

Fostering Resilience Through Art

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Do you work with children or adults who:

Give up efforts to succeed?

Engage in defiant rebellion?

Exhibit negative thinking?

Involved with alcohol or drugs?

Self-abuses?

Keeps other people at a distance?

Are hostile or aggressive?

Are being bullied or bullies others?

Are truant or tardy?

Ridicules others?

Lack access due to physical disabilities?

Have learning disabilities?

Have experienced trauma from neglect or abuse?

Have family members who are incarcerated?

Have experienced violence?

Are homeless or in transition?

Have experienced extreme poverty?

Are gifted and suffer in silence?

What Can We Do?

We can strengthen protective factors that foster resilience by implementing innovative practices that are centered on strengthening protective factors and utilizing nurturing pedagogy. We can empower youth by giving them choices, engaging them in authentic learning experiences and collaborative community art-based initiatives that celebrate individual and collective strengths. **By understanding the characteristics of resiliency, we who are advocates for learners that have experienced trauma can help them avoid the cycle of failure and low expectations that can lead to adverse outcomes.**

RESILIENCY is the ability to bounce back, to successfully adapt, to cope, to develop social, academic, and vocational competence despite exposure to the stress that is inherent in today's world.

Resiliency Theory is the belief in the ability of every person to overcome adversity if important protective factors are present in that person's life.

Protective Factors that the arts provide (Heise & MacGillivray, 2013, 2012, 2010) are personal accomplishment, resourcefulness, creativity, persistence, metacognition, vision for the future, a sense of purpose, sense of humor, and optimism.

Conditions that nurture resilience:

1. A **safe place to express** feelings, concerns and to have fun
2. Opportunities for **meaningful participation**
3. Safe place where **mistakes are encouraged** and educational
4. Personal **strengths are acknowledged** and supported
5. High expectations for success
6. Opportunities to **connect with others**
7. **Healthy role models**
8. Available **guidance** and help
9. Communication is clear with **consistent** expectations and boundaries
10. Having at least one caring, nurturing person in life
11. **Accomplishments are celebrated**

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESILIENT ART CLASSES:

- art making based on **real life issues** that are relevant and important to student
- engages students in **problem solving** and provides students **choices** in process
- teachers use **inquiry** method to stimulate critical and creative thinking in students
- students actively **engaged** rather than listening to teacher
- students obtain **mastery** over medium or process
- students have **fluency** and **flexibility** – multiple solutions to an [art] problem
- students develop/exhibit **vision, sense of purpose**
- art assessment goes **beyond** product assessment and evaluation of principals and elements of design, but evaluates the students' depth of thinking
- Students participate in **service learning** activities that engages students in learning about and contributing to the **solution of real issues of concern** to the student and the community.

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