

# Developing Protective Factors and Resiliency for Students with Disabilities

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
**Public Instruction**  
Jill K. Underly, PhD, State Superintendent

# Objectives

- Understand what protective factors and resilience skills are.
- Understand why it is critical for students with disabilities to build resilience skills.
- Understand how to align disability-related needs, goals, and IEP services to increase protective factors and build resilience skills.



# Multi-Level Systems of Supports

- Services, practices, and resources based upon responsiveness to effective instruction and intervention
- Foundation of high quality instruction, strategic use of data, and collaboration
- Continuum of supports builds knowledge, skills, and habits for success beyond high school, including developmental, academic, behavioral, social and emotional skills.



# Comprehensive School Mental Health

**"School systems have an opportunity to promote individual and community resilience and leverage positive social influencers while mitigating negative influencers through their Comprehensive School Mental Health System."**

**[The Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework](#)**

# What is Resilience?

The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress (American Psychological Association, 2012)



# Why Does Resilience Matter?

“Compared to children and students without disabilities, children and students with disabilities experience (a) higher rates of mental health challenges; (b) more anxiety, depression, and academic-related distress; (c) higher rates of suicide ideation and suicide attempts, and nonsuicidal self-injury; and (d) greater peer victimization (Coduti et al., 2016; Fleming et al., 2016; Salle et al., 2018).”

[Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral and Mental Health Needs](#). US Department of Education

# How Resilience is Built



# Protective Factors

Individual or environmental characteristics or conditions that promote the health and emotional well-being of children and adolescents.

[CDC Protective Factors in Schools](#)



# Protective Factors: Individual Characteristics

- Positive Self-worth
- High self-efficacy
- Social and Emotional Competence
- Positive Relationships
- Good decision making
- Self-control
- Planning and goal setting



*CDC Protective Factors in Schools*

# Protective Factors: Environmental Characteristics and Conditions

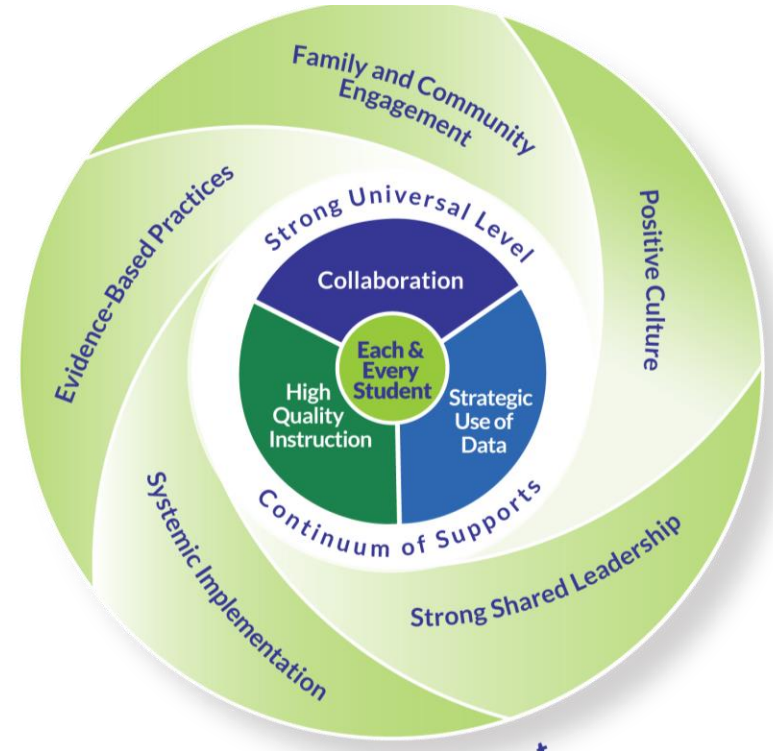
- Positive parenting
- Parent engagement
- Social support
- Supportive school environments
- School connectedness
- Safe and caring communities
- Community involvement



[CDC Protective Factors in Schools](#)

# Multi-Level Systems of Supports and Resilience Factors

- Family and Community Engagement
- Positive Culture
- Continuum of Supports



# Key Resilience Factors

- Adaptable, caring, and supportive relationships
- Sense of mastery over life circumstances
- Strong executive function and self-regulation skills
- Safe and supportive environments
- Affirming faith or cultural traditions



# Strong and Healthy Relationships

Building and cultivating relationships with students is key to positive outcomes.

- Express Care
- Challenge Growth
- Provide Support
- Share Power
- Expand Possibilities



From: [Search Institute Developmental Relationships](#)

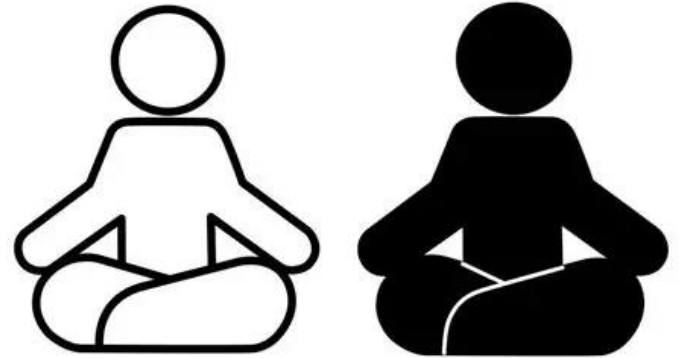
# Sense of Mastery Over Life Circumstances

- Provide opportunities for student voice and choice
- Encourage involvement in interests and hobbies
- Foster a sense of meaning and purpose
- Promote, support, and teach independence and self-determination skills



# Executive Function and Self-Regulation

- Model and teach skills, such as:
  - planning, focus, organization, impulse control
  - calming techniques, mindfulness, emotional awareness
- My [Emotional Regulation Plan](#)



# Supportive and Safe Environment

- Establish a predictable routine
- Provide a safe place to fail
- Encourage problem solving
- Trauma Sensitive Schools



# Culturally Responsive Practices

- Avoid untrue, unalterable, unfounded attributions to behaviors and challenges
- Limit bias in data collection and analysis
- Culturally specific evidence-based interventions, supports, services



[Culturally Responsive Problem Solving Guide \(2020\)](#)

# Resiliency and the IEP

- Root cause analysis
- Match interventions and supports to the identified need
- Provide services
- Analyze progress



# Root Cause Analysis

**Behavior Output – Student pushes desk, throws a pencil, and yells at the teacher**

**Why? Student is angry and lashes out.**


**Why? Student is frustrated, did not understand what to do or how to do it.**

**Why? Student can identify feelings but does not know what to do when feeling intense or strong emotions.**

**Need: Skill development in self-management or coping strategies.**

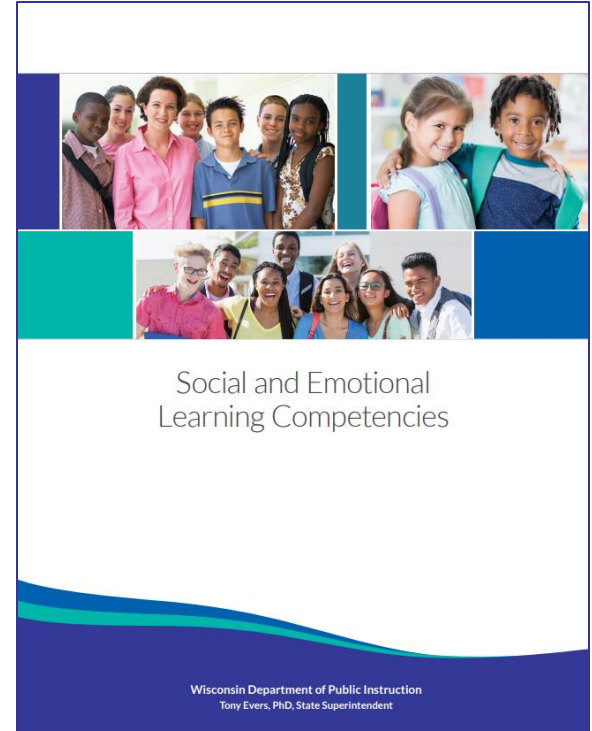


# Teach and Model

- IEP Goals and Specially Designed Instruction
    - Academic Skills
    - Social and Emotional Learning
  - Growth Mindset
    - Move from "I don't know how to do this." to "I don't know how to do this, yet."
  - Focus on strengths, build from interests
  - Model skills and use adult think-alouds
- 

# Social and Emotional Learning Competencies

- Social and Emotional Learning Competencies are essential skills that help children and adults understand and manage emotions, building healthy relationships and make responsible decisions.
- The competencies are provided in grade bands for levels 4K-5K, grades 1-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-10, and 11-adulthood.



## EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Understand and manage one's emotions

No.	CASEL Domain	PK-5K	1st-3rd	4th-5th
1	Self-Awareness	Learners will be able to demonstrate awareness of their emotions and how they may be the same or different from others. <i>Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) Domain II A EL.1</i>	Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of their own basic emotions.	Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of complex emotions in self and others.
2	Self-Management	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, use verbal and nonverbal language to demonstrate a variety of emotions. <i>WMELS Domain II A EL.1</i>	Learners will be able to use verbal and nonverbal language to demonstrate a variety of increasingly complex emotions.	Learners will be able to express their emotions to self and others in respectful ways.
3	Self-Management	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, display age appropriate self-control. <i>WMELS Domain II A EL.1</i>	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, demonstrate a variety of strategies to manage strong emotions.	Learners will be able to, with minimal adult guidance, manage emotions (e.g., stress, impulses, motivation) in a manner sensitive to self and others.

# Teaching Skills and Providing Supports

Skills to Teach	Accommodations to Support
Academics	Extended Time
Problem Solving Skills	Home Base or Calm Area When Upset
Self-Monitoring Skills	Peer Support
Self-Regulation or Self-Management Skills	Regular Scheduled Breaks
Transition Skills (between activities and environments)	Additional Time Use of Visual Schedules
More	More

# Analyze Progress

- From baseline data:

Example:

Student can identify zero strategies to use when feeling intense emotions.

- Measure skill growth, not a reduction in behavior output:

Example:

With adult guidance, student will identify three strategies to use when feeling intense emotions.



# Building Resiliency: Support and Skill

- Supportive Relationships
- Safe and Supportive Environments
- Development of Executive Function Skills, Self-Regulation Skills, or Other Skills
- Time



# Resources

## Grant Resource

- [Supporting Neurodiverse Students Professional Learning System](#)
  - [Resiliency: Coping and Relationships](#)

## Wisconsin DPI

- [Addressing Mental Health Needs in the IEP](#)
- [College and Career Ready IEPs](#)
- [Culturally Responsive Problem Solving Guide](#)
- [Inclusive Strategies to Address the Behavioral Needs for Students with IEPs](#)
  - [Strong and Healthy Relationships](#)
- [School Mental Health](#)
  - [Resiliency](#)
  - [Emotional Regulation Plan](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning Competencies](#)

# Contact Information



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