United States Olympic
& Paralympic Museum™

Becoming Your Personal Best

Life Lessons from Olympians and Paralympians

A United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum Project

TEACHER GUIDE
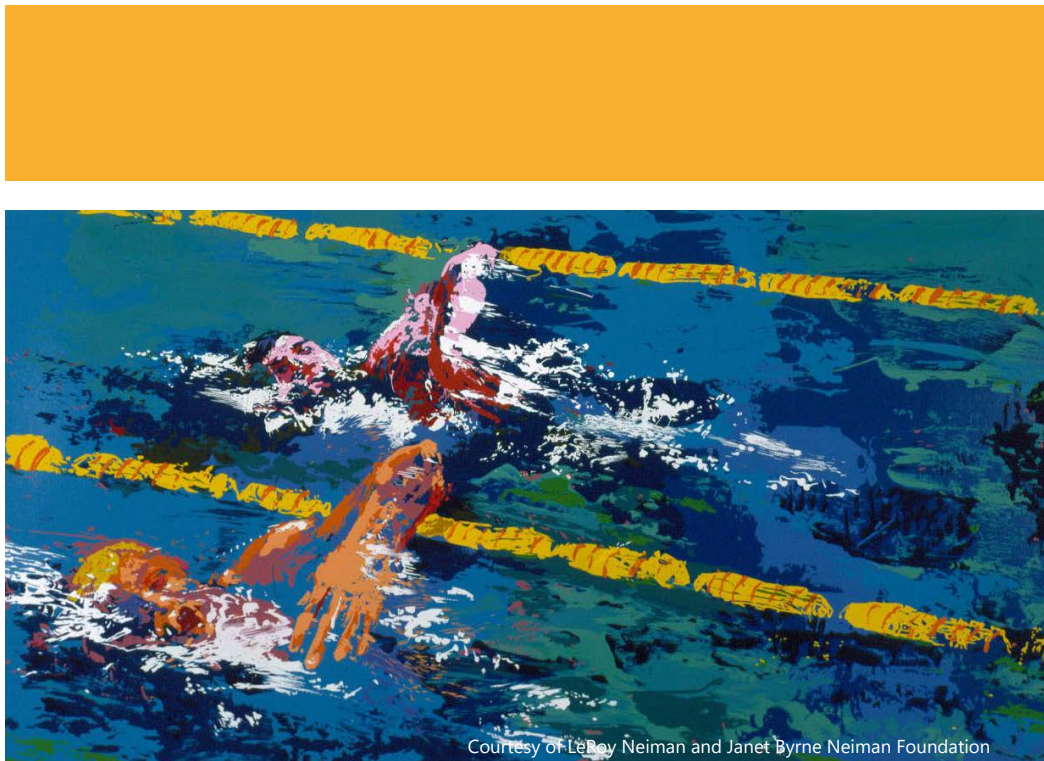
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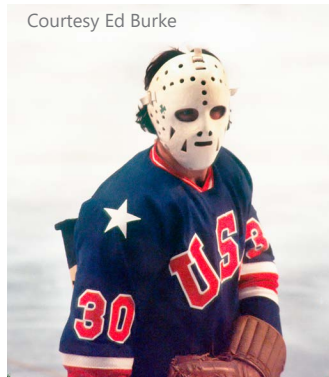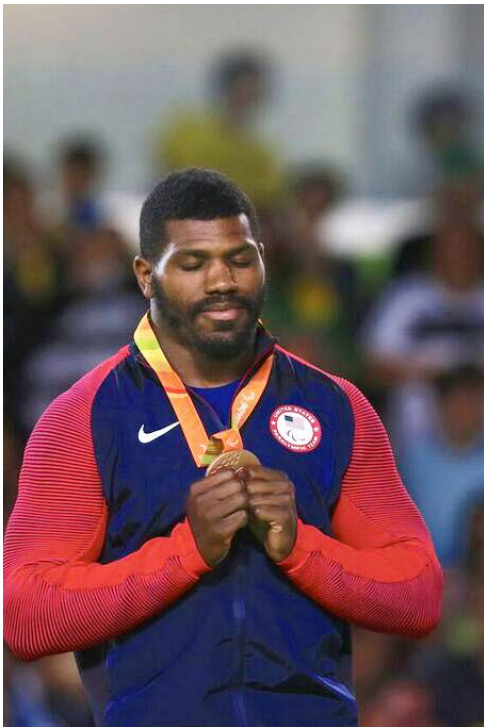
Life Lessons from Olympians and Paralympians

A United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum Project

Table of Contents

Dr. Pam Shockley-Zalabak, Project Director

On behalf of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum, we invite you to join an elite team of athletes on an inspirational journey of resiliency and self-discovery through the **Becoming Your Personal Best: Life Lessons from Olympians and Paralympians** curriculum. The mission of this compelling project, sponsored by the Colorado Health Foundation, is to weave resiliency into the lives of elementary, middle and high school students through life lessons shared by Olympic and Paralympic role models who have overcome tremendous challenges to achieve their hopes and dreams.

Resiliency is a term that we have become accustomed to in our daily lives—especially over the past two years. Educators, parents, psychologists, counselors, and social workers are acutely aware that resilient children and teens are more likely to maintain healthy relationships with their peers, turn failure into personal growth, pivot in the face of unexpected changes, and overcome the obstacles that life is guaranteed to abundantly supply. Through personal testimonials, student-centered video modules, inquiry-based group discussions, and hands-on activities, youth will explore six key skills competencies to serve as mindful guidance throughout their lives: **Self-Identity, Mindset, Problem Solving, Relationships, Perseverance, and Confidence**. Each grade-level module was meticulously designed by educators, industry leaders, and youth advisors who understand the importance of infusing this timely topic into classrooms, youth centers, afterschool programs, homes, and even workplaces.

It is our hope that this curriculum inspires everyone, regardless of age, to holistically reflect on the essential life skills needed to live successful, healthy, and happy lives. We encourage you to take this mindful journey with an elite team of athletes, who have achieved their personal best and triumphed over defeat.

Stay resilient, remain optimistic, and always be your personal best.

Dr. Pam Shockley-Zalabak,
Becoming Your Personal Best Program
Director, USOPM

Courtesy Richard Seldomridge

Letter from Olympian Hunter Kemper

Courtesy Dave Mable

Welcome! I'm Hunter Kemper – 4x Olympian in the sport of Triathlon, proud father and husband, and athlete ambassador for the **Becoming Your Personal Best: Life Lessons from Olympians and Paralympians (BYPB)** curriculum.

Kids today have so many critical challenges, many of which mirror the trials and setbacks that elite athletes must overcome on their athletic journeys.

A lot of folks see Olympians and Paralympians as larger than life, fearless and unstoppable! But what isn't usually obvious is the reality that we lose our way and even fail sometimes, just like everyone else.

Throughout the BYPB curriculum modules, Paralympians and Olympians like myself share lessons of resilience from this unique perspective. We're not JUST athletes and while we have learned valuable lessons on the field of play, the experiences we've struggled through before, during and after our athletic competitions are where we have grown the most.

Hunter Kemper – 4x Olympian, Triathlon
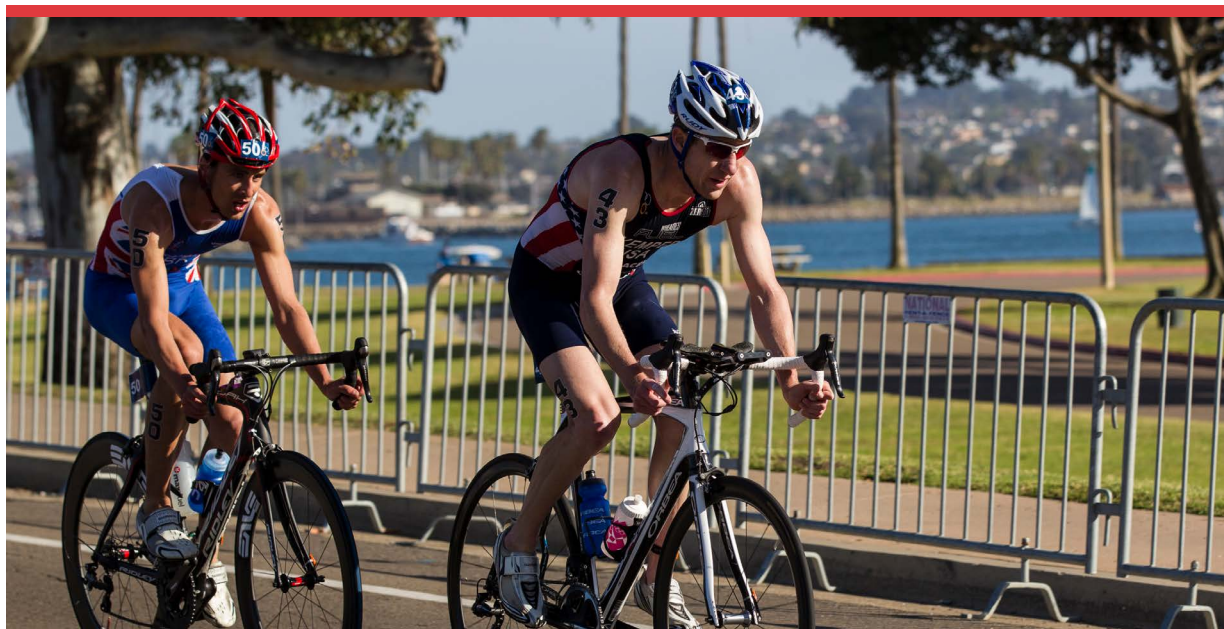
Introduction

Becoming Your Personal Best Overview

Becoming Your Personal Best (BYPB) is a comprehensive curriculum project of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum in partnership with the Colorado Health Foundation. The mission of this multi-faceted project is to provide youth with essential social and emotional learning tools that will create self-awareness and build resiliency through the inspirational life lessons shared by Olympic and Paralympic role models.

There are three main components to the BYPB project:

1 **Curriculum –** A learning curriculum composed of lesson plans and skills videos for students in grades 4-12. BYPB incorporates the inspiration of Olympic and Paralympic athletes to help young people learn about meeting personal challenges, setting goals, growing through failure, and developing a positive mindset.

2 **Video Series –** BYPB includes a 9-part video series produced to help young people, families, and communities develop positive resiliency skills to meet life challenges. Filmed at the United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum, the series features nationally known resiliency experts and Olympians and Paralympians who share practical information and skill building tips with young people, family, and community members.

3 **Facilitator/Teacher Professional Development –** Two separate professional development modules for formal and informal educators accompany the curriculum and video series.

What makes BYPB *unique*, *powerful*, and *innovative*?

The United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum's Becoming Your Personal Best: Life Lessons from Olympians and Paralympians resiliency curriculum distinguishes itself in several specific ways: (1) Stories of Olympic and Paralympic athletes are utilized in all curriculum modules; (2) Teacher Professional Development modules are part of the program; (3) Parents, extended family, and community organizations benefit from an educational video series designed specifically for their use; and (4) Accessibility to the program is provided by design without regard to race, socio-economic status, geography, disability, or access to technology. Additionally, an incredibly high-caliber and experienced design team created the curriculum with the added expertise of an accomplished advisory committee.
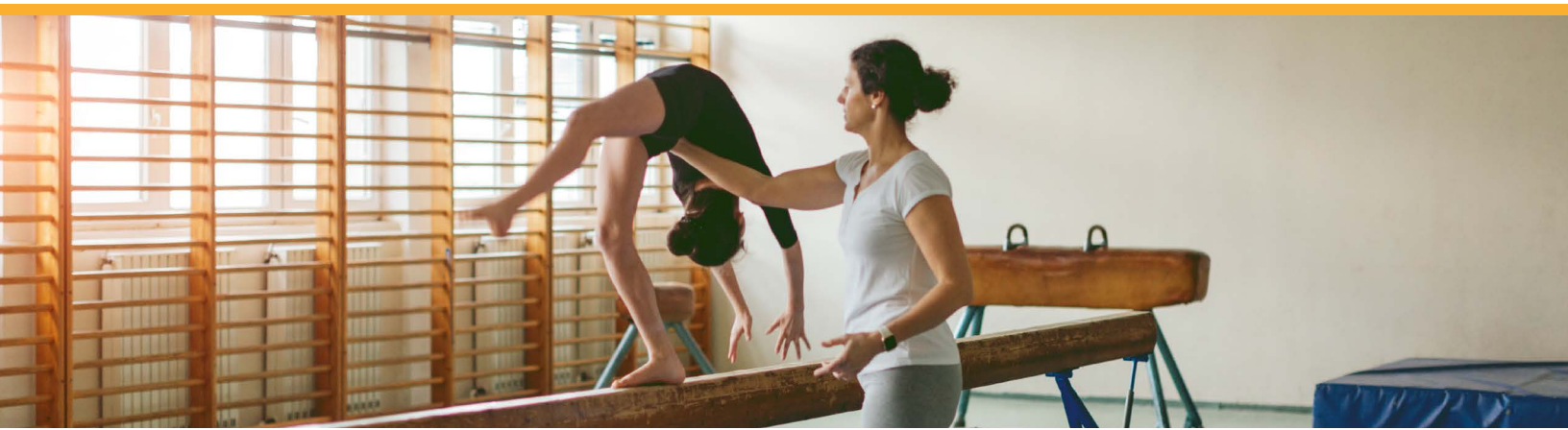
Why focus on resiliency?

Resiliency is lacking in youth of all ages and has become a major challenge in education. Students are increasingly seeking help for, and having emotional crises over, problems of everyday life such as school, interpersonal conversations, relationships, peer pressure, and many other issues.

> Gray, P. (2015). *Declining student resilience: A serious problem for colleges*. Psychology researcher at Boston College, writing for Psychology Today.

Resiliency education outcomes have promise. Studies of over 2,000 students indicate positive resiliency education outcomes including: 1) increased well-being, life satisfaction, and optimism; 2) reduction in hopelessness and depression, anxiety, and conduct problems; 3) improvement in physical health; and 4) decrease in mental health diagnoses, and in one study, decrease in substance abuse problems.

> University of Pennsylvania Resiliency Program. Background & Empirical Research (2020)

Defining Resiliency

In the social, behavioral, and biological sciences, the term resiliency is used in a variety of ways and contexts—the essence of resiliency is a positive, adaptive response in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress.

> National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2015). Supportive relationships and active skill-building strengthen the foundation of resilience. Working paper No. 13 http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu)

Whether it is considered an outcome, a process, or a capacity, the essence of resiliency is a positive, adaptive response in the face of significant adversity. It is neither an immutable trait nor a resource that can be used up. On a biological level, resiliency results in healthy development because it protects the developing brain and other organs from the disruptions produced by excessive activation of stress response systems. Stated simply, resiliency transforms potentially toxic stress into tolerable stress. In the final analysis, resiliency is rooted in both the physiology of adaptation and the experiences we provide for children that either promote or limit development.

> Lee, T.Y., Cheung, C.K., & Kwong, W.M. (2012). *Resilience as a positive youth development construct: A conceptual review.* Scientific World Journal.

The American Psychological Association uses a broad definition: "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means 'bouncing back' from difficult experiences."

Learning from Olympians and Paralympians

A significant number of studies have shown that children learn socially acceptable behaviors and strategies for achieving their goals through mentors and role models. Positive role models can boost a child's motivation by demonstrating how to achieve success and how to overcome obstacles, and by illustrating a sense of self-worth.

> Price-Mitchell, M. (2014). *How role models influence youth strategies for success.* Stop Medicine Abuse (Blog). www.stopmedicineabuse.org

Athletes, especially Olympians and Paralympians, are particularly important as examples of these role models, and their value in the process of helping children internalize values and behaviors have been confirmed with research. Data suggest the influence of cultural icons such as athletes extend beyond simple admirations to impacts on beliefs, values, and self-appraisals.

> Pleiss, M.K. & Feldhusen, J.F. (1995). Mentors, role models, and heroes in the lives of gifted children. *Educational Psychologists, 30* (3), 159-169.

For thousands of years, hero stories have been used to inspire, motivate, and instill character strength and cultural values in children.

> Price-Mitchell, M. (2014). *What is a role model? Five qualities that matter to you*. Roots of Action (Blog). www.rootsofaction.com

These stories can be tools to teach young people a resiliency mindset and skillset they can use to face and overcome challenges in the real world. And, it is not just the story of 'what happened to me' that has the power to motivate youth—the "how" and "why" story of an athlete's experiences navigating challenges and overcoming barriers is an essential component in understanding resiliency.

This curriculum connects youth to athletes through the power of stories.

The Becoming Your Personal Best curriculum combines the rigor of tested research in resiliency with the unique strategic driver of engagement with Olympic and Paralympic athletes around their personal and powerful resiliency stories from direct, lived experiences. Each module in the curriculum features an Olympian or Paralympian telling a story related to one of the selected resiliency skills. The goal is not to have students become athletes but to become their own personal best. Students will learn that all Olympians and Paralympians have experienced failure and success and use strategies, presented in the curriculum, to help them develop resiliency in their everyday lives.

Courtesy Ed Burke

Courtesy Larry Slater

Courtesy Diane Johnson
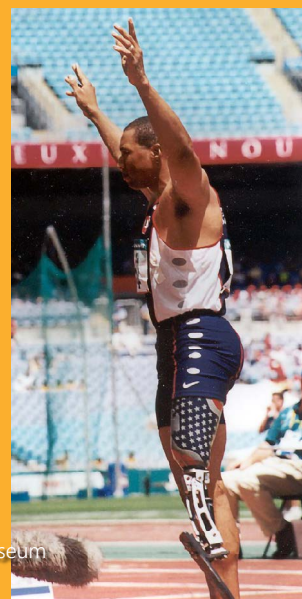
Courtesy Jim Craig, Gold Medal Strategies, INC

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Who are the athletes featured as role models in this curriculum?

Clarissa Chun

Courtesy Larry Slater

Sport: Wrestling

Hometown: Oahu, Hawaii

Competition Year(s) and Results: 2012 Olympic Bronze Medalist; 2x Olympic Athlete (2008 & 2012)

Real World Context: First wrestler from Hawaii to medal in the Olympic Games

Jim Craig

Courtesy Jim Craig

Sport: Ice Hockey

Hometown: Easton, Massachusetts

Competition Year(s) and Results: 1980 Olympic Gold Medalist

Real World Context: Member of 1980 'Miracle on Ice' team that defeated the Soviets in the midst of global political tension
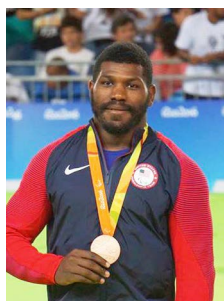
Dartanyon Crockett

Sport: Judo

Hometown: Cleveland, Ohio

Competition Year(s) and Results: 2x Paralympic Bronze Medalist (2012 & 2016)

Real World Context: Today Dartanyon mentors kids on growing through challenges in their lives.

Tricia Downing

Courtesy Mark Woolcott

Sport: Pistol Shooting

Hometown: Denver, Colorado

Competition Year: 2016 Paralympian

Real World Context: First female paraplegic to complete an Ironman triathlon

Michelle Dusserre Farrell

Sport: Gymnastics

Hometown: Long Beach, California

Competition Year(s) and Results: 1984 Olympic Silver Medalist

Real World Context: Youngest member of the Women's Olympic Gymnastics Team in 1984

Hunter Kemper

Sport: Triathlon

Hometown: Charlotte, North Carolina

Competition Year(s): 4x Olympian (2000, 2004, 2008, 2012)

Real World Context: Most decorated triathlete in U.S. history

Letticia Martinez

Sport: Swimming

Hometown: Las Cruces, New Mexico

Competition Year(s): 2x Paralympian (2012 & 2016)

Real World Context: Completely blind Hispanic Paralympic swimmer

John Register

Sport: Track & Field (Long Jump)

Hometown: Oak Park, Illinois

Competition Year(s) and Results: 2000 Paralympic Silver Medalist; 2x Paralympic Athlete (1996 - Swimming & 2000 - Track & Field)

Real World Context: Black military veteran with a disability

Curriculum Design

Design Team

The invitation to participate in the creation of this program rendered an incredible cadre of researchers, educators, experts, and mentors to be part of a collaborative, diverse team. In addition to Olympian and Paralympian athlete partners, the project has engaged with a group of world-renowned contributors.

Curriculum Design Team & Partners

Pam Shockley-Zalabak | Laura Quinn

No Barriers USA
Andrea Delorey
Mariah Nelson
Dave Shurna

Windstar Studios Inc

Higley Photography & Design
Ryan Higley
Catherine Higley

Sarah Porter Osborn

Red Pen, LLC

USOPM
McQella Adams
Tiffany Stahl

Carolyn Derr	Brandon DeMatto	Aaron Geffre	Emily Hoover	Kelli Sisson
Chloe Delisle	Sarah Fabian	Anne Hatch	Jennicca Mabe	Kahlyn Weldon

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Athletes		Advisory Council	Youth Partners
Clarissa Chun	Michelle Dusserre Farrell	Margaret Bacon	Devyn Jackson
Jim Craig	Hunter Kemper	Daniel Edelson	Gwendolyn Osborn
Dartanyon Crockett	Letticia Martinez	George Houston	Diego Sauceda
Tricia Downing	John Register	Steve Kern	Santiago Sauceda
		Paul Martinez	Piper Sturgis
		Theresa Newsom	

Project generously funded by: **The Colorado Health Foundation**™

Design Process

The design of the curriculum was conducted through three phases.

1 Research and Planning

The project team reviewed existing research on resiliency and how it is developed and consulted with experts in the field. Relevant information was compiled in the Research Brief (see page 31) and then used by the Design Team to identify areas of skills for the curriculum modules. Members of the Design Team then met for a series of collaborative sessions focused on understanding end users of the curriculum, identifying learning objectives, determining the structure of the curriculum, and designing for equity and accessibility. Throughout the design labs, members of the Design Team reflected on their own personal resiliency journeys as well as engaged in activities to meet the objectives identified above.

The Design Thinking process, along with the Understanding by Design (UbD) methodology for developing learning experiences, were used to facilitate the design labs. The results of these design labs were integrated into a formal plan to guide development of the curriculum.

Simultaneously, the project team identified Olympic and Paralympic athletes to highlight in the curriculum and began filming those athletes telling their stories.

2 Curriculum Development

The lead designers facilitated an extended process with stakeholders to identify the content and activities to include in each module in order to meet the identified learning objectives. David Kolb's theories on Experiential Learning and Learning Styles, along with the 4MAT process, were layered in with Understanding by Design to guide the curriculum development process throughout this stage.

Once the project team completed production of the final athlete videos, lead designers then integrated the content, activities, and videos to create each lesson. After going through several rounds of feedback and revision, the learning modules were put into the graphic design process. Each module then underwent an additional review and approval process before moving into the pilot stage.

3 Pilot and Revision
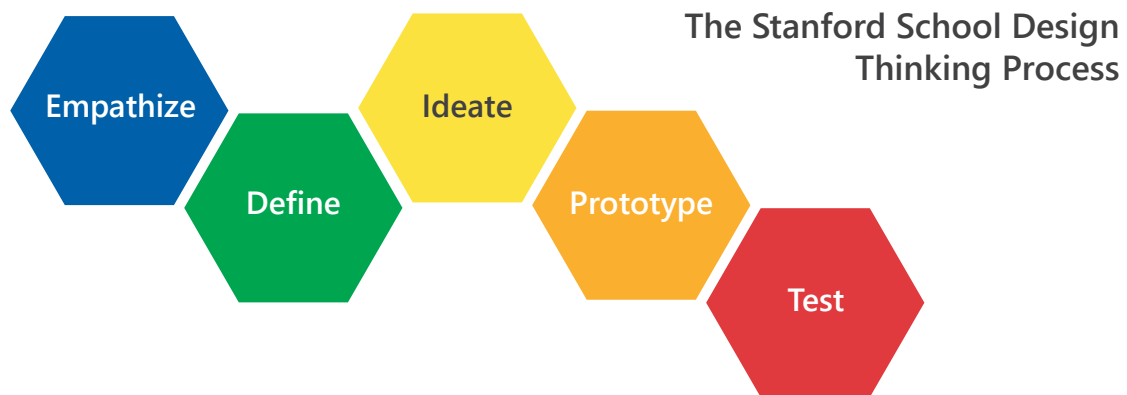
In this stage, systematic feedback was gathered from several stakeholder audiences including teacher Design Partners, members of the Advisory Committee, additional teachers from a variety of contexts who used the curriculum with students (school, home school, and community organizations), and youth. Feedback was analyzed to identify trends, and the curriculum was revised to make improvements.

Design Models

The following provides more information about the models used throughout the design process.

Design Thinking

The curriculum process was conducted through the Design Thinking model, starting with understanding who the curriculum was being defined for, all the way to testing the curriculum and making changes based on the results.

The Stanford School Design Thinking Process

- Empathize
- Define
- Ideate
- Prototype
- Test

Stanford Design Thinking Bootleg. (2018). Stanford DSchool.
https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources/design-thinking-bootleg

Understanding by Design

Using the Understanding by Design framework, the curriculum was structured through the backward design process.

1 Identify desired results

2 Determine acceptable evidence

3 Plan learning experiences and instruction
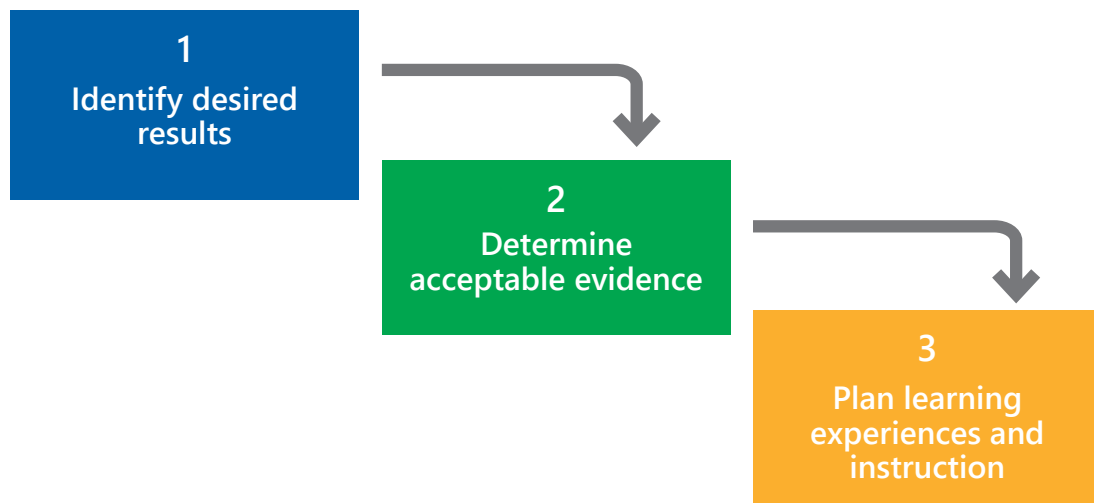
The Stage 1 and Stage 2 work was organized into three categories:

- **Enduring Understandings:**
  Statements of the big, meaningful ideas that have lasting importance for students to transfer across multiple areas of life into the future

- **Skills:**
  Specific abilities the curriculum is designed to target, organized into six areas of resiliency skills

- **Learning Objectives:**
  Lesson-level statements, designed using UbD's Six Facets of Understanding, that express what students can do as a result of the learning experience

UbD's Six Facets of Understanding

Explain
Interpret
Apply
Have Perspective
Empathize
Have Self-Knowledge
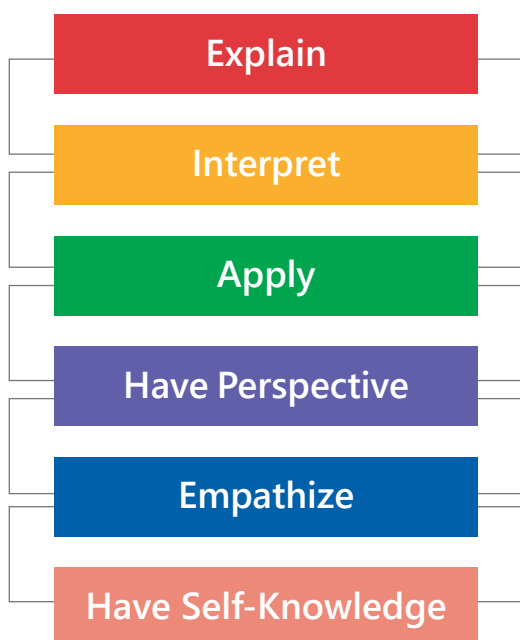
The Stage 3 work of planning the learning experiences was then conducted to meet the defined results.

Bowen, R. S. (2017). *Understanding by Design*. Vanderbilt University. https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/understanding-by-design/
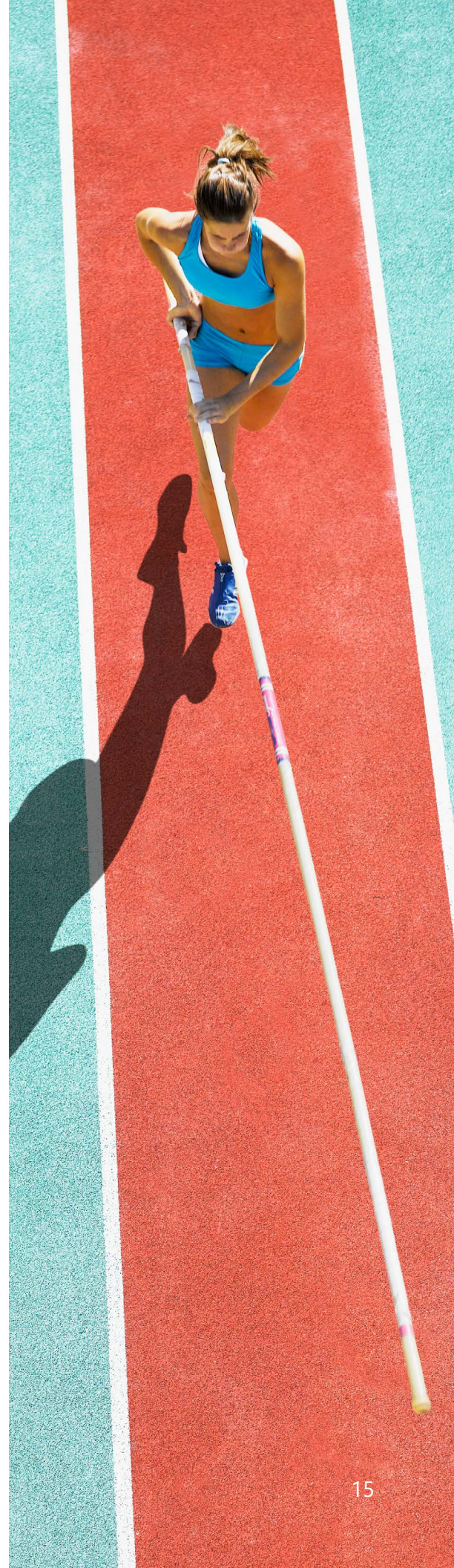
Experiential Learning and Learning Styles

As the work progressed, Kolb's theories on Experiential Learning and Learning Styles, along with About Learning's Learning Type Measure were utilized. These models support the transformation of experience into knowledge through a cycle of learning, while addressing the needs of different learning styles.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle and Learning Styles

McLeod, S. (2017). *Kolb's Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Style*. Simply Psychology. https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html
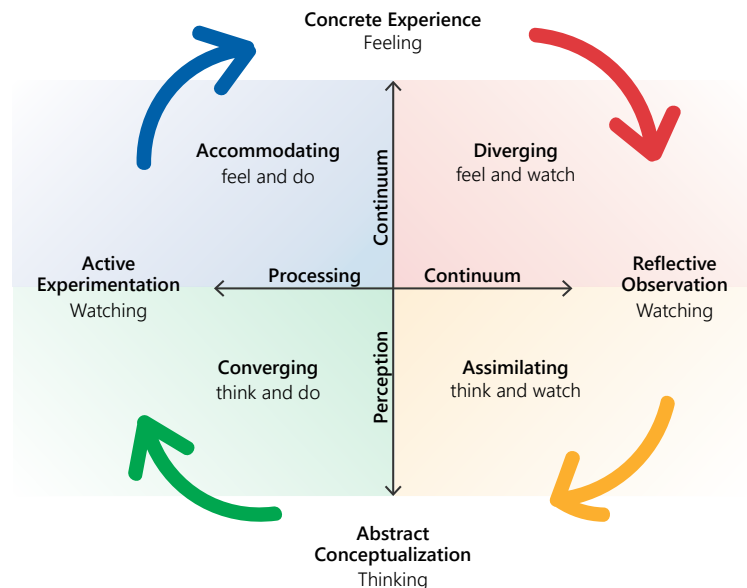
4MAT Cycle of Learning Mode
(from the Learning Type Measure by About Learning)

What Is the 4MAT - 4MAT learning model and styles. (2016). 4MAT 4LEARNING. https://4mat4learning.com.au/what-is-4mat/
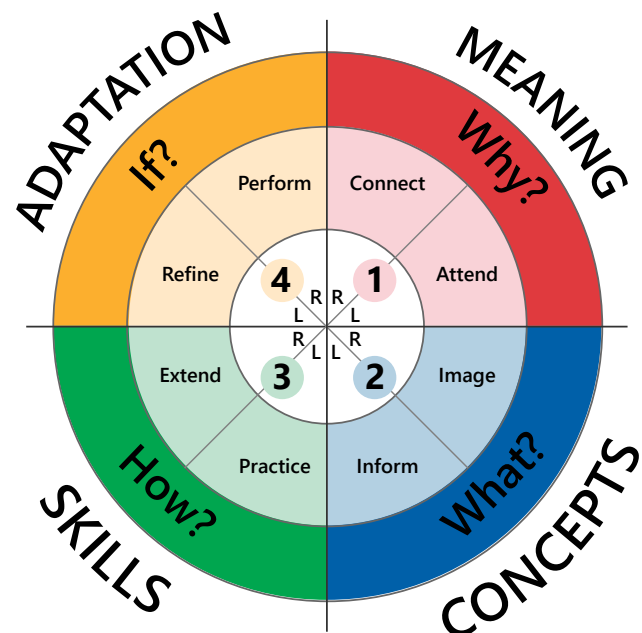
Structure and Flexibility

Throughout the design process, an emphasis was placed on creating a balance between clear structure and flexibility for how the curriculum is implemented. With awareness that some users of the curriculum would want clearly defined implementation steps, and others would want flexibility for a variety of contexts and timing, the Design Team set out to create a curriculum that could offer a clear implementation path alongside flexible options. The goal became to create a simple, consistent structure that would be user-friendly, find the right balance of being substantive while not overwhelming, and provide options for users with less time to implement the curriculum as well as for those wanting to provide extended learning opportunities. Details of the curriculum and lesson structure are found on page 21.

Student Support

In order to support students in a variety of learning environments and with diverse learning needs, this guide includes a section called Adaptations for Accessibility: Support for Learners with Diverse Needs, found on page 48. This section provides suggestions for how to support needs such as attention, sensory, communication, and accessibility. Additionally, student support boxes are embedded into lessons throughout the curriculum, providing suggestions and examples to support students.

Equity and Accessibility

While social-emotional learning and development of resiliency skills will not solve longstanding and deep-seated inequities in the education system, it can help schools promote understanding, examine biases, reflect on and address the impact of racism, and build cross-cultural relationships. It can also cultivate adult and student practices that close opportunity gaps and create more inclusive school communities. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) does not seek to have students conform to the values and preferences of the dominant culture but uplifts and promotes understanding of the assets of diverse individuals and communities.

Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Borowski, T. (2018, November). *Transformative SEL as a Lever for Equity & Social Justice*. CASEL. https://casel.org/research/transformative-sel/
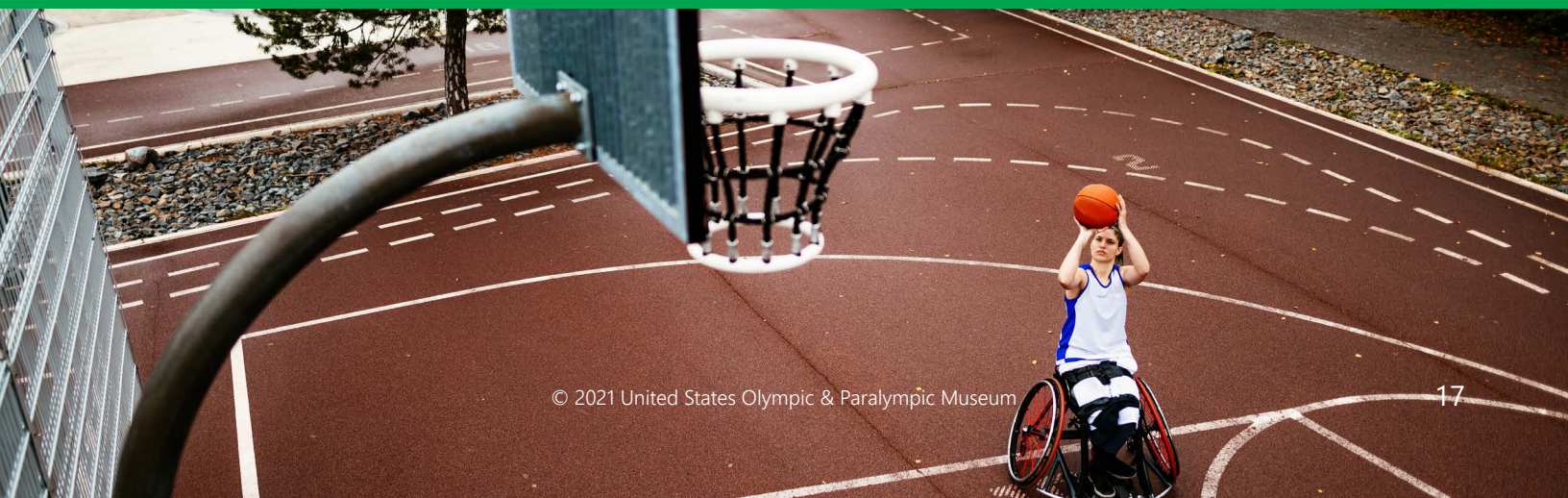
Designing for Equity and Accessibility: Guiding Principles

- Take the time to learn, ask questions, and better understand what we don't know

- Be aware of our own biases and how they influence our decisions

- Create learning experiences that focus on developing unique potential rather than pursuing stereotypes of success

- Balance an individualistic perspective for succeeding with a communal one

- Choose content* and role models that represent and are inclusive of diversity (racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, gender, disabilities, language)

- Check our language for the kinds of values it assigns and adjust as needed (including language related to barriers, privilege, assumptions, etc.)

- Select content and create learning experiences that provide cultural relevance and that support ethnic/racial identity development

- Engage in a feedback process that includes teachers and students from diverse backgrounds to give input

- Build in flexibility for teachers to implement the curriculum according to their schedule and students' needs, while also providing clarity regarding a recommended core experience

- Create recommended adaptations to support students with different learning needs being able to access the curriculum in the regular classroom

- Design the curriculum so that it can be made accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired and deaf or hard of hearing

- Design the curriculum so that it can be made accessible to teachers and students who may not have access to technology

*including a variety of sports so that sports associated with privilege do not dominate

Accessibility Recommendations

The Design Team also identified recommendations for how to effectively support students who have diverse learning needs in the regular classroom.

- Use Universal Design for Learning principles from the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)

- Use National Center for Accessible Education principles for creation of accessible documents and videos

- Use Website accessibility guidelines to meet ADA compliance requirements where the curriculum is hosted online

- Include suggestions within lessons for how to support students

- Provide a bank of instructional strategies and accommodations to support accessibility across the curriculum

Planning for Implementation
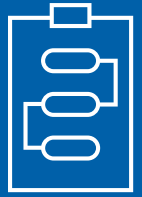
Education Setting and Teacher Role

How you plan to implement this curriculum depends on the setting, your role and background, and the youth who will be participating in the program. There are three primary contexts the curriculum is intended for: students in schools, youth participating in community programs, and children learning at home. The curriculum is designed to be used by whomever is teaching the program to youth in these settings, whether that is a teacher or counselor in a school, a program staff person or volunteer in a community organization, or a parent or family member at home.

Sharing the Materials with Students

While there are parts of the curriculum that are designed to be student-facing (module videos, athlete bios, and lesson worksheets), the rest of the curriculum is written specifically to guide teachers through facilitation of the program with youth, providing teachers with background information, directions, and ideas for how to support students. Many teachers will also choose to share images and quotes found throughout the curriculum with students by using technology to project them for students to see, which is encouraged! The key point here is that the curriculum is not designed to be handed off to youth to complete on their own. It is a curriculum created for teachers to use with youth. If a teacher would like to have a student engage in this program with a great deal of independence, using the reproducible accelerated lessons is the recommendation.

As students work through the modules, it is highly recommended that they keep a portfolio of their completed activities and reflection. This will allow students to refer back to their work as is sometimes suggested in later modules, and will also support students to successfully complete the conclusion module.

Implementation Scenarios

Possibilities for implementation are outlined in the table below, including scenarios that would work with a full class, small groups, or individual students. Additionally, the curriculum can be implemented all at once in a short period of time, or spread out over many weeks, months, or even the whole year.

Elementary School	• Time designated for social and emotional learning • Free time or empty spaces in the schedule that need to be filled • Through a learning theme • Integrated into a specific unit • Special counselor-led program • After school program or club
Middle School	• Advisory/Homeroom • Time designated for social and emotional learning • Enrichment time • Integrated into Language Arts or other content area • Integrated into P.E. or Health class • Specially created elective class • Special counselor-led program • After school program or club
High School	• Advisory/Homeroom • Time designated for social and emotional learning • Elective class • Integrated into P.E. or Health class • Special counselor-led program • After school program or club
Youth and Community Organizations	• Community program for youth • Camp program on days when school is out (during the school year or summer) • Sports programs, churches, food banks, expressive and performing arts organizations, etc.
Home	• Homeschool unit • Enrichment activity • Family activity

Sample Implementation Timing

Year Program: Monthly Implementation
Introduce the program in late September, implement one module per month from October to March wherever it fits in the schedule that month, then conclude the program in April.

Semester Program: Weekly Implementation
Complete the program in one semester by designating a 45-60 minute block of time each week to complete one lesson per week.

Month Program: Daily Implementation
Implement a unit focused on resiliency, completing one lesson per day for four weeks.

Curriculum and Lesson Structure

The **Becoming Your Personal Best: Life Lessons from Olympians and Paralympians** curriculum is designed to develop students' resiliency skills at four levels:

- 4th/5th Grade

- 6th/7th/8th Grade

- 9th/10th Grade

- 11th/12 Grade

Each level includes an introduction module, six skills modules, and a conclusion module:

- Introduction

- Self-Identity

- Mindset

- Problem Solving

- Perseverance

- Relationships

- Confidence

- Conclusion

The introduction and conclusion modules are made up of one 45-60 minute lesson, while the six skills modules are made up of three 45-60 minutes lessons. The total estimated time to complete a level of the curriculum is 15-20 hours. For teachers with less time, each lesson includes a plan for an accelerated lesson option. For teachers with more time, or to support individual students needing enrichment, each lesson includes an extended activity option.

Curriculum Structure

Levels	Introduction Module	Module 1 Self-Identity	Module 2 Mindset	Module 3 Problem Solving	Module 4 Perseverance	Module 5 Relationships	Module 6 Confidence	Conclusion Module
4th-5th 6th-8th 9th-10th 11th-12th	Introduction to BYPM program (45-60 min)	**Module Overview** - Background information, enduring understanding, priority skills, lesson titles **Athlete Biography** - Information about featured athletes **Lesson 1** - Athlete story and introduction to skills area (45-60 min) **Lesson 2** - Skills development through activities (45-60 min) **Lesson 3** - Skills development through activities (45-60 min)						Conclusion of BYPM program (45-60 min)

Lesson Structure

Lesson Info	Kick-Off	Main Activity	Wrap-Up and Closing Reflection	Extended Activity	Accelerated Lesson
• Lesson overview • Learning Objectives • Materials • Time	Short activity to introduce the lesson focus	Larger activity to develop skills	Final remarks and reflection prompt	Optional enrichment activity for individual students, small groups, or the whole group	Alternative option for a shorter lesson (can be used with a whole group or reproduced for individual students)

Additional Lesson Features

Conversation

Prompts provided for whole group, small group, and partner conversations.

Worksheets

Reproducible worksheets to guide students through activities.

Student Support

Suggestions and examples to give students extra support.

Resiliency Skills and Enduring Understandings

Each skills area has an enduring understanding and a set of skills-based objectives. The ✓ checks indicate which objectives are prioritized at each level of the curriculum.

Self-Identity

Enduring Understanding

Understanding and appreciating your self-identity—your values, strengths, interests, passions, and identity markers—gives you a sense of self-worth and keeps you centered to live an authentic and fulfilling life.

Objectives	Priority Objectives at Each Level			
	4th/5th	6th/7th/8th	9th/10th	11th/12th
Have a sense of self-worth	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understand one's values and strengths	✓	✓	✓	✓
Explore interests and passions	✓			
Understand one's identity markers		✓	✓	
Prioritize self awareness and reflection				✓
Act with integrity			✓	✓

Mindset

Enduring Understanding

Approaching life with a positive mindset increases your ability to navigate obstacles and thrive.

Objectives	Priority Objectives at Each Level			
	4th/5th	6th/7th/8th	9th/10th	11th/12th
Approach challenges with a positive attitude	✓	✓	✓	
Use a growth mindset	✓	✓	✓	
See possibilities	✓			✓
Be willing to reach out of comfort zone		✓	✓	✓
Be willing to fail and learn from the experience		✓	✓	
Approach life with optimism				✓

Problem Solving

Enduring Understanding

Thinking critically about possibilities, motivations, and consequences in order to make conscious choices helps you to prevent, recognize, and solve problems.

Objectives	Priority Objectives at Each Level			
	4th/5th	6th/7th/8th	9th/10th	11th/12th
Use critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consider consequences and make conscious choices	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognize emotions	✓	✓		
Understand motivations		✓	✓	
Act in alignment with values				✓
Use creativity and innovation			✓	✓

Perseverance

Enduring Understanding

Appreciating the process of pursuing goals and working through challenges, and using failure as an opportunity to learn and grow, supports you to persist when faced with adversity.

Objectives	Priority Objectives at Each Level			
	4th/5th	6th/7th/8th	9th/10th	11th/12th
Set and pursue goals	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understand the "why" and use that to move forward	✓	✓		✓
Engage with effort/work hard where you can	✓			
Move through challenges and failures with an appreciation for the process		✓	✓	
Act with flexibility			✓	
Engage in productive struggle				✓

Relationships

Enduring Understanding

Practicing respect for yourself and for others contributes to nurturing positive relationships and living effectively in an interdependent world.

Objectives	Priority Objectives at Each Level			
	4th/5th	6th/7th/8th	9th/10th	11th/12th
Show respect for self and others	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use effective communication	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaborate with others	✓			
Consider different perspectives		✓		
Recognize support systems		✓		✓
Act with empathy			✓	✓
Understand interdependence			✓	

Confidence

Enduring Understanding

Having self-efficacy, along with being aware of your needs and emotions, helps you to act with confidence.

Objectives	Priority Objectives at Each Level			
	4th/5th	6th/7th/8th	9th/10th	11th/12th
Thoughtfully make decisions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advocate for self and others	✓		✓	✓
Show awareness of emotions	✓	✓		
Act with independence		✓		✓
Set boundaries			✓	
Display self-efficacy				✓

Preparing to Teach Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

With a focus on the development of resiliency, this curriculum teaches social and emotional skills. Recognizing that teachers of this curriculum will have a wide array of experience with SEL, the curriculum is structured to guide teachers to teach the activities, facilitate conversations, and provide opportunities for reflection with students, while also providing flexibility for teachers to meet the needs of their specific learning environment and students. Whether you are a classroom teacher, counselor, community organization staff person, volunteer, or parent/family member, you know your students best. Therefore you are encouraged to adapt the curriculum to most effectively meet the needs of your students.

Whether you are new to SEL or experienced, **it is highly recommended that you take the time to complete the two professional development modules** provided as a supplement to this guide. These modules will deepen your understanding of resiliency, an important focus of SEL, and provide support for how to implement the curriculum with students.

Courtesy of LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation

Pause now to reflect on your own readiness to teach this curriculum.

- Describe your experience supporting the social and emotional development of youth.
- How comfortable are you in an SEL role?
- How willing are you to take risks and be vulnerable in an SEL role?
- Which of your strengths are most beneficial for supporting SEL?
- What would help you feel prepared to teach this curriculum?

Additionally, **it is essential to assess the current culture of the student group(s) you will be working with, and to take the time to support development of a positive culture**. This should include setting or revisiting norms for behavior and communication, and working on building trust. See the Professional Development modules and the Resources section at the end of this guide for resources to support this work.

Pause now to reflect on your students' readiness and the class culture to engage in this curriculum.

- Describe your students' experience with developing social and emotional skills. How comfortable are they with SEL?
- Do the students you will be working with already have norms/ expectations established? If so, how well do they live up to them?
- How trusting are students of each other? How willing are they to take risks and be vulnerable?
- How well do students display empathy and support one another?
- What preparation do your students need to be ready to participate in this curriculum?

Courtesy of LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation

Professional Development Modules

Overview

To support the preparation of educators, two professional development modules are provided as a supplement to this guide. Prior to engaging in these Professional Development (PD) modules, it is important to read the previous sections of this guide, which provide important context and information.

While the body of research supporting the positive benefits of social and emotional learning (SEL) has grown, and SEL has gained popularity in schools, many educators do not feel equipped to teach students specific SEL skills. The intent of the two PD modules is to deepen educators' understanding of resiliency, an important focus of SEL, and to provide support for how to implement the curriculum with students. These modules can be completed independently or collaboratively with colleagues.

What is in the PD modules?

Each module includes additional information along with reflection questions and activities to help you prepare to facilitate the Becoming Your Personal Best curriculum.

Module 1: Preparing to Teach About Resiliency

Learning Objectives:

- Identify why students need to develop resiliency skills

- Communicate about relevant resiliency research

- Define the six areas of resiliency skills taught through this curriculum

- Create a curriculum implementation plan that will work for you (includes planning tool)

Module 2: Your Personal Resiliency Journey

Learning Objectives:

- Reflect on the role of resiliency in your own life and why resiliency matters

- Create a personal resiliency map focused on the six areas of skills

- Consider how to connect with your students through your own resiliency journey

- Review module preparation reflection prompts (opportunities to reflect as part of your pre-teaching preparation)

Resources

Resiliency and Social and Emotional Learning

While the body of research supporting the positive benefits of social and emotional learning (SEL) has grown, and SEL has gained popularity in schools, many educators do not feel equipped to teach students specific SEL skills, such as the resiliency skills taught in this curriculum. Along with the professional development modules provided to support teachers as they prepare to implement this curriculum, this section includes additional resources for learning about resiliency and social and emotional learning, and for creating a safe learning environment through the intentional development of classroom culture and norms.

BYPB Video Series

A 9-part video series produced to help young people, families, and communities develop positive resiliency skills to meet life challenges. The series is introduced by former Olympian, NBA player, and professional sports announcer Bill Hanzlik and hosted by 4-time Olympian Hunter Kemper. The series features nationally known resiliency experts and Olympians and Paralympians who share practical information and skill building with young people, family, and community members. The series was filmed in the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum, but it is not about becoming an Olympian or Paralympian. It uses the inspiration of Olympic and Paralympic athletes to help young people learn about meeting personal challenges, setting goals, learning to grow through failure, and developing a positive mindset. In the introductory segment, Bill Hanzlik introduces the Museum, the resiliency story of 2016 Paralympian Tricia Downing, and Jim Craig, the gold medal goalie for the U.S.A. Hockey Team during their iconic 1980 victory over Russia. We meet young people who love basketball and learn how the program in which they participate is part of a community effort to build resiliency. Bill Hanzlik introduces us to our series host, Hunter Kemper. We learn from Kemper and Dr. George Houston about the importance of resilience for young people. We learn about the series and see clips from the eight segments which follow. The introductory segment closes with an invitation to be part of a truly remarkable journey. The 9 videos titles are:

1. Why Resiliency?
2. Physical Resiliency
3. Mental Resiliency
4. Emotional Resiliency
5. Social Resiliency
6. Spiritual Resiliency
7. A Conversation About Resiliency with Educators & Youth: Part 1
8. A Conversation About Resiliency with Educators & Youth: Part 2
9. A Conversation with Dr. Chip Benight, Executive Director of the National Institute for Human Resilience

▶ Videos On-Demand at https://becomingyourpersonalbest.org

Research Brief

The following research brief outlines key concepts, definitions, frameworks and empirical studies in support of the USOPM's "Becoming Your Personal Best" project. The project team is committed to using research-based findings to inform the objectives, outcomes and design parameters of all work entailed in the project. The organization of this research brief includes excerpts from key academic works on:

- Resiliency concept, definition(s) and frameworks
- The outcomes and impact of resiliency work
- Developing and teaching a resiliency curriculum

The compilation below consists of select foundational articles highlighting resiliency models, research as well as articles specific to curriculum development and the role of athletes as models/mentors/heroes/heroines—it is NOT a comprehensive bibliography on resiliency; we are aware that all models/frameworks are not listed but we have reviewed the literature and chose these pieces as key contributors to our design thinking. Also, the only cites listed are the original work referenced; supporting citations were not included but are available via full citation of the article.

RESILIENCY AS A CONCEPT

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2015). *Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience: Working Paper No. 13.* http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

Decades of research in the behavioral and social sciences have produced a rich knowledge base that explains why some people develop the adaptive capacities to overcome significant adversity and others do not. Whether the burdens come from the hardships of poverty, the challenges of parental substance abuse or serious mental illness, the stresses of war, the threats of recurrent violence or chronic neglect, or a combination of factors, the single most common finding is that children who end up doing well have had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult. These relationships provide the personalized responsiveness, scaffolding, and protection that buffer children from developmental disruption. They also build key capacities—such as the ability to plan, monitor and regulate behavior, and adapt to changing circumstances—that enable children to respond to adversity and to thrive. This combination of supportive relationships, adaptive skill-building, and positive experiences constitutes the foundations of what is commonly called *Resiliency*.

RESILIENCY DEFINITIONS AND EVOLUTION OF THE TERM

In the social, behavioral, and biological sciences, the term resilience is used in a variety of ways and contexts—sometimes as an individual characteristic, sometimes as a process, and sometimes as an outcome. Despite these differences, there is a set of common, defining features of resilience that illustrates how the concept has been used in research and intervention sciences. These features include the following:

1   *The capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten its function, viability, or development.*

2   *The ability to avoid deleterious behavioral and physiological changes in response to chronic stress.*

3   *A process to harness resources to sustain well-being.*

4   *The capacity to resume positive functioning following adversity.*

5   *A measure of the degree of vulnerability to shock or disturbance.*

6   *A person's ability to adapt successfully to acute stress, trauma, or more chronic forms of adversity.*

7   *The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress.*

Whether it is considered an outcome, a process, or a capacity, the essence of resilience is a positive, adaptive response in the face of significant adversity. It is neither an immutable trait nor a resource that can be used up. On a biological level, resilience results in healthy development because it protects the developing brain and other organs from the disruptions produced by excessive activation of stress response systems. **Stated simply, resilience transforms potentially toxic stress into tolerable stress. In the final analysis, resilience is rooted in both the physiology of adaptation and the experiences we provide for children that either promote or limit development.**

Lee, T.Y., Cheung, C.K., & Kwong, W. M. (2012). *Resilience as a positive youth development construct: A conceptual review*. Scientific World Journal.

A *broad* definition defines resilience as the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances. Difficulties in defining resilience have become more widely recognized. In explaining why some children and adolescents maintain positive adaptation even though they grow up in deprived, troubled, and threatening environments, differences in measuring the significance, quality, and quantity of adversities as well as positive adjustment are commonly found. **The American Psychological Association also uses a broad definition: "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means 'bouncing back' from difficult experiences."** The term "resilience" indicates a paradigm shift from the identification of the risk factors of an individual (i.e., a pathological view) to the identification of strengths of an individual. A "resilient" individual is stress-resistant and less vulnerable despite experiences of significant adversity. To sum up, **resilience can be defined in terms of an individual's capacity, the process he or she goes through, and the result. Resilience as a *capacity* refers to an individual's capacity**

for adapting to changes and stressful events in a healthy way. Resilience as a *process* **is regarded as a reintegration process and a return to normal functioning with the support of protective factors after encountering a severe stressor. Resilience as a** *result* **is defined as the positive and beneficial outcomes resulting from successfully navigating stressful events.** An operational definition of resilience must encompass all of the key characteristics of resilience and include the components of capacity, process, and result. Therefore, resilience can be defined as the process of effectively mobilizing internal and external resources in adapting to or managing significant sources of stress or trauma. Thus, cultivation of resilience means fostering adolescents' capacity, flexibility, and coping strategies as they face developmental changes and life stresses in order to "bounce back" from difficult life experiences and achieve positive outcomes.

→ Benard, B. (1993). Fostering resiliency in kids. *Educational Leadership, 51* (3), 44-48.

The resilient child is one who "works well, plays well, loves well, and expects well." Resilient children usually have **four attributes: social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and future.**

→ Knight, C. (2007). *A resilience framework: Perspectives for educators. Health Education, 107*(6).

Knight (2007) presents a three-dimensional framework for resilience: as a state, a condition and a practice—suggesting that it can be developed and nurtured in numerous development capacities.

The USOPM project will take the above into account and has found the most comprehensive framework to be the PENN MODEL of RESILIENCY SKILLS (below), incorporating much of the research cited above and being backed by extensive empirical research specific to the Penn Resiliency Program for Youth.

Self-Awareness
The ability to pay attention to your thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and physiological reactions.

Self-Regulation
The ability to change one's thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and physiology in the service of a desired outcome.

Mental Agility
The ability to look at situations from multiple perspectives and to think creatively and flexibly.

Strengths of Character
The ability to use one's top strengths to engage authentically, overcome challenges, and create a life aligned with one's values.

Connection
The ability to build and maintain strong, trusting relationships.

Optimism
The ability to notice and expect the positive, to focus on what you can control, and to take purposeful action.

ATHLETES: ROLE MODELS, HEROES & HEROINES

Price-Mitchell, M. (2014). *How role models influence youth strategies for success.* Stop Medicine Abuse (Blog). www.stopmedicineabuse.org.

A substantial number of studies have shown us that **humans learn through modeling others**. As these experiences accumulate through adolescence, teens decide what socially acceptable behavior is and what is not. They also **learn strategies for achieving their goals**. While we often think of role models as people with outstanding qualities like the ones mentioned by civically-engaged teens, the truth is that role models can have positive or negative impacts on children. For example, many of us know teens who emulated the wrong role models—people who were detrimental to their lives. **Positive role models boost young people's motivation by modeling a guide to achieving success. For example, they likely have 1) an ability to inspire others, 2) a clear set of values, 3) a commitment to community, 4) an acceptance of others, and 5) an ability to overcome obstacles. They illustrate for youth a way of achieving successful goals and a sense of self-worth**. Youth who have a *growth mindset* are likely to gravitate toward these types of positive role models (See Dweck, 2006).

Price-Mitchell, M. (2014). *What is a role model? Five qualities that matter to youth*. Roots of Action (Blog). www.rootsofaction.com.

A positive role model serves as an example – inspiring children to live meaningful lives. Role models show young people how to live with integrity, optimism, hope, determination, and compassion. They play an essential part in a child's positive development.

5 Qualities of a Positive Role Model

The top five qualities of role models described by students in my study are listed below. These qualities were woven through hundreds of stories and life experiences that helped children form a vision for their own futures. By far, the greatest attribute of a positive role model is the ability to inspire others.

1. **A Role Model Shows Passion and Ability to Inspire.** Role models show passion for their work and have the capacity to infect others with their passion.

2. **A Role Model Shows a Clear Set of Values.** Role models live their values in the world. Children admire people who act in ways that support their beliefs. It helps them understand how their own values are part of who they are and how they might seek fulfilling roles as adults

3. **A Role Model Shows Commitment to Community.** A role model is other-focused as opposed to self-focused. Role models are usually active in their communities, freely giving of their time and talents to benefit people.

4. **A Role Model Shows Selflessness and Acceptance of Others.** Related to the idea that role models show a commitment to their communities, students also admired people for their selflessness and acceptance of others who were different from them.

5. **A Role Model Shows Ability to Overcome Obstacles.** As Booker T. Washington once said, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome."

LeMier, K (2008). Relationship between athletes and role models. *Journal of Undergraduate Research at Minnesota State University, 8*(7).

Three main factors on athletes as potential role models: **Moral development of youth, the potential influence by athletes on the behavior of youth**, and athletes seen through media as exceptions to the rules. According to Kenneth L. Shropshire in his contribution to Paradoxes of Youth and Sport, the meaning of "role model" was rather unclear and could only be defined in the context it was used. Yet he eventually developed the interpretation that a role model is a person such as a hero or a mentor who acts as a leader to be emulated. According to Shropshire, paraphrasing Professor Adeno Addis, the role modeler can be emulated in two ways. The first is the Role Imitation View, which is emulation through the precise area an athlete performs in, such as the form he or she has. The second is the **Comprehensive View, which is emulation of all areas that may pertain outside of the athletes "expertise."** The first factor in the potential influence of athletes as **role models is the moral development of character of youths** who are still maturing. The two main components of character development are imitation and initiation. Imitation occurs the day a child is brought into the world, while initiation begins when the conventions of growth become more complex. Robert L. Simon, a contributing author to Sports Ethics, defines imitation as children acting like the people who exemplify what is expected of them, and initiation as when a child begins to observe and then attempts to model a modeler. Jay Coakley, a contributing author to Paradoxes of Youth and Sport, asserts that children, especially adolescents, depend not only on moral support from athletes, but also parents, teachers, mentors, and advocates. This supports the notion that it takes a community or village to raise a child. In this study, **the males prevailed over the females in recognizing athletes as their childhood role models.** This could be attributed to the male dominance in sports, or more specifically the male dominance in publicized sports. According to a study done by Terry Adams and C.A. Tuggle on ESPN's SportsCenter and Coverage of Women's Athletics, research showed "the level of women's involvement in sports is not reflected in the amount of coverage devoted to it."

Rychtecký, A. (2013). Are Olympians real idols of young people for their motivation and participation in sport? *ACTA Universitatis Carolinae, Kinanthroplogica, 49*(1), 65–76.

The aim of this study was to determine: **"if Olympic champions are real models and idols for today's young people"** and whether they would wish or not to become Olympic champions, and which reasons they associate with their positive or negative answers. The desire to become an Olympic Champion was felt more intensely in respondents of the surveys carried out in the year 1998 than in the project carried out in period 2010–2011. Young people more involved in sports express their wishes to become Olympic winners significantly clearer than those who practice sports seldom or not at all. 16-year-old respondents are more aware of the difficulties associated with the process of becoming Olympic champions than 12-to-14-year-olds. **The hypothesis about the importance of sports models and idols in current youth was confirmed. The role of Olympic champions is very important; namely in the internalization of the Olympic values in the process of the Olympic education of youth; both at schools and out of schools.** Olympians should be aware of the fact that even their behavior which is not related to sport events is noticed by young people. The Olympians should be informed about their influence on young generations. Mass-media play a very important role in their mediation.
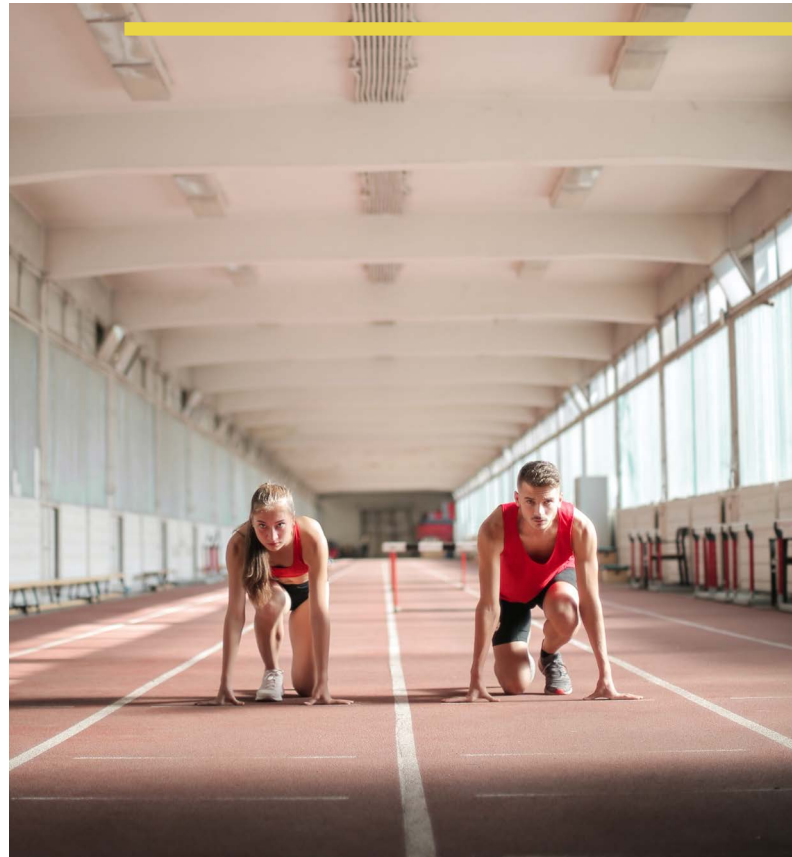
Balswick, J. & Ingoldsby, B. (1982). Heroes and heroines among American adolescents. *Sex Roles, 8,* 243-249.

Based upon the analysis of questionnaire responses of 1,092 high school students, an attempt was made to assess the type of heroes and heroines most often chosen. **The major findings are that high school students have more heroes than heroines, that they have an approximately equal number of personal heroes and heroines, and that the preference for heroes is not altered when the sex or race of the respondents is considered.** The findings are explained both by the greater numbers of males than females in public professional roles and by the greater salience of male than female professional role models. Implications of the possible effects of hero and heroine choices for sex-role identification are discussed.

Melnick, M. J. & Jackson, S. J. (2002). Globalization American-style and reference idol selection: The importance of athlete celebrity others among New Zealand youth. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 37* (3-4), 429-448.

While there have been significant refinements in the scholarly development of the sport and Americanization/globalization literature in recent years, the individual, psychosocial consequences resulting from the intersection of global forces and local cultures remain largely unexplored. A sample of 510 New Zealand youth (average age = 14.5 yrs) was administered a survey instrument to identify their public heroes and heroines (reference idols), that is, celebrity others who are 'very important in your life'. Statistical analysis of these data as well as movie and television consumption patterns revealed that these youth are heavily influenced by global media in general and American popular culture in particular. **The data suggested that the influence of popular American cultural icons (e.g., Michael Jordan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jim Morrison, Michael Jackson) extended well beyond simple admiration for some respondents to include impacts on beliefs, values, self-appraisals, and behaviors. It was concluded that focusing on adolescent reference idol choices and their identity related consequences is a promising approach to understanding the influence of the 'global' on the 'local.'**

Pleiss, M. K. & Feldhusen, J. F. (1995). Mentors, role models, and heroes in the lives of gifted children. *Educational Psychologists, 30* (3), 159-169.

This review examines the literature dealing with mentorships, mentor programs for gifted students, the use of role models in gifted education, and the heroes of gifted children as compared to those of the general population. **Gifted children can benefit from relationships with adults who are successful in their areas of interest. These adults may be present in children's lives as mentors, role models, or heroes and heroines. The relationships that develop range from close, interactive partnerships to admiration or imitation of public figures.**

SUPPORTING RESEARCH FOR HEROES/HEROINE SECTION

Bush, A. J., Martin, C. A., & Clark, P. W. (2001). *The effect of role model influence on adolescents' materialism and marketplace knowledge.* Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 27-36.

Price-Mitchell, M. (2008). *Fostering tomorrow's actions today: An in-depth look at the construct of initiative in adolescence.* Unpublished paper. Fielding Graduate University.

Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success.* Random House Digital, Inc..

RESILIENCY AND EQUITY

Yale University CASEL Center (2020). *Transformative SEL as a lever for equity & social justice.* CASEL District Resource Center. www.casel.org.

While socio-emotional learning (SEL) will not solve longstanding and deep-seated inequities in the education system, it can **help schools promote understanding, examine biases, reflect on and address the impact of racism, build cross-cultural relationships and cultivate adult and student practices that close opportunity gaps and create more inclusive school communities**. SEL does not seek to have students conform to the values and preferences of the dominant culture but uplifts and promotes understanding of the assets of diverse individuals and communities.

WHY IS RESILIENCY IMPORTANT? OUTCOMES & IMPACT OF RESILIENCY WORK

Gray, P. (2015). *Declining student resilience: A serious problem for colleges.* Psychology Researcher at Boston College, writing for *Psychology Today*.

Resiliency is lacking in youth of all ages and has become a major challenge in education. Students are increasingly seeking help for, and apparently having emotional crises over, problems of everyday life. Faculty at the meetings noted that students' emotional fragility has become a serious problem when it comes to grading. Some said they had grown afraid to give low grades for poor performance, because of the subsequent emotional crises they would have to deal with in their offices. Many students,

they said, now view a C, or sometimes even a B, as failure, and they interpret such "failure" as the end of the world. Faculty also noted an increased tendency for students to blame them (the faculty) for low grades—they weren't explicit enough in telling the students just what the test would cover or just what would distinguish a good paper from a bad one. They described an increased tendency to see a poor grade as reason to complain rather than as reason to study more, or more effectively. The lack of resilience is interfering with the academic mission of the University and is thwarting the emotional and personal development of students."

University of Pennsylvania Resiliency Program. Background & Empirical Research (2020).

Since 1990, research by Drs. Seligman, Gillham, Reivich, and their colleagues has focused on the development and evaluation of school-based prevention programs for adolescents and young adults. There is an extensive body of research examining the effects of the Penn Resilience Program for Secondary School Students. This program has been evaluated by the Penn research group and other research teams in at least 20 controlled studies with more than 2,000 children and adolescents from a variety of demographic and socio-economic backgrounds. Empirical studies of these program indicate:

- ✓ *Increased well-being, life satisfaction, and optimism*

- ✓ *Reduced hopelessness and prevent depression, anxiety, and conduct problems*

- ✓ *Improved physical health*

- ✓ *Fewer mental health diagnoses, and in one study, fewer substance abuse diagnoses.*

A meta-analysis of existing studies on the adolescent program found **that the effects were significant through one year post-intervention.**

DEVELOPING & TEACHING A RESILIENCY CURRICULUM

Harvard Univerisity Center on the Developing Child. (2015). The Science of Resilience (InBrief).

From longitudinal research, considerations to enhance the resilience prospects for all children:

- **Resilience results from a dynamic interaction between internal predispositions and external experiences.**
- **Resilience requires relationships, not rugged individualism.**
- **The capabilities that underlie resilience can be strengthened at any age.**
- **Individuals who demonstrate resilience in response to one form of adversity may not necessarily do so in response to another.**
- **When programs use "character education" models in contexts for which they were not designed, they miss the power of creating supportive, growth-promoting environments that build skills that generalize across contexts.**

Transforming K-12 Education Through Leadership Development (2017). Center for Creative Leadership Case Study.

Driven by a compelling theory of change, **CCL found that early socio-emotional development occurs within multiple contexts and systems, is carried out through the interpersonal relationships we develop, and can empower youth by giving them—and adults who support them—tools to increase self-awareness, improve connections with others, and ultimately change their communities.**

Lee, T.Y., Cheung, C.K., & Kwong, W. M. (2012). *Resilience as a positive youth development construct: A conceptual review.* Scientific World Journal.

Lee, Cheung & Kwong find several ways to foster students' resilience in schools. **First, schools can arrange curricula-based programs, since many of these programs have been evidenced to enhance students' bonding, core competencies, and optimism through which students build up resilience.**

Second, **it has been found that attachment to adults other than a child's parents has positive effects on a child's resilience to adversity.** Also, bonding to school teachers increases positive developmental outcomes.

Third, extra-curricular activities can be used to facilitate and maintain the healthy development of adolescents, but the effectiveness of these activities depends on the type, frequency, and quality of interchanges in the activity context. Besides, **resilience-focused groups can be used for students who need more intensive intervention due**

to the severity of adversity. In addition, specialized intervention programs such as adventure-based counseling can be used. Finally, **school social workers can collaborate with students' parents to encourage parental involvement and support in fostering the development of adolescents' resilience.** Since adverse events affect behaviors of family members in terms of family rules, organizational structures, communication patterns, and beliefs systems, the ability to survive and recover from disruptive family life challenges is related to the family relationship network. **In general, the school can adopt a whole-school approach to involve different stakeholders in the school, family, and community to nurture the development of adolescents' resilience.**

Yeager & Dweck (2012). Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational Psychologist, 47*(4), 302-314.

Because challenges are ubiquitous, resilience is essential for success in school and in life. In this article we review research demonstrating the impact of students' mindsets on their resilience in the face of academic and social challenges. We show that students who believe (or are taught) that intellectual abilities are qualities that can be developed (as opposed to qualities that are fixed) tend to show higher achievement across challenging school transitions and greater course completion rates in challenging math courses. **New research also shows that believing (or being taught) that social attributes can be developed can lower adolescents' aggression and stress in response to peer victimization or exclusion, and result in enhanced school performance. We conclude by discussing why psychological interventions that change students' mindsets are effective and what educators can do to foster these mindsets and create resilience in educational settings.**
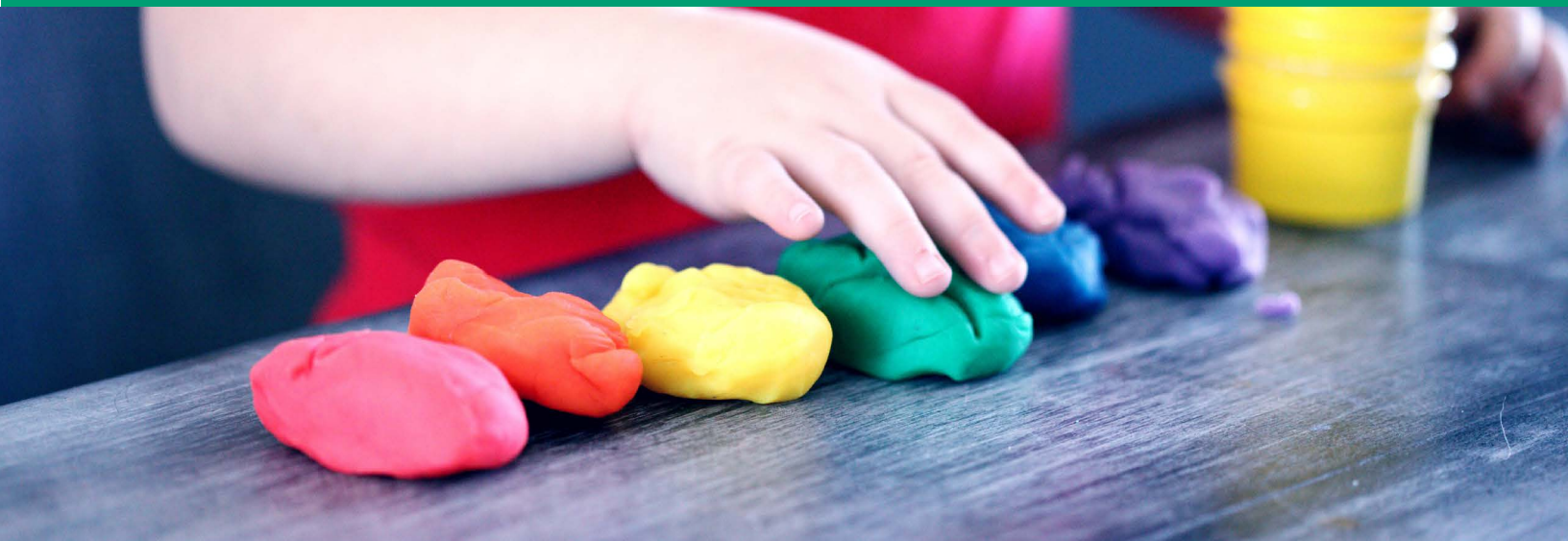
WHY TEACH RESILIENCY IN SCHOOLS?

Henderson, N. (2013). Havens of resilience. *Educational Leadership, 71*(1), 22-27.

Research shows that **schools are filled with the conditions that promote resilience (Werner, 2003)**. These include caring, encouraging relationships, role models, and; clear and fair boundaries and structure; exploration of other worlds and possibilities; stories of overcoming adversity in literature, films, and history; and basic human respect and dignity that too many kids like me do not find in their troubled homes. (Citations in article).

WHY GRADES 4-12?

Transforming K-12 Education Through Leadership Development (2017). Center for Creative Leadership Case Study.

Socio-emotional development can occur with students as young as four. Developmentally appropriate experiences can begin to introduce students to key values, mindsets, and skills that will make them more successful during and after their school years.

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2015). *Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience: Working Paper No. 13.* http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

The capabilities that underlie resilience can be strengthened at any age. Age-appropriate activities that have widespread health benefits can also improve resilience. For example, regular physical exercise and stress-reduction practices, as well as programs that actively build executive function and self-regulation skills, can improve the abilities of children and adults to cope with, adapt to, and even prevent adversity in their lives. Many of these essential capabilities fall within the domains of executive function and self-regulation, which can be built through programs that focus explicitly on their development, **beginning in early childhood**, and strengthened in adulthood through services that provide appropriate coaching, scaffolding, and practice.

TWO-YEAR INTERVALS FOR RESILIENCY CURRICULUM

University of Pennsylvania Resiliency Program.
Background & Empirical Research (2020).

The studied effects of the UPenn Resiliency programs appear to be long-lasting. In studies that include long-term follow-ups, **the program's effects often endure for two years or more.** The Penn Resilience Program for Secondary School Students has been shown to prevent moderate to severe depressive symptoms for at least two years (Cardemil, Reivich, Beevers, Seligman, & James, 2007; Gillham & Reivich, 1999; Gillham et al., 1995) and to prevent high levels of anxiety symptoms across long-term follow-up (Gillham et al., 2006). Another study examined the program's effects on clinical diagnoses and found

significant prevention of combined depression, anxiety, and adjustment disorder diagnoses **across a two-year follow-up period among children with elevated levels of baseline symptoms** (Gillham, Hamilton, Freres, Patton, & Gallop, 2006). In another universal effectiveness study with a sample of 697 students from three suburban middle schools, the Penn Resilience Program for Secondary School Students significantly reduced depressive symptoms through 30 months of follow-up relative to the control group in two of the three schools (Gillham et al., 2007).

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT FOR RESILIENCY CURRICULUMS

University of Pennsylvania Resiliency Program. Background & Empirical Research (2020).

Research suggests that the quality and amount of training that group leaders receive is essential for effective implementation and may explain inconsistent findings. **The program usually has beneficial effects when those who deliver the curriculum receive extensive training but is often not effective when leaders receive minimal training.** One study used an intervention integrity coding system and found that the adolescent program prevented depressive symptoms when implemented with high fidelity but not when implemented with low fidelity (Gillham, Hamilton, et al., 2006). In a study in the UK, the Penn Resilience Program for Secondary School Students was administered in an 18-hour long session facilitated by school staff.

Benard, B. (1993). Fostering Resiliency in Kids. *Educational Leadership, 51* (3), 44-48.

Evidence demonstrates that a nurturing school climate has the power to overcome incredible risk factors in the lives of children. What is far less acknowledged is that creating this climate for students necessitates creating this environment for all school personnel. **Whatever factors, variables, and ambience are conducive for the growth, development, and self-regard of students are precisely those that are crucial to obtaining the same consequences for a school's staff. Fostering resiliency in young people is ultimately an "inside-out" process that depends on educators taking care of themselves.** "To see the strengths in children, we must see our own strengths; to look beyond their risks and see their resiliency means acknowledging our own inner resiliency."

Resources to Support SEL, Classroom Culture, and Setting Norms

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
https://casel.org

Social and Emotional Learning Teacher Practices (Education First)
https://selforteachers.org

Social and Emotional Learning Teacher Toolkit (Common Sense Education)
https://www.commonsense.org/education/toolkit/social-emotional-learning

Social and Emotional Learning Research Review: Avoiding Pitfalls
https://www.edutopia.org/sel-research-avoiding-pitfalls

Fostering Belonging with Classroom Norms
https://www.edutopia.org/video/fostering-belonging-classroom-norms

20 Tips for Creating a Safe Learning Environment
https://www.edutopia.org/blog/20-tips-create-safe-learning-environment-rebecca-alber

Making Diverse Classrooms Safer for Learning
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar15/vol72/num06/Making-Diverse-Classrooms-Safer-for-Learning.aspx

The Science Behind Establishing Classroom Norms
https://www.edutopia.org/blog/establishing-classroom-norms-todd-finley

Collaborative Culture: Norms
https://eleducation.org/resources/collaborative-culture-norms

Case Study Unit for Teachers on Establishing Classroom Norms and Expectations
https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_case_studies/ics_norms.pdf

Adaptations for Accessibility:
Support for Learners with Diverse Needs

To Support Learners with Needs in the Areas of Attention/Focus/Executive Functioning

- Provide a visual agenda of the day's activities. Prepare students for the day's lesson by quickly summarizing the order of various activities planned.

- Reduce extraneous visual stimuli on a page by highlighting the target stimulus (underline key words), covering extraneous stimuli (using a marker when reading), increasing the size of a stimulus (enlarge print), or highlighting in color important information on a page to help the student scan.

- Provide visual markers to guide the student on tasks that are spatial and sequential. For instance, provide an arrow to demonstrate where to start and in what direction to proceed when computing a math problem. Visual markers might also be used to assist the student to organize information on paper (e.g., marker for name, marker for title, marker for where to place paragraphs.)

- Provide hands on, concrete experiences and manipulatives when teaching an abstract concept that is visual in nature. Accompany these concrete experiences with verbal explanations.

- Explain the purpose of an assignment in order to make the task meaningful to the student. Set learning expectations. State what students are expected to learn during the lesson.

- Provide multi-modality instruction that includes modeling, visual cues, role-play, tactile, kinesthetic, paired with verbal instruction and directions.

- Engage students in classroom activities and connect learning to real-life examples, as much as possible to help maintain participation and aid in focus and attention.

- Use a visual timer to help students understand the expected time required to complete a given task or the time to engage in activities.

- Provide fast-paced instruction while mixing and varying instructional tasks to follow non-preferred or challenging tasks with preferred activities.

- State needed materials. Identify all materials that the children will need during the lesson, rather than leaving them to figure out on their own the materials required.

- Provide advance warnings. Provide advance warning that a lesson is about to end. Announce 5 or 10 minutes before the end of the lesson (particularly for seatwork and group projects) how much time remains.

- Create a predictable routine within daily lessons to support students who may have difficulty attending or staying organized. Provide reminders of what is coming up next, refer to the agenda often.

To Support Learners with Communication and Language Needs

- Avoid use of idioms, similes, metaphors with students who are not native English speakers or provide instruction to explain their meaning.

- Use visual aids (symbols, pictures, charts, videos, etc.) to accompany oral lessons and/or lectures, and to illustrate text.

- Encourage partner or peer cooperative learning groups. Have students work together in small groups to maximize their own and each other's learning.

- Organize students into teams or collaborative learning groups.

- Simplify instructions, choices, and scheduling. Limit the amount of talking you do.

- Use strategies such as Think-Pair-Share where teachers ask students to think about a topic, pair with a partner to discuss it, and share ideas with the group.

- Incorporate as much of students' native language into language as possible; provide translated copies of classroom activities or access to translation software.

- Work with speech clinicians to preload relevant vocabulary, words or symbols on student communication devices or picture exchange communication systems (PECS).

- Allow students to draw pictures or verbalize instead of requiring written output on learning activities.

- Comment on what students are doing – this is less pressured than asking questions.

- When students can't think of what to say, help them. Demonstrate how to say things. Expand on what students say – this helps them to build longer sentences.

- When creating instructional materials, keep the layout clean and uncluttered.

To Support Verbal and Reading Comprehension Needs

- Use symbols, pictures, and other visual supports (videos, graphics, charts, maps, drawings, etc.)

- Provide direct, explicit instruction in unfamiliar vocabulary and/or concepts; keep direct instruction brief and focused; provide opportunities for active student responding or choral responses.

- Provide leveled reading materials that are at or just slightly above students' instructional reading levels.

- Chunk reading comprehension tasks into small parts followed by use of discussion/graphic organizer/task related to reading in between parts

- Encourage students to engage in conversation by creating an open, positive environment for communication. Provide opportunities for spoken output.

- After group directions are given, check with the student to insure comprehension of task demands. This might be done by asking the student to paraphrase directions in the student's own words

- Pair oral instruction with demonstrations, visual examples and models.

- Use concrete references familiar to the student when presenting new vocabulary or concepts.

- Partner reading activities: Pair the child with another student partner who is a strong reader. The partners take turns reading orally and listening to each other.

- Shared reading: consider using a whole-group, read-aloud strategy where the teacher reads out loud to students as they follow along individually. Teacher can leave out words intermittently and allow students to chorally fill in the blanks to increase engagement without calling attention to learners with reading difficulties.

To Support Learners with Sensory Needs

- Incorporate music into lessons (consider use of songs, jingles, slogans).

- Limit the number of items on a page for lesson handouts or activities.

- Minimize sound distractions and/or background noise (hallways, doors, windows, heaters/AC, lightbulbs that buzz).

- Limit usage of flashing lights, graphics in videos.

- Warn students of anticipated loud noises.

- Consider usage of natural or dim lighting as much as possible.

- Gain attention before giving directions.

- Frequent positional changes (students work seated, work in prone, on side, on hands and knees, standing up, move around classroom).

- Permit students who exhibit a need to move to be in charge of handout or activity distribution.

- Consider strategic use of color in graphics/handouts:
    - Green: helps with concentration and task completion; calming.
    - Blue: leads to increased productivity; can improve comprehension; calming.
    - Orange: lifts the mood; welcoming; improves neural function.
    - Red: may stimulate excitement or trigger warning.

To Support Needs in the Area of Working Memory

- Incorporate frequent, scheduled breaks to free up working memory.
- Teach using multi-sensory approach (auditory, visual, tactile) so that students have multiple means of obtaining information.
- Provide frequent check-ins and reminders to check work.
- Have student repeat assignment directions.

To Support Needs in the Area of Processing Speed

- Allow extra time to complete tasks.

- Reduce volume of writing and copying, especially when it is not a critical component of an instructional task.

- During an oral discussion, allow the student time to formulate responses so the student can be an active participant. Questions to be discussed might be reviewed with the student prior to the discussion.

- Provide the student extra time to read a text, provide a shortened version of the text or have the text read to the student.

To Support Learners with Visual Impairments

- Provide spoken output and vivid descriptions.

- Provide Braille materials where available.

- Incorporate collaborative and/or group work wherever possible.

- Use online programs and/or apps such as ViA, Be My Eyes, TapTapSee, SayText, Big Browser.

To Support Learners with Hearing Impairments

- Use captioning software on all videos.

- Use pictures, graphics, symbols, gestures.

- Use sign language and/or gestures wherever possible.

- Use online programs and/or apps such as:

Key Terms

The following terms are key to the curriculum content. Definitions are provided to support teacher and student understanding of these key terms.

1. **Adversity –** a state or instance of serious or continued difficulty or misfortune

2. **Advocate –** to support or argue for (a cause, policy, person, etc.); to plead in favor of

3. **Agency –** the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power

4. **Authentic –** true to one's own personality, spirit, or character

5. **Cognitive dissonance –** psychological conflict resulting from incongruous beliefs and attitudes held simultaneously

6. **Comfort zone –** the level at which one functions with ease and familiarity

7. **Confidence –** a feeling or consciousness of one's powers or of reliance on one's circumstances; faith or belief that one will act in a right, proper, or effective way

8. **Critical thinking –** exercising or involving careful judgment or judicious evaluation

9. **Emotion –** a conscious mental reaction (such as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body

10. **Empathy –** the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner

11. **Extrinsic motivation –** incentive or drive that comes from a source outside of a person

12. **Fixed mindset –** a mental attitude or inclination that see one's traits as being permanent and unchanging

13. **Growth mindset –** a mental attitude or inclination that one's talents can be developed

14. **Identity marker –** distinguishing characteristic based on definitions or labels of groups of people

15. **Integrity –** firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values

16. **Intrinsic motivation –** incentive or drive that comes from a source inside a person

17. **Locus of control –** people's beliefs regarding the cause of their experiences

18. **Mindset –** a mental attitude or inclination

19. **Optimism –** an inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and events or to anticipate the best possible outcome

20. **Perseverance –** continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition

21. **Problem solving –** the process or act of finding a solution to a problem

22. **Productive struggle –** the process of effortful learning that results in problem-solving skills rather than just a correct solution

23. **Relationship –** the state of being related or interrelated; a state of affairs existing between those having relations or dealings

24. **Resiliency –** an ability to recover from or adjust easily to adversity or change

25. **Respect –** to consider worthy of high regard; high or special regard

26. **Self-efficacy –** an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments

27. **Self-identity –** the recognition of one's potential and qualities as an individual, especially in relation to social context.

28. **Self-worth –** a sense of one's own value as a human being

29. **Stereotype –** something conforming to a fixed or general pattern; especially a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment

30. **Value –** something (such as a principle or quality) intrinsically valuable or desirable

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Dictionary by Merriam-Webster. (2021). Merriam-Webster. *https://www.merriam-webster.com*

The Olympics and Paralympics

For more information about the Olympics and Paralympics, the following websites provide history of the games, athlete biographies, pages and stories about specific sports (summer and winter games). There are also numerous videos to access as additional resources to accompany the curriculum.

www.teamusa.org (website for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee)
www.olympics.com (website for the International Olympic Committee)
www.paralympic.org (website for the International Paralympic Committee)

In addition to the above, we have found that many teachers have developed YouTube videos and web resources to explain the Olympic and Paralympic Games to students. We encourage you to search for assets that are available publically from fellow teachers.

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Becoming Your Personal Best

Life Lessons from Olympians and Paralympians

A United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum Project

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