



TALE Teaching Tip:

Increasing Resilience and Grit within the Student Population

More than ever students need strong coping skills and encouragement to thrive under difficult circumstances. This can be accomplished by helping students focus on (1) Improving physical and emotional health; (2) Strengthening relationships and social connections; (3) Reducing stress, anxiety and depression; (4) Increasing academic and work performance; (5) Managing challenges and difficulties and (6) Achieving goals.

Resilience is the ability to:

- Persevere or adapt when things go awry
- Overcome obstacles
- Bounce back from major setbacks
- Reach out and broaden your world

Grit is:

- Passion
- Persistence
- The ability to achieve what is important to your values¹

Importance

Growing evidence supports a clear association between the COVID-19 pandemic and mental health issues among college students. The outbreak of COVID-19 affected the lives of all sections of society as people were asked to self-quarantine. The abrupt closure of BU in March 2020 and the change to learning online may have caused psychological problems including frustration, stress, depression, anxiety, loneliness, isolation and more. Many studies suggest that institutions of learning should take all the necessary measures to enhance the educational experience by mitigating the negative impacts caused due to the COVID-19 outbreak.²

The Process of increasing Resilience and Grit

“Advances in neuroscience research have established that the brain is “plastic,” or changeable, throughout the lifespan. Our thoughts and actions influence brain chemistry and create new neural pathways, which in turn influence mood and behavior. With practice, proper exercises can create and strengthen neural pathways that promote well-being and support thriving. This process can be thought of as an emotional fitness program, helping the brain become stronger, healthier and more resilient.”³

We are working with Generation Z, who are:

- Digital Natives – could swipe before they learned to talk
- Three or more hours are spent in front of screens every day
- Prefer Snapchat, Instagram, Tik tok,
- More diverse than X and Y
- More obese than any other generation
- Attention span decreasing from 12 to 6 seconds

¹ Reivich, K. & Shatté, A. 2002. *The Resilience Factor*. New York: Broadway Books

² K Chaturvedi, [DK Vishwakarma](#), N Singh - Children and youth services ..., 2021

³ Jessica Gifford <https://wellstudent.co/>



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- Overwhelmed – “schoolwork, managing a social media identity and fretting about career, climate change, sexism, racism—you name it”
- Lonely: 3 million adolescents 12-17 have had a “major depressive episode” in the past year
- Less Religious Identification: In 1966, 6.6% of incoming freshman reported being unaffiliated with any religion. In 2015, nearly one-third (29.6%) reported un-affiliation
- And – they have been exposed to the COVID 19 Pandemic

They have come to the world from 1997 to 2012; Their approximate time on campus: 2016 to 2032. Seven issues have commanded the attention of Generation Z so far. These are: (1) health care; (2) mental health; (3) higher education; (4) economic security; (5) civic engagement; (6) race equity; and (7) the environment.

“There is a tendency to be either overly romantic or critical about new generations. The reality is that members of Generation Z face the same life challenges as previous generations, but in a super-connected and rapid-moving technological age. And let us not forget that they have the same deep needs for love, significance, meaning, and belonging as every previous generation”.⁴

The Benefits of Resilience Skill Training

By considering student’s unique life circumstances like trauma, lack of life skills, peer/societal pressure, COVID 19 and other challenges Resilience Skill Training focuses on:

1. **Assisting** with recognition of challenging circumstances and obstacles
2. **Engaging** students in exercises that fortify mental health, well-being and healthy choices by enhancing their ability to bounce back from or adjust to misfortune or change.
3. **Engaging** students in activities that strengthen skill development that lead to higher efficacy.
4. **Guiding** students to consistently practice exercises that promote resilience and grit, leading to a healthy lifestyle and designed to increase the likelihood of academic success.
5. **Reinforcing** progress by helping participants to reflect on outcome.

What can faculty do to help students increase Resilience and Grit?

Looking at that question makes me think back of my own college time and how much teaching faculty has contributed to my success through caring and considerate personal outreach and mentorship. Students are strongly impacted by the interactions they have with their professors. Therefore, it is evident that continued concern and attention within teaching faculty will empower students to thrive.

In the end – it is all about ACTION and DOING

Increasing student’s knowledge about resilience and grit is helpful. However, as one student said “not until I finally implemented and practiced the daily task did I sense the change in myself”.

When addressing Resilience and Grit it helps to be blunt and authentic:

“Many students encounter challenges, some more than others – on top of this we have to deal with a pandemic and its consequences. You can quit and give up OR you can become stronger”.

⁴ Sean McDowell, Ph.D. @seanmcdowell; blog: seanmcdowell.org



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Encourage students to attend the Resilience Skill Training at BU:

Students who want to make changes and are willing to increase resilience and grit can contact Margarete Hahn, LCSW, mhahn@bloomu.edu for individual coaching support and for attending the Resilience Skill Training (Re.S.T.)

The 4-week curriculum offers a careful selection of evidence-based exercises to **build coping skills, grit** and promote **thriving** by providing participants with a toolbox of resiliency exercises that can be practiced regularly, or called upon during times of stress. Each individual exercise has been selected because of its demonstrated effectiveness.

- Improve physical and emotional health
- Strengthen relationships and social connection, especially after/amid COVID
- Reduce stress, anxiety and depression
- Increase academic and work performance
- Manage challenges and difficulties
- Achieve goals

Invite students to explore the “Student Guide to Resilience Skill Training”, which is a handout for students who want to get started but are not ready yet to attend the 4-week program – see Appendix below.

Introduce students to the condensed version of Resilience Skill Training using the Appendix:

- Groups of students** in the classroom form a Resilience Training group program. Use “Student Guide to Re.S.T. - Resilience Skill Training” - Appendix. This will enhance interactions among students, promote team work and self-determination.
- Individual students** commit to enhancing resilience and grit, develop their own Resilience Skill Training, guided by Student Guide to Re.S.T. - Appendix. An outside support person (peer, friend, family member, mentor etc.) can be included as co-partner and to enhance accountability.
- Experienced students** (military, non-traditional, disability, etc.) adopt the Resilience Skill Training program for a student in need and report on the experience/result for extra credit.

Direct students to Advisor/Coach - Margarete Hahn at mhahn@bloomu.edu. Health and Wellness – 570 389 4980

Offer Off and On-campus resources:

- Trauma Resource Institute offers a free App – Ichill can be downloaded on the phone.
- Yoga Nidra – for relaxation



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- <https://thewilltochange.com/leadership-mastery-program-for-organizations/grit-and-resilience/>
- <https://positivepsychology.com/5-ways-develop-grit-resilience/>
- <https://mhanational.org/mental-health-month-2021-toolkit-download>
- Consult Web page for Resilience Skill Training ReS.T. by Jessica Gifford <https://wellstudent.co/>

BU Health & Wellness Resources



Health & Wellness Educator

- ✦ Kristi Hammaker
- ✦ DAWN Office, 253 SSC
- ✦ 570-389-4980
- ✦ khammaker@bloomu.edu

Student Health Center

- ✦ 324 KUB
- ✦ 570-389-4451
- ✦ Bloomu.edu/health

Center for Counseling & Human Development

- ✦ 240 SSC
- ✦ 570-389-4255
- ✦ Bloomu.edu/counseling
- ✦ Same Day Appointments Available

DAWN (Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention/Intervention)

- ✦ Margarete Hahn
- ✦ DAWN Office, 253 SSC
- ✦ 570-389-4980
- ✦ mhahn@bloomu.edu

Check us out on social media at BU Healthy Husky:



Re.S.T.

RESILIENCY SKILLS TRAINING

KEY ELEMENTS OF RESILIENCE

1. Cognitive - How events are perceived and interpreted
2. Behavioral - Our daily habits that reflect persistence
3. Motivational - The willingness to BE and DO
4. Spiritual - how you define the meaning of life
5. Relational - The sense of social connectedness and altruism
6. Emotional - Ability to maintain emotional confidence

WHAT IS RESILIENCY?

Resilience is the ability to:

- Overcome obstacles
- Bounce back from major setbacks
- Reach out and broaden your world
- Set appropriate boundaries
- Stay self-motivated
- Take responsibility

Activities to Increase Resilience:

It's all about ACTION and DOING-- Choose a task from the list below or come up with your own exercise!

Set a Mini-Goal... and accomplish it! Organize your planner, meet with your advisor, clean up your desk, study with peers

Practice your Emotional Skills - Practice mindfulness around your emotions, Identify feelings based in truth and reality, reach out for help if needed

Engage in Social Relations - Listen, validate, and spend time with others, perform an act of kindness, give somebody your undivided attention

Improve your Health - Find ways to increase quality of sleep, take time to exercise, practice deep breathing, eat healthy

Find Meaning - Spend time in nature, assess your values and nurture them, affirm your beliefs

Engage in Caring Self Talk - Find an honestly bound inner voice, write a supportive letter to yourself, speak to yourself the way you would speak to a good friend

Re.S.T. Areas of Focus:

CONNECTING VALUES AND PURPOSE

- What are my values?
- How do I express my values in my self-talk?
- What strengths can I apply to my values?
- What strengths would I like to develop?

THE EMOTIONAL SELF

- What do I feel?
- How do I know I'm feeling this?
- How do I respond to my feelings?
- What causes these feelings?
- What power do I have?

STRESS, ANXIETY, & SELF CARE

- What is my stress caused by?
- Can I use this stress to motivate myself?
- What do I have control over?
- Can I reframe my stress as excitement?
- What can I do to replenish my energy?

PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE

- What do I value about my past self?
- How can I ground myself in the present?
- What insights do I have about my future self?
- What can I remind myself of when life gets tough?



Are you interested in in learning more about Bloomsburg University's ReST program?

We offer an engaging & interactive 4-week course that allows small groups of students to expand their resiliency skills

Contact Margarete Hahn at Health and Wellness
mhahn@bloomu.edu

The 4-week Resilience Skill Training Re.S.T. was developed by Jessica Gifford LICSW wellstudent.com