Chapter 5
Discovering Resilience and Well-being in School Communities

Kathy Marshall

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Education globally has been upended by the pandemic and unprecedented political unrest. To date, more than 700,000 Americans have already died as COVID-19 rapidly escalates. Veteran educator Linda Dierks (personal communication, January 8, 2021) describes one school system this way:

> Classroom teachers—online and in person—are overwhelmed. Social-emotional learning, equity, trauma-informed teaching, and restorative practices are initiatives. Instructional, personalized, and/or digital coaching is mostly optional. Professional learning communities focusing on building and district goals are required. About 30% of students are failing. Teachers and parents are not equipped for this kind of learning. A high percentage of teachers are considering retiring or leaving education.

Nationwide educators, with little warning, pivoted to hybrid and online classrooms, and continuously juggle changes in every aspect of school operations. The process for reopening schools is uncertain in every community. Parents depend more than ever on schools for children's academic instruction, special education, support services, behavior management and discipline, childcare, nutrition, extracurriculars, COVID-19 management, and more.

Kathy Marshall, http://www.nationalresilienceresource.com/index.html
https://www.csh.umn.edu/bio/center-for-spirituality-and-he/kathy-marshall-emerson
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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Kathy Marshall.

K. Marshall (✉)
National Resilience Resource Center and University of Minnesota, Earl E. Bakken Center for Spirituality and Healing, Minneapolis, MN, USA
e-mail: marsh008@umn.edu

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This systemic upheaval is in the context of personal economic, health, and mental stresses for every educator, student, parent, service provider, and community leader. Across all of these sectors, a *universal, general approach* to *a* commonsense personal understanding of resilience and well-being is needed. Current research tells us a raft of positive internal protective factors could support "the ways in which people are sustained and strengthened" through crises like the pandemic (Waters et al., 2021, p.1). Resilience initiatives in school communities have precipitously declined steadily for the last 10 years. Educators, parents, and caregivers are often the forgotten stakeholders in the discussion of resilience (Matsopoulos & Luthar, 2020). Therefore, this chapter purposefully provides a research-based, commonsense understanding of resilience to update overwhelmed and stretched school community professionals. As Harvard's Laura Kubzansky says, there is real and immediate value in understanding resilience as a capacity that is exercised, "in the process of living and making one's way in the world" (Denckla et al., 2020, p. 4).

At the National Resilience Resource Center, we know educators with a simple, clear, practical, and lived experience of resilience, who tap the natural resilience of students. A basic, commonsense, naturally and instinctively familiar understanding of resilience benefits students and adults alike. When school staff members discover and live the principles behind resilience, they impact not only students but the system of colleagues, parents, community professionals, and their own family members as well (Marshall, 1998, 2004, 2005, 2013; Marshall Emerson 2020b).

This discussion's simplicity may seem counter to new and emerging, increasingly complex, multidisciplinary, and specialized resilience research. Researcher Ann Masten (2021) notes in times of disaster resilience research surges. She stresses the importance of defining resilience for "portability across system levels and disciplines" in order to integrate knowledge and prepare for the challenges disasters pose to children and youth. "*A scalable definition of resilience is recommended: The capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to challenges that threaten the function, survival, or development of the system*" (Masten, 2021a, p. 1).

This big picture, while wise and needed, may seem daunting to individual educators. Michael Ungar, a global leader in social-ecological resilience research in clinical, community, and residential settings, said, "Helping young people change is as much about changing the people and institutions with which they interact as it is about changing individuals themselves. …" and we may need to "change the environment first … before we try to change individual thoughts, feelings, or behaviors" (Ungar, 2021, p. 8). Both schools and families play an important role in providing a multitude of resources and relationships directly supporting and also nurturing child resilience (Masten, 2021b; Masten et al., 2021; Ungar et al., 2019). Educators know firsthand that children and adults are interacting with, and impacted by, a multitude of systems. Children, adults, families; school classrooms, buildings and districts; neighborhoods, faith communities, public and private organizations, health and human service in cities, states, and the nation are all systems in perpetual motion.

In school communities, it is practical and doable, at first, to think of each student, school staff member, parent, or community service provider as an individual system. Every person can learn to discover their own capacity for natural resilience and well-being.

Simplifying Resilience Research for Educators

Selected resilience research can point all of us to a practical day-to-day understanding of resilience one step at a time. The ultimate goal is for students, educators, parents, and others to have a *lived* understanding of resilience and well-being with which to navigate life successfully. Formal and informal natural leaders can *learn*, *live*, and *share* their own personal understanding of resilience with students, staff members, community professionals, and parents (Marshall, 2004).

Bonnie Benard's groundbreaking *Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family, School, and Community* in 1991 introduced school and community professionals to resilience. She analyzed 135 publications to learn how families, schools, and communities promoted student resilience. She instinctively and innovatively followed multidisciplinary research on these three interconnected systems. The profile of a resilient child that emerged from this review included social competence, autonomy, and sense of purpose and future. Most importantly, Benard discovered that three critical protective factors clearly stood out – caring and supportive relationships, high expectations, and meaningful opportunities for participation.

The prospective longitudinal pioneering research of Emmy Werner featured prominently in Benard's (1991) summary along with that of Norman Garmezy, Michael Rutter, and many others. Benard also drew early attention to Roger Mills' Health Realization principles-based work in schools and public housing communities (Mills & Spittle, 2001; Pransky, 2011). Mills' effort, a precursor to the *inside-out understanding* discussed later, was federally recognized as a research-based "general approach applied in different settings" to foster resilience (Davis, 1999, p. 48).

The protective factor approach identified by Benard contrasted sharply with the prevailing social and behavioral problem-focused, pathological approach to studying social and human development. From 1990 to 1994 Benard's short essays, published as *Turning the Corner: From Risk to Resiliency* (1994) reached American grassroots school-based prevention specialists, state and federal grant project officers, community youth workers, and classroom teachers, student services personnel, and administrators.

Benard (1994) ignited national education and community attention by calling for *changing hearts and minds* to shift our personal perspectives and paradigms from a focus on risk to a focus on protection and strengths. "My concern is that the movement toward resiliency – toward creating family, school, and community environments rich in the protective factors of caring, high expectations, and opportunity for meaningful participation – not dissolve into more add-on, quick fix programs, and strategies" (p. 27). World-renowned resilience researcher Emmy Werner voiced a similar concern. "It can't possibly ever be an organized program. … you need to think of stepping-stones along the way that need to be provided nationally as a policy" (Werner, 2003, p. 3).

To tackle the problem within school communities, Benard and Marshall (1997), associated with U.S. (United States) Northwest and Midwest Regional Educational Laboratories, created a conceptual planning framework for integrating resilience into the fabric of the school and community systems. They grappled with fundamental life-changing questions. How do adults become caring, have high expectations, and create opportunities for students? Do individual adults in any system *see* a child or youth as *at promise* or *at risk*? (Marshall, 1998, 2020a)

Marshall established the National Resilience Resource Center (NRRC) at the University of Minnesota in the 1990s with a goal of leaders in school community systems learning to see all students, employees, residents, clients, or organizations as *at promise* rather than as *at risk*. The original NRRC mission acknowledges:

> The process of tapping resilience is deeper than prevention strategies, wellness programs, community empowerment, collaborative initiatives, youth development programs, or interventions, such as traditional therapy. Resilience is an undergirding *inside-out* process. To successfully foster resilience, it is essential to focus on the natural, internal, innate capacity of young people and adults for healthy functioning. The process of personal change – or self-righting – is documented in the continuously evolving, broadly multidisciplinary, international body of resilience research. (Marshall, 2021)

Benard published *Resiliency: What We Have Learned* in 2004 to synthesize what she called the previous pivotal decade of resilience research. Familiar with the prospective classic resilience research, and also Roger Mills' Health Realization principles successfully introduced to public housing and school communities (Mills & Krot, 1993), Benard (2004) began defining resilience as a universal "capacity all youth have for healthy development and successful learning" (p. 4).

For more than 25 years, Bonnie Benard was the information bridge between school communities and resilience research. No one has filled that unique role since. Well after retirement she wrote:

> I naively thought that when people saw these research findings, policy would follow. … But lo and behold as is usually the case when bridging the gap between research—falls the shadow of politics. … we still have not created policies that make children and those who serve them a priority. We still do not have a strengths-based, human development, and health promotion perspective. Rather we are stuck in a deficit-based, problem-focused perspective. This means we are still trying to "fix" broken schools, broken teachers, and broken students … I ask you … to open your head, heart, and soul to the light that resilience theory and practice can bring to you as a person and professional in service to our most precious resource: our children. (Truebridge, 2014, pp. xii-xiii)

Emmy Werner, in a 2003 interview with Kathy Marshall at the University of Minnesota, also reflected on her lifetime of resilience research. "We really need to do … some things earlier, and … *beyond* isolated programs within the context of national policy. That's where I'm completely out of step because we don't have a national policy." Several protective factors, research indicates, seem to work no matter what—maternal education, good health, a basic sense of trust from interacting with a caring person, ability to read, a sense of faith, and a community where you learn to care for others. "If you like school, if you've got a teacher who cares for you, that will be with you whether you're five or 50. … These are all things we

know. We don't really have to do any more studies [on these]" (Werner, 2003, pp. 3–4).

Like so many teachers, Emmy Werner (2003) knew her calling:

> If you want to be really honest about how you do research and why I get interested in a phenomenon … A lot of the *knowing* may be deep down really in your heart [rather] than in your head. … I think if you are a researcher who does their work because of passion in your heart … you just follow that passion … What does your heart tell you to do? (pp. 1-2)

Educators surviving the pandemic may one day strongly identify with Werner (2003) explaining:

> As a child, I lived through WWII in Europe. It wasn't the greatest experience, but those who did survive, I think all probably shared in common the fact that *they hadn't given up hope*. Just think of it, just think! That's why I feel so much with children today. After that war was over even though there were many child casualties, the ones who came back to school, seemed to share something in common: the fact that they were able to not look back at the bad things that had happened to them, but forward to what they could make now out of the opportunity to go back to school, even though there was rubble all around them. I probably had that sort of perspective unconsciously and brought it with me to this country. (p. 1)

On the day of this interview, Emmy Werner was 74 years old. We talked about her world-famous 40-year longitudinal study of Kauai babies, *Journeys from Childhood to Midlife: Risk, Resilience, and Recovery* (Werner & Smith, 2001). She energetically described new books in progress. In the end, she shed a tear of gratitude and went across campus with her husband to find archived documents on the history of Hmong children. Yet another book was in the works. That was the last time I saw her. Her words still ring in my ears. "The vast majority of human beings seem to veer toward a form of basic normal development. In other words, what we have sort of taken for granted – that everyone who has been faced with a problem will be a casualty – is just not so" (Werner, 2003, p. 8).

Werner and Smith's (2001) Kauai longitudinal study indicates extraordinary resilience and a capacity to recover from and overcome problems that shaped the journey to midlife for most of the study's 489 participants born in 1955.

> What lessons did we learn? Most of all … they were lessons that taught us a great deal of respect for the self-righting tendencies in human nature and for the capacity of most individuals who grew up in adverse circumstances to make a successful adaptation in adulthood. (Werner & Smith, 2001, p. 166)

Ann Masten, a generation younger than Werner, had a similar view. Almost foreshadowing her current focus on resilience in dynamic systems, in 2001 Ann Masten coined the phrase *ordinary magic*:

> The great surprise of resilience research is the ordinariness of the phenomena. … Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from ordinary everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities. This has profound implications for promoting competence and human capital in individuals and society. (Masten, 2001, pp. 227, 235)

Werner and Masten's independent findings give pause in light of the decade-long sweeping school focus on trauma-informed teaching rather than healing-centered engagement (Ginwright, 2018). Kelly and Pransky (2013) describe a hopeful principles-based view of trauma recovery using an inside-out approach to discovering natural inner resilience in line with Werner's (2003) and Masten's (2001) surprising discoveries. Similarly, finding this ordinary magic of child and adolescent resilience in extraordinary times is crucial to scientific and public health responses to COVID-19 (Dvorsky et al., 2020). The University of Minnesota Institute for Translational Research in Children' Mental Health stands ready to connect school community professionals and others with evidence-based practices addressing children's mental illness including trauma; TRANSFORM Research Center does so with a focus on those who have been or may be at risk for maltreatment (Cerulli et al., 2021).

In her seminal book *Ordinary Magic: Resilience in Development,* Masten (2014) recognized, "Now, after a half century of research, it is time to take stock of what has been learned from research on resilience in young people: the evidence and the surprises, the conclusions and the controversies and" she emphasized, "the gaps and the future goals, and the implication to date for practice and policy" (p. 6–7). There she identified four waves of resilience science briefly summarized this way: 1. *Descriptive* (What is resilience? How do we measure it? What makes a difference?) 2. *Process* (How questions: What processes lead to resilience? How do protective, promotive, or preventive influences work? How is positive development promoted in the context of risk?) 3. *Interventions and Testing* (Are our theories on target?) 4. *Dynamic Systems Orientation* (Focus is on interactions of genes with experience, persons with contexts, connecting levels of analysis, and multidisciplinary integration.)

"As more disciplines engage in research on resilience, there is interest in adopting common terminology… . The uniting theme would be adaptation in dynamic and developing systems" (Masten, 2021b, p. 262). Key researchers, understandably outside of education, have collaborated in search of a common definition of resilience (Southwick et al., 2014; Denckla et al., 2020; Twum-Antwi et al., 2020).

One of Masten's first 2021 publications discusses the impact of the classic resilience researchers. She focuses on the famous 1987 review written by Michael Rutter, a contemporary of Emmy Werner and Norman Garmezy (Masten, 2021b; Rutter, 1987). Rutter was a highly respected clarifying mentor and constructive critic for other resilience researchers, often pointing them to what became new waves of research, while also warning of pitfalls. Masten further adds Rutter "was arguably the leading international psychiatrist of his generation. … Rutter also wrote of this complex subject matter with exceptional clarity, like a beacon lighting the way through foggy waters" (Masten, 2021b, p. 257). Rutter clearly distinguished between risk and protective mechanisms. This in part meant:

> The focus of attention should be on protective *processes* or mechanisms, rather than on variables [risks]. These processes, by definition, involve interactions of one sort or another. … the limited evidence available so far suggests that protective processes include [among other things] … those that promote self-esteem and self-efficacy through the

> availability of secure and supportive personal relationships or success in task accomplishment and those that open opportunities. Protection does not reside in the psychological chemistry of the moment but in the ways in which people deal with life changes and in what they do about their stressful and disadvantaged circumstances. (Rutter, 1987, p. 329)

The *inside-out* process of personal thinking is vital and often overlooked in studies of resilience. In fact, "individuals do not just react passively to what happens to them. Rather, they actively process those experiences, and the ways in which they do so may constitute an essential part of the risk mechanisms" (Rutter, 1994, p. 933). Meaning-making is "a key mechanism that mediates interactions between individuals and their ecologies" and involves "an individual's beliefs, goals and subjective feelings about the world and their place in it" (Liebenberg, 2020, pp. 1365,1368). McCubbin & Patterson (1983) found a family's definition and meaning of a crisis was a critical component in coping. Ryff (2014) indicates resilience research has given limited attention to essential activities of meaning-making and self-realization in the confrontation of life adversity.

John Hattie's Visible Learning early research on student achievement included over 1200 meta-analyses examining more than 65,000 studies including one-fourth million students worldwide (Hattie 2015, p. 79). By 2021 Corwin reports Visible Learning includes 1,700 meta-analyses comprising more than 100,000 studies involving 300 million students around the world. This work highlights the importance of both student and teacher thinking. An update with 252 influences and effect sizes shows collective teacher efficacy, student self-reported grades, and teacher estimates of student achievement are the three top impacts on student achievement (Hattie, 2021). "It is less what teachers do in their teaching, but more how they think about their role. It is their mind frames or ways of thinking about teaching and learning that are most crucial" (Hattie, 2015, p. 81). Jenni Donohoo (2016) notes the powerful impact of educators' collective efficacy. "The way school leaders think about what they do is more important than what they do" (Hattie & Smith, 2021 p. 2).

Understanding of resilience continuously evolves. "There are undoubtedly more research waves out on the horizon, building strength unseen" (Masten, 2021b, p. 262). Powerful elusive words thread through this review: passion, changing hearts and minds, knowing, thinking, self-righting, ordinary magic, seeing, at promise, innate capacity, hope, trust, faith, gaps, and foggy waters. A new wave of resilience research could explore critically important characteristics of our *inner landscape*, the *inside-out* nature of how children and adults in school communities experience life.

Resilience Initiatives in School Communities

American school-based resilience programs, trainings, and initiatives, often grant-funded, have nearly disappeared in the last 10 years (Bonnie Benard, personal communication, February 9, 2021). Resilience, youth development, and prevention have perhaps taken a back seat to what may inadvertently be a focus on "brokenness" and

"fixing problems" with social-emotional learning, trauma-informed teaching, and the growth of essential personal and digital coaching. Schools' tight budgets and classroom schedules, a trend toward in-house coaching, highly regulated teacher responsibilities, increasing online technology, and the pandemic itself, have profoundly changed professional development and program adoptions in schools. "In our ever complex and contentious world, we can no longer afford to separate well-being and learning. … well-being is far more than the absences of ill-being" (Fullan, 2021, p. 14).

In this context, it is notable that the inner life of children has yet to be fully understood. Masten and others emphasize "the hesitance of the scientific community to approach the spiritual dimension as a subject of study. … our understanding of what will promote recovery and foster resilience will be more comprehensive when we incorporate 'spiritual' processes in the biopsychosocial approach" (Crawford et al., 2006 p. 367) As I have noted, "Each human being has an inner life. The path to wellness recognizes, nurtures, and articulates a quest for personal spirituality [distinct from religion]. … Spirituality is formless—universal experiences of knowing and being" (Marshall, 2007, p. 12). The importance of understanding human spirituality in clinical practice and educational settings is documented by Kelley et al., 2021a, b. Robert Coles, author of *The Spiritual Life of Children,* reported "it was harder for me to obtain funding for this research than other work I had done" (1990, p. xviii). Search Institute's leadership team of Benson, Roehlkepartain, and Hong found spiritual questions "difficult, even uncomfortable in both science and practice" (2008, pp. 1–2). Lisa Miller as director of the Clinical Psychology Program at Columbia University Teacher's College, founder of the *Journal of Spirituality in Clinical Practice,* author of *The Spiritual Child* (2015), and president of the newly formed Collaborative for Spirituality in Education (2021) may be bringing new life to the discussion of spirituality and resilience research.

Looking Inward: Selected Resilience Initiatives for School Communities

It is time for an updated and renewed practical focus on resilience and well-being in school communities. Despite the current obstacles to resilience training generally in school communities, the following selected very reputable, established, research-based external programs focus directly or indirectly on the *inner landscape* of personal resilience and well-being. All facilitate in-person and online professional trainings for adults including educators and helping professionals. Some have curriculum, activities, and resources for K-12 students. Program descriptions with impressive research and outcomes are posted online. These providers have stood the test of time and thrived.

Global Center for Resilience and Wellbeing was founded by Dr. Amit Sood, M.D., formerly with Mayo Clinic. He developed *SMART: The Four-Module* ***S****tress*

***M**anagement and **R**esilience **T**raining Program* (Sood, 2019). There is a digital version, *Resilient Option* (https://www.resilientoption.com/), and a training institute. SMART is research-based and grounded in neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, and spirituality and has been tested in more than 30 published clinical trials. Dr. Sood lightheartedly proposes, "Resilience is doing well when you shouldn't be doing well" (2018, p. 360). Dr. Sood's programs have reached more than a half-million participants, approximately 50,000 per year. Health care professionals and patients, educators and students, business and industry groups have received this training. Dr. Amit Sood states:

> When science has matched spirituality, it creates a milieu for transformation. This is … timeless wisdom that sages have told us, that scientists are finding. Science is nothing but the study of spirituality. That's what I believe. Science doesn't know it. Science will know it at some point. I believe this is what the children of the world need. They want us adults to be grateful, to be compassionate, to be accepting, to live our lives with meaning and have forgiveness. And if we do that, we will create a wonderful world for them. (Sood, 2015, May 11)

As this author has seen, Dr. Sood easily traverses such foggy waters with humor, engaging graphics, and carefully researched resources. He effortlessly builds the bridge from science to each participant's inner spirit and capacity for resilience, reduced stress, and greater well-being and happiness.

Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was founded by neuroscientist Richard Davidson (https://centerhealthyminds.org/). He describes well-being as a skill. Four neuroscientifically validated constituents of well-being include resilience (rapidity of recovery to adversity), positive outlook (seeing others as having innate goodness), attention, and generosity. These are rooted in specific brain circuits exhibiting neuroplasticity that gives us the opportunity to enhance our well-being with practice (Davidson, 2016). A new training-based framework for the cultivation of human flourishing includes awareness, connection, insight, and purpose (Dahl et al., 2020). The Center researches how the mind can be trained through secular mediation to be more focused, calm, and resilient. Access the Center's online free mindfulness-based interventions for children, the workplace, or personal well-being (Center for Healthy Minds, 2021). The free preschool *Kindness Curriculum* (https://centerhealthyminds.org/join-the-movement/lessons-from-creating-a-kindness-curriculum) improves student social competence and report card grades in learning, health, and social-emotional development (Flook et al., 2015).

Davidson worked closely with the Dalai Lama in planning to study the relationship between neuroscience and meditation. With an extraordinary insight while viewing an MRI experiment, the Dalia Lama asked a graduate student to voluntarily move his right-hand fingers; the MRI scanner showed activation of the motor cortex in the left hemisphere of the brain. Then he asked the student simply to imagine his fingers were moving. The Dalia Lama wanted to see if the brain activated with pure mental activity and it clearly did. "It's all going on inside one's head, so to speak … these are powerful tools which can be used to measure changes in mental activity

that may be produced through practices designed to transform the mind" (Davidson, 2013).

Center for Courage and Renewal was founded in 1997 by Parker Palmer, author of *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (2007). The Center offers a vibrant global network of online and in person facilitated workshops and retreats for educators, school administrators, and others (http://www.couragerenewal.org/). For decades the Center's extensive research and evaluation documents very successful work with both staff and students in school communities (Center for Courage and Renewal, 2021). The Center's popular *Circle of Trust* program (http://www.couragerenewal.org/touchstones/) "gives you a chance to explore your own inner landscape at your own pace and with your own resources discovering that you have what you need" (Palmer, 2021). "By spiritual, I mean the diverse ways we answer the heart's longing to be connected with the largeness of life – a longing that animates love and work, especially the work called teaching" (Palmer, 1998–1999, p. 5). He explains, "Spirituality – the human quest for connectedness – is not something that needs to be 'brought into' or 'added onto' the curriculum. It is at the heart of every subject we teach, where it waits to be brought forth" (Palmer, 1998–9, p. 8). We are reminded, "The most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside of us as we do it" (Palmer, 2007, p. 7).

Search Institute former President, Peter Benson, inspired youth development leaders in school communities globally to see the spark inside each and every young person. "The best of development is *from the inside out*, *not the outside in*. … The real question of human development is letting this emerge in life; and what is this 'fire' … this inner light, that human spark?" (Benson, 2011). The science of human thriving has guided the Search Institute for 60 years. Search Institute partners with organizations to conduct and apply research that promotes positive youth development and advances equity (https://www.search-institute.org/vision-mission-values/).

Search Institute's 40 *Developmental Assets*, designed for four student age groups, are translated into 30 languages and have reached more than five million young people in 70 countries. The goal is for children and youth to become their best selves (https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/developmental-assets-framework/). Under the leadership of Search President Kent Pekel (2019), *The Developmental Relationships Framework* includes five elements expressed in 20 actions that make strong, positive relationships powerful in young people's lives (https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/developmental-relationships-framework/). Such relationships are seen as the roots of youth development (Pekel, 2019). These documents are downloadable in English and Spanish. Search also offers workshops and schedules speakers, including Senior Scholar Gene Roehlkepartain, editor of *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence* (Roehlkepartain et al., 2006). The Institute provides

extensive published research, student surveys, free tools, resources, and more online. The program has a vigorous social media presence.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) develops and disseminates the influential *Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs* (https://casel.org/guide/). The guide identifies preschool through high school evidence-based Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs that have met rigorous application standards. SEL has been described as a public health approach to education (Greenberg, et al., 2017). CASEL's review program designations are SELect (program met or exceeded all criteria), Promising (met or exceeded most criteria), and SEL-Supportive (aligned with SEL, primarily emphasizing interpersonal or intrapersonal competence). *SPARK: Speaking to the Potential, Ability & Resilience Inside Every Kid* categorized as a Promising program for teens (http://secondaryguide.casel.org/description-page.html#spark), is the only listing with a focus on resilience (CASEL, 2020). SPARK specifically emphasizes resilience "inside" every kid. The child and pre-teen versions of SPARK will be reviewed by CASEL in 2021 (Brooke Wheeldon-Reece, personal communication, February 7, 2021). SPARK research has been published (Green et al., 2021b) or manuscripts submitted for publication (Ferrante et al., 2021; Green et al., 2021a). SPARK, like the National Resilience Resource Center, relies on a principles-based understanding of resilience.

Promoting Resilience in School Community Systems: National Resilience Resource Center Suggestions

With the current focus on resilience in dynamic systems (Theron, 2021; Ungar et al., 2019), overwhelmed educators need to see an example of how this can be simple and doable in education. There are small personal steps to take during the pandemic, and a classroom or schoolwide process post-pandemic. Nearly 30 years ago, the University of Minnesota's prevention grant-funded small National Resilience Resource Center (NRRC) was founded; it is now an independent entity. Our unique systems changing resilience training includes both educators and helping professionals. These collaboratives focus on the *health of the helper*. Learning communities in schools can do the same thing in a simplified, scaled-down way.

We "believe human beings are *at promise* because there is a core of spiritual and mental well-being to be discovered. … Few community projects have attempted to improve the inner well-being of helpers" (Marshall, 2015, p. 6). Participating school and community staff members completing NRRC trainings become familiar with the *inner landscape* Palmer (2007) describes. These adults learn how they operate and experience life from the *inside out* and thereby discover an inborn *capacity* for natural resilience and well-being.

The seminal resilience research of Werner, Masten, Rutter, and others discussed earlier is also part of our training program. Benard initially pointed NRRC to the

community empowerment work of Roger Mills grounded in three simple principles behind resilience articulated by Sydney Banks (1994). These principles and a basic understanding of resilience research are the bedrock of NRRC school community resilience training. The NRRC training is fully described and illustrated in an earlier publication, *Resilience in Our Schools: Discovering Mental Health and Hope from the Inside Out* (Marshall, 2005). An overview follows including discussion of the NRRC definition of resilience, explanation of basic principles behind resilience, description of resources for adults and students, and summary of program evaluation outcomes.

NRRC Definition of Resilience

We recognize the definition of resilience is continuously evolving (Masten 2014, pp. 9–10). NRRC honors and builds on current definitions of resilience found in research. Because we believe there is an important *inner landscape* at play in human resilience, we define resilience this way for adults and students in school community trainings:

> "Resilience is our natural, innate capacity to navigate life successfully. The opportunity to learn how we operate makes a critical difference whether one realizes resilience or not" (Marshall, 2015, pp. 6-7).

This basic definition, focused on an "innate capacity for resilience" in all individuals, is hopeful, understandable, and useful. It emphasizes having the "opportunity to learn" about resilience can be life-changing. We have learned this definition is equally helpful to children and adults in all systems. A kindergartner responded to an age-appropriate resilience mini lesson saying, "Nobody's a burnt cookie" (Marshall, 2013, p. 8). Everyone appreciates that no one is left out; this is a matter of discovering what is already inside each one of us. We are *at promise*, not broken or waiting to be fixed.

We also stress the importance of evidence-based protective factors, processes, and dynamic systems in fostering resilience. When all systems players discover their innate capacity for resilience, essential protective factors are much more likely to appear in school communities: caring and supportive relationships, encouraging high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation. Kathy Marshall recalls a school administrator (confidential personal communication, n.d.) reporting he could no longer ethically withhold this understanding from his alternative high school students. The administrator and five students forged ahead with his first simple weekly resilience principles book discussion. Soon a student reported her parents saw such positive change in her that they wanted to read her class book!

NRRC Focus on Principles Behind Resilience for Adult and Student Learning

NRRC teaches basic principles for realizing natural resilience and well-being so adults and ultimately youth are able to tap their natural resilience. This is a practical educational process of learning that life happens from the *inside out*. This means we create our own experience of life events with the thinking we choose to hold on to. If we begin to understand we are *thinkers* with a natural ability to *notice that we are thinking rather than what we are thinking,* the world begins to be a very different place. We each have 60,000 thoughts a day. By habit, we hold on to a few stressful thoughts and frequently make tornados of the mind. In this insecure state of mind, we begin to believe what seems to us as real and permanent. From this perspective, we blame the circumstances in our lives, when in fact, it is our invisible habitual attachment to particular thoughts creating the experience. At such times our state of mind may plummet so that separate realities innocently held by others seem like conflicts rather than understandable differences, or we may be stuck on a thought and mistakenly conclude our feelings and moods must be in the driver's seat.

At these times it is so important to remember we cannot change a thought. The moment we notice a thought, it has already happened. But the hopeful lesson is that we are more than our thinking, that every thought will pass, that another more helpful insight will become apparent. We can begin to trust we are hardwired with sufficient "knowing" to meet life's ups and downs. It is important to trust the unknown to deliver a fresh idea or insight. "Wait, the wisdom will come." In the process, we hold onto our peace of mind and have a better chance of discovering the way out of the internal thicket. This approach is discussed more fully by Marshall (1998, 2004, 2005) and Marshall Emerson (2020a).

In simplest terms, we can learn to trust the unknown, to invoke the still small voice within. As Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl (1959) said, "Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom . … there are always choices to make … any man can … decide what shall become of him – mentally and spiritually," and "It is this spiritual freedom – which cannot be taken away – that makes life meaningful and purposeful" (pp. 104–106).

This *inner landscape* makes our future hopeful and promising. Our capacity for resilience involves more than risk and protective factors typically addressed in research. A natural and illusive internal protective mechanism is also at play. Human beings do life from the inside out. We all are *knowers*, *thinkers*, and *noticers*. The more formal Three Principles – terms used by Sydney Banks (1994) – are *Mind*, *Thought,* and *Consciousness*. These three principles operating behind resilience are simply a description of how we all create our experience of life from the *inside out* as depicted in this visual (Fig. 5.1):

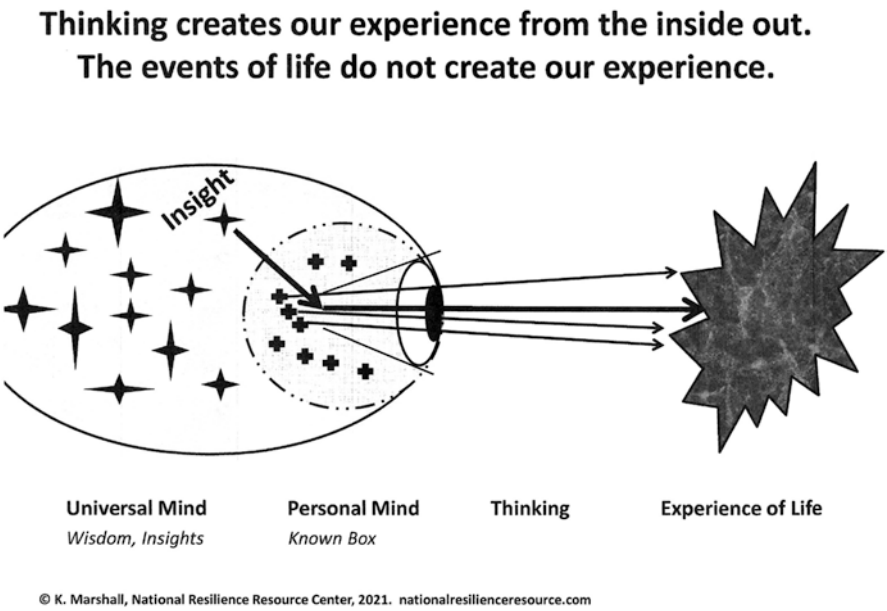

Fig. 5.1 Visual of the creation of life experience from the inside-out

Sydney Banks' (1994) basic principles operating behind resilience are described in research by Kelley et al. (2020, 2021a, b); Pransky and Kelley (2014); Pransky and McMillen (2009); Pransky (2011), and Kelley et al., (2015). Mills and Krot (1993), Mills (1997), and Mills and Spittle (2001) outline applications in schools and public housing communities.

Resources for School Communities

In addition to National Resilience Resource Center training and technical assistance services, NRRC offers a massive website (www.nationalresilienceresource.com) with free audiovisuals, print resources, and resilience research publications. We also have collaborated closely for several years with selected colleagues such as Bonnie Benard, Barbara Aust, Christa Campsall, and others to develop the following principles-based resilience resources for professional development, student learning, and parent education in school communities:

Educators Living in the Joy of Gratitude (2018) includes more than 20 NRRC recorded webinars featuring veteran educators describing learning, living, and sharing the principles with students and educators (http://www.nationalresilienceresource.com/Educator-Preparation.html). A companion handbook, *Ordinary Miracles:*

The Quiet Work of the Three Principles in Schools by Barb Aust (2021), presents stories from these classrooms collected over four decades.

My Guide Inside (2021) K-12 principles-based curriculum, includes student books and teacher manuals for primary, intermediate, and secondary grades. It meets educational learning objectives and competency requirements and may carry academic credit in a variety of subject areas. Co-authored by Christa Campsall et al., (2021), the curricular resource is available in print, e-book, and on-demand formats (https://www.myguideinside.com/mgibooks). Educators familiar with the principles do not need special training. Translations in several languages are available globally.

The Essential Curriculum: 21 Ideas for Developing a Positive and Optimistic Culture by classroom teacher and principal Barbara Aust (2013) supports busy school administrators in learning, living, and sharing the principles in school systems. This short book accommodates busy schedules.

Parenting with Heart by Kathy Marshall Emerson (2020b) introduces the principles in everyday language to parents. It may also be used in facilitated parent book discussion groups.

The Secret a letter written by Mavis Karn (1999) for juveniles learning the principles while in a correctional facility is presented as an educational video created by Wendy Robinson. It is highly effective with students and educators alike.

Selected Supplemental Books include *Whooo … Has a Guide Inside?* (Campsall & Tucker, 2018), *What is wisdom? And Where do I find it?* (Pransky & Kahofer, 2016), *What is a Thought? A Thought is a Lot* (Pransky & Kahofer, 2013) for young children. *The Great Remembering* (Rees-Evans, 2021) is for teens. Adults appreciate *Insights: Messages of Hope, Peace, and Love* (Tucker, 2021).

NRRC Evaluation Outcomes with Adults

NRRC's ongoing longitudinal independent program evaluation is solid (http://www.nationalresilienceresource.com/Outcomes.html#anchor_83). Adult focus groups document enhanced mental and physical well-being, enriched inner life and reflection, improved relationships with others, and increased satisfaction with the workplace or daily life (Marshall, 1998, 2004, 2005). The statistically significant pre-/post-introductory school and community adult training survey ($N = 797$) shows a positive impact reducing stress, improving life quality, and producing a more secure state of mind essential to well-being and healthy living. It follows that these changes in perception would indicate significant changes in the behaviors that proceed from these perceptions or beliefs. An additional follow-up survey ($N = 143$) with participants tests from 10 months to 6 years after training ($M = 3.1$ years) indicated that positive perceptions were maintained over time. As such, "the overwhelming evidence is that the changes in perceptions, thinking, and behavior that were reported

by participants following their training remain intact over time. The principles of resilience … become internalized and continue to bear fruit and effect change long after the initial training is over" (National Resilience Resource Center Outcomes, 2021). Extensive qualitative comments from these surveyed adults are also presented with this research (http://www.nationalresilienceresource.com/Outcomes.html).

My Guide Inside Curriculum Student Outcomes

Table 5.1 presents secondary, intermediate, and primary students' comments describing the impact of *My Guide Inside* classes. High school students completing the course participated in the Gulf Island Secondary School (2018) focus group; a three year follow-up is in process (http://www.nationalresilienceresource.com/Curriculum.html). Intermediate students completed written posttests, and primary students were interviewed in person.

Finally, it is helpful to know that parents who have learned the principles behind resilience in NRRC trainings also describe important changes in their lives:

> One parent said, "I don't know how I would have made it through the personal crisis our family has been in if I did not have this understanding!" Another added "My family is living proof this theory is a reality. My daughter is a healthier and happier person these days. … We come from a long line of dysfunctional families and I believe our family will be the break in that cycle."

A mother concluded by saying, "One of the biggest things for me … if I just listen to [my children] they will solve their problems. … It's seeing their resilience, knowing that they have it. It's intuitive knowing that they have it" (Marshall Emerson, 2020a, 2020b p. 23).

Additional Support Programs for School Communities

We draw attention to two other independent resilience service providers. Both globally offer very successful school and community principles-based training programs conducted for students, staff members, and parents.

The *SPARK Mentoring Program* (2021), based in Florida, is dedicated to cultivating human potential and resilience through education, mentoring, and coaching (https://sparkcurriculum.org/). SPARK director Brooke Wheeldon-Reece (personal communication, February 7, 2021) indicates their evidence-based program has been implemented in schools, jails, drug rehabilitation centers, and social service organizations. There are 100 certified trainers in eight countries. The teen program has been designated a CASEL Promising program. Other SPARK programs for children and preteens are under review. SPARK research results indicated that a majority of

Table 5.1 *My Guide Inside* Student Reports of Curriculum Impact

High school focus group students	"I am able to stay calm and think things through more clearly before immediately getting stressed out or frustrated which is really helpful especially in high school."
	"It's made a huge difference within my rowing capabilities and my successes."
	"It's great to see the outcome within friends and really know [I can] support them properly."
	"The single most important thing – I am a lot less judgmental of people and I feel more compassion."
	"I am no longer as afraid to think about stressful things because I can approach it in a more unbiased way rather than actively trying to not think about things or push things back."
	"I have become very focused in a direction that has helped me mentally and physically. My overall health has improved a lot and my mental wellness as well."
	"A lot more internal things that have been happening … my relationships with my parents have been a lot better and with my friends as well. Overall, I have been a lot happier."
	"We miss the most important piece of education, which is teaching one person about themselves, about their thought and … their emotions and how they have the ability to change. This is what this [learning] enables you to do."
	"I think if this was taught we would be able to be more successful students and also be more fulfilled in our every day because we have the capacity to change and that's critical."
Intermediate surveyed students	"Knowing there is a power within to help us out is the most meaningful thing for me."
	"If you have a calm mind you can work it out."
	"This class has helped me … to not let myself get mad and to have another person have an effect on me to ruin my day."
	"The ideas we have shared in this class could help not only me but most likely everyone in the world."
	"The best thing I learned was being a-okay is natural."
Primary interviewed students	"The best thing I learned is my guide inside solved all my problems. And my problem was I worried too much."
	"Wisdom whispers to me."
	"The sun behind that bad cloud is always shining."
	"I trust what I think, and I feel good about it. I am feeling more brave. You have to trust to be brave."
	"I didn't know about tornado thinking. I tornado think a lot; now I know how to get over it."

youth, ages eight through 18 showed they gained an understanding of how the mind works, increased ability to regulate their emotions and, improved their abilities to communicate with others and solve problems, have compassion for others and cope in difficult circumstances. SPARK's impact on student perception of well-being and school climate is documented by Kelley et al. (2021b). The SPARK Initiative's impressive *2020 Annual Report* may be downloaded (https://sparkcurriculum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2020-Annual-Report-updated.pdf).

The program *iheart* (*Innate Health Education & Resilience Training,* 2021) founded in London, UK, by Terry and Brian Rubenstein, helps young people uncover their innate resilience and mental well-being (https://www.iheartprinciples.com/). CEO (Brian Rubenstein, personal communication February 10, 2021) reports they work closely with schools and educational leaders to build a sustainable culture of resilience and well-being embedded across the whole school environment including students, staff members, and parents/carers. Over 7,500 young people and more than 500 educators in 227 schools and educational organizations in 14 countries have participated in the program. Facilitators are trained and certified. An independent iheart survey (see Research@YouthSight.com evaluation at https://www.iheartprinciples.com/news/study-iheart-proves-successful-during-covid-19/) indicates that during the pandemic, iheart trained students are retaining high levels of positive emotions, managing to remain calm, and more likely to be very good at working together with others, even those that they do not agree with. This compared to 83% of untrained young people saying the pandemic made their mental health worse. This survey indicates during the pandemic trained teachers report enhanced understanding of emotional well-being and resilience and better communication with students using the principles of the iheart program. The organization advocates for national policy to support mental wellness and enhanced psychological well-being and resilience.

Conclusion

School community systems everywhere have been upended by the pandemic. This crisis is an opportunity for school staff and students, parents, and collaborating community professionals everywhere to discover, perhaps for the first time, their own natural capacity for resilience and well-being. A basic understanding of even the most fundamental aspects of resilience research points in the right direction. Traditional protective factors of caring and supportive relationships, encouraging high expectations, and self-chosen opportunities for meaningful participation in programs or projects can take on new meaning.

These are pandemic lessons lived every day if we pay attention. Children and adults who are clearheaded and calm do know who needs special attention, a hug, and encouragement. Opportunities for meaningful participation abound as students, families, friends, or strangers pull together, help each other or reach out to someone in need. We all know someone who is alone and needing support. Parents and

teachers, once they find their own resilience, can encourage and expect students to do well online or in person. These are the fundamentals of resilience.

This horrific global crisis is the laboratory for resilience lessons already learned. What teacher has not crumbled and cried? Who has not listened and comforted someone else in this time? These hard experiences are the fertile ground for school systems deciding to go deeper and truly discover natural resilience—not to sideline it. There will be an opportunity for weaving the principles behind resilience into student curriculum, staff professional development, and relationships with parents.

Renewed systemic focus on resilience is a decision. What priority does it merit? The best supportive resources are all available. Every child and adult already has real, lived resilience stories from the pandemic to share. The basic understanding of resilience research and the principles behind resilience offered here are enough to begin either personally or professionally. There is hope and possibility. Every child and adult is *at promise*. Trust that we do all live from the inside-out—our *inner landscape*—and can discover this hopeful truth together. It is possible to learn, live, and share the principles behind resilience and realize well-being personally and collectively one doable step at a time.

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