Ideas with IMPACT

RESILIENCY

Brain & Body Basics: Promoting Resiliency
Brain & Body Basics: Promoting Resiliency

By: Vanessa Radice

Vradi001@dadeschools.net

Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High
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About Brain & Body Basics: Promoting Resiliency-

Empowering each student to be the best they can by educating them on brain & body basics as it pertains to understanding how the two communicate, as well as how they can help regulate and control their thoughts, emotions and behaviors. Building resilient students through restorative practices is an emerging discipline that brings together research in neuroscience, psychology and education, that helps ensure brain-based teaching strategies and activities, which are valuable in promoting well-being across all 6 domains; physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and intellectually. Creating opportunities for students to access and learn about the attributes that lead to resiliency: confidence, character, control, coping skills, contribution, connection, and competence is key in creating lifelong learners and productive citizens of society.

The activities and practices shared in the packet will help power up the brain and strengthen the executive function which is where critical thinking, creativity and emotions come together to create neuron pathways. Only when the body is relaxed and the brain feels safe can stress hormones decrease allowing for swelling of the brain to also decrease and consequently permitting the frontal cortex to communicate with the cerebellum which support new neural pathways, and allowing for learning to transpire. This is why creating a safe learning environment is the first crucial step in making the classroom conducive for learning.

Having students engage in active interactions and experience positive healthy relationships with others have been proven to help restore trauma which many time is the root cause for many of the negative behaviors that are displayed within the school and classroom environments. With the proper support and tools, students can experience success. Students’ academic performance will increase, and their negative behaviors will decrease, regardless of the school’s population, when they feel valued and have built connections with peers and school personnel. This packet will provide many activities and actions that have showed to be effective in all environments.
About Resiliency-

Resiliency is known as the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness, adversity. Resilient individuals tend to have strong coping skills, are resourceful, ask for help when needed, and find ways to manage the situation they are facing.

Developing the self-awareness, self-control and interpersonal skills are vital in fostering resilience. People, places, and things are all part of the resiliency process through which students and adults manage, establish, and maintain positives goals, relationships, and decisions.

The ultimate goal as it pertains to students is for them to all be given access and support to achieve good educational outcomes despite adversity. Teaching our students to learn and grow from all situations. This calls for the whole school community to work together strategically to implement with fidelity practices that will help our vulnerable youth bounce back from any setbacks and have the best chance at succeeding.
“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.”

- Anonymous Author

Curriculum Area(s):

1. K-12 Cross Curriculum
2. Teachers and Administrators of students in both the General Education Program and Exceptional Student Education Program.

- The project can be adapted to other ages or achievement levels
- The project can be used with larger or smaller groups

Goals & Objectives

To implement activities and actions that help:

educate students on how to listen to their body, self-regulate their emotions, process their thoughts, develop their ideas and be able see different perspective that will lead to paradigm shifts and empower them to become change agents.

provide students with the tools they need to develop their passion, which will consequently increase their resiliency and academic performance.

help students build respectful, lifelong learners that can coexist in a diverse society as independent citizens.

empower students to be the best they can be, helping them become intrinsically motivated to face adversity as events that will not define them but refine them.
RESILIENCY EDUCATION STANDARDS

**Character:** Understanding how and why others think, feel, and act. Being thankful and sharing it with others. Telling the truth.

HE.68.R.1.1 Demonstrate the ability to respond with empathy in a variety of contexts and situations.

HE.68.R.1.3 Identify sources of relational conflicts and healthy approaches to conflict resolutions.

**Personal Responsibility:** Thinking about all options and outcomes, then making the best choice. Using good judgement, self-control, and owning my actions. Self-awareness and self-management. Understanding/Governing how and why I think and act, including my impact on others.

HE.68.R.2.2 Demonstrate responsible decision-making that considers multiple perspectives.

HE.68.R.2.8 Identify strategies to manage challenges and setbacks. Clarification: Time management, setting boundaries, setting realistic goals, self-care.

**Mentoring & Citizenship:** Giving or asking for support, guidance, training, or expertise. Making good choices that help my community and nation.

HE.68.R.3.2 Explain and develop ways to apply leadership skills in the school and the community.

HE.68.R.3.3 Identify the importance of volunteerism in positively affecting the community and nation.

**Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** Gathering information to think through options and outcomes and determine the best choice. Coming to a solution by working together. Continuing to try even when things are hard.

HE.68.R.4.1 Analyze possible solutions to a problem to determine the best outcome for oneself and others.

HE.68.R.4.3 Analyze ways to pursue common goals as a part of a team or group.
Creating a Safe Learning Environment

Safe spaces are environments where students feel the freedom to be their authentic selves, make mistakes without lasting judgment or ridicule and where they can engage in critical, honest, civil, and challenging discussions about sensitive topics. As an educator, you want your students to feel comfortable navigating the classroom and have a sense of ownership to be able to use the various stations you are implementing and just feel as if they are at home.

The classroom must first resonate and be the teachers “ZEN” space. Having the teacher incorporate what they love in their classroom is key to creating a happy space. Then knowing your students needs and creating stations, a corner or having items that they will enjoy and benefit from is important. Include differently able people in classroom presentations. Finally, allowing students to have some say as to the layout, or the items in which they would like to have as part of their classroom experience is important. A comfortable bean bag, sectional rug, or calming corner with fun sensory and fidgety items can also help make them feel loved and teaches them how to self-regulate their feeling when having excessive stimuli or just being stressed or anxious.

Having students and teacher work together in setting the classroom expectations is valuable as they will take ownership of them.

Always validating the emotions, by actively listening and using micro-affirmations. “Thank you for trying this problem out, I know it can be difficult” or “I see that you are uncomfortable, my intentions were not to make you anxious”, “How may I help you feel more comfortable with this topic.”

Having soft music, natural or dim lights versus the florescent lighting that trigger stress hormones, some sage or Eucalyptus scents, also real plants that help purify the room and bring positive vibes.

A classroom pet or hydroponic tower where students can care and nurture it.

Use restorative language that is welcoming and always focused on the students ‘feelings (Refer to Restorative Language Guide in Packet)

Always start a conversation not school related to build rapport (How was your weekend? I like your new shoes!)
Brain & Body Basics

This section will briefly discuss the brain and body facts that both the teacher and student need to know to take ownership of their thoughts, emotions, and actions while sharing the same space. Being aware of how the body and brain works with various biologicals and environmental stimuli is important to become self-aware and self-regulate. This is the foundation to building resilience. Learning how to heal the brain from past traumas and cope with present stressors allows students to strengthen their confidence and character, and most importantly supports the brain to function to its maximum capacity.

- Hippocampi is still developing in babies, this one reason why we have no memory of early years, until the age of 8 we lack details

- Frontal brain regions involved in working memory aren’t fully developed until 20s planning, organizing, completing a project, creative and critical thinking can all be challenging.

- Plasticity is the ability for the brain to rewire itself and create neuro pathways.

- Plasticity in the young brain is very strong as we learn to map our surroundings using the senses.

- As we grow older, plasticity decreases to stabilize what we have already learned.

- Trauma can lead to an immature executive function which leads struggles with problem solving.

- Trauma and executive function can be restored.
-Brain image of a person who copes well with stress and one who does not. Dynamic brain changes during stress.

-Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex-processes risk and emotional response.

-Poor stress coping skills can lead to a blockage between the frontal cortex and medial temporal lobes of the cerebrum.

-Regulating your body's stress response is crucial during times of stress, because your body can release cortisol, after releasing its “fight or flight” hormones, such as adrenaline, so you continue to stay on high alert.

-In addition, cortisol triggers the release of glucose (sugar) from your liver for fast energy during times of stress. This leads to inflammation of the brain, which disrupts its natural state and does not allow it to function to its full potential.
The 'Everyday' Brain

**The Amygdala:**
The brain's alarm system (the amygdala) is activated when we are faced with a potential threat (such as an unexpected loud bang). Providing nothing too distressing occurs, it will work alongside other areas of the brain to process our everyday experiences.

**The Hippocampus:**
Memories are processed in the brain and stored in the normal way through the hippocampus.

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The Brain During Trauma

**The Amygdala:**
The threat level is so high that the amygdala is fully activated and overwhelms the brain.

**The Hippocampus:**
The hippocampus shuts down and can't store memories in the normal way.
Restorative Trauma Activities

- Restorative Yoga Helps Feel Your Body and Listen to its needs.
- Exercise—Exercise causes your brain to release 'feel good' chemicals like endorphins and serotonin that help improve your mood.
- Eating—A Diet that is Supportive and Restorative
- Mindfulness/Meditation Practices
- Healthy Relationships
- Breathing Exercises
- Assertiveness, Boundaries, Communication, Being Proactive, Self-Regulation
- By changing your mindset through practices such as meditation, gratitude, acting selflessly, etc. You cause your brain to physically change and make more neural connections.
Character

Understanding how and why others think, feel, and act. Being thankful and sharing it with others. Telling the truth.

A. Positive Affirmations:
As students walk in it is important to always have a positive affirmation on the board. For example, the "Dear Student: We Believe in You" message. Throughout the year teacher can project the same message or any other positive affirmation as they walk in or before an important assessment.

Dear Student:
We BELIEVE in you
We are here for you
You are CAPABLE
You are RESPECTED
You are listened to
You are UNIQUE
You are worth it
We expect wonderful things
We will never give up on you
We care about you
Your SUCCESS is my SUCCESS
We are in this together
You are the reason I teach!

B. Four Corners (Positive Quotes):
At the beginning or throughout the year teacher/s and students can participate in the Four Corners Quote Activity. This helps create thoughts that are positive, constructive, and encouraging. Teacher can use any quotes and post one in each corner. Example of quotes:

“It’s your reaction to adversity, not adversity itself that determines how your life’s story will develop.”
“I can be changed by what happens to me, but I refuse to be reduced by it.”
"If you want to change, you have to be willing to be uncomfortable"
“I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become”
Then each student and teacher in the room walks to the corner which has the quote that resonates most with them. In their corresponding corner students and teacher/s share (verbally and/or in writing) why they chose that quote. A student from each corner can share with the whole class the various reasons for why that group chose that quote. The quotes can remain in the room for the entire year and teacher/students can refer to it during teachable moments.

C. Home Learning Folder

Each student gets heavy duty plastic two-pocket folders for each of their classes. (A different color is recommended for each class) The folders, which can be personalized/decorated, must have the title of its corresponding class subject. The folders are to be kept in their book bags to store any home learning or parent communication letters/notifications. This folder helps transport the home learning/correspondence to and from home. Parents should be aware of the home learning folder so that they can look inside it daily for letters, messages and to make sure child is doing nightly home learning. Every day in class student takes out home learning for teacher to stamp while they work on their bell ringer. After reviewing the daily bell ringer, the teacher will go over the home learning from the night before. On Fridays, after reviewing the Thursday night home learning, teacher will collect the weekly home learning sheet for a grade. It is important to create a routine that every day regardless if there is home learning or correspondence, students need to have folder out. Folder cannot be shared with other subjects/teachers. If work that belong is another subject’s folder is seen student are asked to kindly switch it over. Teaching organizational skills and holding them responsible for daily tasks is important in helping promote resiliency.
D. Binder/Notebook Rubric

Students self-check their portfolio (notebook/binder/work folder). If possible, the teacher can have a few minutes to sit individually with each student to go over the rubric and portfolio. This allows for constructive feedback as to organization and completion of the tasks within the portfolio. Teacher can focus on a specific skill or area in which to give feedback for. For example, the first rubric check teacher may want to focus on students putting the correct header and title on all assignments or that the assignments are placed in some order (chronological). This rubric allows for students to check off the assignments that they have in their notebooks as completed or not completed. They then add up all the points for those completed assignments and calculate their own score. This holds them accountable for their own grades. It also teaches the importance of honesty. Teacher can then check the binders using the same rubric paper to analyze work and check for honesty. Conversations can then be held accordingly. For students who were honest positive reward can be given, regardless of grades. For those who scored themselves higher than they were supposed to a heart-to-heart conversation on the importance of honesty.
**Personal Responsibility**

Thinking about all options and outcomes, then making the best choice. Using good judgement, self-control, and owning my actions. Self-awareness and self-management. Understanding/Governing how and why I think and act, including my impact on others.

**A. Organization (Kaizen):**

Kaizen is a Japanese word that means “change for the better”. It is the act of continuous improvement to help facilitate or make a process more efficient for the greater good. Kaizen sees improvement in productivity as a gradual and methodical process. Implementing time-management, setting boundaries, setting realistic goals, and allowing for constant reflection and accepting constructive criticism are all skills that can be embedded in the learning environment to promote resiliency.

**B. Classifying Behaviors as Above the Line/Below the Line:**

Create a space in your classroom where students and teachers can identify and write down positive and negative behaviors as they occur within the classroom. On an anchor paper, white board, or bulletin board, draw a horizontal line in the center creating a top and bottom section. The top section can be titled positive behaviors and the bottom section can be titled negative behaviors. You can have students brainstorm positive/negative behaviors when it comes to creating a nurturing and safe environment. Teacher or students can write them in the corresponding section large enough for the entire class to see it. Throughout the year as situations occur, both positive and/or negative, students or teacher can communicate with each other when they feel that there is a behavior that occurred and needs to be added above the line or below the line. Having students become self-aware of their actions and be able to distinguish behaviors that promote a healthy environments/relationship versus those that hurt their environment/relationships is another great skill for promoting resiliency.
C. Power of Silence:

Before class (especially after recess or extracurricular activities) having a silent moment and dimming the lights to allow students to transition and reflect over what the classroom expectations are can be very effective. This helps calm the students down and minimize the amount of time it takes them to get focused on classroom task/s. You can name it “Rest and Digest Time” It is important to build REST after lunch to activate the parasympathetic nervous system so body can digest food.

D. Mindfulness “Peace Time”

“Mindfulness is a pause-the space between stimulus and response, that’s where choice lies” Tara Brach

Two-Minute Meditation Video- “Re-centering yourself after stressful events/interactions”

[https://youtu.be/Jholcb8Gz0M](https://youtu.be/Jholcb8Gz0M)

This guided meditation video is great to implement every morning, during transitioning or when a student or teacher feels as if they need a two-minute mindfulness break. It helps students and teacher practice being in the present moment. The video makes you aware of your breathing and has you scan your body making sure you are aware of its communication.

- Practicing mindfulness means to orient yourself toward your present moment experience with attention and compassion. What is, as it is.

- When students practice mindfulness their stress, depression, and anxiety decrease,
while impulse control, emotional regulation, happiness and empathy increase.

- Mindfulness and emotional learning are profound drivers in academic success. Mindfulness practice help students' memory and limit distracting thoughts. This promotes self-awareness, helps focus attention, and reduces stress.

- Mindfulness can be taught through short practice sessions. When taught the art of attention students build executive functioning.

- Teachers that incorporate mindfulness in their class experience a more pleasant teaching environment because students self-regulate themselves to become ready to learn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ready to learn</th>
<th>How I Feel</th>
<th>Things I can do to make it better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tired</td>
<td>Take a short brake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td>Play beat the Clock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged</td>
<td>Talk to a friend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>I feel Proud of my self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>Figure out how I did this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared</td>
<td>Keep asking myself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curious</td>
<td>Visualize myself feeling differently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silly</td>
<td>Write in my journal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>Picture myself feeling successful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspired</td>
<td>Say, “I’ll do better next time by...”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>Take a little walk or stretch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>Ask for help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>Sit quietly and breathe deeply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panicked</td>
<td>Visualize myself in a happy place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explosive</td>
<td>Listen to calming music</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draw a picture and throw it away</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do self-talk exercises</td>
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Mentoring & Citizenship

Giving or asking for support, guidance, training, or expertise. Making good choices that help my community and nation.

A. Random Name Calling (Popsicle Sticks):

This is the best way to assure that all students have a chance to participate and to teach accountability. It builds confidence for those students that tend to not participate, allowing for them to have a voice. This also helps identify students who are following along, have misconceptions, or are struggling with the skill/s being taught. A teacher will then have to prompt and scaffold a student to help him/her get to the answer. Teacher should always try to strategically ask questions that will help set up students for success and not failure. In other words, try to ask questions that are challenging but also appropriately to the student’s academic ability. This will help build confidence and hopefully promote self-advocacy. After a student is called, his/her name goes into another cup or can be tied with a rubber band so that he is not called again until all other students have had a turn. This helps prevent the issue of always calling on the same student and allows for students to learn how to respect each other’s turn.
B. Gardening/Nature Walks

Gardening and being aware of nature’s beauty and needs helps build Social-Ecological resilience. The process of caring for the environment and maintaining crops and plants instills values and creates awareness of how one’s actions can affect the environment. It is a collective activity that strengthens people-place relationships, peer relationships, social networks and other community support personnel. It helps bring family, friends, and colleagues together. You can start a very basic hydroponic garden in the classroom and have students nurture and care for it. It helps give students a sense of control, motivation, and confidence as they watch their plant sprout and grow.

C. Pets in a Classroom

Giving students a voice as to having a pet in the classroom is really soothing and creates a nurturing environment. It teaches them responsibility and how to share roles with their peers. The get to research and interview others with expertise on the pet, a real-life situation. Finally, pets help provide support emotionally and mentally for many students.
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Gathering information to think through options and outcomes and determine the best choice. Coming to a solution by working together. Continuing to try even when things are hard.

A. Conflict Resolution Task Cards (Also fits the Character resiliency standard)

It is important to teach conflict resolution so that students can peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. Conflicts can arise from a number of reasons. To be successful at conflict resolution, people must consider the perspective of others. Conflict resolution is a life-skill that students must learn to be successful in the real world. This is a resource that allows students to think about how they would respond in different situations with their peers. It is a very versatile resource as there are so many different ways task cards can be used in the classroom. Whether used as a or morning journal, this resource will help your students practice thinking about conflict resolution and acquire those skills that are so very important. By practicing healthy ways of reacting to adverse situations, students can help program their brains so that when confronted with a real situation they react proactively versus reactively.

Description:

There are many different task cards that can be purchased online and cater to all age groups. Conflict resolution cards allow students to discuss various resolutions for conflicts and misunderstandings. Students can also discuss similar experiences that they have had in their lives. Individually: Students can read through the card and think about how they would respond in each scenario. In partners: With a friend, students can take turns reading the cards to each other and giving their responses. Small-group: Students can take turns reading the card. When a student has an idea for how they would respond, they can say it and roleplay the scenario. Large-group: The teacher can read the card and students can raise their hands to give a response.
B. Class Dojo (https://www.classdojo.com)

An application that allows for a safe way to create a positive culture, give students a voice, and share moments with families. Teachers/Students/Parents can download Class Dojo as an avenue for communication for academic and behavior updates. The platform allows you to upload files and pictures. You can organize your daily lessons or activities in one place for students to refer to as needed.

Create a positive culture by creating the classroom rules with your students and adapting the Dojo application to each classroom or student’s personal need. Increase intrinsic motivation rewarding positive actions or achievements. Points can be redeemed for prizes. Teacher can also deduct points for inappropriate behaviors.
Students can share their learning by adding photos and videos. All students work can be stored in portfolio. Parents can also be notified every time their child receives or loses points. Great way for them to monitor their child behavior.

C. Teacher-Student Mediation

Mediation is a process wherein the parties meet with mutually selected impartial and neutral person who assists them in negotiation of their differences.

This technique must be done with a counselor or administrator or any non-bias school staff. After a student has been continuously written up for the same behavior with the same teacher, both should be able to share their situation and conflict with another impartial party. Both student and teacher should agree on trying to settle their difference and focus a solution to the current issue.

This models and promotes social communication, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills.

The mission of mediation is to restore the respect so teacher can teach and students can learn.
The 7 C’s of Resilience
(Video 2:25)

https://youtu.be/hIo4ur5sfK0
Teacher Resources

How to Foster Resilience Among Learners

(Video 5:45)

#1 Confidence-Believing in Your Abilities and Self

#2 Competence-Having the Skills to Thrive

#3 Connection- Working, Growing, and Learning Together

#4 Character-Being a Good Person

#5 Contribution-Helping Others Helps You

#6 Coping- Using Your Toolbox

#7 Control- Having a Choice
Restorative Practices

Punitive and Restorative Inquiry: Different Paths

Punitive processes focus on the enforcement of rules which are broken.
- What rule was broken?
- Who’s to blame?
- What punishment is deserved?

Restorative process focus on the repair of relationships that are broken.
- Who was harmed?
- What are their needs?
- Whose responsibility are these needs?

Restorative Conversation Step-by-Step Guide

| INVITE participants into conversation | • How is your day going?  
|                                      | • Thank you for coming to meet with me.  
|                                      | • Would you be willing to talk to me about this situation?  
|                                      | • Before we start talking about the incident, can you tell me a little about how your day is going? What classes have you had?  
|                                      | • What do you want to make sure we talk about? |

| Understand WHAT | • From your point of view, what happened?  
|                | • What was going on that led up to this situation?  
|                | • Imagine you are directing a movie; what would the audience see?  
|                | • Let’s press rewind for a minute; can you take me back to that moment in slow motion? |

| Step 2: Understand the THOUGHTS and FEELINGS surrounding the event | • What were you thinking about just before that happened?  
|                                                                  | • What thoughts do you remember swirling in your head? |
| Promoting Resilience | What were you feeling when it happened?  
| | What made you feel ___? (or: What was it about ___ that made you feel ___?)  
| | How do you feel right now, as you remember the incident?  
| | Has this happened in the past? If so, what causes it to continue?  
| | What do you sense is at the root of this conflict?  

**Step 3: Understand the Impact**

- How might that person be feeling?  
- What’s it like to be them right now?  
- Looking back, what role do you think you played?  
- How did this affect you? Why?  
- What’s it like to be them right now?  
- What might that person need to repair what was harmed between you?  
- Who else is affected? How are they affected?  
- Who are all the other people who might be feeling ripple effects from this event?  
- Based on what happened, is there anything that you feel you can take ownership of (or accountability for)?  
- How can you communicate your role in this conflict and what you want to take ownership of, to others involved?  

**Step 4: Assess the Participant's Needs for Repair**

- What do you need to move forward?  
- How do you think we can work together to help meet those needs?  
- When you’ve been in situations like this before, what was helpful?  
- What do you think the other parties involved need?  
- What would you like to see happen?  
- What might be some of the choices you have to resolve this situation?  
- How can you make things better? What are you willing to give?  
- Would you like to meet with ____?  
- What might you hope to accomplish during that conversation?  
- What support do you need from me to make this work?
## CLOSE the conversation

- How could you have approached the situation differently?
- What could you do to prevent a similar situation in the future?
- Thank you for participating; I appreciate your willingness to meet today.
- Do you have any questions for me?
- The next set of steps to move us forward will be...
- Here are action steps you agreed to follow in order to prevent any further conflict. Do you think that you can follow these?
- Is there anything that’s still on your mind?
- I hope you have a wonderful rest of your day.
References


