

June 2020

# Community Resilience Toolkit

CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE PLANNING PROJECT



**Student  
Well-Being**  
MCDONALD CENTER



# Community Resilience

“Community resilience is the capability to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution, and growth in the face of turbulent change.”

**From Definitions of Community Resilience: An Analysis**  
A Community and Regional Resilience Institute Report

This toolkit shares four recovery response elements that are part of the community resilience process. This toolkit is one lens to look through as we prepare for and respond to adversity. As we adapt our work to meet evolving needs, being intentional about incorporating these elements can lead to a stronger community overall.

# Physical and Psychological Safety

Neurobiologically, students can't learn if they don't feel safe, known, and cared for within their schools.

Aupperle et al., 2012

## definition

An environment in which people have a sense they are free from harm and are comfortable being and expressing themselves.

## key questions

1. How are people assured that this is a safe environment?
2. What do people need?
3. Are we being transparent?
4. How do we affirm individual differences?
5. What signs demonstrate this space is accepting of everyone?

## examples

### INDIVIDUAL

Ask for input.

Ask, "What will make you feel safe?"

Check in with audience or conduct a pre-event poll.

### INTERPERSONAL

Facilitate conversations about safety and risk between roommates.

Teach communication skills for navigating individual safety within relationships.

### INSTITUTIONAL

Provide on-going and clear communications about expectations and changes.

# Social Connectedness

Our capacity to destroy one another is matched by our ability to heal one another. Restoring relationships and community is central to restoring well-being.

Dr. Bessel Vander Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*

## definition

The feeling that people belong to a group and generally feel close to each other; accomplished through presence, genuineness, affirmation, effective listening, kind acts, and acknowledging similarities.

## key questions

1. How do we help people be fully present?
2. How can we facilitate sharing and active listening?
3. In which ways could this activity point out similarities between people?
4. How might we facilitate showing care toward friends, family, and community members?
5. What new ritual or tradition can we begin?
6. How can we connect others who could help each other?

## examples

### INDIVIDUAL

Have a phone-free event or space.

Offer workshop on social connection.

### INTERPERSONAL

Do introductions.

Consider having participants commit to attending regularly.

End event with affirmation exercise.

### INSTITUTIONAL

Have a kindness or compassion campaign.

Create new norms, traditions, and rituals around which communities can connect.

# Emotional Well-Being

People can never get better without knowing what they know and feeling what they feel.

Dr. Bessel Vander Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*

## definition

A syndrome of emotional awareness, self-acceptance, flexibility, acceptance of change, and self-compassion.

## key questions

1. When could we check in with people?
2. How could we give people an opportunity to name how they feel?
3. What creative ways could people express themselves?
4. Are we normalizing reactions, emotions and experiences?
5. Are we validating authenticity, vulnerability?
6. Who should be referred to services for additional support?

## examples

### INDIVIDUAL

Writing workshop.

Paint what your summer was like.

Refer student to UCC.

### INTERPERSONAL

Ask, How are you? And then really listen.

Start meetings with one word feeling check-in.

### INSTITUTIONAL

Expression wall.

Use inclusive language in materials

# Hope

Fostering hope may promote college adjustment, regardless of collective traumas that might occur on campus.

Liu, S. R., Kia-Keating, M., & Modir, S. (2017)

## definition

Positive, future-oriented thinking; an optimistic state of mind.

## key questions

1. How could we help people remember what is truly important to them?
2. When could we help people develop bigger-than-self goals?
3. How can we help people identify their strengths and use them?
4. Is there an opportunity to acknowledge learning from failure and challenge?
5. What opportunity might we have to explore spiritual questions?
6. In what way could we report on good news?

## examples

### INDIVIDUAL

Values clarification exercises.

Strengths-Finder workshop.

Discuss, Where is God when I'm suffering?

### INTERPERSONAL

A dinner to share stories of failure and lessons learned.

Share where you saw God working this week?

What kindness have you offered, witnessed, or received this week?

### INSTITUTIONAL

Leaders talk about their failures and struggles.

Signage regarding pillars of Holy Cross.

Inspirational or encouraging posters.



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