



HERE WE GO

Suzanne Bouffard

Resilience isn't something you can give to another person, but you can establish the conditions for it and cultivate it like a garden.

LEADERS NEED TO CULTIVATE THEIR OWN GARDENS

As we settle into October and the honeymoon period of the new school year wanes, *The Learning Professional* is taking the opportunity to address stress and resilience — specifically how professional learning can help build school leaders' resilience to handle the stresses that come with their jobs.

Education leaders need resilience more than ever. From mental health crises and public health concerns to college admissions scandals that threaten the equity of opportunity schools work hard to create, leaders face constant stress and unexpected challenges.

The concept of resilience blossomed in the 1970s and 1980s. Emmy Werner helped start a paradigm shift with her study of how some high-risk children on the island of Kauai thrived despite significant adversity (Werner, Bierman, & French, 1971). Later, research by Anne Masten, Dante Cicchetti, Suniya Luthar, and others illuminated factors and supports that help children bounce back from setbacks and succeed. This work continues to grow as research illuminates the impact of adverse childhood experiences (Felitti et al., 2019).

Resilience — the ability to overcome challenges, bounce back, and maintain strength — isn't something you can give to another person, but you can establish the conditions for it and cultivate it like a garden. Great educators do that for students every day. But leaders and teachers need to be resilient themselves, and that means they need to cultivate their own gardens, too.

Resilience doesn't come from a workshop. It develops over time, under the right conditions, including high-quality professional learning that follows the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011). For example, supportive relationships, which research shows are essential to resilience, are embedded in the Learning Communities and Leadership standards. Commitment to the long-term process of development and growth, as articulated in the Implementation standard, builds strength and focus.

As authors in this issue illustrate, high-quality professional learning promotes resilient leadership by emphasizing instructional leadership when other responsibilities and divergent backgrounds threaten it (see pp. 32 and 24); facilitating support from peers, coaches, and supervisors (see pp. 36 and 51); and developing skills that are essential for success (see p. 18).

As the school year ramps up, we invite you to lean on the Learning Forward community to cultivate your resilience. Meet up with like-minded colleagues at the Learning Forward Annual Conference in December, where we'll be celebrating our organization's 50th anniversary. And follow us on social media (#LearnFwdTLP) for information on Twitter chats, webinars, and more. We are committed to helping you continue learning, reflecting, and thriving, no matter what the school year brings your way.



REFERENCES

Felitti, V.J., Anda, R.F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D.F., Spitz, A.M., Edwards, V., ... & Marks, J.S. (2019). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 56(6), 774-786.

Learning Forward. (2011). *Standards for Professional Learning*. Oxford, OH: Author.

Werner, E.E., Bierman, J.M., & French, F.E. (1971). *The children of Kauai: A longitudinal study from the prenatal period to age ten*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press. ■

Suzanne Bouffard (suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org) is editor of *The Learning Professional*.