

Getting Results: Developing
Safe and Healthy Kids
Update 1

Positive Youth Development:
Research, Commentary, and Action

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A team of research experts selected the key research in the field of developmental assets and protective factors, summarized those research studies, met to discuss the implications of the research, and wrote personal commentaries on the importance of the research for the field. Included on this team were:

Peter Benson
President, Search Institute
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Michael D. Resnick
Professor of Pediatrics and Public Health;
Director of Research, Division of General
Pediatrics and Adolescent Health; and
Director, National Teen Pregnancy Prevention
Research Center, University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

J. Fred Springer
Director of Research, EMT Associates
Professor of Political Science and Public Policy
Administration, University of Missouri
St. Louis, Missouri

Norm Constantine
Director, School and Community Health
Research
WestEd, Oakland
Special Consultant for the California Healthy
Kids Survey developed for the California
Department of Education

A concept team reviewed the draft publication for ease of use in the field and contributed to the “Research into Action” chapter. Included on this team were:

Bonnie Benard
Resiliency Associates, Berkeley

Beverly Bradley
University of California, San Diego

Carol Burgoa
Contra Costa County Office of Education,
Pleasant Hill

Sally Champlin
California State University, Long Beach

Ritchie Eriksen
Long Beach Unified School District

Susan Giarratano-Russell
Health Education Consultant, Glendale

Jordan Horowitz
WestEd, Los Alamitos

Kathleen Middleton
Toucan Ed Publications, Soquel

California Department of Education staff who participated in research meetings and responded to drafts of the publication included:

Kathy Lewis
Deputy Superintendent

Wade Brynelson
Assistant Superintendent

Healthy Kids Program Office

Gerald Kilbert
Administrator

Greg Wolfe
Project Monitor

Ruth Bowman
Bruce Gordon
Rae Kine
D.J. Peterson
Myra Young

Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office

Karen Lowrey
Acting Administrator

Jean Scott

Health & Education Communication Consultants identified the researchers and concept team members and worked with them to create this publication:

Lisa K. Hunter
Donna Lloyd-Kolkin
Berkeley

Chapter 1

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Positive Youth Development: Research, Commentary, and Action is the first of a series of updates to *Getting Results: Developing Safe and Healthy Kids*. *Getting Results, Part I, California Action Guide to Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities* was published by the California Department of Education (CDE) in January of 1998. This update highlights research strategies on positive youth development for use by county- and district-level educators. Like its predecessor, this document was developed by Health & Education Communication Consultants, Berkeley, California, with the assistance of a concept team of educators and a research team of experts who reviewed key research studies and then wrote the personal commentaries on those studies that appear herein.

As this document goes to press, *Getting Results, Part II, California Action Guide to Tobacco Use Prevention Education* is being developed. It is expected to be available in fall, 1999.

Process of Development

Three research and evaluation experts whose work on youth development is highly respected nationally were invited to participate in the development of this update. Michael Resnick is a senior investigator on the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health, which is identifying risk and protective factors in the family, at school, and for individuals; Peter Benson conducts research on developmental assets and works with schools and communities to create asset-rich environments; and Fred

The *Getting Results* materials center on national principles of effectiveness set forth in the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, Title IV of the Improving America's Schools Act. The third of these principles requires schools to design and implement prevention programs for youth that are based on research or evaluation. Future updates, too, will help practitioners become aware of new prevention research. It is not the intent of the California Department of Education to promote one model or research study over another. The Department's goal is to provide an in-depth examination of various relevant perspectives.

The concept of "youth development" was cited in Part I as a prevention strategy, but it was not explored in detail. New research on this topic, however, has generated a great deal of dialogue and sparked widespread interest in its potential in the area of prevention.

Springer is an evaluation and policy expert who is presently conducting a five-year evaluation of the high-risk youth programs funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

These researchers identified and summarized key research on positive youth development and then discussed the research with Health & Education Communication Consultants and CDE staff. Although each researcher brought his

own special perspective to the dialogue, the discussion was remarkable for its points of intersection and complementary approaches.

Each researcher then wrote a personal commentary on the research. They were asked to make the research compelling and concrete to the practitioner and to explain its relevance.

Finally, Norm Constantine, Director, School and Community Health Research, WestEd, who also participated in the research dialogue, contributed a description of a new research tool from WestEd that measures

internal and external assets of youth. The tool, the Resilience Assessment Module of the *California Healthy Kids Survey*, is included in Chapter 3, “Research into Action,” of this document.

The draft of *Positive Youth Development: Research, Commentary, and Action* was reviewed by a concept team of district- and county-level prevention coordinators and health education consultants. Their suggestions for applying the research to the real world of schools and classrooms are also included in Chapter 3.

Definitions

Positive youth development is a relatively new prevention approach. It continues evolving, and terminology is therefore still fluid. Even among the three researchers cited above, there is not a completely uniform use of terms. Table 1 on the next pages defines terms **as they are used in this document**.

There is general agreement in the field that the youth development approach shifts the prevention focus from repairing deficits to building assets. Reducing risks and deficits is an essential strategy, but youth development is a complementary approach that accents building strengths and capacity. It assumes there are many paths to achieving a productive and healthy life.

Getting Results, Part I, California Action Guide to Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities cites Karen Pittman’s view that youth development strategies offer

youth opportunities for membership, social skill building, participation, clear norms, adult-youth relationships, and relevant information and services. She says, “[Our] long-term task is to help families, neighbors, and communities nurture, support, and demand excellence from our youth” (Pittman, 1995).

Part I also includes a research summary by Bonnie Benard about Emmy Werner’s resiliency studies. In the work of Werner, and of Benard herself, the focus is on the protective factors in the environment (e.g., caring relationships, high positive expectations, opportunities for meaningful participation) that promote positive youth development. They believe that supportive adults can foster positive individual outcomes and protect against negative outcomes in youth.

Table 1

Definitions of Terms as Used in *Positive Youth Development: Research, Commentary, and Action*

Term	Definition	Researcher
Assets	A range of relationships, social experiences, social environments, competencies, and skills that help to “inoculate” youth against health-compromising behavior.	Benson
Asset-building community	A community-shared commitment to promoting developmental assets of children and youth through support, boundaries, and opportunities.	Benson
Asset development	A vision that names the core elements of healthy development and the community actors needed to promote these building blocks.	Benson
Asset-oriented approach	A focus on positive youth development and building individual assets that will help youth attain a range of healthy outcomes for themselves and society, rather than a focus on punitive efforts to prohibit negative behavior.	Springer
Caring school community	Schools in which members care about each other, have opportunity for active participation and decision making, have feelings of belonging, and share norms, goals, and values.	Springer
Connectedness	A sense of closeness, affiliation, or bonding to a person(s), group(s), institution(s), or idea(s).	Resnick
Developmental assets	The building blocks of human development—such as family support, creative activities, achievement motivation—that promote health and protect young people from risk-taking behaviors.	Benson
External protective factors	Peer, family, school, and community influences on youth attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. External supports and opportunities such as caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities to participate and contribute.	Springer Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment Module (from Benard)

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Term	Definition	Researcher
Internal protective factors	Individual attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors (e.g., self-efficacy, positive beliefs about self). Resilience traits (positive developmental outcomes).	Springer Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment Module (from Benard)
Positive youth development	A set of developmental targets such as connection and empowerment that are important in the second decade of life.	Benson
Prevention	Any activity aimed at reducing the incidence of harmful behaviors and the possibilities of such behaviors occurring later in life.	U.S. Department of Education
Prevention mission	The creation and support of opportunities for positive behavior and development. Effective prevention must focus on the goal of promoting the positive behaviors that replace the accumulation of behavioral problems and recognize that some “deficit” behavior is normal for young people.	Springer
Protective environment	An environment characterized by caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities to participate in meaningful activities.	Benard
Protective factors	Relationships, social experiences, social environments, competencies, and skills that protect youth from health-compromising behavior and increase positive outcomes. External supports and opportunities for youth, such as caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation in activities, that foster positive developmental outcomes.	Benson Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment Module (from Benard)
Resilience traits	Such individual qualities and characteristics as social competence, autonomy, sense of self, and sense of purpose and future. These traits are enhanced by protective factors.	Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment Module (from Benard)
Resiliency	The ability to bounce back in the face of adversity; the ability to weather the effects of stress, insult, or injury. An area of research and practice grounded in environmental and psychological factors that help children transcend adversity.	Resnick Benson

Terms	Definition	Researcher
Risk	Environmental and personal deficits in the lives of youth that increase the probability of bad personal and social behaviors and outcomes. Most risk factors are beyond the control of youth workers.	Springer
Risky behavior	An act that increases the likelihood of an adverse outcome.	Resnick
Self-efficacy	Combined feelings of self-esteem, positive self-concept, and interpersonal competence.	Kumpfer and Turner
Thriving outcomes	Positive outcomes such as school success, affirmation of diversity, and a proactive approach to nutrition and exercise.	Benson
Youth development	An approach that helps youth build strong relationships with others, learn new skills, and give back to the community.	Pittman

Finally, the dialogue on positive youth development always includes discussion on the interrelated themes of internal and external risk and protection.

In this update, Springer says that terminology is less important than the overall framework and approach, because it is the mind-set or mission that determines what actions are undertaken. An asset-oriented approach creates actions that “help youth attain a broad range of healthy outcomes” throughout their lives, while a deficit-driven approach “focuses attention on eradicating negative attributes of experience and individual attitude and behavior.” Youth development researchers are in

agreement that prevention strategies based on a deficit model do not tend to build life-long healthy behaviors.

Despite the lack of a universal lexicon, California has begun to define the field for educators through the Resilience Assessment Module of the *California Healthy Kids Survey*. The module uses Bonnie Benard’s integration of the research literature, and defines external assets as protective factors and internal assets as resilience traits. The module will enable California educators to measure the protective factors and resilience traits of their youth, and to take action within a youth development framework.

Intersecting Themes

The research summaries and essays all cite the need to complement the dominant deficit-oriented paradigm—which Benson calls “naming, counting, and reducing the negative”—with an asset-oriented paradigm that promotes the positive. The research also emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive “not schools alone” approach—neighborhoods, families, the faith community, and schools must consistently act in concert to help youth feel empowered, affirmed, and connected.

Another significant point is reinforced by each researcher, the idea that **positive youth development is an approach and a way of thinking rather than a fragmented “magic bullet” program**. In this approach the role of adults is not to provide specific

services, but, as Resnick says, to “foster a close sense of connection, and to help open doors of possibility to help young people develop the capacity to enjoy life.” Those who become involved in this approach notice that they are energized and hopeful, rather than overwhelmed by a relentless emphasis on problems and solutions that tend to be restrictive.

There is clear agreement that schools are critical forums for positive human development. As Springer suggests, “teacher warmth and supportiveness, an emphasis on prosocial values, encouragement of cooperation, elicitation of student thinking and expression of ideas, and less reliance on extrinsic control [are] key elements of a caring school.”

Preview of Contents

Following this Introduction are three chapters: Commentaries and Research Summaries, Research into Action, and Resources for Positive Youth Development.

The commentaries and research summaries provide each researcher's perspective and contribution to the dialogue about positive youth development. Each researcher's commentary appears first, followed by his summaries of two key research studies. The summaries provide the underpinnings for the commentary and give the reader a model for critiquing research. The researcher discusses why the research is intrinsically important, what its limitations are, and why schools should be interested in it. Because their work is seminal in this new field, two of the three researchers were invited to comment on their own research.

Chapter 3 offers concrete steps schools can take to put the research on positive youth development into action. Many of the suggestions for how schools can build positive environments for staff, parents, and students were provided by prevention specialists on the *Getting Results* concept team. The Resilience Assessment Module of the *California Healthy Kids Survey*, which provides a way for schools to gauge students' levels of protective factors (external assets) and resilience traits (individual qualities and characteristics), is described next.

Finally, the resources section provides information about organizations and publications that offer further information and technical assistance in creating environments to promote positive youth development.

Reference

Pittman, Karen J. (1995, May). *Preventing problems or promoting development: Competing priorities or inseparable goals?* Paper presented at the 17th Annual Gisela Konopka Lecture. Washington, DC: International Youth Foundation.

Chapter 2

Commentaries and Research Summaries

CHAPTER 2

Commentaries and Research Summaries

Developmental Assets and Asset-Building Community

Researcher: Peter L. Benson, Ph.D.

Peter L. Benson is president of Search Institute in Minneapolis, a national organization that generates knowledge through research and promotes its application to advance the healthy development of children and adolescents. At Search Institute, Benson serves as author, researcher, consultant, and lecturer on youth development, community development, and the intersection of the two. He is also a professor at the University of Minnesota in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration. His most recent book (1997) is *All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents*.¹

Benson's commentary discusses the implications of functioning within a deficit-reduction model of prevention and asserts that we must shift our thinking to promoting the positive. One framework for this

approach is developmental assets, incorporating key learning from the fields of resiliency and youth development. Benson also discusses the role of schools and communities in building developmental assets in youth and lists specific steps for action.

Benson then summarizes two research articles that describe the measurement of forty developmental assets whose presence is protective against high-risk behavior patterns. Certain assets—such as positive peer influence, restraint, and school engagement—have particular power in deterring risky behavior—such as use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and violence, depression, and attempted suicide.

The research articles summarized are available from the Healthy Kids Resource Center (see the resource chapter for contact information).

¹For further information, contact Peter L. Benson at Search Institute, Thresher Square West, 700 S. Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55415. www.search-institute.org

Promoting Positive Human Development: The Power of Schools

Commentary by Peter L. Benson, Ph.D.

The Dominant Paradigm

American citizens and their leaders are deeply committed to promoting the health and well-being of children and adolescents. There is, of course, much at stake. How well we do—collectively as a nation and within all of our communities—dramatically informs not only shorter-term outcomes like school success but longer-term outcomes that include parenting effectiveness, productivity in the world of work, and civic engagement.

Much of the energy and resources we now use to promote health and well-being is framed within a deficit-reduction model. This dominant paradigm focuses on naming, counting, and reducing the negative. The “negative” includes risks to healthy development (e.g., poverty, family dysfunction, unsafe schools and neighborhoods, negative peer pressure) and problem behaviors (e.g., teen pregnancy, substance use, school dropout, antisocial behavior, the violent resolution of conflict). This approach—“this way of thinking and conceptualizing”

—often dominates the way communities plan, organize, and implement youth-serving policy, program, and practice.

This way of thinking is deeply entrenched. It leads too often to a categorical approach to prevention that is supported and encouraged by federally funded streams of research and practice dedicated to reducing developmentally harmful acts and experiences. It is one important approach. But by itself, it is insufficient. In fact, one could argue that the domination of deficit-reduction thinking has unintended negative consequences. As thinking and action in our communities organizes around the reduction of complicated and seemingly intractable behavioral problems, we tend to fuel the assumption that change requires, more than anything, the expansion of professionals who have the requisite expertise to introduce programs designed to reduce negative behavior and/or build competencies and skills to inoculate youth against risk-taking choices.

The Other Side of the Coin

Beneath the headlines about youth violence, crime, pregnancy, and other problems is an even more important and urgent story: In towns and cities across America, the developmental infrastructure is crumbling.

Too few young people grow up experiencing key ingredients for healthy development. They do not experience consistent support from adults, build relationships across generations, or hear consistent messages about boundaries and values.

Most have too little to do that is positive and constructive. The failure to provide these core elements of human development helps to explain the proliferation of problem behaviors that galvanize national attention.

Thus, the challenge facing us is not only to attack deficits and risks head-on but also to shift our thinking to a new approach—one that addresses deeper causes and needs.

The real challenge is to rebuild the developmental infrastructure for our children and adolescents. Though professionals and the public sector have a role to play, much of the responsibility and capacity for the healthy development of youth is in the hands of the people.

In raising healthy and successful youth, then, deep attention must also be given to naming, counting, and promoting the positive. It is the other side of the coin. But what is the script for naming the core building blocks of human development which every child and adolescent needs? In brief, three models have emerged in the 1990s. They are resiliency, youth development, and developmental assets.

Resiliency is an area of research and practice grounded in factors, both environmental and psychological, which help children transcend adversity. **Youth development** names a set of developmental targets that are important in the second decade of life (e.g., connection, competence, and empowerment). This field places high energy in developing programs in schools and other settings to meet these developmental needs.

The framework of **developmental assets** incorporates key learnings from the fields of resiliency and youth development and extends the conceptualization of positive human development beyond those two

fields. The framework, developed by Search Institute in Minneapolis, is grounded in an expansive theory-based and research-based exploration of positive human development.

In order to rebuild the developmental infrastructure for America's children and adolescents, we need to think boldly and expansively. **Positive development in the first two decades of life is not a program or a curriculum.** There are no magic potions or quick fixes that steer lives toward success, productivity, and responsibility.

In the past several decades, a deep body of knowledge has emerged concerning elements of human experience that have long-term, positive consequences for young people. This work explores a wide range of topics, including family dynamics, support from other community adults, school effectiveness, positive peer influence, value development, and the learning of social skills. Too often, however, these areas of inquiry are disconnected from each other in both scholarship and practice, so that each by itself too easily is seen as a panacea. What has been missing in national discourse is a broad vision that names all of the core elements of healthy development and all of the community actors (family, neighborhood, school youth organizations, congregations, and so on) needed to promote these essential building blocks.

The framework of developmental assets embodies this kind of far-reaching vision. In establishing benchmarks for positive child and adolescent development, it weaves together a wide range of essential developmental building blocks requiring broad community engagement to ensure their acquisition. The developmental asset framework enables families, schools, neigh-

borhoods, congregations, employers, and youth organizations to unite around a common language and employ complementary strategies toward a shared goal: healthy children and adolescents.

Ultimately, the forty developmental assets name building blocks of development which, when present, predict healthy outcomes for all youth, regardless of key social demographics (e.g., gender, family income, race-ethnicity, town size, region). Further-

more, the assets reflect core developmental processes. Accordingly, they include the kinds of relationships, social experiences, social environments, patterns of interaction, norms, and competencies over which a community of people has considerable control. That is, the assets are more about the primary processes of socialization than the equally important arenas of economy, service, and the bricks and mortar of a city.

Asset-Building Community

Based on a five-year research effort to study the forty developmental assets in more than a thousand U.S. cities, Search Institute has developed a new stream of scientific and practical work to help mobilize the people and institutions of communities to unleash community action to build developmental assets. These cross-sector, communitywide initiatives are now under way in hundreds of American cities, from large urban centers like Seattle and Portland to suburbs and small towns. Local initiatives are grounded in a set of shared understandings with both strategic and motivational import. These include:

- The developmental assets begin to frame a territory of positive human development that benefits all children and adolescents.
- Middle school and high school students (nationally and in the community) typically experience less than half of these developmental assets.
- The developmental assets serve as important protective and thriving factors.

- The developmental assets need to be nurtured by the community at large, not just by families and schools.

Asset-building communities are places with a widely shared commitment to unleashing individual and system capacity. They are distinguished as relational and intergenerational places that emphasize support, empowerment, boundaries, opportunities, and a shared commitment to developing internal assets. Developmental assets become a language of the common good, and the commitment to engage citizens and systems pursuing this common good is visible, long-term, and inclusive.

Following are some of the images we should be able to observe in asset-building communities, as contrasted with communities not engaged in collective asset building:

- All residents build caring relationships with children and adolescents and express this caring through dialogue, listening, commending positive behavior, knowing their names, acknowledging their presence, involving them in decision making, and doing things with them.

- Neighborhoods develop intentional mechanisms to name, know, and engage children and adolescents in constructive ways.
- Families elevate asset development to top priority for their own children and their children's friends.
- Religious institutions mobilize their capacity for naturally occurring inter-generational relationships, parent education, value development, quality structured opportunities, and service to the community.
- Schools place priority on becoming caring environments for all students, provide additional opportunities for the nurture of values deemed crucial by the community, strengthen cocurricular activities, and use connection to parents to escalate parental involvement and reinforce the importance of family attention to assets.
- Youth organizations train leaders and volunteers in asset-building strategies

and provide a continuum of opportunities for healthy relationships with adults and peers.

- Businesses that employ teenagers address the assets of support, boundaries, commitment to learning, values, and social competencies. Employers develop family-friendly policies and provide mechanisms for employees to build relationships with youth.
- Through policy, training, and resource allocation, city government moves asset development to top priority.

Ultimately, rebuilding and strengthening the developmental infrastructure in a community is not a program run by professionals. **It is a movement of people and systems that arises from and continually recreates a communitywide sense of common purpose and creates a normative culture in which all members of the community are expected to promote the positive development of children and adolescents.**

Implications for Schools and Schooling

In thinking about the role of schools in building developmental assets, we begin with several assumptions:

- Schools have the capacity to promote most of the developmental assets.
- It is in the self-interest of schools to promote developmental assets. As assets become stronger, school achievement increases.
- Schools are necessary but are not the only actors required for raising asset-rich youth.
- Much asset-building energy is informal,

relational, and nonprogrammatic.

- All adults and students within schools have asset-building capacity.
- Nearly all students in a school, not just those who are underachieving or at risk, need more developmental assets.
- The power of schools to build assets is not just about the climate, vision, and daily life of classrooms and school buildings. Schools and their leaders have particularly strong catalytic power to help unleash a larger community movement.

The public schools of Minneapolis are pioneering a process to put all of the foregoing principles into action. The school board has adopted a district improvement agenda that includes “building assets in partnership with families, neighborhoods, and community.” The agenda will provide support systems, including training for school staffs, to help each school in the district develop and implement an asset-building vision and plan, with innovations to be shared at cross-school gatherings. As importantly, the school district is catalyzing a larger city movement. In the fall of 1998, the superintendent and the mayor of Minneapolis hosted an all-day conference for six hundred civic leaders designed to trigger partnerships among neighborhoods, families, congregations, employers, media, foundations, and governmental entities in promoting an asset-building city. As one observer noted, “I have never seen before in Minneapolis such a uniting of people and sectors—across race, income, and turf—to share a vision and take action.”

How does a prevention specialist begin this transformative work? In this brief introduction, let me suggest some ways to start.

- Affirm one’s own asset-building capacity. In particular, name and affirm what one already does to build assets.
- Teach the developmental asset framework wherever one can—to teachers, administrators, and other school staff (including bus drivers, coaches, nurses, and social workers). Encourage personal affirmation of what one already does and empower all to envision additional asset-building strategies. Let the paradigm bubble up. Much asset-building change can occur before anyone in authority pronounces this as an official way. In fact, making it “official” may get in the way.
- Provide occasions for school staff to share with each other how they build assets.
- Teach the paradigm to parents.
- Teach the paradigm to service organizations, employers, civic leaders, and religious institutions.
- Ask students to help you create a picture, a vision, and a set of images of what an asset-building school and an asset-building classroom look like. Capture these ideas and spread them.
- Empower students to be active in change.
- Empower students to “own” the assets in their own development.
- Empower students to recognize their asset-building power in the lives of their peers.
- Affirm asset-building where you see it.
- Incorporate asset-building into cocurricular activities.
- Be bold, noisy, and relentless in a spirit of uniting and unleashing.

Beyond the “Village” Rhetoric: Creating Healthy Communities for Children and Adolescents²

Summary by Peter L. Benson, Ph.D.

Importance

This article is a theoretical and conceptual presentation of the impact of community on the development of children and adolescents. It discusses two original frameworks useful for understanding this connection: developmental assets and asset-building community.

The first author originally developed the concept of developmental assets in 1989. This concept has evolved into a research-based taxonomy of forty “building blocks” of human development which promote child and adolescent health. The developmental assets are a synthesis of decades of research in child and adolescent psychology and the more applied literatures of prevention, protective factors, and resiliency. This research synthesis focused on integrating developmental experiences that are known to influence three types of health outcomes: (a) the prevention of high-risk behaviors (e.g., substance use, violence, sexual intercourse, school dropout); (b) the enhancement of thriving outcomes (e.g., school success, affirmation of diversity, a proactive approach to nutrition and exercise); and (c) resiliency, or the capacity to rebound in the face of adversity. In further defining the framework, developmental assets were chosen for which there is scientific evidence that they promote health across a wide range of

demographics, including gender, race, ethnicity, and family income.

The forty assets include the range of relationships, social experiences, social environments, competencies, and skills which help to inoculate youth from many kinds of health-compromising behaviors, including alcohol use, tobacco use, illicit drug use, violence, school dropout, attempted suicide, and sexual activity. In addition, many of these same so-called protective factors are also important for increasing positive outcomes, including the affirmation of diversity, the development of leadership skills, and school achievement. (The list of forty developmental assets appears at the end of this summary.)

The paradigm of asset-building community articulates the potential power of each of many sectors within a community to promote the forty developmental assets. These include families, neighborhoods, faith communities, employees, youth organizations, and schools. The article argues that assets are particularly promoted in the lives of children and adolescents when all of these sectors share responsibilities for asset development and when asset-building energy is redundantly experienced across many of these socializing systems.

²Benson, P.L., Leffert, N., Scales, P.C., and Blyth, D.A. (1998). Beyond the “village” rhetoric: Creating healthy communities for children and adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science*, 2 (3), 138-159.

Intent

The survey-based research discussed in this article documents two important findings: that American adolescents, ages twelve through eighteen, typically lack most of the

forty developmental assets and that increasing the number of assets among youth is a powerful strategy for preventing many kinds of high-risk behaviors.

Sample and Methods

A 156-item anonymous survey was administered in 213 locations across the country in the 1996-97 school year to 99,462 public

school students (grades six through twelve). The locations included urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Findings

On the average, **students in this large sample possess only 18.0 of the 40 assets.** As hypothesized, the more assets, the better. Students with 31 or more assets, for example, are 17 times less likely to exhibit a pattern of alcohol use than students with 10 or fewer assets. Percentages of students who “have used alcohol three or more times in the last month, or binge drank once or more in the last two weeks” are as follows:

If 0–10 assets	53%
If 11–20 assets	30%
If 21–30 assets	11%
If 31–40 assets	3%

Boys in this study average 16.5 assets while girls average 19.5. There is surprisingly little variability by town size in the average number of assets. Youth in small towns, for example, average about the same number as do youth in large cities like Seattle, Portland, and Minneapolis. The challenge faced in all cities is that **only about 8 percent of students in grades six through twelve experience 31 to 40 assets. Across the country 62 percent of students experience 20 or fewer.**

Limitations

To date, the studies that demonstrate the cumulative power of developmental assets are cross-sectional in nature. It is not clear yet to what degree community initiatives can improve the asset profile of youth or to what degree schools acting alone or in concert with other community sectors can increase developmental assets. Several longitudinal studies under way in Colorado and Minnesota are designed to inform these questions.

The student sample was not nationally representative, but overrepresents Caucasian youth from smaller cities and towns, whose parents have higher-than-average formal education. It is likely, therefore, that the data underestimate youths' risk behaviors, overestimate their assets, and understate the degree of concern we ought to have about the developmental infrastructure for most youth, particularly among the economically disadvantaged.

Implications for Schools

The issues for schools are as follows: (a) how to organize classrooms and buildings to promote the developmental assets and (b) how to build partnerships within community (e.g., families, neighborhoods, congregations, youth organizations) to unleash the asset-building capacity of many systems. Search Institute is in the process of developing resources to assist schools, across grades K–12, to mobilize and unleash the asset-building capacity of schools. Work is also under way to conceptualize how assets develop in age spans of 0–2, 3–5, and 6–10.

As communities across the country implement communitywide asset-building

movements (about four hundred were under way in early 1999), it is particularly important to understand that many sectors of a community have the capacity to build assets. These sectors include families, neighborhoods, employers, religious institutions, and youth organizations. Schools are a necessary but not a sufficient source of developmental assets. That is, schools matter but can't carry the responsibility alone. One of the primary accomplishments of many asset-building community initiatives is building a new kind of unity and shared vision across all the sectors of community life.

Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets

Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

External Assets

Support

1. **Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive family communication**—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other adult relationships**—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring neighborhood**—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring school climate**—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent involvement in schooling**—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

Empowerment

7. **Community values youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as resources**—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to others**—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.

10. **Safety**—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries and Expectations

11. **Family boundaries**—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. **Adult role models**—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive peer influence**—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. **High expectations**—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time

17. **Creative activities**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. **Youth programs**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.

19. **Religious community**—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at home**—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning

21. **Achievement motivation**—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. **School engagement**—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. **Homework**—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. **Bonding to school**—Young person cares about her or his school.
25. **Reading for pleasure**—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Positive Values

26. **Caring**—Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. **Equality and social justice**—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. **Integrity**—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. **Honesty**—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”
30. **Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.

31. **Restraint**—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Social Competencies

32. **Planning and decision making**—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. **Interpersonal competence**—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. **Cultural competence**—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. **Resistance skills**—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.

Positive Identity

37. **Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
38. **Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. **Sense of purpose**—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”
40. **Positive view of personal future**—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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Developmental Assets: Measurement and Prediction of Risk Behaviors Among Adolescents³

Summary by Peter L. Benson, Ph.D.

Importance

This article describes, in depth, the development, measurement, and importance of forty developmental assets. These assets, individually and in combination, serve as a comprehensive framework for defining the breadth of protective factors. These forty developmental assets are strongly related to important outcomes. As assets rise in number, decreases occur in many high-risk behavior patterns, including alcohol use, tobacco use, violence, and antisocial behavior. And as assets rise in number, many indicators of thriving also rise, including school grades and school attendance. Hence, in a variety of ways, it is in the self-interest of schools to be deeply attentive to

promoting these elements of developmental strength.

The forty assets are divided into eight categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive time use, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. This article defines all of the assets and each of these categories. A review of the full taxonomy suggests that schools can theoretically enhance about thirty-five of the assets via adult-student relationships, classroom dynamics, cocurricular activities, school climate, parent education, and community partnerships.

Intent

This article describes the relationship of the forty developmental assets to ten forms of high-risk behavior and pinpoints specific

assets that are particularly powerful for shaping youth outcomes.

Sample and Method

A 156-item anonymous survey was administered in 213 locations across the country in the 1996-97 school year to 99,462 public

school students (grades six through twelve). The locations included urban, suburban, and rural communities.

³Leffert, N., Benson, P.L., Scales, P.C., Sharma, A.R., Drake, D.R., and Blyth, D.A. (1998). Developmental assets: Measurement and prediction of risk behaviors among adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science*, 2 (4), 209-230.

Findings

Table 2 shows that **increases in the number of developmental assets are related to decreases in many forms of high-risk behavior**. Specifically, the table shows that the percentage of youth engaged in patterns of high-risk behavior decreases with each stepwise increase in the number of assets they possess (0–10, 11–20, 21–30, 31–40).

The relationship of assets to high-risk behavior holds even after gender, age, race, ethnicity, family composition, and level of maternal education are controlled for.

Though the assets are cumulative (i.e., the more, the better), **some assets appear to**

have particular power in deterring high-risk behavior. For alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, the assets of positive peer influence and restraint are the most important protective factors. For violence and antisocial behavior, the most powerful protective factors are positive peer influence, restraint, and school engagement. For depression and attempted suicide, sense of purpose and self-esteem rise to the top. And for protecting against school problems, the strongest factors are achievement motivation, positive peer influence, and school engagement.

Limitations

Though the relationship between the number of assets and student health behaviors has been replicated in hundreds of community studies, more work is needed to document how well survey items and scales actually measure each of the forty developmental assets. New studies are under way to deepen knowledge about the

reliability and validity of the measures. Currently, the developmental asset survey is used only for large sample studies. **It has not yet been demonstrated how well this measurement tool captures the assets of an individual student**. New work is under way to plan the development of an individual-level measurement tool.

Implications for Schools

The findings presented here contribute to the increasing body of evidence that core elements of community life—the engagement and participation of multiple community forces, persons, organizations, and sectors—serve as important protective factors across multiple domains of child and adolescent health. These findings are pervasive, engaging us to think more broadly

about the cumulative effects or “pile up” of positive developmental features in lives of children and adolescents. The challenge (and opportunity) for schools is to discern their role in asset building. Particular, but not exclusive, emphasis should be given to mobilizing positive peer influence, the value of restraint, and school engagement.

Table 2

Percentages of Students Exhibiting High-Risk Behaviors, by Number of Assets They Possess

High-Risk Behavior Patterns		% with High-Risk Patterns			
Category	Definition	0–10 Assets	11–20 Assets	21–30 Assets	31–40 Assets
Alcohol	Used alcohol three or more times in the past month or got drunk once or more often in the past two weeks.	53	30	11	3
Tobacco	Smokes one or more cigarettes every day or uses chewing tobacco frequently.	45	21	6	1
Illicit Drugs	Used illicit drugs three or more times in the past year.	42	19	6	1
Sexual Intercourse	Has had sexual intercourse three or more times in lifetime.	33	21	10	3
Depression-Suicide	Is frequently depressed and/or has attempted suicide.	40	25	13	4
Antisocial Behavior	Has been involved in three or more incidents of shoplifting, trouble with police, or vandalism in the past year.	52	23	7	1
Violence	Has engaged in three or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying or using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the past year.	61	35	16	6
School Problems	Has skipped school two or more days in the past month and/or has below a C average.	43	19	7	2
Driving and Alcohol	Has driven after drinking or ridden with a drinking driver three or more times in the past year.	42	24	10	4
Gambling	Has gambled three or more times in the past year.	34	23	13	6

Protective Factors: Connections That Count

Researcher: Michael D. Resnick, Ph.D.

Michael D. Resnick is director of the National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Research Center, and professor and director of research in the Division of Pediatrics and Adolescent Health at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. He is a member of the research team for Add Health (the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health), specializing in risk and protective factors relative to adolescent health and risk behavior. His general research interests include adolescent health, risk behaviors, resiliency and protective factors in the lives of youth, and translation of research into programs, policies, and practices.⁴

Resnick's commentary traces one of the roots of positive youth development to a 1973 paper written by Gisela Konopka on the fundamental requirements for healthy adolescent development. He explains that promoting protective factors for healthy

development, in addition to reducing young people's risks, offers a different view of prevention. The role of adults becomes one of fostering a sense of connection rather than providing services to adolescents.

Resnick's research summaries focus on the impact of several protective factors on the health and risky behaviors of adolescents. These factors are adolescents' perception of being cared for and connected to others. Data from two studies showed that feelings of connection with family and school protected youth from engaging in a variety of risky behaviors.

The research articles that are summarized are available from the Healthy Kids Resource Center (see the resource chapter for contact information).

⁴For more information, contact Michael Resnick at Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, D373 Mayo Memorial Building, 420 Delaware Street, S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-0381. resni001@tc.umn.edu

Resiliency, Protective Factors, and Connections That Count in the Lives of Adolescents

Commentary by Michael D. Resnick, Ph.D.

At times we “rediscover” ideas that were once accepted widely as valid. Across an array of professionals working with and on behalf of adolescents, whether in education, social services, health care, or juvenile justice, there is increasing attraction to the idea that young people have certain fundamental, underlying needs for healthy development. When these needs are met, it is assumed, these adolescents are more likely to develop as caring, compassionate, effective individuals with sparkle and zest for life. What are these needs of youth that must be met?

In his book, *Western Civilization in Biological Perspective*, Stephen Boyden, professor of human ecology at the Australian National University, describes the universal, underlying psychosocial needs of human beings that are conducive to health and happiness. He uses as evidence everything that had been learned about hunter-gatherer societies, the social form in which we, as *Homo sapiens*, have spent most of our time in evolutionary history. He suggests that this enumeration of needs for healthy development provides clues to the universal health needs of the human species. These universal health needs include an environment and lifestyle that provide a sense of personal involvement, belonging, responsibility, a sense of challenge, satisfaction, comradeship and love, pleasure, confidence, and security (Boyden 1987; Eckersley 1993).

What a different world it would be if our environments and lifestyles were typically characterized by these elements. What is clear to a growing number of observers is that postmodern life no longer offers these qualities (Eckersley 1993). Those persons who focus on building protective factors in the lives of young people assume that when these elements exist, or are transplanted into the lives of youth who have not had such experiences, the result will be greater health, happiness, and less destructiveness toward self and others.

Boyden’s list of needs for human growth and development may not speak to adolescence as a unique developmental period in the human experience. For that, consider the work of Gisela Konopka, who was asked more than a quarter century ago to write a paper articulating the fundamental requirements for healthy adolescent development by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Konopka 1973). Against a backdrop of social unrest, anti-war protests, civil rights activism, and pervasive expressions of youth culture when the media had elicited antiyouth sentiment among many adults, Konopka identified eight fundamental requirements for healthy adolescent development:

- Participating as citizens, as members of a household, as workers, as responsible members of society
- Gaining experience in decision making

- Interacting with peers, and acquiring a sense of belonging
- Reflecting on self, in relation to others, and discovering self by looking outward as well as inward
- Discussing conflicting values and formulating one's own value system
- Experimenting with one's own identity, with relationships to other people, with ideas; trying out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably
- Developing a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals
- Cultivating a capacity to enjoy life

At age 89, Konopka added the following to her list: participating in the creative arts, learning self-expression, and communicating deep feelings from within (Konopka 1998).

So what is the common, underlying philosophy embedded in this view? The assumption is that young people are resources to be treasured and developed, not problems to be solved (McLaughlin and others 1994). A focus on the promotion of protective factors in addition to risk reduction in young people signals a commitment to developing capacities and competencies for which the involvement of caring, compassionate adults is essential. This is a very different view from only providing services to adolescents. The role of adults here is to foster a close sense of connection, and to help open doors of possibility (Blum 1998).

And what if we are working with decision-makers who do not view as appealing the idea of promoting resiliency and healthy youth development? What about the skeptics who are not swayed by enthusiastic

descriptions of promoting a competent citizenry of youth? What do we say to those who truly believe that the world is filled with the same challenges and temptations that they faced when they were teens, and that if young people don't turn out right, it is because they're fundamentally bad kids who need to live with highly punitive consequences?

Martha Burt of the Urban Institute challenges us with a provocative and troubling question that provides material for a persuasive response: What will the consequences be if we do not make investments in resiliency and healthy youth development? There is a compelling language and logic here, because the concept of costs and benefits is widely demanded by legislators, funders, and other constituents. According to the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, when we look specifically at the utility of promoting school competency and achievement as a protective factor among young people, we find that:

- Each year's class of high school dropouts, over the course of their lifetime, will cost the nation \$260 billion in lost earnings and foregone taxes.
- Over a lifetime, the average high school dropout will earn \$230,000 less than a high school graduate, and contribute \$70,000 less in taxes.
- Each additional year of secondary education reduces the probability of public welfare dependency in adulthood by 35 percent, with associated reductions in public costs (Carnegie 1983; Burt 1998).

Citing Cohen's work at the Urban Institute, Burt goes on to note the social costs associated with a typical career criminal. For the victim, those costs include lost produc-

tivity, medical expenses, intangible costs like pain and suffering, reduced quality of life, and probability of premature death. Criminal justice costs include police, investigative, court, and imprisonment costs. Foregone earnings of the youth while incarcerated are also part of the social costs.

Looking at the mix of crimes that might be expected of a career criminal, the estimated monetary value of saving one high-risk youth is \$1.5 to \$2.0 million. As Burt emphasizes, even if the underlying economic assumptions inflate the estimate by a factor of 10, these savings still justify considerable investment in high-risk youth in the direction of building resiliency and promoting healthy development (Burt 1998).

A few concluding thoughts: Our real goal—whether in education, health, social services, youth work, or a related area of endeavor—is achieving a concept borrowed from statistics: the metaphor of goodness of fit. We seek to maximize the fit between the needs of young people for healthy development, and the opportunities, events, life experiences, and services we provide to them that are designed to build resiliency, competence, and confidence. We want, ultimately, as Konopka has insisted, to help young people develop the capacity to enjoy life (Konopka 1973).

We approach our efforts with a well-understood caveat. There are times when those working with and on behalf of adolescents also need to have their hope and sense of possibilities renewed. Sometimes, that kind of reinvigoration can occur through a powerful image or anecdote. The following parable is adapted from the writings of Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, who teaches that whatever the question or problem is,

there is always something we can do, some improvement at hand we can bring to bear:

Once upon a time there was an emperor, and the emperor heard of a very wise woman. The wise woman was known for her powers. She knew how to listen to the wind and interpret its melody as it rippled upon the waters. She could hear the symphony of the stars. She understood the language of the birds. She knew everything. So the emperor commanded she be summoned to the palace. The emperor said to her:

“Is it true you understand the language of the birds?”

“I think so.”

“Is it true you know how to read the traces the wind leaves?”

“I think so.”

“Is it true you know the symphony of the stars?”

“I think so.”

“In that case,” said the emperor, “I also heard that you know how to read someone else’s mind. Can you read my mind?”

“I think so.”

“In that case,” said the emperor, “I have in my hands behind my back, a bird. Tell me: is it living, or is it dead?”

The wise woman was afraid. Maybe the bird was still living, and then the emperor—in order to prove a point—would kill the bird. So she waited for a very long moment, and then smiled, looked straight into the eyes of the emperor and said,

“Majesty, the answer is in your hands.”

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The Impact of Caring and Connectedness on Adolescent Health and Well-Being⁵

Summary by Michael D. Resnick, Ph.D.

Importance

This article explicitly put to the test an assumption that has been growing among a wide variety of educators, practitioners, advocates, and others working with and on behalf of young people: that the involvement of caring, competent adults in the lives of youth can protect them from involvement in a variety of health-risking behaviors. Importantly, the protective

factors utilized in this study are, for the most part, amenable to intervention, meaning that schools, community-based organizations, families, and others can take actions with likely positive consequences for youth in general, and young people at high risk, in particular.

Intent

The intent of this study is to empirically investigate the impact of several risk and protective factors on the health and risky behaviors of adolescents. The health-risking behaviors of interest here comprise the sources of most morbidity and mortality affecting adolescents. They are analyzed as clusters of risky behaviors, since previous studies have consistently demonstrated that adolescents involved in one type of health-jeopardizing behavior are likely to

be involved in other behaviors as well. The analysis sought to clarify the relative importance of such protective factors as feeling close to and connectedness with family, parents, and school in comparison to other factors widely used by both professionals and the general public to explain adolescent risky behaviors. Examples of these other factors are single-parent family composition and lower socioeconomic status.

Sample and Method

Utilizing data from the Minnesota Adolescent Health Survey conducted in 1988, the investigators analyzed self-reported questionnaire data from a sample of over 36,000 girls and boys in public schools, grades seven through twelve.

Statistical techniques were utilized to identify the relative importance of variables in explaining behaviors, which were attributed to one or both of two clusters of risky behaviors: the **quietly disturbed behaviors**, and the **acting out behaviors**. Quietly disturbed behaviors included: poor

⁵Resnick, M.D., Harris, L.J., Blum, R.W. (1993). The impact of caring and connectedness on adolescent health and well-being. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 29, suppl 1:s3-s9.

body image; disordered eating, including bingeing, deliberate vomiting as a strategy for weight loss, chronic dieting, and fear of loss of control of eating; emotional distress; and suicidal involvement. Acting out behaviors included: multiple drug use; school absenteeism; risk of unintentional injury (e.g., drinking and driving, not

wearing seatbelts, use of motorcycles or all-terrain vehicles without a helmet, riding in the back of an open pickup truck); pregnancy risk (becoming pregnant or causing a pregnancy); and delinquent involvement (antisocial behaviors such as physical fighting, vandalism, and theft). Results were reported for each of the two behavior clusters, separately analyzed by gender.

Findings

As hypothesized, **measures of caring and connectedness were more robust than other measures in their capacity to protect against involvement in both the quietly disturbed and acting out behaviors.** For girls, the rank order importance of protective factors for quietly disturbed behaviors included: family connectedness; school connectedness; low levels of family stress measured in terms of domestic violence, parental substance abuse, poverty, and unemployment; religious/spiritual connectedness; and younger age (i.e., junior high school vs. high school). Protective factors for boys in this domain included: family connectedness, school connectedness, and low family stress.

Protective factors for the acting out behaviors for girls included: school connectedness, young age, family connectedness, religious/spiritual connectedness, low family stress, and two-parent family. For the boys, protection came from school connectedness, family connectedness, religious/spiritual connectedness, younger age, low family stress, and two-parent family. **Across both clusters of behaviors, for both girls and boys, measures of closeness to and connectedness with family and school were the most salient, cross-cutting protective factors evident.** Family stress levels and an adolescent's sense of spirituality were also salient buffers against involvement in health-jeopardizing behaviors.

Limitations

This analysis is limited to one statewide survey in one region of the country. It utilized in-school youth only, clearly excluding dropouts and adolescents characterized by chronic absenteeism. Both school attendance behaviors are markers for high-risk status for all of the outcomes analyzed in

this study. The data, though a decade old, provided the foundation upon which subsequent analyses using a nationally representative sample of in-school youth were conducted.

Implications for Schools

The results highlight two key messages: (1) risk behaviors of adolescents occur in clusters and should not be addressed singly, in isolation from each other; (2) recurring, robust, cross-cutting protective factors apparently apply across those behaviors. The protective factors have the potential to promote the health and well-being of adolescents, using interventions that emanate from school, community, youth-serving

religious institutions, and certainly from the family, however it is defined or constituted for the adolescent.

For schools, the protective factor most amenable to action is increasing young people's sense of connection to school, enabling students to perceive school personnel as caring about them and to like being in school.

Protecting Adolescents from Harm⁶

Summary by Michael D. Resnick, Ph.D.

Importance

Building on previous analyses of risk and protective factors in the lives of youth, this article utilized the largest, most comprehensive longitudinal study of adolescent health, risk behavior, resiliency, and protective factors ever undertaken with a nationally representative sample of adolescents in the United States. Rather than providing yet another “report card” on the problems of youth, the analysis focused specifically on factors associated with increased or diminished likelihood of involvement by

young people in eight areas of risk, including emotional distress; suicidality; interpersonal violence perpetration; substance use, including cigarette, alcohol, or marijuana use; age of first sexual intercourse; and history of pregnancy. The analyses examined risk and protective factors at the family, school, and individual levels to identify key factors within each of those domains that might be used to protect young people from harm.

Intent

By congressional mandate, the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) was developed to understand the determinants of adolescent health and risk behavior. The study team sought, in this first paper, to highlight risk and protective factors related to the major sources of adolescent health risk in a nationally representative sample of youth in seventh

through twelfth grades. By controlling for the effects of gender, race and ethnicity, poverty, and family composition, the study team could identify cross-cutting factors to use for health promotion and protection across a variety of populations of youth, protecting them against multiple health-jeopardizing behaviors.

Sample and Method

The Add Health study began with a representative sample of 80 high schools and 54 associated feeder schools across the United States. These included public, private, parochial, magnet, and alternative schools at junior and senior high school levels. Approximately 90,000 students responded

to a brief, self-administered questionnaire. School administrators also completed a self-administered questionnaire on school policies and characteristics. From the student sample and from school rosters, the core sample of approximately 20,000 youth was selected. Computer-assisted surveys

⁶Resnick, M.D., Bearman, P.S., Blum, R.W., Bauman, K.E., Harris, K.M., Jones, J., Tabor, J., Beuhring, T., Sieving, R.E., Shew, M., Ireland, M., Bearinger, L.H., and Udry, J. R. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 278: 823-832.

were completed at Time 1 and at a one-year follow-up in the students' homes. A parent of each adolescent interviewed at home was also invited to complete a half-hour interview. Taken together, these datasets provided detailed information on the individual adolescent, her or his school, family,

Findings

While significant risk and protective factors varied for each of the behaviors studied, there were consistent, recurring results that underscored which risk and protective factors were most critical to understanding and ultimately preventing health-jeopardizing behaviors among youth. **A key protective variable in the family domain was parent-family connectedness**, measured as perceived closeness to mother and/or father, perceived caring by mother and/or father, satisfaction with parent relationships, and feeling loved and wanted by family members. Other salient family factors were shared parent-adolescent activities, parental presence in the home during any of four times (when the adolescent got up in the morning, coming home from school, during the evening meal, and when going to bed), and parental expectations for the adolescent's school completion.

While a variety of school-level variables were assessed, **the only school factor to show consistent protective effects was**

and community contexts. After developing valid, reliable, robust measures for each of the key risk and protective factors and health behaviors, statistical models were developed to identify key risk and protective factors for the risk behaviors of interest.

school connectedness, measured in terms of whether the adolescent perceived teachers to care, to be fair, and whether the teen felt a sense of belonging at school. **School connectedness was far more important a variable than any school characteristic** such as size, type of school, or specific school policies or programs.

The personal importance placed on religion and prayer was a key, recurring individual-level protective factor.

Salient family-level risk factors included easy access to alcohol, drugs, and firearms within the home; and family suicide attempt or completion. No other school-level variables showed consistent relationships across health risk behaviors.

Individual risk factors of note were: perceived risk of untimely death, paid work during the school year for 20 or more hours per week, appearing older or younger than most peers, repeating a grade as well as low grade point average, and same-sex attraction or behaviors.

Limitations

This analysis included only the initial cross-sectional dataset. Our current analyses with the one-year longitudinal data will considerably advance our understanding of risk and protective factors and how they work over time. By focusing on an initial

sample of in-school youth, the sample excludes school dropouts, although the one-year follow-up does permit analysis of students who dropped out between Time 1 and Time 2.

Implications for Schools

For an audience of educators, the initial findings underscore the important role of school connectedness as an arena of health promotion and protection for young peo-

ple, who gain that sense from perceptions that can be affected by teachers and other school personnel.

The Importance of Schools in Promoting Internal and External Protective Factors

Researcher: J. Fred Springer, Ph.D.

J. Fred Springer is director of research at EMT Associates, Inc. In this position he manages major research projects; designs and reviews research methods, instrumentation, and analysis for all EMT studies; and presents EMT research products and results in a variety of settings. Springer is also a professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis where he teaches in the public policy doctoral program and public policy administration master's program, and serves as a fellow in the Public Policy Research Centers. He also acts as project director for the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) National Cross-site Evaluation Study of High Risk Youth Programs, a five-year project that tracks approximately ten thousand youth at fifty program sites nationwide.⁷

The first part of Springer's commentary is a primer on how to review prevention research and apply it. He points out that the research and practice perspectives "provide two distinct kinds of knowledge that must be synthesized"; a scientifically

validated prevention strategy will only be effective if it is appropriate to a given school or community. The second part of Springer's commentary describes the change that has occurred in the prevention field, moving from problems that need to be reduced to personal and environmental attributes that should be promoted. In this section, he comments on several of the research studies that are reviewed in this update.

The two research articles selected and reviewed by Springer confirm the importance of schools as the central forum for the formation of internal and external protective factors in youth. They also recognize that creating change in the school environment is much more difficult than adopting new prevention curricula in the classroom.

The research articles that are summarized are available from the Healthy Kids Resource Center (see the resource chapter for contact information).

⁷ For more information, contact J. Fred Springer at EMT Associates, Inc., 408 North Euclid Avenue, Second Floor, St. Louis, MO 63108. Fred@emt.org

Beyond the Magic Bullet: How We Can Achieve Science-Based Prevention

Commentary by J. Fred Springer, Ph.D.

Teachers, counselors, and other youth workers understand implicitly that there is no “magic bullet” in their efforts to promote positive development in youth. Every child is different, the world is a dynamic place in which crises arise and diversions occur, and the reaction of an individual child to any one intervention is relatively uncertain. Youth workers have their own personalities, preferences, and perspectives. They “click” with some youth and do not with others. Both practitioner knowledge and research findings support the importance of the skill and perceptiveness of the adult helper if prevention interventions are to work. **No single curriculum or scientifically validated prevention strategy will replace the skill and judgment of program designers and deliverers in constructing programs that make sense in their schools and communities.**

Such evidence about working with youth sometimes seems to conflict with the call for more “science-based” approaches to prevention activities intended to protect our young people from substance abuse, violence, school failure, early pregnancy, and similar negative behaviors and problems. Exhortations for science-based pre-

vention may be seen to imply that research produces “findings” that are superior to the accumulated knowledge and experience of youth workers. Prevention workers are naturally skeptical about these perceived claims when they read a research report or evaluation study, seeing the reasons that this particular theory or that particular program may not apply to their school or their kids and the important perspectives and circumstances that the research could not encompass in a single study.

The purpose of this commentary is to offer a perspective on science-based prevention that does not draw strict boundaries or hierarchical relations between prevention research and practice. **This perspective recognizes that science-based practice requires that youth workers know how to look for relevant material in research findings, and then know how to apply that material to the specific circumstances of their practice.** To develop and apply this perspective, I present several important themes concerning the relationship of science and applicable knowledge, reference examples of those themes, and summarize conclusions and implications for schools as forums for effective prevention activities.

Science and Applicable Knowledge

The prevention field, as other professional fields, has increasingly turned to program evaluation as a form of applied research that will identify effective practice. Similarly, funding organizations have increasingly sought to fund “proven” programs, with the major criterion for “proof” being positive evaluation results. The emergence of program evaluation as a major vehicle for promoting science-based practice has brought positive developments, but it has also provided unintended support for the idea that practitioners should look to science for a “magic bullet” approach to prevention.

Program evaluation, particularly in its more rigorous forms, focuses on whether a whole program achieves its outcome objectives. The frequently drawn inference is that the purpose of evaluation is to identify programs that “work,” and that these proven programs will constitute the “magic bullets” that practitioners can use, if they implement them with sufficient fidelity (i.e., as proven). Although program evaluation is an important contributor to science-based practice, the notion that a study can approve specific programs because they “work” disagrees with the traditional use of scientific knowledge, which is to **provide basic, reasonably generalizable understanding of complex problems so that practitioners (e.g., engineers) can design effective solutions (e.g., prevention programs), given their specific purposes and particular environment.** Thus, research-based prevention will use the general understanding of positive youth development and how to encourage it to inform the development of prevention activities in specific schools and communities. The following discussion identifies

important perspectives on the effective use of research reports and findings to build research-based prevention programs.

The Importance of Replication. One of the reasons that the impact of research on practice is not more evident is because the translation from a single study with concrete findings to actual programs and practices in the work place is not, and cannot be, simple and direct. Program evaluations, for instance, are field studies that most frequently address single programs in single locations. Specific findings about a program serving one group of children, implemented by one set of youth workers, in one community may not apply when any of these circumstances change. Thus, the one-on-one transfer of practice from a research site to actual practice in other settings is not a realistic expectation; there is no such thing as a “crucial experiment” in the social sciences.

Researchers know that because of social diversity, single studies do not provide knowledge sufficient to guide action. Some studies are more applicable to one practitioner’s particular situation than to others, but no one study provides information that applies to all situations. **Multiple studies finding complementary results in multiple settings are necessary to produce findings of general value.** Researchers call this principle “replication.” For practitioners, it means that patterns of findings over multiple studies command more attention than striking findings based on one study alone. Indeed, presenting summaries of multiple studies is one of the strengths in the approach to research utilization in *Getting Results*.

The Importance of “Big” Ideas. One of the first statements I make to beginning students in my seminars on policy research is “You won’t believe how simple-minded you have to be to conduct rigorous social research.” Doing research on the complex and dynamic social world requires simplifying assumptions—the simple definition of variables so they can be measured, the development of simple models so they can be tested, the development of simple theories so they can be understood. This simplification of the world is necessary to the researcher, but it does not easily translate into guides to action for the practitioner who must live in the dynamic complexity of reality. Practitioners must look for the “big ideas” that lie behind specific studies and provide a bridge to their application.

The Importance of Mission. One guide to fashioning concepts that are useful in a particular setting is a clear understanding of the organizational, programmatic, or personal mission that underlies the action that is being taken. Research may inform, but cannot dictate, the fundamental characteristics of mission that provide the rationale and the motivational appeal for action. As an example, this publication and other current work in the field of prevention are intended to re-orient our thinking from a risk- or deficit-based framework, to a protection- or asset-based approach. Although existing research can provide important information that is interpretable within either approach, the action implications are very different.

The asset-based approach focuses on positive youth development and building individual assets that will help youth attain a broad range of healthy outcomes

for themselves and society, while the deficit orientation focuses attention on eradicating negative attributes of experience and individual attitude and behavior. Deficit thinking leads more naturally to punitive approaches, while asset thinking links more naturally to support and development. Clear articulation and understanding of mission provides an important basis for shaping the big ideas that help us interpret specific research findings and utilize them to inform action.

The Importance of Context. Scientists value findings that can be generalized, while practitioners must apply science-based knowledge in specific settings that serve specific target populations. To be most useful in informing practice, research results must report the important characteristics of the context in which findings are developed. Practitioners correspondingly use their own knowledge of their environment to select, modify, and otherwise interpret the implications of findings for their setting.

The Importance of Applicability. The research community tends to emphasize the application of rigorous criteria of research design and analysis to determine the quality of findings, while practitioners must be more concerned with the applicability of implications of findings in their work environment and on the consistency of findings with current knowledge and practice in the field. Researchers tend to ask questions like “Is there true random assignment?” while practitioners must ask “Do the findings make sense within what we know about helping young people, and can they guide practice in the setting in which I work?”

Summary. In summary, the preceding discussion emphasizes that research and practical experience provide two distinct kinds of knowledge that must be synthesized in research-based prevention. Research can produce scientifically valid findings and interpretations that support the development of patterns of understanding useful to practitioners. These patterns must be based on multiple-site findings, whether in a single project or research program or across separate studies. Findings must be accompanied by sufficient contextual and process detail to allow practitioners to understand the strengths and limits of application to their specific environment.

On the practitioners' side, the challenge is to identify those aspects of the research that apply to their situation and to develop action steps to implement them. For example, classroom teachers interested in promoting school bonding must assess what actions might be attainable at the district, building, and classroom levels. In an unsupportive district or building environment, teachers may have to focus on those aspects of research findings that apply directly to their classroom conduct. Effective science-based prevention requires that practitioners have commitment and creativity, as well as a relevant research base.

Science-Based Prevention: Emerging Lessons

Getting Results provides a resource for the advancement of science-based prevention. It provides summaries of scientifically-credible studies that have been selected by experts as articles every school-based prevention worker should recognize. The volume is widely disseminated among school personnel as a compendium of research information from which patterns of findings relevant to different environments can be discerned. The remainder of this essay uses findings from research articles from this update of *Getting Results* to provide substantive examples of the kinds of contribution that research-based results can make to understanding prevention and providing a basis for action. We have learned a lot in the field of prevention, and the articles reviewed here support big ideas that provide relevant and science-based implications for schools as forums for prevention. These excellent pieces of research crystallize themes that are found throughout the

prevention literature.

Positive Youth Development. For years the field of prevention has been preoccupied with the concept of risk, those environmental and personal deficits in the lives of youth that increase the probability of bad personal and social behaviors and outcomes. Research focuses on the deficit end of the deficit-to-asset continuum. By focusing on assets, resiliency, or protective factors, prevention research turns to identifying environmental and personal attributes that should be promoted in youth, rather than those that should be reduced.

The implications for action of this reorientation are profound.

- The motivation and enthusiasm of youth workers is stimulated much more effectively by focusing on what is good in youth rather than on what is bad. This perspective fosters optimism, a favorable attitude for anyone under-

taking a difficult task.

- The asset orientation is more closely tied to action because many of the risk factors identified in the literature are beyond the control of youth workers in a particular setting. Risk factors embedded in the larger society leave school personnel frustrated in their inability to change things. The articles in this volume demonstrate that the protective factor orientation allows school and other youth helpers to identify those assets they can support in youth.
- The positive orientation in the assets perspective focuses on creating opportunity and fostering positive behavior rather than on punitive efforts to prohibit negative behavior. Work by Battistich et al. and others provides evidence of the desirability of creating a positive environment rather than relying on extrinsic control, which research has consistently shown to be ineffective in altering long-term behavior.
- The focus on assets, protective factors, and resiliency constitutes a change in the prevention mission. It brings a more positive and action-oriented set of criteria for identifying the contributions of research to action.

This reorientation is completely consistent with my own favorite definition of the prevention mission—**to create and support capability and opportunity for positive behavior and development**. This mission provides both an agenda for prevention research and a focus for prevention practice that reflects the scientific findings reviewed above.

Cumulative Effects. The interconnectedness of assets or protective factors is a clear theme in prevention research. The work of

Benson, Resnick, and others clearly demonstrates that these positive attributes are interconnected in the lives of youth, and that the overall number of assets is more important for positive behaviors and outcomes than the presence of any single or few critical factors. This fundamental idea also has important implications for action.

One implication is the realization that effective prevention for all youth cannot be realized only in the family, or only in the community, or indeed only in the schools. **To fashion the strongest fabric of protection for all youth requires collaboration and consistency in various aspects of the youth environment. Schools must do their best because they are a critical environment for youth, but they cannot carry the burden alone.** They must reach out to collaborate with families and other social institutions.

A second and more controversial point is that deficits—risks or problem behaviors are also interconnected. Specific problem behaviors (e.g., substance use) are sometimes defined as the products of risk and other times defined as risks for other behaviors (e.g., school dropout, violence). Like assets, deficits form a syndrome of behaviors within which it is difficult and unnecessary to define explicit causal sequences. Similarly, bad outcomes for youth and society are related to the severity and number of these outcomes that a child manifests.

Seeking to completely eliminate a particular behavior (e.g., zero tolerance policies) represents potential misdirection of effort in trying to eradicate levels and examples that are not related to the accumulation of problem behaviors that undermine a child's future and produce real social harm. Effective prevention must focus on the goal

of promoting the positive behaviors that replace the accumulation of behavioral problems, and recognize that some “deficit” behavior is normative for young people, particularly adolescents.

The Importance of Connections. Another pattern of findings across the articles in this update provides insight into the ways that protective factors work in the lives of all young people. Underlying many of these factors is the importance of connections between youth and their social milieu. Family bonding, school bonding, associations with positive peers, a sense that school is a fair and caring place where they belong—all of these factors reflect the underlying importance of connectedness to the social environment. My own current work with the National Cross-site Evaluation of High Risk Youth Programs clearly reinforces the importance of connection in the sequence of protective factors that produce positive outcomes for all youth. In that ongoing study, structural modeling for more than ten thousand youth at risk demonstrates that **family bonding is a fundamental protective factor**, enabling the exercise of other environmental protections such as parental supervision. Without bonding, close supervision drives youth away from parents; with bonding, it influences behavior. Similarly, the study reinforces the importance of **connectedness to school as a context for developing efficacy and school achievement** and connectedness to organized community opportunities for reinforcing protection.

The implication is that protective factors are not solely internal. They cannot be injected into the youth as suggested by the “inoculation” metaphor. Fostering assets and youth development is an interactive

process that requires effort and change in elements of the external environment of youth. Connectedness is not a one-way street; it requires that families and schools become more caring and supportive of positive opportunities, and that they work with youth to develop the internal orientations that will allow them to use these opportunities.

The Centrality of Schools. The final and most important point for educators is that the articles reviewed here typify the consistent findings throughout the research literature on the centrality of the school experience in building many external and internal assets for youth. In the Kumpfer and Turner article (see page 49), academic self-efficacy is a key protective element in the prevention of substance abuse among youth. The close association of school bonding and performance with motivation, self-efficacy, positive outlook, and other labels associated with internal protection is replicated in many studies of protective factors and is a key theme in the articles reviewed in *Getting Results*. Put simply, **the research clearly shows that school is a critical forum of opportunity and support for positive behavior and development in youth**. Schools are the primary place in which youth have the opportunity to contribute to social activities, to achieve, and to receive recognition. Schools are a fundamental part of prevention for youth.

An important implication follows from the major points made above. The contribution of schools to prevention is not to provide access to children for prevention workers to inoculate students against harm through curricula or presentations. **Effective prevention does not mean taking time away from the essential educational functions of school; it means permeating school activi-**

ties with an orientation to creating and supporting positive behavior and development.

This vision of schools as a forum for positive achievement presents real challenges to school administrators and staff. A detailed discussion of concrete strategies and activities to realize the vision goes beyond the purposes of this essay, and, indeed, this is the kind of context-specific activity that requires the interpretation and creativity of practitioners' experience in their own schools. Nevertheless, the articles reviewed here do provide specific suggestions from which practitioners can draw. Resnick's research summaries (pages 32–37) identify the importance of perceptions of schools as caring and fair, and as places where youth can belong. Similarly, Kumpfer and Turner (pages 49–51) find

that schools that are perceived as supportive, cooperative, and fair contribute to school bonding and self-efficacy in their students. Most explicitly, the work of Battistich, Schaps, and their colleagues (pages 46–48) at the Developmental Studies Center provides clear direction on the actions that will help schools become caring communities. For example, their research identifies teacher warmth and supportiveness, an emphasis on prosocial values, encouragement of cooperation, elicitation of student thinking and expression of ideas, and less reliance on extrinsic control as key elements of a caring school. The Center's many publications provide further detail on how to achieve these school attributes (see the resource chapter of this update for the Developmental Studies Center).

Conclusion

The intent of this commentary is to provide some thoughts on how we can more fully achieve research-based prevention. The core of this argument may be best expressed through a metaphor. The process of using science as a basis for action is more like a court room than a laboratory. The practitioner searching for science-based prevention faces an imperative to act because the lives of children do not wait for scientific verification. The practitioner must discern the pattern of evidence presented by scientific findings and determine whether it is sufficient to warrant action. This essay has attempted to

provide some instruction on how the jury of practitioners can proceed in assessing this evidence, and applying it to the specific decisions they must make. **Research-based prevention cannot lift the burden of decision from the jury of practitioners, but it can improve the chances that their decisions and actions will have a positive effect on youth.** The dissemination of research findings provides school personnel with evidence for making research-based decisions. The challenge of fashioning and applying science to prevention programs in schools is great, but the potential benefits are much greater.

Caring School Communities⁸

Summary by J. Fred Springer, Ph.D.

Importance

Despite the demonstrated importance of attitudes toward education and school (e.g., school bonding, school performance) as correlates of problem and positive behaviors, there is relatively little research concerning the influence of the school environment itself. "Caring School Communities" is an important article for

school administrators, teachers, and staff because it summarizes a focused program of research addressing the influence of school environment on student attitudes and behaviors, with relevance for substance use, violence, and associated problem behaviors.

Intent

The authors intend to summarize a cumulative set of findings from 15 years of research. The research program has focused on three major research issues.

- What is a meaningful definition of schools as caring communities, how can this concept be measured, and what is the pattern of variation in this attribute across schools and classrooms?
- Can the degree to which schools are experienced as caring communities be influenced through conscious programs of intervention, and how should these interventions be designed?

- What is the impact of a school as a caring community environment on student attitudes, values, motivation, and behavior?

This research program has produced numerous focused articles that have addressed these questions. The careful research program has provided findings related to both reduction of problem behaviors (e.g., substance use, violence) and promotion of positive behaviors (e.g., prosocial behavior, positive school performance).

Sample and Method

This article synthesizes findings from two major studies. The first was a seven-year study that followed students from first through sixth grade at three treatment and three similar comparison schools. The sec-

ond study was more extensive, involving a diverse sample of twelve treatment and twelve comparison schools from six school districts nationwide. Both studies utilized multiple methods of data collection from

⁸Battistich, V., Solomon, D., Watson, M., and Schaps, E. (1997). Caring school communities. *Educational Psychologist*, 32(3), 137-151.

students, teachers, school staff, and classroom observation. The studies represent an exceptionally thorough and varied program of analysis, including a complex assessment of the separate and interactive

effects of school, classroom, and individual student characteristics for understanding the factors that lead to experiencing school as a caring community, and the impacts of that experience on students.

Findings

Although this research has produced numerous findings reported in separate articles and reports, several major themes are broadly supported.

- Schools can be meaningfully characterized in the degree to which they are experienced as a caring community where members (a) care about each other; (b) have opportunity for active participation, influence, and decision making; (c) have feelings of belonging and identification; and (d) share norms, goals, and values. Schools vary in the degree of this experience, with degree of community poverty as a major correlate of lower sense of community for both teachers and students.
- **Particular classroom and school practices will increase the degree to which students and teachers experience the school as a caring community, and these practices can be taught.** The classroom characteristics include teacher warmth and supportiveness, emphasis on prosocial values, encouragement of cooperation, elicitation of student thinking and expression of ideas, and less reliance on extrinsic control.
- School community demonstrably produces a variety of positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes for both students and teachers. For students these **outcomes include classroom behaviors (strengthened academic engagement, strengthened influence in the classroom, and increased positive interpersonal behavior)** and positive change in a larger set of **attitudes and behaviors related to the school environment (liking of school, enjoyment of class, learning motivation, concern for others, conflict resolution skills, democratic values, sense of efficacy, and altruistic behavior)**. The research produced evidence that these benefits are sustained and in some instances are strongest in schools where students have the greatest need (i.e., the economically poorest schools).

Limitations

This article is a summary of a strong research program that looked at multiple studies, and its major limitations are inherent in the scope of the material that is covered. This article can only skim the surface of a rich and detailed research program

that provides much more in the way of specific lessons for schools than can be summarized in one piece. (See the resource chapter to contact the Developmental Studies Center for specific findings and analyses of related studies.)

Implications for Schools

These findings have significant implications for the role of schools in promoting mediating attitudes and behaviors centrally related to the promotion of positive outcomes. The school's role as the primary societal forum for promoting efficacy and positive achievement among youth is increasingly supported in prevention research, and this article articulates the

importance of school practice and environment for strengthening that forum. While the promise is great, so is the challenge. **Promoting change in the school as a community is a much larger task than launching individually focused prevention curricula in the classroom. The research reported in this article suggests that the product is well worth the effort.**

The Social Ecology Model of Adolescent Substance Abuse⁹

Summary by J. Fred Springer, Ph.D.

Importance

Strengthening protective factors for youth is an encompassing prevention objective that can be approached through a variety of strategies. In general terms, these approaches can be divided into internal protective factors that focus on the individual attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of targeted youth; and external protective factors focusing on peer, family, school, and community influences on attitudes, perceptions, and behavior. The tendency in research literature and practice has been to focus on either internal or external protective influences, with few empirically con-

firmed models of the ways in which these complementary sets of factors interact to influence attitudes and behavior in youth.

This article is important as a seminal piece of empirical work proposing and testing a “social ecology” model that combines external and internal protective factors, and posits an understanding of how these factors interrelate. It is a particularly important article for school personnel because it emphasizes the role of school for both external (school climate) and internal (school bonding and self-efficacy¹⁰) protection.

Intent

The major purpose of the article is to develop and verify an extension of earlier social ecology models of prevention that focus on the transactions between external and internal influences on attitudes and behavior. Of particular interest to educators, the model extension includes school and family as particularly important components of the social environment of youth. The

focused research question with respect to school is: what is the nature and strength of the influence of school climate and school-related attitudes and behaviors on self-reported drug use among youth? This question is asked within the context of other important influences on youth attitudes and behaviors (e.g., family and peers).

⁹Kumpfer, K.L. and Turner, C.W. (1990-91). The social ecology model of adolescent substance abuse: Implications for prevention. *The International Journal of the Addictions*, 25(4a), 435-463.

¹⁰Self-efficacy was a cluster variable consisting of measures of self-esteem, self-concept, and interpersonal competence.

Sample and Method

The study sample is 1,373 high school youth in a mixed rural-urban high school district in Utah. The sample is 55 percent female, and analyses are conducted separately for males and females because of initially observed mean differences on variables in the model. The authors acknowledge that the largely white and middle-class sample may support an empirical model that has characteristics unique to this geographic and socioeconomic popula-

tion, and that the generalizability of the basic ecological model will have to be tested on other samples. The main analysis utilizes structural equation modeling (LISREL) to test several alternative model configurations. This advanced statistical technique cannot confirm causal relations on this baseline sample, but it does confirm plausible models of causal relation between initial, mediating, and outcome variables.

Findings

The analysis yields several findings important to understanding the crucial role of schools in the formation of protective factors for youth.

- Replicating the findings of numerous studies of alcohol and drug use among youth, the model identifies **association and involvement with prosocial peers as the strongest direct factor influencing self-reported use.**
- The findings strongly suggest the centrality of school in the formation and support of important internal protective factors. In particular, the research suggests that **school is a primary forum for exercising self-efficacy and experienc-**

ing positive beliefs about self.

Measures of school bonding, self-efficacy, and self-esteem are so highly inter-related that they are treated as one concept (school bonding + self-efficacy) in the analysis. High scores on this construct are strongly associated with more positive peer associations and contribute to decreased alcohol and drug use through this association.

- Though not as strong an influence as family, **schools that are experienced as supportive, cooperative, and fair make a positive contribution to school bonding + self-efficacy and thus indirectly influence substance use.**

Limitations

The model fits data for males better than for females, and the authors acknowledge that additional factors may be important for protection among young women. The sample is from a single locale in Utah, and

is relatively homogeneous with respect to racial and cultural diversity. Thus, the generalizability of this model must be tested through attempts to replicate in diverse settings.

Implications for Schools

This study has important implications for schools because it provides explicit empirical confirmation of the importance of school as the central forum for the development of self-efficacy and related protective factors in the lives of youth. Family environment is a strong contributor to youth development, but schools provide the essential social environment in which

youth learn that they can be effective actors in the world, and can achieve positive outcomes. Furthermore, school administrators and staff are challenged to strengthen this essential forum for youth development through creating an environment that is perceived as supportive, cooperative, and fair.

Chapter 3

Research into Action

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Research into Action

Action Steps for Schools

Research and practical experience provide two distinct kinds of knowledge that must be synthesized in research-based prevention. On the practitioners' side, the challenge is to identify those aspects of the research that apply to their situation and to develop action steps to implement them. (Springer, page 42)

There is no “cookie cutter” mold for building resiliency in youth . . . Fostering resilience is not a single program or set of activities; it is an ongoing process. It is how a program is conducted rather than its content . . . a process of creating environments in which youth can develop skills and competencies. (Learning Systems Group, 1998)

The research commentaries and summaries in this document focus on the need to complement the current emphasis on reducing risks of young people with an emphasis on positive youth development. This new emphasis calls for caring relationships between students and adults, high expectations for youth, and opportunities for students to participate and contribute. It means attention to school climate and to processes—how things are done. Youth development is an **approach rather than a program**, and as such it takes time.

In the first section of his commentary, “Beyond the Magic Bullet” (pages 39–45), J. Fred Springer suggests ways for educators to read research and evaluation articles analytically. The next step in the research-to-practice continuum, he says, is for practitioners to apply the research to a specific context—select, modify, and otherwise interpret the implications of findings for their settings.

Schools have the capacity to promote most of the forty developmental assets, and all adults and students within schools have asset-building capacity. However, schools are necessary but are not the only actors required for raising asset-rich youth. (Benson, page 17)

This section offers action steps for schools to consider that are based on the youth development research. Many were contributed by members of the concept team for this project. (Readers should also consult Chapter 3 in Part I of *Getting Results* to ensure that youth development strategies are adopted in the context of a comprehensive program.)

Reference

Learning Systems Group (1998). *Creative partnerships for prevention: Using the arts and humanities to build resiliency in youth*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328.

Assessment and Monitoring

By focusing on assets, resiliency, or protective factors, prevention research turns to identifying environmental and personal attributes that should be promoted in youth, rather than those that should be reduced. (Springer, page 42)

- Assess students' assets with simple, valid, and reliable instruments.
 - The *California Healthy Kids Survey Resilience Assessment Module* is one such instrument. It was developed by WestEd for the California Department of Education and is available to California schools. See the next section of this chapter for detailed information.
 - Other instruments are available from organizations listed in the resource section.
- Don't use asset and resiliency assessment instruments as individual diagnostic tools. Remind your partners that such instruments should be used to measure schoolwide and communitywide capacity to foster youth development.
- Assess whether the classroom, school, and district are representative of a caring community (see the research articles summarized by Springer for dimensions of school environments and caring communities).
 - Assess the classroom, school, and district for their capacity to employ asset-building principles (see the research articles summarized by Benson for asset-building principles). Self-study questions for this type of assessment include the following:
 - What does the research tell us is necessary?
 - What already exists in our programs?
 - What changes could be made that would better align those programs with the current research?
 - What is totally lacking? Are resources available to rectify this problem? If not, who can help?
 - Keep a focus on school climate, and self-assess progress using the *Healthy Kids Survey Resilience Assessment Module* or school climate measures. Monitor improvement in class attendance, school attendance, referrals to the office for problem behaviors, and grades.

Planning

Effective prevention does not mean taking time away from the essential educational functions of school. It means permeating school activities with an orientation to creating and supporting positive behavior and development. (Springer, page 44)

- Ask students, teachers, other staff, and families what they want and need from school. Integrate the responses into classroom, school, and district planning, budget decisions, and policymaking.
 - Encourage groups to discuss what the school is doing to promote caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for students to participate and other steps to promote these protective factors.
 - Hold brainstorming sessions to determine ways in which school connectedness can be fostered.
 - Ensure that opportunities for participation are broadly inclusive and reflect the school community's ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity.
 - Incorporate asset building and youth development into school site plans, especially in areas such as school climate, tracking and learning, and parent and community involvement.
 - Include positive youth development in the safe schools plan at each site.
 - Ask parents who are actively participating in school site councils, safe schools committees, and other advisory groups to support youth development and asset-building.
 - Plan and conduct a variety of family-centered activities at the school site to make school a place where students and families experience connectedness. Provide before- and after-school and weekend activities at the school site for the same purpose.
 - Include within-school mentoring, peer tutoring, service learning, and cooperative learning in site plans.
 - Embrace the “tough” kids, including those in continuation schools and special education programs, rather than moving them out of the system. Remind your colleagues that all kids have the capacity to become resilient and the desire to thrive.
 - Provide opportunities for youth to participate in and contribute to their school and their community through such activities as the following:
 - Cross-age mentoring
 - Peer tutoring
 - Youth-driven community service learning
 - Media advocacy
- Make these opportunities strongly experiential in order to break through the sense of inertia or personal invulnerability that pervades many youth.

Training/Staff Development

A focus on the promotion of protective factors in addition to risk reduction in young people signals a commitment to developing capacities and competencies for which the involvement of caring, compassionate adults is essential. This approach is very different from merely providing services to adolescents. The role of adults here is to foster a sense of close connection and to help open doors of possibility. (Resnick, page 29)

- Provide schoolwide training in the youth development, asset building, resiliency approach, including what the research says about its relationship to the prevention of risky behaviors (see the resource section for public and private organizations that can provide training resources).
- Promote naming every child and labeling none.
- Use student assessment results to motivate students, teachers, and other partners to infuse asset-building/youth development principles into the classroom, teaching methodology, and the school environment.
- Encourage each staff person to name and affirm what he or she already does to build assets in youth.
- Provide occasions for staff to share with each other how they promote protective factors such as caring and connectedness.
- Provide staff development time for creating a caring school community and assessing the degree to which students and families form a positive bond to school.
- Provide practical applications of what the school and the family can do to foster asset-building in youth. For example:
 - Involve students in setting behavioral and academic standards.
 - Involve students in developing a “sense of purpose” for their classroom.
 - Give attention to communication skill development.
 - Establish an annual conference for students to attend sessions and workshops of their choice.
- Build on the concept of asset-building communities to help teachers and other school personnel foster asset development.

Collaborating

To fashion the strongest protection for youth requires collaboration and consistency in various aspects of the youth environment. Schools are a critical environment for youth, but they cannot carry the burden alone. They must reach out to collaborate with families and other social institutions. (Springer, page 43)

- Foster school/community collaboration in the following ways:
 - Network with community-based organizations to get needed services to students.

Setting Policies and Procedures

The developmental asset framework enables families, schools, neighborhoods, congregations, employers, and youth organizations to unite around a common language and employ complementary strategies toward a shared goal: healthy children and adolescents. (Benson, page 15)

- Develop a group of community volunteers to serve as mentors for students.
 - Give students opportunities for service learning in the community.
 - Solicit assistance from as diverse (culturally, professionally, organizationally) a set of partners as possible to ensure a communitywide effort to build family and community assets for all youth.
 - Provide opportunities for student-led conferences at which youth share their work with their teachers, parents, and others in their school and community.
-
- When interviewing prospective teachers/staff members, include questions on ways the candidate would contribute to the school's/district's role as a caring community.
 - Examine guidelines for report cards, assessment tools, and parent conferences to ensure they provide for reflection of students' assets, not just their deficits.

- Provide students an opportunity to interact with those assessing their performance.
- Provide for teachers what students need—a professional community of caring relationships with colleagues, high expectations by administrators, and ongoing opportunities to reflect, engage in dialogue, and make decisions together.
- Include strategies for youth development and for creating a caring school community in school standards, plans, and mission whenever possible.
- Establish a common understanding that the need to thrive and the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities are fundamental to all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, or economic status.

Educating/Disseminating

- Educate the school board on the concept of youth development and related research.
- Create a newsletter that highlights positive youth development, volunteer youth activities, and ways in which assets are being enhanced. Encourage all students, parents, and other partners to take the lead in such newsletters and efforts.
- Identify and use informed youth as peer leaders and community spokespersons to communicate/disseminate information about youth development at community block parties, meetings, and so on.
- Solicit assistance from local, diverse, and culturally-appropriate media (including newspapers, radio and television, billboards, and Internet services) to:
 - Inform the community of salient family-level risk factors (see Resnick’s research).
 - Offer suggestions, including resources, as to how those factors may be mediated (in the school, family, and community).

The Resilience Assessment Module: An Optional Module of the *California Healthy Kids Survey*

Norm Constantine, Ph.D.

The Resilience Assessment Module is one of several optional modules of the *California Healthy Kids Survey*, a comprehensive system for collecting data on youth health behavior and resilience in California schools. The Resilience Assessment Module includes a full range of toll-free phone assistance and other support available to all California school districts and county offices of education.

Building on Bonnie Benard's integration of the research literature on resilience, the module consists of six clusters of resilience factors, comprising 20 of the assets researchers most consistently identified to be associated with positive youth development and protection against health-risking behavior (see Figure 1).

The Resilience Assessment Module distinguishes between two types of resilience factors: (1) protective factors, sometimes referred to as external assets; and (2) resilience traits, also known as internal assets. Protective factors are the supports and opportunities, including caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities to participate in meaningful activities, that foster positive developmental outcomes. Resilience traits, including social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose, are the individual qualities and characteristics that are enhanced by protective factors. (For a complete listing and definitions of these

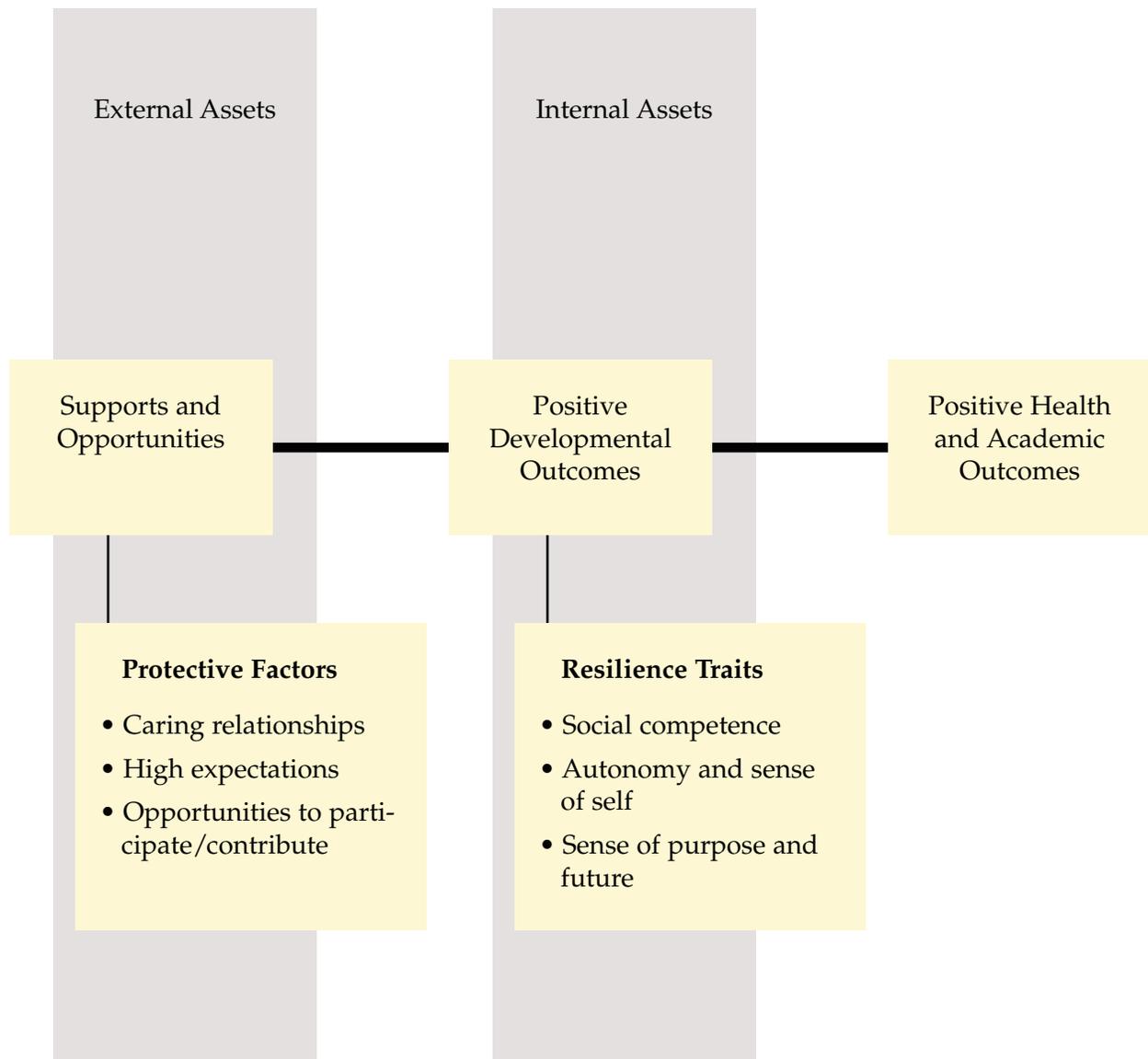
protective factors and resilience traits, see Figure 2.) Together protective factors and resilience traits foster healthy development and academic achievement and protect against the negative impacts of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse; violence; and risky sexual behavior.

The field test of the Resilience Assessment Module has generated a great deal of interest and excitement among educators and researchers in California. The growing popularity of resilience-based prevention programs has created a need for a comprehensive measure of protective factors and resilience traits that is theoretically sound, developmentally and culturally appropriate, and psychometrically reliable and that has construct validity. The Resilience Assessment Module provides an opportunity to obtain important data on needs assessment, program planning, and program evaluation.

For further information about and technical support for the *California Healthy Kids Survey* and the Resilience Assessment Module, please call (from anywhere in California) the toll-free help line at (888) 841-7536. You will be automatically connected to the service center for your region. Or visit the web site at www.WestEd.org/hks.

Figure 1

The Resilience Assessment Module



The Resilience Assessment Module measures specific protective factors and resilience traits that make youth development work.

Figure 2

Assets Measured by the Resilience Assessment Module

Protective Factors: Supports and Opportunities (12 external assets)

ASSET CLUSTERS (median alpha = .80)	SPECIFIC EXTERNAL ASSETS (median alpha = .76)
<p>1. Caring Relationships (.80) <i>The presence of others in the student's life who model and support healthy development and learning</i></p>	<p>Caring relationships with: <i>Adults in the home (.75)</i> <i>Adults in the school (.75)</i> <i>Adults in the neighborhood (new subscale)</i> <i>Adults in the community (.82)</i> <i>Peers (.80)</i></p>
<p>2. High Expectations (.86) <i>The consistent communication of both direct and indirect messages that the student can and will succeed</i></p>	<p>High expectations from: <i>Adults in the home (.69)</i> <i>Adults in the school (.79)</i> <i>Adults in the neighborhood/community (.88)</i> <i>Pro-social peers (.77)</i></p>
<p>3. Meaningful Participation (.80) <i>The involvement of the student in relevant, engaging, and responsible activities with opportunities for responsibility and contribution</i></p>	<p>Meaningful participation in the: <i>Home (.70)</i> <i>School (.67)</i> <i>Community (new subscale)</i></p>

Resilience Traits: Positive Developmental Outcomes (8 internal assets)

ASSET CLUSTERS (median alpha = .84)	SPECIFIC INTERNAL ASSETS (median alpha = .70)
<p>4. Social Competence (.88) <i>Ability to communicate effectively and appropriately and to demonstrate caring, flexibility, and responsiveness in social situations</i></p>	<p>Cooperation and communication skills (.65): <i>Flexibility in relationships and the ability to work effectively with others, effectively exchange information and ideas, and express feelings and needs to others</i> Empathy (.73): <i>Understanding and caring about another's experiences and feelings</i> Problem solving skills (.72): <i>Ability to plan, to be resourceful, to think critically and reflectively, and to creatively examine multiple perspectives before making a decision or taking action</i></p>
<p>5. Autonomy and Sense of Self (.84) <i>Sense of personal identity and power</i></p>	<p>Personal conviction (.75): <i>A strong sense of what is right and wrong and the strength to stand up for those beliefs</i> Self-efficacy (.70): <i>Belief in one's own competence</i> Self-awareness (.55): <i>Knowing and understanding one's self</i></p>
<p>6. Sense of Meaning and Purpose (.82) <i>Belief and understanding that one's life has coherence and makes a difference</i></p>	<p>Optimism (.65): <i>A belief in the positive potential for one's self and the future</i> Goals and achievement motivation (.70): <i>Using specific dreams, visions, and plans to focus the future and having high expectations for one's self</i></p>

Note: Coefficient alphas are based on high-school-level field test data from three California school districts, two high SES (socioeconomic status) and one low SES; combined n = 1,078.

Chapter 4

Resources for Positive Youth Development

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Resources for Positive Youth Development¹¹

Organizations

Asset Development Project

Orange County Department of Education
 Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Education Program
 200 Kalmus Drive, P.O. Box 9050
 Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050
 (714) 966-4474
 (714) 662-3570 fax

This project coordinates asset-building workshops, trainings, and institutes in several regions of the state and disseminates information about events and training in asset building, youth development, and resiliency to other county offices of education and schools. The project is guided by an advisory committee of teachers, administrators, and county office of education staff.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America

1230 W. Peachtree Street, N.W.
 Atlanta, GA 30309
 (404) 815-5758
 (404) 815-5789 fax

This is a nationwide affiliation of local organizations that work to help youth of all backgrounds, with special concern for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The clubs offer program activities in the areas of personal and educational development, citizenship and leadership development, cultural enrichment, health and physical education, recreation, and outdoor and environmental education.

California Healthy Kids Resource Center

(510) 670-4581
<http://www.californiahealthykids.org/index>

The Healthy Kids Resource Center is funded by the California Department of Education and houses an up-to-date selection of teacher-reviewed health education materials by topic, grade, teaching strategy, skill development, and other categories. Schools may borrow materials on-line or by telephone request. The Resource Center also collects research articles that are summarized in *Getting Results*.

California Healthy Kids Survey

WestEd
 730 Harrison Street
 San Francisco, CA 94107-1242
 (888) 841-7536
<http://chks.wested.org/>

The *California Healthy Kids Survey* (CHKS) is a comprehensive youth health and risk behavior data collection support system for school districts. It is supported by the Healthy Kids Program Office, California Department of Education. It can be used to assess the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; violence, school safety, gang involvement, and delinquency; nutrition and physical education; sexual behavior; exposure to prevention and intervention activities; and risk and protective (resiliency) factors (Resilience Assessment Module). The survey and technical support are available to school districts in California from WestEd.

¹¹Many of the resources listed in this chapter were compiled and annotated by Bonnie Benard.

Center for Asset Development

Sacramento County Office of Education
Prevention and Student Services Department
9738 Lincoln Village Drive
Sacramento, CA 95827
(916) 228-2200
(916) 228-2216 fax
<http://www.sac-co.k12.ca.us>

The Center for Asset Development promotes asset-building strategies to improve the personal and academic outcomes for Sacramento County children and youth. Some services are available statewide. Utilizing research and strategies regarding developmental assets, the center works in partnership with schools and community-based groups to (1) increase awareness of developmental assets and mobilize the public to implement the developmental asset approach to preventing risk behaviors and academic failure; (2) assist with assessments and surveys to determine existing assets and needs for asset building; (3) conduct activities to increase developmental assets for local children and youth; (4) support current asset-building efforts in local communities; and (5) provide training and technical assistance to school personnel and community members.

Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers

Northern California:

Fred Tempes, Director
WestEd
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107-1242
(415) 565-3009
(415) 565-3012 fax
<http://www.wested.org>

Southern California:

Henry Mothner, Director
Los Angeles County Office of Education
9300 Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242-2890
(562) 922-6343
(562) 940-1798 fax
<http://www.lacoe.edu/Home.asp>

The Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers are funded by the U.S. Department of Education to support the implementation of Improving America's Schools Act, which is intended to help all students achieve high academic standards through educational reform. The centers provide information, technical assistance, and resources to school districts throughout California.

Creative Partnerships for Prevention

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.
The Portals Building, Room 604
Washington, DC 20202-6123
(202) 260-3954
(202) 260-7767 fax
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS>

This organization offers the following useful publication:

Creative partnerships for prevention: Using the arts and humanities to build resiliency in youth, by Learning Systems Group (1998)
(202) 260-2673
(877) 433-7827

Developmental Studies Center

200 Embarcadero, Suite 305
Oakland, CA 94606-5300
(800) 666-7270
(510) 533-0213
www.devstu.org

The Developmental Studies Center is an educational nonprofit organization that develops, evaluates, and disseminates programs and materials to foster children's social, emotional, ethical, and academic growth. Its mission is to deepen children's commitment to values such as kindness, helpfulness, personal responsibility, and respect for others, while helping them learn to think deeply and critically. All programs and materials have grown out of long-term partnerships with educators to create schoolwide change and renewal.

Family-School Involvement Center

Sacramento County Office of Education
Prevention and Student Services Department
9738 Lincoln Village Drive
Sacramento, CA 95827
(916) 228-2206
(916) 228-2216 fax
cgust@sac-co.k12.ca.us
www.sac-co.k12.ca.us

The Family-School Involvement Center works in partnership with schools, families, and community-based groups to improve the academic and personal achievement of children and youth and to promote safety in schools and neighborhoods in Sacramento County. Using youth development research and strategies, the center (1) provides services to parents/families to increase their involvement with schools, including workshops, seminars, and outreach activities; (2) offers seminars on family issues and parenting skills; (3) provides training, seminars, and technical assistance for school personnel and parent outreach

workers; (4) maintains a lending library and provides resource materials for parents/families and family involvement staff; and (5) maintains a network of family involvement staff, parents, and interested, caring adults through regular meetings, special events, and a family involvement newsletter. Some of its services are offered outside Sacramento County.

Girls Incorporated

30 East 33rd Street
New York, NY 10016-5394
(212) 689-3700
(212) 683-1253 fax
www.girlsinc.org

This national organization is dedicated to helping girls become strong, smart, and empowered. It offers innovative programs to help girls overcome traditional societal messages, gender barriers, and limitations. There are approximately 130 affiliates and 900 sites throughout the country.

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth

P.O. Box 13505
Silver Spring, MD 20911-3505
(301) 608-8098
(301) 608-8721 fax
info@ncfy.com

The clearinghouse published *Reconnecting youth and community: A youth development approach* (1996), which was written to assist youth services professionals in helping communities shift from a problem-focused to a community-youth-involvement model. Self-assessment tools and an extensive bibliography are included.

National Network for Youth

1319 F Street, N.W., Suite 401
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 783-7949

This is a national network of more than 400 agencies and individuals. Its mission is to ensure that young people can be safe and grow up to lead healthy and productive lives. A driving force for achieving this mission is Community Youth Development, an approach that focuses on helping young people develop skills and competencies to be contributing members to their communities and society. The network publishes training reports, briefs, and periodicals; conducts public education; and provides training and technical assistance.

New designs for youth development is a quarterly publication of the National Network for Youth.

National Resilience Resource Center

School of Public Health
University of Minnesota
Box 97, Room D371 Mayo
420 Delaware Street, S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 624-8919
marsh008@tc.umn.edu

The center provides training and technical assistance for strategic systemic initiatives based on tapping the innate resilience of youth, families, and communities.

National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations

1319 F Street, N.W., Suite 601
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 347-2080
Building resiliency: What works!
(1994)

This guide discusses the prevention of negative risks and promotion of positive outcomes for youth in their development. Practical examples of what works are presented, based on programs with positive outcome evaluations.

Project Resilience

5410 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20015
(202) 966-8171
www.projectresilience.com

Steven and Sybil Wolin, authors of *The resilient self: How survivors of troubled families rise above adversity* (New York: Villard Books, 1993) conduct training nationally and internationally on the topic of resilience.

ResilienceNet

<http://www.resilnet.uiuc.edu/>

ResilienceNet provides reviews of current information about human resilience, especially among children, youth, and families. It brings together information available through the Internet and conventional published sources about the development and expression of human resilience. All web sites have been reviewed by a panel of experts according to a set of criteria.

Resilient Youth Curriculum

University of Utah
Health Education
Annex 2054
Salt Lake City, UT 84112
(801) 581-8039
glenn.richardson@health.utah.edu

Training and manuals are available for the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
School and Community Health

Research Group

WestEd
500 Twelfth Street, Suite 340/350
Oakland, CA 94607-4010
(510) 587-7300

The School and Community Health Research Group provides training, technical assistance, program development, and evaluation in the area of resiliency and youth development.

Search Institute

700 S. Third Street, Suite 210
Minneapolis, MN 55415
(800) 888-7828
www.search-institute.org

Search Institute is a nonprofit research and educational organization working to advance the healthy development of adolescents and children through research, evaluation, training, and publications. It focuses on asset development, and its publications include the following:

Assets: The magazine of ideas for healthy communities and healthy youth.
(Distributed quarterly.)

Benson, P. L. (1996). *Developmental assets among Minneapolis youth: The urgency of promoting healthy community.* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Leffert, N., & Scales, P. (1999). *Developmental assets: A synthesis of the scientific research on adolescent development.* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Draayer, D., & Roehlkepartain, E. C. (1998). *Learning and living: How asset building for youth can unify a school's mis-*

sion. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Western Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies

University of Nevada, Reno
MS 279
Reno, NV 89557-0202
(888) 734-7476
(775) 784-1840 fax
www.unr.edu

The Western Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (WestCAPT) is one of five regional centers funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. WestCAPT assists states, jurisdictions, and community-based prevention programs in applying research-based strategies to substance abuse prevention efforts. A network of local and regional technical assistance experts, skill development activities, innovative uses of electronic media, a resource repository, and production services are available.

Youth as Resources

1700 K Street, N.W., Suite 801
Washington, DC 20006-3817
(202) 466-6272
(202) 785-0698 fax
www.yar.org/

Youth as Resources (YAR) is dedicated to improving community life nationally and internationally through the spread of youth-led service initiatives. The Center for Youth As Resources has implemented YAR in juvenile correctional settings, in schools as a service-learning strategy, and in public housing communities.

Further Reading

Benson, P. L. (1997). *All kids are our kids*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publications.

Benson provides a comprehensive and compelling overview and vision of how communities can mobilize to provide the forty developmental assets that promote healthy youth development.

Blum, R. W., & Rinehart, P. M. (1997). *Reducing the risk: Connections that make a difference in the lives of youth*.

This is a monograph about the Add Health Study. Up to 25 copies may be obtained from Add Health, c/o Burness Communications, 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1401, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Diero, J. (1996). *Teaching with heart: Making healthy connections with students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

This book reports on the author's qualitative study of six teachers in different high schools who are known for their positive relationships with students. It identifies the nature of effective teacher-student relationships; the traits, experiences, and skills of these teachers; and the characteristics of schools that support nurturing.

Garbarino, J., et al. (1992). *Children in danger: Coping with the consequences of community violence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

After documenting, through interviews with children and caregivers and supporting research, the realities of life for children growing up in "war zones" in the United States, the authors document the critical

importance the school plays as a safe haven, with the most important factor promoting children's mental health being a caring relationship between a teacher and his or her pupils—from preschool through high school.

Henderson, N., Benard, B., & Sharp-Light, N. (1999). *Resiliency in action: Practical ideas for overcoming risks and building strengths*. Gorham, ME: Resiliency in Action.

This document is a compilation of the best of the first two years of the journal *Resiliency in action*. It includes research findings, interviews with resilience leaders, personal stories from practitioners and youth, book reviews, and information on resiliency-based family, school, and community programs.

Henderson, N., & Milstein, M. (1996). *Resiliency in schools: Making it happen for students and educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

This guide for schoolwide reform incorporates the principles of resiliency. This book is rich with examples and tools to be used in creating resiliency-building schools. As Emmy Werner states in her foreword, this book "should be read by all administrators, teachers, and parents concerned with the future of their children."

Kohn, A. (1993). *The brighter side of human nature: Altruism and empathy in everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.

Kohn definitely makes the case—supported by a great deal of research—that schools

that promote the development of caring offer hope of personal and social transformation. All of Kohn's books support the resiliency perspective and provide research documentation extraordinaire (also see his books, *No contest: The case against competition* and *Punished by rewards: The trouble with gold stars, incentive plans, A's, praise, and other bribes*).

Kohn, A. (1996). *Beyond discipline: From compliance to community*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Although not using the language of resiliency, Kohn passionately and scientifically presents the case for classroom discipline based on the deep belief in intrinsic motivation that results through providing caring relationships, high expectations, and ongoing opportunities for participation and contribution.

Krovetz, M. (1999). *Fostering resiliency: Expecting all students to use their minds and hearts well*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

This book explores what resilience-building schools look and feel like. It consists of seven case studies of schools that exemplify resiliency theory, based on the work of Emmy Werner and Bonnie Benard. It is a reflective guide, filled with effective practice principles and questions for self-assessment, to the process of reculturing schools to support the healthy development and successful learning of all their students.

Males, M. (1996). *The scapegoat generation: America's war on adolescents*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

This book examines every problem behavior of adolescence and provides scientific evidence—over a thousand studies—to deconstruct some of the destructive myths that have been promulgated by politicians, private interests, and the media. A must-read for anyone working in adolescent alcohol, tobacco, drug, pregnancy, depression, and violence prevention.

Munson, P. (1991). *Winning teachers: Teaching winners*. Santa Cruz, CA: ETR Associates.

This little book focuses on teachers' self-esteem (i.e., resiliency) as the key to successful school change. Filled with vignettes, pithy statements, and lots of passion, it is a real boost to educators' self-esteem.

Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

The challenge to care in schools is an absolutely essential book and the "classic" on what a caring school looks like. Noddings creates a vision of a school system built on the central mission of caring (which in her model incorporates the other protective factors of high expectations and opportunities for participation) and which is organized around centers of care: care for self, for intimate others, for associates and friends, for distant others, for nonhuman animals, for plants and the physical environment, for the human-made world of objects and instruments, and for ideas.

Prevention tactics

EMT (Evaluation, Management and Training)
771 Oak Avenue Parkway, Suite 2
Folsom, CA 95630-6802
(916) 983-6680
(916) 983-6693 fax
erica@emt.org

Prevention tactics is a periodic publication under EMT's Community Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention contract with the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. The publication helps practitioners in the prevention field stay abreast of best practices emerging from current research and provides practical tools and resources for implementing proven strategies.

Resiliency in action: A journal of application and research

P.O. Box 684
Gorham, ME 04038
(800) 440-5171
www.resiliency.com

Resiliency in action is an international journal of resiliency application and practical research. It is published five times yearly.

Winter 1996 includes "Foundations of resiliency."

Spring 1996 contains "A resiliency resource primer: Resiliency and the schools," an annotated bibliography by Bonnie Benard.

Spring 1998 contains "What resiliency and assets research reveals about gender and resiliency," by Bonnie Benard.

Sergiovanni, T. (1993). *Building community in schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This is the essential book for administrators on fostering resiliency in schools written by the premier authority on principalship. Sergiovanni challenges educators to change their basic metaphor for schooling to that of community building, which means changing their basic thoughts and beliefs about students, teachers, and parents. "If we want to rewrite the script to enable good schools to flourish, we need to rebuild community," says Sergiovanni. This book guides the way.

Substance abuse resource guide: Positive youth activities (1988)

DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 98-3210
National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
(800) 729-6686

This book is a resource guide on prevention materials, groups, and programs to help readers incorporate positive activities (e.g., sports, the arts, community service) into drug abuse prevention strategies.

Werner, E., & Smith, R. (1992). *Overcoming the odds: High-risk children from birth to adulthood*. New York: Cornell University Press.

This is a landmark ethnographic study of resiliency.

