



RESILIENCE DURING CRISIS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING SCHOOL STAFF

Second Step® SEL for Adults

Why did we develop a module on resilience?

The COVID-19 pandemic has chipped away at the resilience of adults and children alike. Resilience is our ability to cope with and recover from adverse events in our lives. It can be strengthened when we have good coping strategies and skills, and worn down with fatigue, stress, and inadequate support. Right now, many of us find ourselves feeling worried or anxious, or that some of our habits, such as sleeping or eating, have been adversely affected. This is common after a traumatic event. For most of us, these symptoms improve over time. The goal of this module is to enhance and rebuild the natural resilience of the adults and children in your school community.

What's included in the module?

The Resilience During Crisis module consists of three units. Each unit requires approximately 1-1.5 hours to complete.

Unit 1: Self-Care—In this unit, educators and other participants examine their role in crisis response and in nurturing resilience in themselves and their school community. They'll explore how the recent crisis has affected their own resilience and learn routines that can help reduce their stress and support their journey to recovery.

Unit 2: Caring for Each Other—In this unit, educators and other participants focus on ways they and their colleagues can support each other in the workplace during and after a crisis.

Unit 3: Student Care—In this unit, educators and other participants focus on ways they can support students during a crisis. They'll learn about how students react to crises, what to watch out for, and what they can do to help give students a sense of safety and security and help strengthen students' resilience.

Student Activities—These short, research-based student activities are designed to help teachers support students' coping and recovery following a crisis. Each activity focuses on a topic or skill known to support students' coping and well-being.

How can school leaders, counselors, or district coordinators support their staff?

The COVID-19 pandemic has not been a single traumatic event. It's an ongoing and unpredictable crisis. It will be particularly important to maintain open lines of communication and regular opportunities for staff to meet and discuss what they or their students are going through. Below are some recommended ways you can support your staff.

1. Share the link to Resilience During Crisis and encourage staff to sign up.
2. Do a Resilience kick-off in small groups or for all staff.
 - Do the first Unit 1 microlearning, Resilience During Crisis, together.
 - Watch the video and open a discussion.
 - Think of group discussion questions, such as:
 - What are things you're doing to take care of yourself right now?
 - What can we do to take care of each other as colleagues?
 - What are we most concerned about when we think of our students?
 - At the end of the kick-off, share the link and encourage staff to sign up.
3. Set up regular voluntary drop-ins or check-ins.
 - These can be weekly or bi-weekly opportunities where staff can drop-in as needed.
 - Think about using informal "lunch and learns" or meeting for coffee before school.
 - Let staff know this will be a time to share:
 - What they're learning
 - How they're feeling
 - Questions or concerns they have
4. Set up voluntary Resilience Learning Communities.
 - These can be weekly or bi-weekly meetings organized much like a book group or lesson study.
 - Create a learning plan. For example, members agree to do microlearnings 1 and 2 and then meet to discuss what they've learned.
 - Center discussions around a set of core questions, such as:
 - What did we learn that was valuable?
 - How can we apply what we're learning?
 - How can we support each another in moving this work forward?

What's a realistic pace for going through the module?

The individual microlearnings in each unit are short and targeted. However, many of them involve making a one- or two-week plan to try something out. Therefore, we recommend doing approximately two microlearnings per week. It will take a total of only 20–25 minutes to do two microlearnings, but the real benefits come from practicing and applying what's being learned.

Many of the strategies that staff will be learning are not meant to be "one and done" activities. They are intended to be used routinely, and for as long as necessary, for coping and recovery. Staff can work on more than one unit at a time. For example, they can be working on the Self-Care unit independently while working on the Caring for Each Other unit with their learning community.

Is there a way to track progress?

How, or if, you track progress depends on the context in which the module is being used. For example, if staff are:

- *Learning individually*—You may want to informally check in and ask how they're doing. Are they trying anything out that's working? Are they learning anything that might benefit others?
- *Learning in small groups, such as Resilience Learning Communities*—If the meetings are facilitated by counselors or teacher leaders, meet together and discuss progress. What strategies are staff using or finding helpful?
- *Learning through drop-in or informal check-ins*—Pay attention to who is attending. What are the major concerns or questions? What key learnings might be worth sharing more broadly as a staff or school?

It's important to remember that not all staff members will be in the same place in terms of their needs, goals, and willingness to ask for or offer support.