

Writing and Sharing Staff Resilience Stories

One of the schools that helped in the development of the toolkit by piloting it in its first year was Adams Friendship Middle School. They experimented with an activity the principal had suggested and it went so well, we want to share it with other schools.

1. Ask each staff member to write a short story about an obstacle they faced and overcame (or are overcoming on a daily basis such as chronic illness) in their life.
2. Have a process where staff can submit their stories anonymously.
3. Share stories randomly with each class or grade level in the school. You may decide to share three or more stories with each group of students to heighten their sense of the breadth of resilience among the staff. Stories can be shared as "homework" to read and prepare for the next step.
4. Closely after the stories are shared with the students, preferably the next school day, set aside time for students to come together (possibly in a community building circle) to talk about what the students heard/read and what it meant to them.
5. Prepare classroom teachers to facilitate discussion using some of the following questions:



- a. What did you feel while reading these stories?
- b. What difference does it make to learn about how adults in this building have faced and overcome obstacles, or are living day-to-day with ongoing challenges?
- c. How is the school community impacted by such knowledge?
- d. Think to yourself but do not share: What story of resilience could you tell about your life? How do you think that has prepared you for future challenges?
- e. What happens when we think about each other as resilient people?
- f. What happens when you think of yourself as resilient?