

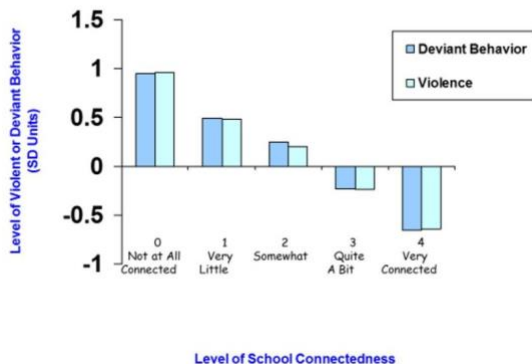
YOUTH AS RESOURCES

Students who feel that they belong in the school, are accepted, or feel that they are connected in their school, have more commitment to education. They believe that school is important to their future and the adults in the school care about them and their goals. Keeping the school environment safe and engaging students in activities at their school enhances these feelings of **connectedness**.

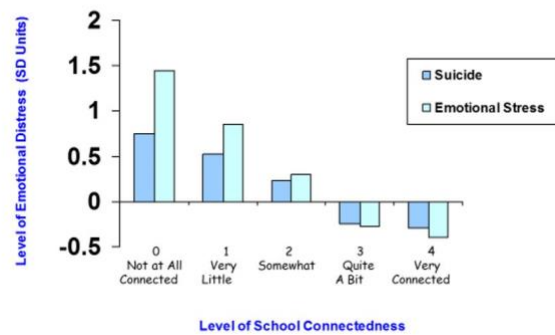
WHY FOCUS ON ENGAGING YOUTH?

Creating an environment in which all students feel that their voice is being heard has benefits to those students as well as the climate in both health and learning outcomes. The more connected the student feels the less adverse or negative behavior is reported.

Students Who Feel Connected to School Engage in Less violent or Deviant Behavior

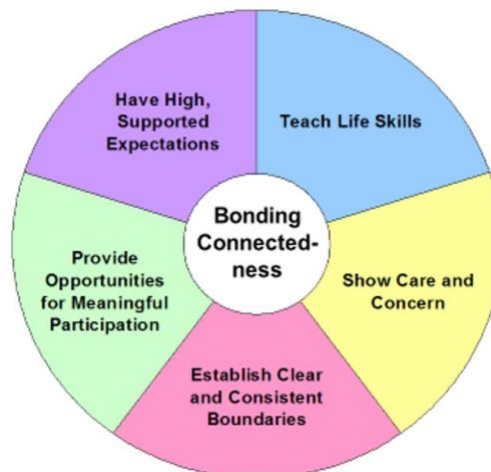


Students Who Feel Connected to School Experience Less Emotional Distress



PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO SUPPORTING CONNECTEDNESS AND YOUTH VOICE

Through research on the activities that support resiliency and connectedness, Nan Henderson identified five activities that support students, promote students' voices and lead to increased connectedness and a sense of belonging. The Resiliency wheel provides some strategies to increase opportunities for youth connectedness, build resiliency in the environment and mitigate risk factors.



ACTIVITIES THAT INCREASE BONDING AND CONNECTEDNESS

High expectations are a driver of student achievement. Provide tutoring or other appropriate support.

Teaching life skills is necessary to manage emotions, achieve positive goals, and show empathy for others. Identify age-appropriate skills necessary to successfully navigate life.

All members of the school community show care and concern towards one another. Relationships are the foundation of a positive climate.

Establish clear and consistent boundaries where all are held accountable for their actions. Acknowledge appropriate or caring behaviors.

The school structure provides opportunities for students to participate in meaningful activities. Listen to students' ideas and opinions. ¹

HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE YOUTH?

Show Care and Concern	Establish Clear and Consistent Boundaries	Provide Opportunities for Meaningful Participation	Have High, Supported Expectations	Teach Life Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicate time, interest, attention, and emotional support to students• Show care and concern to other students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish consistent and fair policies and regulations• Contribute positively to a common goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create time for students to actively participate• Listen to students' ideas and be sensitive to cultural differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create realistic expectations to motivate students• Create collaborative and interest-based learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach social emotional learning (SEL) for students to navigate challenges• Teach conflict resolution and cooperation

- Adults can build youth voice by listening to young people and be willing to learn from them.
- Adults can provide young people with the information, training and support they need to succeed.
- Adults can plan meetings where everyone feels welcome.
- Adults can include as many young people from different groups as possible.

¹ Adapted from Nan Henderson, M.S.W., PhD