

# Battle Ground's Resilience Implementation Strategy

## Core Concept - Everyone DOES belong and IS significant

All of us struggle in varying degrees to find and experience satisfying relational connectivity. However, regardless of the struggle, the truth is still the same. We do fit. We do belong. Each and every one of us. In that context and because of our unique fit, we find our significance. We are a particular irreplaceable benefit to the community in which we find ourselves. And in that community, in those relational connections, we receive the inputs we need to be the most powerful version of ourselves.

Believing this absolute truth is the stable foundation under and the motivation behind our efforts as individuals and as a community to:

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| ● Believe in and seek to understand our individual value and purpose                | KNOW   |
| ● Foster an awareness of and connection to those in our relational network          | NOTICE |
| ● Invest in our relationships by offering our resources generously when appropriate | OFFER  |
| ● Invest in our relationships by receiving with humility and grace what we need     | TAKE   |
| ● Share the story of restoration with authority and frequency                       | SHARE  |

As we revel in each experience of belonging and significance, the confidence and power to share it into the lives of others increases. It becomes our norm - "how we do it in Battle Ground."

## Many feel isolated

They are or feel disconnected from healthy relationships. They are ours to draw into our relational networks because of a shared need for each other. It's not charity or pity. Every person belongs and has value in the organism of community in a vital way. We will not experience wholeness or the full expression of our mission as a community while there are people who are disconnected and unappreciated.

*How do we move from our current disconnected state to one where the experience of belonging and significance is the norm?*

To begin answering this question, we must accept that we are dealing with a culture that is broken at a systemic level. Over time, we have accepted and operated by inaccurate paradigms that caused damage or at least served us poorly. We are now faced with the task of fixing what is broken, correcting our inaccurate paradigms and enacting systemic change. It's **transformation** work and it won't happen unless we **collaborate** to determine holistic solutions and operate from a structure that is fashioned and welded together by healthy **relationship**. Transformation, collaboration and relationship are absolute values we cannot sacrifice for efficiency or expedience or the gain of individual entities. They are organic and require determination to protect the slow process of growth just like a healthy crop or a child.

## Children our our focus

We most easily recognize the symptoms of damaging cultural norms in our youngest generation because they are the most susceptible to it. Gratefully, they are also the most susceptible to our efforts to repair. Our kids have suffered the ill effects of a hyper-individualistic society and the sense of isolation that accompanies it. They are subject to overstimulation more than any generation before and encouraged to measure their value by shallow, fragile indicators. The systems we have relied on for decades (religious, political, economic and environmental) have or appear to have become untrustworthy. Nearly all children have suffered varying degrees of trauma. As a result, our children are not experiencing a deep sense of belonging and significance. It is our responsibility, as adults, to partner with them in restoring their sense of connection and value.

## Impact of Trauma

We have learned that the impact of trauma experienced during childhood can create misunderstanding of how to achieve belonging and significance. Experiences shape the physical structure of their brains, creating stronger neural pathways that facilitate beliefs of abandonment and insignificance. The result is an underutilized and therefore underdeveloped neocortex - the part of the brain responsible for cognition and executive function. Instead, they become stuck in their limbic brain - every encounter and activity is overlaid with an urge for self-preservation. They are in flight, fight or freeze mode without a familiar alternative. These are the children most in need of generous compassion and influence.

## Restoration

The restoration of belonging and significance for all kids, but especially trauma affected kids can best be accomplished in relationship with a caring adult. Many studies over the last several decades have proven this.<sup>1</sup> According to scientists from the University of San Francisco, it's called "limbic regulation." "A relationship is a physiological process, as real and a potent as any pill or surgical procedure."<sup>2</sup> It is in the context of a relationship with a caring adult that the experience of belonging and significance can be strengthened to overcome unhealthy beliefs.

*Therefore, our primary strategy is to increase the number of skilled caring adults in contexts where kids are being served.*

## Identifying the Right Kids

We have learned how to identify kids in our community who need the influence of a caring adult the most. Their behavior (see Resilience Strategy - Behavior Indicators) is an invitation and a challenge to share dignity and respect. When we can accomplish connection instead of eliciting resentment, revenge, rebellion and retreat with traditional responses of disapproval and punishment, we will create opportunity for restoration, healing and connection. This will in turn reduce suicide, substance abuse and other unhealthy outcomes. It will increase graduation rates, employment satisfaction and social health. In fact, if we can reduce the negative impact of trauma by increasing the positive impact of belonging and significance, we will see long-term, marked improvement in all areas of social, emotional, mental and physical health in our community members.<sup>3</sup> While all our kids need the influence of caring adults and healthy environments, focusing on these kids will produce the greatest decrease in negative outcomes.

## Two areas of focus

Relationship and environment. There is a fuzzy line between these two areas. When we speak of relationship, we are talking about a specific, identifiable and sustained connection between two people, marked by intention and long term commitment. Environment is about shared attitudes, norms, and less involved relationships that nevertheless contribute to a sense of belonging and significance. Both relationship and environment require purposeful application of paradigms and behavior that are different than we have applied in the past.

*The negative outcomes we see necessitate a change if we are going to produce new, healthy outcomes together.*

## Four environments

families, schools, neighborhoods, and our community. At this point and time, we have the most influence and autonomy within the school environment. There are initiatives and programs in all four categories:

<b>Families</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Community</b>
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Positive Discipline for Parents	Positive Discipline in the Classroom	Neighbor connections	Churches
Neighborhood Connections	PBIS - Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports	Neighborhood Associations	Businesses & Chamber
iCAN workshops	YMHFA	Grass roots events	Safe & Welcoming spaces
	YSPP	Link BG	Events: Front Porch, Harvest Days, October ACEs Awareness, etc.
	Watch DOGS	Family Connections	Communications
	Lunch Buddies	<a href="http://Nextdoor.com">Nextdoor.com</a>	iCAN workshops
	SOS Prevention Clubs		Networking groups
			Social Clubs
			Community ED
			4 Results
			Rocksolid
			Prevent Together
			UTC
			Health Clinics
			Mental Health
			Social Media reform

### The Connect BG Role

Recruiting, training and supporting caring adult volunteers as well as providing training for teachers and school staff. We do this using the Caring Adult Network's implementation strategy. There are six phases:

1. Work with leadership of kid serving contexts to identify needs for increase in caring adult presence.
2. Identify potential caring adults (promotion, awareness, recruiting and intake)
3. Assist in determining the best connection for potential caring adults with children in kid serving contexts that match with their capacity (skills and availability) and inclination.
4. Train and prepare according to needs of kids and context.
  - a. iCAN Foundations, ACEs, Youth Perspectives and Resilience Building
  - b. Youth Mental Health First Aid
  - c. Specific training based on context requirements
5. Facilitate and support development of relational connection between leadership and caring adults.
  - a. Overview of systems and protocols used by leadership (Safety, HIPPA, Skyward, etc.)
  - b. Background checks as well as fingerprinting as needed (through BGSD process)
  - c. Maintain database of all volunteers and their roles
6. Provide ongoing support and training for caring adults.

### Caring Adult Relational Standards

In these contexts, Caring Adults partner with kids to transform lives through relational connection. In order to accomplish this, the relationship will be marked by trauma informed kindness and firmness:

- Genuine Curiosity for the whole child (emotional, mental, physical, social and spiritual)
- Mutual respect, observational encouragement and trust - acknowledgement of differences without judgement
  - Respect for adult and the situation (kindness)
  - Respect for the needs of the child and others (firmness)
- A shared sense of connection and the development of a shared story
- Long term commitment (no less than one year)
- Leadership and responsibility owned by the adult - solutions rather than punishment and/or consequences
- Compassion and patience when faced with misbehavior - mistakes are opportunities to learn
- Focus on development of social and life skills
- Passing on of wisdom from experience and expansion of evidence based world view
- Locus of control and empowerment transferred to child (rather than enabling)

### Major Components of Resilience Strategy

Relationships between Caring Adults and kids in existing contexts

Training for Caring Adults (Teachers, Pastors, School Staff, volunteers, mentors, etc)

Trauma Informed community wide response to misbehavior

Physical space for kids to share with adults (Connect BG at Lewisville)

Collaboration between schools, churches other sectors and community to create positive environments

Collective Impact approach (shared vision, common measurements, constant communication, mutually beneficial activities and a backbone organization)

Stable funding - at least 50% community sourced (no auctions)

### Action Steps

If you've made it this far, thank you for taking the time. Here's the ask:

1. **Join** and participate in the Caring Adult Network
2. **Invite** and encourage other potential Caring Adults to join. Our kids need them desperately. Hunt them down and let them know of their significance in this initiative.
3. **Share** what you know about the need for a new, trauma informed paradigm that offers dignity and respect not only to youth but all ages who suffer from feeling disconnected and insignificant
4. **Support** the work of Connect BG financially. We are not an expensive organization to run as we are primarily facilitating other organizations. However, office expenses, staff and training costs add up. If you or your organization can contribute \$20, 50, or 100 per month, it will be a big help.
5. **Follow** and interact with us on social media, get our emails and share our newsletters.

Thank you for your interest and support of Connect BG and the work being done in our community by the many organizations that are a part.

1. Resilience and Recovery: Findings from The Kauai Longitudinal Study, Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith, 32 year study of 698 children starting in 1955. [www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/fpS0504.pdf](http://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/fpS0504.pdf), Hi-LG Rats, Michael Meaney, McGill University [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16262207](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16262207), Cumulative Risk, Maternal Responsiveness, and Allostatic Load Among Young Adolescents, Gary Evans, Cornell University [www.pilyoungkim.org/uploads/1/3/6/8/13689586/cumulative\\_risk\\_maternal\\_responsiveness\\_and\\_allostatic\\_load\\_kim2007\\_.pdf](http://www.pilyoungkim.org/uploads/1/3/6/8/13689586/cumulative_risk_maternal_responsiveness_and_allostatic_load_kim2007_.pdf)
2. A General Theory of Love, Tom Lewis, M.D., Fari Amini, M.D. and Richard Lannon, M.D.
3. ACEs are "the leading determinant of what happens to the health of a nation's population," - Dr. Vincent Felitti. <http://attachmentdisorderhealing.com/the-greatest-study-never-told/> The Social Determinants of Health, It's Time to Consider the Causes of the Causes <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3863696/>