

## Welcome to Newark Public Schools’ Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative Overview and Toolkit Elements

### **It’s not always easy to talk with youth and parents about resiliency-related issues**

This toolkit is one of many resources made possible by the Newark Public Schools’ *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* initiative. It offers resources to help you reach young people and their parents about resiliency, which impacts so many children, families and entire communities. The goal is to share facts, parent tips and advice from experts, and facilitate a community dialogue to help create an atmosphere of resiliency within our community.

### **Newark Public Schools partners with CWK Network, Inc.**

The Newark Public Schools have partnered with CWK Network/*Connect with Kids* and ABC-7 to launch a school and community educational initiative that focuses on resiliency and healthy schools and communities. This comprehensive initiative includes:

- Classroom and parent outreach materials and videos
- A community education component that includes a custom half-hour television program produced by CWK Network, featuring a student and experts from Newark
- A toolkit to extend the reach of the initiative throughout the community for grassroots support

Founded in 1998, CWK Network produces the Emmy® award-winning *Connect with Kids* television series, featuring real kids sharing their true stories about today’s youth issues. Eight new programs are shown on 70 top television stations each year, and in thousands of schools across the country. Research shows that *Connect with Kids* programs are changing youth behavior and inspiring parents to talk with their children.

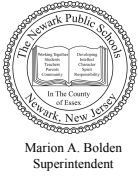
### **We Can Make A Difference**

Often, it is hard for teenagers to listen to adults or really hear positive messages about resiliency. It is equally difficult for parents to know what to say, what to do and how to start the conversation with their children. Children can often feel a tremendous amount of pressure when faced with what seems to be overwhelming odds, but parents, schools, organizations and communities can help them overcome challenges. The *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* initiative is providing an exciting opportunity to reach youth and families and provide them with critical information and resources. By working toward the goals outlined in the initiative – improve/increase services to “at-risk” children and their families; link child-serving agencies in a consistent and complementary way; decrease violence, drug abuse and school disciplinary activity; and increase the healthy development of children – we are paving the way to creating healthy and safe communities for our children.

Thank you for your participation in this important school and community initiative, and for helping to support the emotional and physical health of children throughout the Newark community. For more information, please call Newark Public Schools at (973) 733-7201.

Sincerely,

Clare Shade  
Supervisor and Project Director



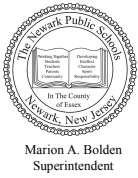
Marion A. Bolden  
Superintendent

## What You'll Find Inside the Toolkit

- A Copy of the Half-hour Television Program, *Overcoming the Odds*, which can be used in a number of settings to stimulate discussion with parents and youth.
- This Implementation Guide to help you use the campaign elements.
- A bounce back card for you to share your reactions to the half-hour television special and toolkit materials.
- A Sample Meeting Announcement for you to photocopy and post, announcing your own school and/or organization's video viewing and discussion meeting.
- An Overcoming the Odds Resource Guide which includes the following:
  - Discussion Questions that can be used as a guide for students, educators and family discussions after viewing the half-hour television show.
  - A Resiliency Fact Sheet with the latest information and statistics about resiliency and what parents, students and educators need to know to help students overcome overwhelming odds.
  - A Parent Tip Sheet with expert advice to help parents take action and talk with their children about ways to help their children make healthy decisions and learn resiliency through tough situations.
  - Lesson Plans for Grades 3 through 12 that can be used in the classroom and other youth settings to help youth develop resiliency and learn how to cope with certain situations.
- Information about *Connect with Kids*: [www.connectwithkids.com](http://www.connectwithkids.com). Here you will have access to free news stories and information about children's health and wellness issues that are updated on a weekly basis. This site also contains information about other youth resources and materials that are available to you.

## How to Use the Community Toolkit

- Arrange a screening of the half-hour television special (in your toolkit) in your community setting. Invite parents, youth or both and use the materials in the toolkit to make the event a positive educational experience.
- Complete and photocopy the sample Meeting Announcement to post in and around your community announcing the screening.
- Start a discussion group for teens and/or pre-teens that focuses on the resiliency issues highlighted in the resources and the video. Use the discussion questions to help facilitate the sessions.
- Loan the video program to parents and/or students for home use or for leading discussions in other settings (religious meetings, civic groups and clubs, schools, etc.).



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### Using the Half-Hour Television Program



- Invite people from your organization and/or the community to watch the *Overcoming the Odds* television program together when it airs in May or use your own copy of the video in this toolkit.
- When you play the video in group settings, pause the tape after each segment and discuss what you have viewed. Use the discussion to facilitate learning.
- Assign young people in your organization the task of watching the program with their parents.
- Allow youth to show the tape to groups of peers or other pre-teens and teens (middle school classes, youth groups, church groups, etc.)
- Encourage schools in your community to use the video program in classroom and other youth settings.
- Develop a series out of the material by using each segment and a follow-up discussion as an independent session.

### Using the Discussion Questions

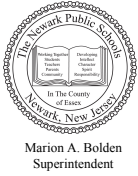


- Train parents and/or youth to become group discussion leaders using the resources in the toolkit.
- Make copies of the discussion questions to use as a viewing guide in a group session. Use the discussion questions for a group meeting or have individuals write their personal responses to issues raised in the video and then talk about them at a later time.
- Post the questions on the wall to help people continue to think about the issues related to resiliency.
- Use the questions as part of a homework assignment for youth as they discuss these issues with their parents.

### Using the Sample Meeting Announcement



- Fill in your organization's name, date and session information on the sample Meeting Announcement in the toolkit.
- Make copies of the Meeting Announcement and mail to families, inviting them to participate in a viewing of the *Overcoming the Odds* video program. Hold a discussion of the program at your facility.
- Post the Meeting Announcement on bulletin boards and other visible locations in your facility and the community.
- Include the Meeting Announcement in your organization's newsletter and/or post it on your website to let parents and youth know about upcoming resiliency-focused events.



### Using the Parent Tip Sheet

- Make copies of the Parent Tip Sheet and distribute during the video viewing. Have the group talk about specific ways they can implement the tips with their children.
- During a parent meeting, use the Tip Sheet as a starting place and have the group brainstorm additional tips and strategies they can use with their children.
- As a group, review the Tip Sheet prior to watching the *Overcoming the Odds* video, and have parents identify scenarios during the video where the Tip Sheet applies.
- Print the parent tip sheet in community and organization newsletters.
- Sent the tip sheets home directly through PTAs or other direct distribution channels.

### Using the Fact Sheet

- During a community meeting, have parents and children pair up and quiz each other on the facts. Have one group member report to the rest of the meeting something new that they learned.
- Review the Fact Sheet prior to watching the *Overcoming the Odds* video. After watching the video, ask participants to identify additional facts they learned or misconceptions they had prior to viewing the video.
- During a parent meeting, instruct parents to take the Fact Sheet home and use as a starting point for conversation with their children.

### Using the Lesson Plans

- Utilize the lessons plans as a reinforcement and follow-up to the videotape and discussion questions.
- Implement the lesson plans as part of an existing program or workshop series that you are conducting with youth.
- Train peer youth leaders to facilitate the lessons with other youth in a school or community setting.

The materials and resources in this toolkit will help you support *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* and increase awareness among youth and their parents.