

# Building Flourishing Communities is spreading the information about how to help our children grow up with strong, addiction-resistant brains, the ability to build meaningful relationships, focus on their work and remain calm under stress.

“I would have looked at my students differently if I had known this when I was teaching.”

## *A comment from an attendee* *at Aldrich Public Library, Barre, April 10, 2018*

Building Flourishing Communities takes the important information about early childhood development to Vermonters. This proven public health model engages average Vermonters in discussion and action to address the factors that lead to poor health outcomes and much of the difficulty so many have in succeeding at work and in family life. We are creating an enduring vision of flourishing communities and the actions to achieve them.

There are 26 Building Flourishing Communities Facilitators guiding Learning Events in all regions of Vermont to increase awareness about how early, overwhelming and/or threatening experiences can lead to later poor health and well-being. The BFC Facilitators are generating interest and excitement about the potential for change through conversations based in the N.E.A.R. sciences:

♦ Neuroscience– early brain development and adaptations to experience

♦ Epigenetics– how our environment influences gene expression

♦ ACEs study – makes the connections to later outcomes clear

♦ Resilience – research shows that even those who have been deeply affected by adversity can become more resilient and flourish, and those with resilience withstand life’s challenges better

Once we have created broad general knowledge and understanding across the state, the BFC Facilitators will then assist local leaders to determine next steps. Experience shows that when community members have an opportunity to lead, local projects are more likely to focus on narrowing the gaps between those with the greatest challenges and those with more advantages. This approach reduces early, overwhelming events, increases resilience and leads to flourishing.

In Washington State where this model was developed, child welfare costs decreased by $27.9 million. Public services costs due to early childhood aversity were reduced by $120 million annually. For an average yearly investment of $3.4 million in small, local grants for community-driven projects; ***for every dollar spent, $35 were saved.***

A list of the Building Flourishing Communities Facilitators follows

September 2019

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