Embedding Emotions into the Curriculum:
Using an Emotions Lens to Consider Professional Wellbeing during the Pandemic

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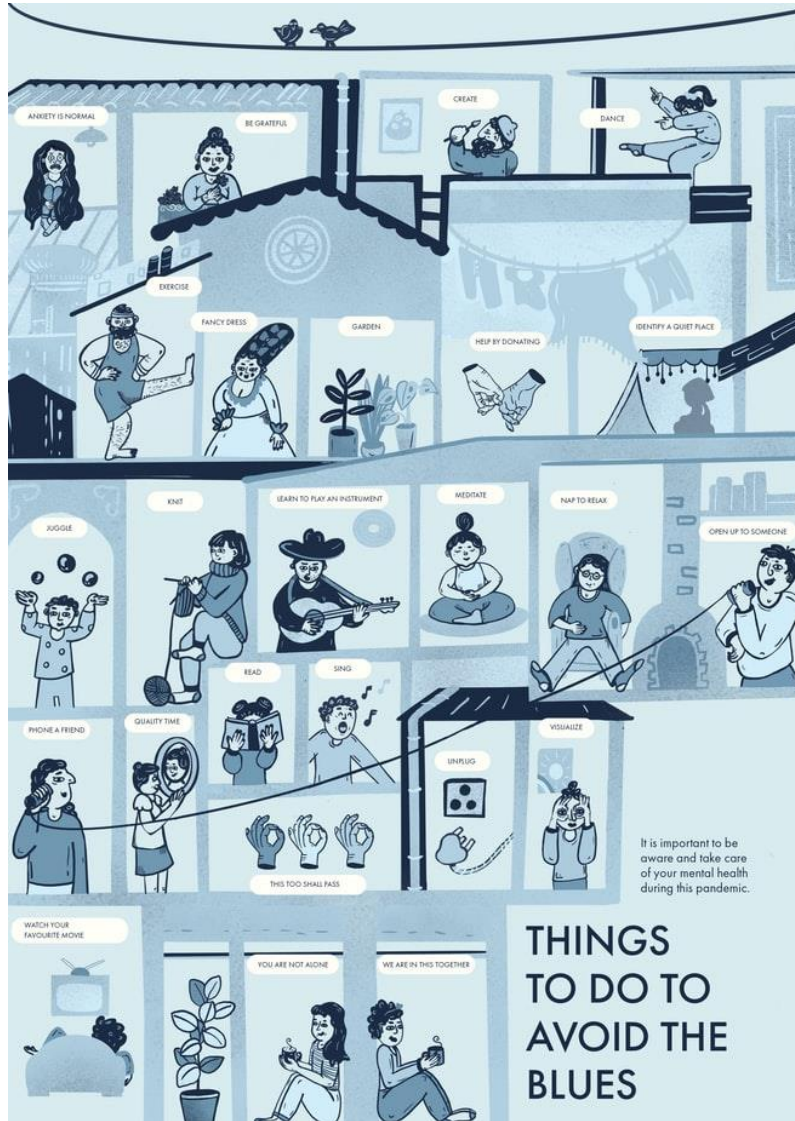
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Agenda

- Introduction
- Overview
  - Wellbeing
  - Resilience
- Curricular approaches
- Key Takeaways
- Q&A
- Breakout Rooms

Wellbeing

'Wellbeing comprises a person's mental health, physical health, financial sustainability, mood, family circumstances, workload, social life and many other things."

University of Greenwich Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2019

Resilience

Resilience has been identified as a key capability to thrive in the complex changing work environment of the 21st century (Sanderson & Brewer 2017).

Resilience is increasingly viewed as a critical graduate capability for the 21st century (Tomlinson, 2017).
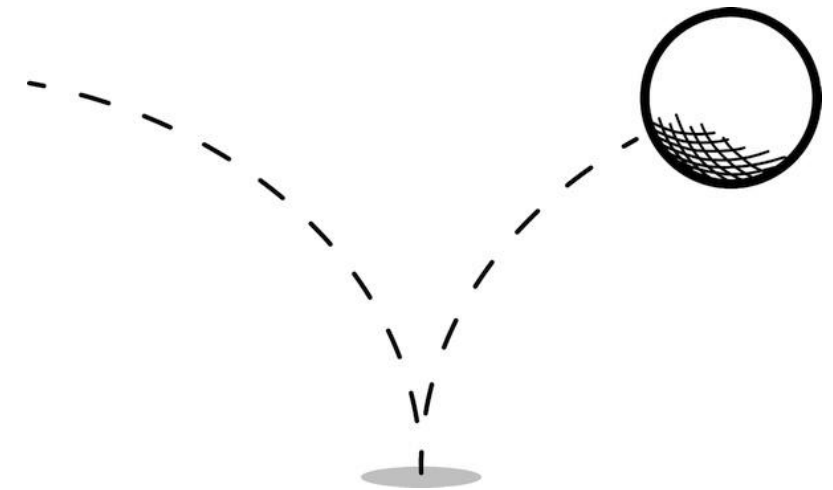
"bounce back"

What does "Resilience" look like in the workplace?

- Capacity to thrive in difficult circumstances

- Skilled in behavior management

- Ability to empathize with difficult clients (e.g. students)

- Ability to restrain negative emotions and focus on the positive

- Experience pride and fulfillment and increased commitment to organization (e.g. school) and profession

- Agile in their repose to negative or stressful events: they possess personal assets and understand how to utilise environmental factors to counter the challenging effects of their work and workplace

- They can reinvent or adapt their roles during organisational change

- Howard & Johnson 2004. Resilient teachers: resisting stress and burnout. Social psychology of education. 7(4):399-420.

Resilience

- NOT a personal trait

- Influenced by individual circumstance, situation and environment, "in particular the opportunities for personal growth that are available and accessible" (Ungar 2012, p. 14)

- Can fluctuate over time
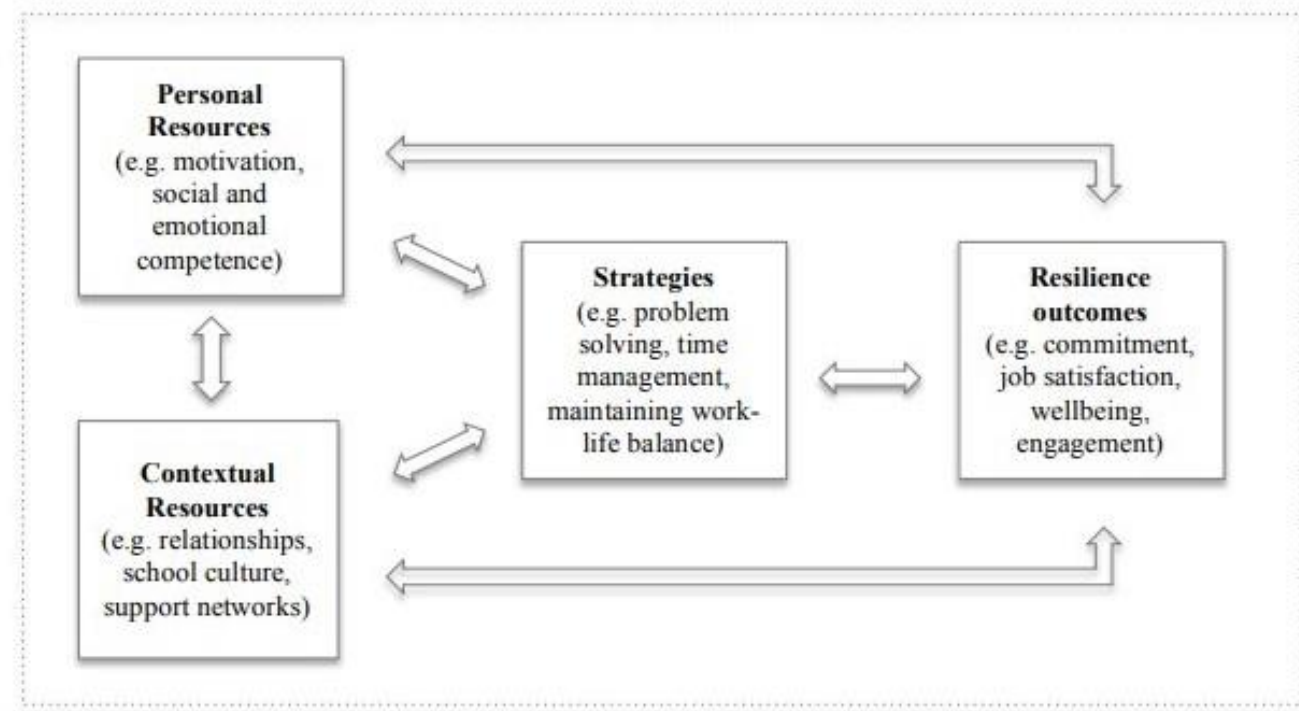
Wellbeing & Resilience relationship

Figure 1: Teacher resilience framework

Mansfield, C., Beltman, S., Weatherby-Fell, N., & Broadley, T. (2016). Classroom ready? Building resilience in teacher education. In *Teacher education* (pp. 211-229). Springer, Singapore.

Resilience

- **Capacity –** of individual to harness personal and contextual resources to navigate through challenges

- **Process**-dynamic process whereby characteristics of individuals and of their personal and professional contexts interact over time as individuals use particular strategies,

- **Outcome** (retention, quality)- thus enabling the outcome of an individual who experiences professional engagement and growth, commitment, enthusiasm, satisfaction and wellbeing

What is the role of training? What is *our* role in preparing graduates?

assist students (e.g. pre-service teachers) to build resilience capacity through:

-awareness/development of personal resources,
-learning ways to harness contextual resources, and
-developing resilience focused strategies for managing challenges in workplace

Proposed vision/role

Curricular approaches to resilience

Explicit

- Teaching explicitly about resilience (in curriculum)
  - What is resilience?
  - Why is resilience important for professionals (e.g. teachers)?

Through reflecting and discussion with peers, mentors, teachers

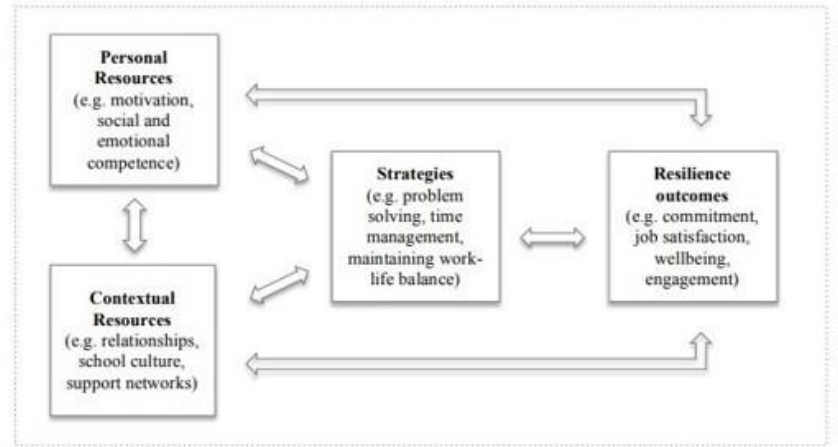Examining case studies and videos on professional challenges

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Implicit

- Modifying or enhancing existing curriculum and practices with a resilience lens

  - Reflection (individual, as a team) (e.g. supervision-individual, group)
  - Experiential learning-Learning experiences that connect training to "real" professional work through direct contact and practice examples (e.g. case studies, videos)
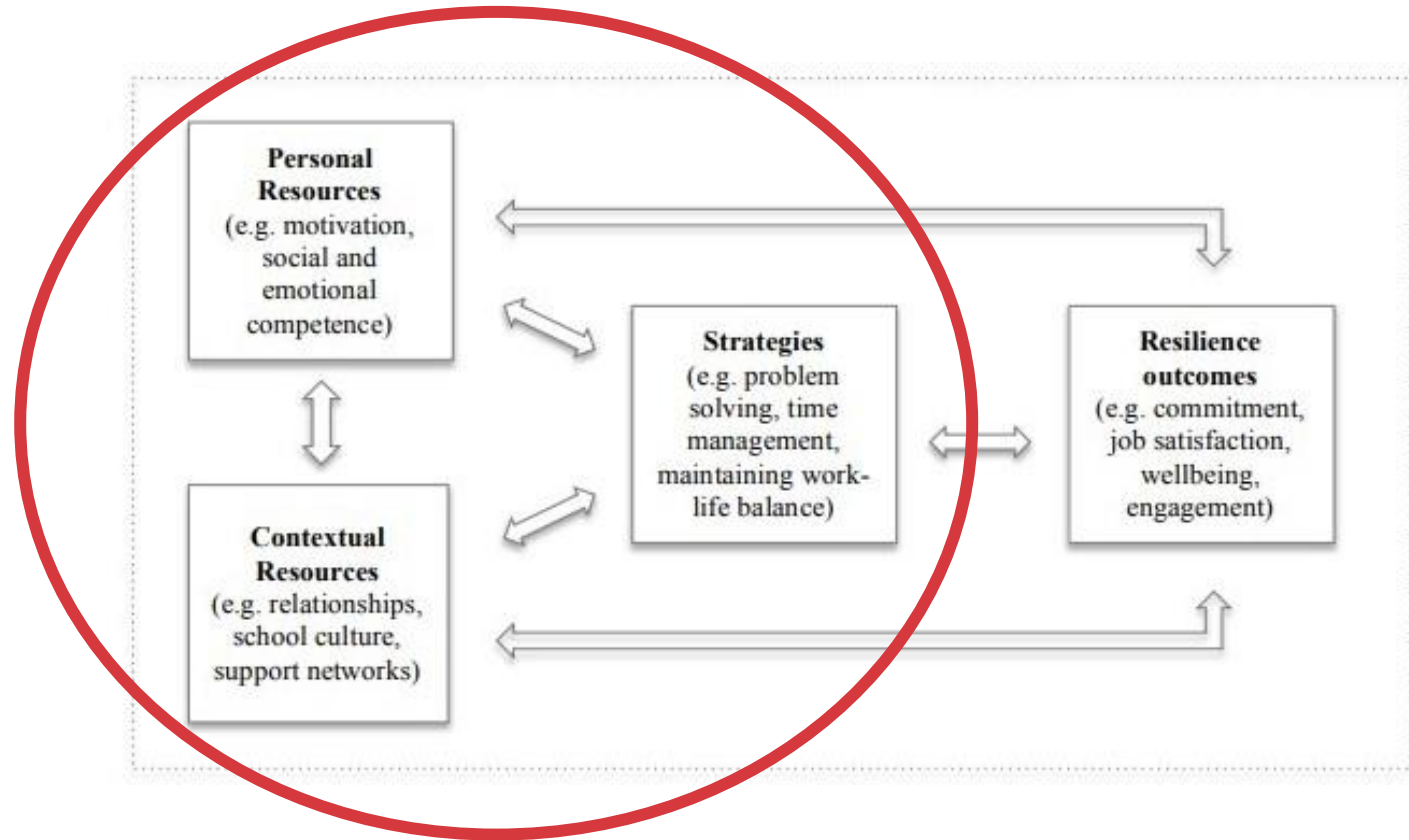
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Implicit approaches

- Building strong support networks (inside/outside school, online) during training
  - Learn how to establish relationships in new environments (e.g. case studies, videos of new teachers showing how they did this)
  - Promoting communicating skills and strategies to develop supportive professional relationships
  - Discussing how to work in a professional team
  - Promoting the building of personal and professional support networks

- Personal resources (e.g. sense of purpose, efficacy, initiative)
  - Motivation for profession (e.g. purpose of teaching)
  - Development of professional identity

Implicit approaches

- Emotional competence, emotional intelligence-
  - recognize their own emotions and its impact on self and others
  - capacity to consider emotions of others,
  - strategies to reframe situation to generate positive emotions
  - humour to reduce emotional tension/provide different perspective in difficult situations

- Strategies –
  - setting boundaries
  - reflection (new perspective)
  - goal setting
  - maintaining work-life balance
  - time management
  - self-care practices

Case-writing with an emphasis on emotions

What is a "case"?

- Carefully crafted narrative of event(s) over time
  - Introduction with surprise
  - Contextual info (school, community, students)
  - Intention, plan, anticipation
  - Actual experience and surprise/tension
  - Analysis and reflection, with lingering questions

- What is this a case of? What does this story represent?
  - Bridging theory and practice

The importance of emotions in teaching
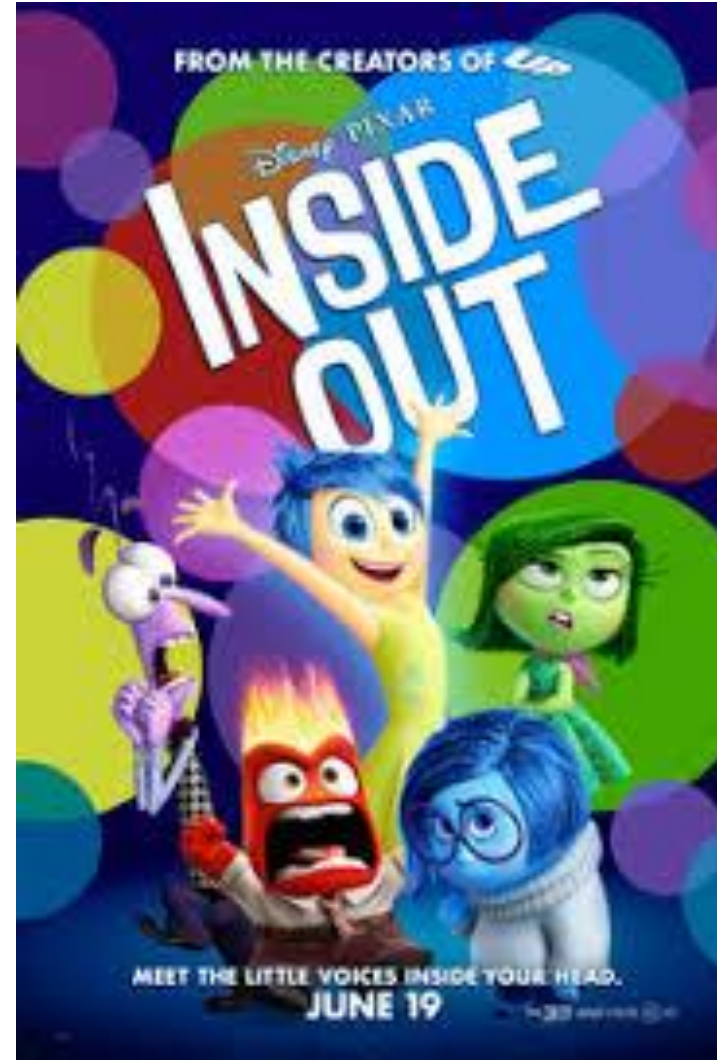
8 Basic Emotions

And the purpose of each one

Anger
To fight against problems

Fear
To protect us from danger

Anticipation
To look forward and plan

Surprise
To focus us on new situations

Joy
To remind us what's important

Sadness
To connect us with those we love

Trust
To connect with people who help

Disgust
To reject what is unhealthy

HK Teacher (follow-up interview, after case completion)

- The case study forced her to stop avoiding the "bomb" of hidden emotions (278A, audio 5). It "was very powerful about the case study, was to take one thing, and go right down into it, in a way that… otherwise, I never would do it because it's not comfortable and I don't have time" (line 278G, audio 5).

- After writing the case, she affirms that "I do" feel more comfortable expressing her emotions as a teacher "because I've duck right into it. Then it doesn't feel like there's a bomb hiding. It's not as dangerous [to reenter these spaces] because it's like I duck ride into the ugliest part of it and not died. So, there's nothing … I'm not gonna accidentally stuck in something that I wasn't… The bomb went off, and I got covered already and it really wasn't a bomb. It's just a punch of an opinion that I have about myself" (lines 394, audio 5)

Case-writing with an emphasis on emotions

After writing the case, she values emotions more. Growth in self-awareness of emotional knowledge, empathy, and self-care practices during pandemic teaching (for herself and her students).

- Followup interview led her to "notice as I'm talking with you" is to "give space to emotion, … it's very useful to notice that there are some emotions that I'm okay with, and some emotions that I'm not okay with. Because they're emotions, they are like weather. If you're not okay with the weather, then, you gonna spend a lot of energy being angry with the rainstorm and it's still going to be a rainstorm. So, I think noticing them and being okay with them, and maybe practicing, setting that up as a practice… setting that up as a kind of a question that I ask myself, what… what is the emotion that's going on? Is there something that I'm avoiding? Is there something that I'm not okay with?" (lines 314, audio 5)

- Now, when she recognizes her discomfort in a situation, she concludes "on a personal level, I think… I think it's enough to be present to it [discomfort] and to acknowledge it, and then let it go. Or, if I can't let it go, write it down and go back to it later. So, actually I could do something like include it in my lesson note, cause I still haven't done it" (lines 318, audio 5).

Context for Case-writing

Writing the case required a "safe space"

- "The powerful thing is that you're interested. Nobody's interested [in my story]. My principal is not interested in what's going on in that class, my colleagues have got their own problems and issues and opinion about their class" (lines 280A-280B, audio 5).

- "I had a very very safe space to do that in, like, without the space you provided, I wouldn't necessarily have made myself emotionally vulnerable. You provided a space that's not judgmental. You gave us examples, you valued our experience, as being something that's missing in the HK curriculum, experience of local teachers. You were friendly and respectful and you made everything be okay. You just kept responding with the positive space" (lines 308-310D, audio 5).

Art-based and creative approaches to reflection

- Utilising modes other than language creates space for *different* ways of knowing or being, thus resulting in more "meaningful insights" that can come as a surprise

- Helping individuals make sense of new and/or complex experiences in their lives at a cognitive and affective level

- Potential to reveal valuable information about personal and contextual resources on which individuals can draw when elements of their work become a threat.

McKay, L., & Barton, G. (2018). Exploring how arts-based reflection can support teachers' resilience and well-being. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *75*, 356-365.

Art-based and creative approaches to reflection

Techniques	Description
rip and paste collaging	Art piece made by combining different pieces/materials: emotional attachment to the event/phenomenon is exposed as connections and relationships emerge from within the product
metaphor writing	Teaching in the intervention class is like … because …
adapted photo-elicitation techniques	Teachers were asked to select an image that resonated with them in response to a guiding question. 1 Which picture resonates with how you currently feel about your work role? 2 How do you feel about next year? 3 What do you need to learn to do your job well next year?

McKay, L., & Barton, G. (2018). Exploring how arts-based reflection can support teachers' resilience and well-being. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 75, 356-365.

Teaching is like … a monkey learning to swing on vines through the jungle.

- To start you are not sure how you will have the strength to hold onto the next vine. You get scared by other monkeys nearby and intimidated yet inspired by their ability they possess to swing so freely. You start to take chances closer to the ground so if you fall it won't hurt. You begin to realise that it can be fun and amazing, so you venture higher. If gets a little more dangerous and risky but the rewards of the thrill are worth it. Sometimes you grab a vine and it isn't stable. You slip, you second guess your choices and you panic, thinking you have failed and let yourself and others down. You scramble for another vine, reaching into the air, hoping. You grasp another vine and let out a sigh of relief. I can do this. It keeps you on your toes and constantly thinking but there is always something to learn from everything. If I don't try and learn, how will my baby monkeys learn to swing form vines and push the limits? I need to teach them and show them the way.

Art-based and creative approaches to reflection

Can arts-based reflective practices support teacher resilience and well-being?

A picture speaks 1000 words, which is definitely true in this case. It enables me to address the picture and it opens up different emotions for you and for others. Others being able to see the journey and pictures I have presented enables them to be able to develop their own ideas. They might find something in that picture that I didn't. It enables us to **empathise together** … To begin with, I was thinking quite literally and trying to find pictures that I think matched my thoughts. I found that I wasn't able to find many pictures … I had to then reassess my strategy and look at the pictures through a different lens. When I did that, I was then able to find images that built my collage.

McKay, L., & Barton, G. (2018). Exploring how arts-based reflection can support teachers' resilience and well-being. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *75*, 356-365.

Key Takeaways
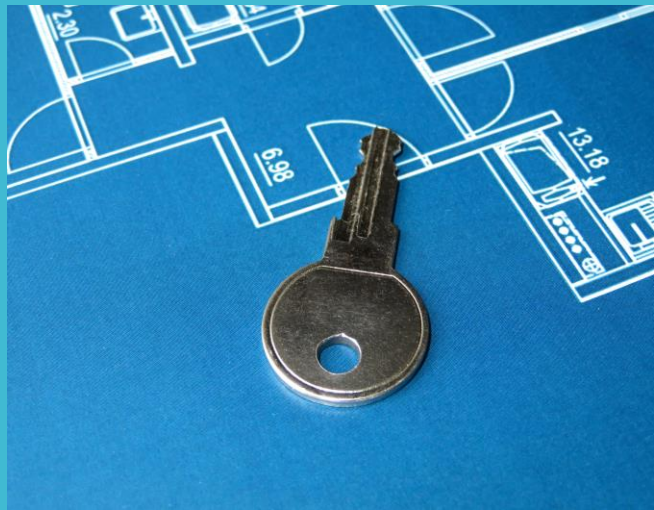
- Prioritizing the *wellbeing* of our graduates necessitates examining whether our programs promote *resilience*

- Applying a resilience lens to our practice and curriculum may be as simple as the *re-purposing* of existing curricular tools and practices

- It's important to recognize that any intervention to promote resilience must recognize and address conditions of work that are substandard

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