Maximizing the Impact of Initiatives to Foster Resilience in a COVID World

For school heads, supporting student and faculty social-emotional well-being adds to an already long list of responsibilities, and COVID-19 has led to increased urgency about attending to mental health. Faced with ongoing disruptions to their everyday lives, students are increasingly vulnerable to anxiety and depression. Their teachers, now asked to shoulder even more responsibility, are at growing risk for burnout and may be less able to provide the support students need. To minimize negative outcomes and foster resilience in school communities, interventions must be guided by rigorous data on the major challenges and opportunities within each school, specifically.

In this webinar, Dr. Suniya Luthar and Nina Kumar will present data on 15,000 students and 3,500 faculty and staff members assessed during distance learning. The presenters will highlight the most important, modifiable risk and protective processes that have emerged during the pandemic, and will describe best practices that schools have implemented to bolster well-being. Importantly, the presenters will also present data on specific demographic groups that have been disproportionally affected by the stresses and disruptions across the country. School leaders who attend this session will leave with actionable steps they can take to best support their communities this fall.

Suniya Luthar is professor emerita at Columbia University's Teachers College and co-founder and chief research officer of Authentic Connections, a science-based organization committed to maximizing well-being in school communities. Her research involves vulnerability and resilience among various populations including youth in poverty, teens in upper-middle class families, and parents (especially mothers) in high-achieving, stressful communities.

Nina completed her undergraduate degree in Computer Science and Psychology at Williams College. Prior to co- founding Authentic Connections, Nina worked in user experience and product management at IBM Watson Health. At AC, Nina steers the organization's data science and analytics efforts. She has published several peer-reviewed papers in leading scientific journals, as well as chapters for scholarly audiences and the general public.