

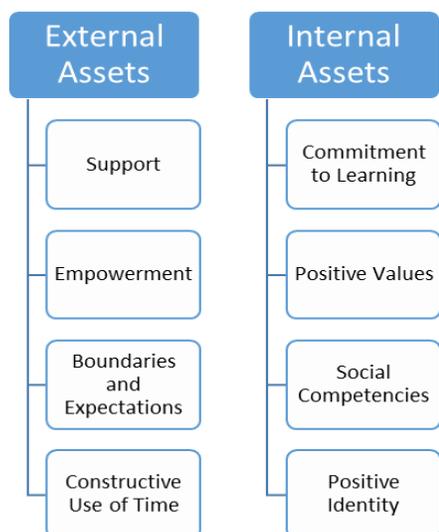
## Culturally Responsive School Mental Health Practices

As our schools continue to become more diverse, it is increasingly important for educators and other school professionals to consider and respond to students' cultural backgrounds in order to most effectively meet their needs. For example, when planning mental health interventions, it is important to consider how individuals' cultural background might influence their perceptions about mental health. Please read the attached brief, which further discusses cultural considerations and lists several practical ways in which school mental health professionals can be more culturally responsive when providing services. Doing so is one way to establish a foundation for promoting positive development in all children, while concurrently preventing problematic discipline and mental health disparities in schools.

### Developmental Assets

When developing culturally responsive mental health supports, it is important to consider both risk factors/needs *as well as protective factors/assets*. Related to the latter, one way in which educators and families can encourage healthy development is by promoting Developmental Assets<sup>®</sup>. The Developmental Assets<sup>®</sup> consist of 40 research-based positive qualities that a student might experience in their families, schools, and community.

In studies of over 4 million youth from diverse backgrounds, research suggests students who experience more of these qualities, are more likely to thrive and less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors (Search Institute, 2008).



The Developmental Assets<sup>®</sup> are divided into external and internal assets, which are further organized into categories (see figure). After becoming familiar with the full list of 40 Developmental Assets<sup>®</sup> (see <http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18>), educators and families can identify key assets that they can help influence and promote in order to encourage positive development for all students.

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