

The Little School of Resilience



OBJECTIVES:

- Identify the elements and/or people that provide protection and are necessary for positive development (resilience).



AXES:

Pursuit of a common future/ goal(s) (putting values such as cooperation and solidarity into practice); Identification of internal and external resources



AGE GROUPS:

Adults



STEP BY STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

>> Introduction to the activity

Pose the following question to the group and invite reflection:

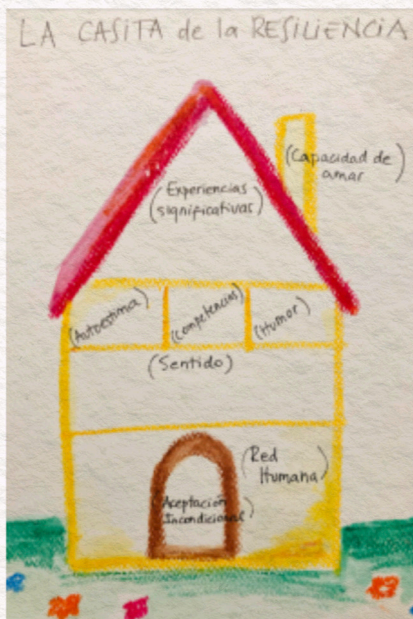
- What do we need to do well in school?

>> 1st part of the activity: building the little school

Groups of 4-5 people are formed.

Give each group a copy of the resilience house/school image and a list of questions corresponding to each level.

Invite the groups to look at the drawing and read the questions.



Each group will work level by level. Explain each one, posing questions so that the groups can capture their vision, strengths and possible difficulties in the outline. As they work, explain the protective factors for the development of resilience.

Foundations: Basic needs: health, food, sleep, shelter, hygiene...Material structures that support the school and community.

Prompt: Create columns at the base of the house representing each of the elements identified: Who(s) supports these needs? Are there any figures in the school or local community who can make a difference (if yes, invite them to write on an arrow under the columns)?

Door: Acceptance and knowledge of what each one is:

- Where do you feel comfortable at school?
- What situations make you feel part of it, accepted? what about the children?
- With whom do you feel cared for? Who takes care of the children emotionally at school?
- What places or moments allow you to express yourself? Doing what? and the children?

Prompt: Think of people in the school who make community members (or you) feel unconditionally loved/accepted. Represent them on the door, name them and write a short sentence that represents their relationship with children and adults in the school community (e.g. Pedro, the caretaker - Presence, recognition).

Ground floor: The human network:

- When you have a difficulty, who do you turn to?
- Remember specific people who have helped you or have helped them (in the school community and their environment).
- Do you feel listened to? Do you listen to others?
- Do you feel that there is someone to turn to when you have a need or problem?

Task: Choose three moments or groups in the school that fulfill the functions of: providing security, trust, support and openness to new experiences. Draw and name each one with a different color.

First floor: Ability to give meaning to what is lived:

- What spaces for enjoyment, sharing, creation, expression do you identify within the school?
- What responsibility do you feel comfortable with?
- Do you have a project/dream that is linked to the school community, which one?
- Do you feel that this vocation of helping other people or community work can be expressed in the school community?
- Do you feel free to share aspects of your faith or principles? Does this faith or principles help you to relate to other people (identify them)?
- Do you feel that your role in the school has a purpose, which one?

Task: Find three symbols that illustrate this dimension (those that match or describe the situation for the group).

First floor:

Room 1: Self-esteem.

- Do you feel you can make a personal contribution to the school community?
- What motivates, encourages, helps each one of us?
- What discourages you?

Room 2: Skills and competences

- What can you do well?
- Do they thank you for these contributions?
- What are you missing/want to learn?

Room 3: Humour

- Do you often laugh at school and have you laughed recently?
- Do you sometimes laugh when something has gone wrong?
- Have any of you ever been made fun of... and how did you feel... were you able to talk about it with the person?
- What is the difference between mockery and humor for the group?

Task: Find a phrase that is representative of each of these concepts (laughter and mockery).

Attic: Meaningful experiences

Task: Remember something that marked you recently (an encounter, a difficulty, a situation). On the tiles, find keywords that remind you of that experience.

Fireplace: Love

Task: Write in the smoke three elements, people or links that motivate you to love/care for the members of the school community. help you to relate to other people (identify them)? Do you feel that your role in the school has a purpose, which one?

>> 2nd part of the activity : Sharing and building a common school

When the groups have completed their cottage, send them to gather around a large poster (A2 size minimum) of the "cottage-school".

There they can transfer (write down) words, phrases and symbols from the different groups: one of the participants per group will read what appears, starting from the foundations, until each group has contributed to "foundations". Another person will write down (in coloured markers) those words, phrases, symbols that the group agrees on. It is not necessary to be unanimous about the concepts, but it is advisable to talk about them in case opposing views appear.

>> 3rd part of the activity : Evaluate and improve

Once the "school-house" common to all groups has been completed, invite people to observe and evaluate it:

"If we were to strengthen our construction, which parts of the school do you think need urgent work, which can be kept as they are, which need to be rearranged?"

Based on these observations, propose to paint the levels with colors:

Red: get back to work!

Yellow: Stop to reflect. Needs to be worked on but not urgent.

Green: Well worked appearance.

>> Closing of the activity

Ask the group how they felt about sharing their homes and what aspects of themselves and the community this work revealed.



MATERIALS:

- Drawing sheets
- Photocopies of the house template (1 per 4 persons),
- Photocopies of questions (1 per 4 persons).
- Large copy (A2) of the house
- Coloured pencils/pencils/crayons



METHODOLOGY:

Art therapy

PREPARATION

Prior knowledge

The resilience (protection) factors that each person needs in order to grow up healthy must be known and explained. It is suggested to draw an attractive colorful picture or to draw the little house in large size on the blackboard to motivate people and facilitate the explanation.



TIPS FOR THE PERSON DOING IT

The theme is introduced by explaining that our aim is to give them the tools to know what is useful and what the community needs to take care of its members, to grow, to face problems and difficulties that we all have (some more serious than others). All people can overcome big problems and we can learn from this.

It introduces the different factors that help to build resilience (“the ability to overcome and learn from the bad things we experience, realizing that we can change things and ourselves to be better and happier people in spite of difficulties”) and how school can be a fertile ground for resilience and the building of healthier societies.

When people make their house, it is important that they visualize very specific people and things.



WHEN:

Right after having carried out activities to create a climate of trust and basic interpersonal knowledge



DURATION: 1h30m



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This activity is inspired by Vanistendael’s resilience cottage model, which he describes as “the cottage, a simple tool for a complex challenge”. The approach has been repeatedly tested and highly valued as a tool for analysis by diverse social groups.