

“It’s what it is” or how to move from resignation to action



OBJECTIVES:

- Developing a strategy to overcome inaction when facing obstacles to community wellbeing.
- To experience and learn a tool for the creation of consensual and organised solutions to shared problems.
- To reduce the stress of educators when faced with difficult situations.



AXES:

Identification and active problem solving



STEP BY STEP OF THE ACTIVITY

» Introduction to the activity: (15 minutes)

After welcoming the group, energising the presentations and briefly introducing the community resilience framework, show them image 1 from the powerpoint file (see annexes p. 1) with the sentence “*It is what it is*”.

Ask the group:

What does this expression mean (allow them to exchange definitions)?

What emotion and what state does this sentence bring with it?

Can each of you think of a situation in the school that you consider to be negative or harmful to the community, but in which a position of “it is what it is” has been adopted?

Show picture 2 (blocked staircase - see annexes p. 2)

» 1st part of the activity: Challenge and objectives: (20 minutes)

Explain to the participants that they will work in breakout rooms separated by groups, where they will receive each assignment in writing, via messages, but that the facilitator will go to each room to answer questions and clarify doubts. The group is separated into small groups of 4 to 6 people in virtual rooms. Give each group a link to a [powerpoint file \(see here\)](#) and ask them to:

1. Discuss the “It is what it is” situations that each member identifies and **choose one to work on together** (e.g. “*Parents are not involved in school, they just drop their children off and come to an annual meeting*”). They can write it on picture 1 (“*It’s what it is*” - see annexes p.1).
2. Think about the **main obstacles** that prevent them from being solved (e.g.: *lack of time of parents; language problems; families think that education is the responsibility of the institution; mothers are delegated the tasks of upbringing, they prioritise work...*). You can write it in image 3 (*Obstacles* - see Annexes page 3).
3. Think of and state a **desirable solution** to this problem (objective) as clearly and concretely as possible (e.g. “*To get parents involved in school: in meetings and extracurricular activities, to link with each other and to communicate with teachers*”). You can write it in picture 4 (*Threshold* - see Annexes page 4).

» 2nd part of the activity: Ladder of solutions (30 minutes)

- a) Once the groups have decided where they want to get to, as a solution to the detected issue, they will work on image 5. Ask each group to think of the actions they identify as necessary steps to reach the objective/solution and to place them on the ladder, from the furthest (top) to the closest (bottom). (e.g.: Parents to attend the 4 annual family meetings; to participate in the family day; to be associated to the AFA,...) with different colours for each action.
- b) The next step is for them to identify the actions that are necessary to complete each of the steps identified in a) and order them on the coloured ladders (annexes, pages 6 to 11). e.g.: “To be in charge of coordinating the March sports day” requires: scheduling the event; sending information to all parents by January; organising a meeting in February; confirming what materials and budget are available; booking the courts, etc.).
- c) Identify what resources or arrangements are needed for each of the sub-steps b) Determine who is willing/available to carry out specific actions.

These resources and agents can be listed at the side of the steps (see annexes of coloured ladders on pages 6 to 11, in

the right-hand columns).

You can change the order of the steps as you detail the actions required for each step and understand how best to resolve or manage the obstacles.

»» 3rd part of the activity: Sharing (20 min)

Once all groups have completed their ladders, ask them to summarise the main points: one member of each group will take a photo of the ladder they completed (this can also be taken by the facilitator). Bring all groups back together in the main room. Each group will present their problem and the steps that lead to solving it.

Ask the group what they believe to be the point of carrying out this whole process as a team (naming the problem, agreeing on a desirable solution, identifying obstacles, etc.). Some key words: organisation, consensus, perspective, integration of different strategies or actions, etc. These notes can be listed on page 13 (threshold image) as “extra” results of the process.

»» Closing of the activity: (10 min)

Reflection:

To what extent does this tool serve collective resilience?

What is built by developing group solutions?

What happens to us, as a community, when we naturalise a problem and resign ourselves to it, and what happens when, instead, we seek a strategy to address it?

Conclusion: The aim is to reinforce the importance of active problem identification and problem solving in the development of resilience. If there is time, participants can be asked if they can recall any experiences where solving a problem together has generated new bonds or strengthened emotional well-being (of both adults and children).



METHODOLOGY:

Cognitive psychology

PREPARATION:

Create and upload to an online platform (such as googledrive) as many copies of the attached powerpoint as working groups will be created to develop the activity (steps 1 and 2).



DIGITAL TOOLS INVOLVED:

Computers/mobile phones with video cameras and microphones (at least one per group of participants) with internet access and online meeting platform.

[Annex file](#)

PLATFORM USED:

online meeting platform (meet, zoom, etc), a copy of the provided powerpoint on google drive (you can also download the powerpoint and directly use the whiteboard in the virtual rooms to organise the information).

DURATION:

1,5 h (varies according to the number of participants)



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



TIPS FOR THE PERSON DOING IT

Once in sub-groups, the facilitator can move from room to room to resolve questions. Ensure that at least one person per subgroup knows how to use the digital tools involved.

With some groups it works best to have the steps to work through in writing, so that the facilitator gives each group a copy (e.g. passes it to the group via chat). It usually works best if the facilitator explains the instructions to each group, and answers questions as they go along. For groups that do not work comfortably with digital tools, it can be proposed that one person per group makes the record on paper (drawing the staircase, writing the steps, etc.).