

Teaching Resiliency Based Practices through Experiential Learning Handout

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Overview of Experiential Learning Lab

Objectives of Lab:

- Teach students resiliency based practices they can incorporate into their work with children.
- Create experiences that are impactful and lead to the development / strengthening of resiliency based practices for students.

The lab is organized around three broad areas of resiliency (Souers & Hall, 2019):

- Relationships – a meaningful connection to others
- Responsibility – a sense of self-worth, efficacy, and competence
- Regulation – the ability to take in stimuli and manage emotional and behavioral responses

Students are assigned to groups of 5-6 and some resiliency based practices are repeated weekly to reinforce learning.

We have included two lab lessons to help illustrate how each lab is structured. For a copy of the entire lab manual or a copy of the course syllabus please contact the authors. However, we request that you share with us how you plan to incorporate our materials into your teaching, research, and/or scholarship activities and cite us accordingly in the materials. We have given the National Council on Family Relations permission to share our material.

A Sample of a Resiliency Based Experiential Lab Lesson

Topic: Goal Setting

Materials needed:

- *Life Areas, Values, and Activities Inventory handout*

1. Welcome students back into the lab

2. Mindfulness - Practice Breathing Retraining Exercise from week 1 and 2

- a. Set aside 5-10 minutes for this activity
- b. Give time to discuss experience with breathing exercise
 - i. Validate struggles and celebrate achievements

3. Briefly Review Group Rules

4. Check-Ins

- a. Share with the group one positive thing that happened this week
- b. Share with the group one negative thing that happened this week
- c. Share with the group one challenge you look forward to taking on this coming week

5. Goal Setting

- a. Group discussion on setting goals
 - i. What are some goals that you have set for yourself in the past?
 - ii. What has been your experiences in setting and meeting these goals?
 - iii. What kept you from meeting your goals?
 - iv. How did you feel when you met your goals?
 - v. Why is setting goals important? How does it benefit us? Probe for keywords such as: growth, self-improvement, accountability, self-worth, achievement, pride, satisfaction
- b. Go over the Life Areas, Values, and Activities Inventory and the examples
 - i. Adapted from Lejuez et al., 2011)
- c. Have students complete the Life Areas, Values, and Activities Inventory
 - i. To get started, help students identify one life area that is important, 1-2 values in that life area, and 2 activities that will help you live according to your values
 1. Note: It may take a few trials for students to get that activities have to be measurable, observable, and smallest piece possible
- d. Have students share from their inventory with their group
 - i. Using a Solution Focused Approach, ask students to share their ratings for their activities and how will they know they met their goal? What would it look like? How would they feel? What is one thing they can do today to begin moving up the scale 1 point?
- e. Encourage students to begin working on these goals and monitor their progress over the course of the semester.

- f. Connect last week's topic of community with goal setting in that how can a community aid in goal achievement? Probe for keywords of encourage, support, hold each other accountable.

6. Reflections

- a. Summarize topics covered today
- b. Ask students to reflect on how they can apply the information presented today in their own lives and their work with children.

A Sample of a Resiliency Based Experiential Lab Lesson

Topic: Amygdala in Action

Materials needed:

- *Checkout Virtual Reality Goggles if available*

1. Welcome students back into the lab

2. Mindfulness - Practice Breathing Retraining Exercise from week 1 and 2

- Set aside 5-10 minutes for this activity
- Give time to discuss experience with breathing exercise
 - Validate struggles and celebrate achievements

3. Briefly Review Group Rules

4. Check-Ins

- Share with the group one positive thing that happened this week
- Share with the group one negative thing that happened this week
- Share with the group one challenge you look forward to taking on this coming week
- Share progress regarding semester goals, identify any roadblocks

5. Amygdala Video 1

- Review the role of the amygdala
 - Scans environment for threats and has a fight, flight, freeze response
- Show video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jc-5tBEPUE>
 - This video is meant to try to activate their amygdala, but also not traumatize them. It is important to let the students know that if they have a fear of clowns or if this video connects to any previous trauma that they can excuse themselves to the hallway until the video is complete.
- This video can be viewed by virtual reality devices or by using the classroom overhead projector. You can set the scene by having students envision having their car break down, leaving them stranded and along comes this guy in the video.
- Pause it when the second guy appears and ask them to close their eyes and focus on the state of their body (heart rate, level of tension, sweaty palms). What do they notice about how their body is reacting? What is their amygdala telling them to do (run, prepare to defend / fight, or hide / stand still)?
- Keeping their eyes closed, have them engage in a mindfulness breathing exercise. After a few minutes, have them reflect on their current state of their body. Are they back in their upstairs brain?
- Have students share experiences and share other moments in their life when they noticed their amygdala was activated.

6. Amygdala Video 2

- Show bungee jumping video where she is too scared to jump <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJ-sINvmFYA&t=214s>
- How is your body responding to watching this video?
- Lead discussion as to what her upstairs brain (cortex) is telling her vs. her downstairs brain (amygdala). Which part of her brain is winning and why?

7. Amygdala Video 3

- a. Show video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8L8Dz_j7I8
- b. Lead discussion about this child's amygdala
- c. Point out in the video the moment his amygdala becomes activated.

8. Reflections

- a. Summarize topics covered today
- b. Ask students to reflect on how they can apply the information presented today in their own lives and their work with children

References

Souers, K. & Hall, P. (2019). *Relationship, Responsibility, and Regulation: Trauma-invested practices for fostering resilient learners*. ASCD, Alexandria, VA.

Lejuez, C.W., Hopko, D. R., Acierno, R., Daughters, S. B., & Pagoto, S. L. (2011). Ten Year Revision of the Brief Behavioral Activation Treatment for Depression (BATD): Revised Treatment Manual (BATD-R). *Behavior Modification*, 35(2), 111 – 161.