

Individual Resiliency Lesson #2: Growth Through Adversity

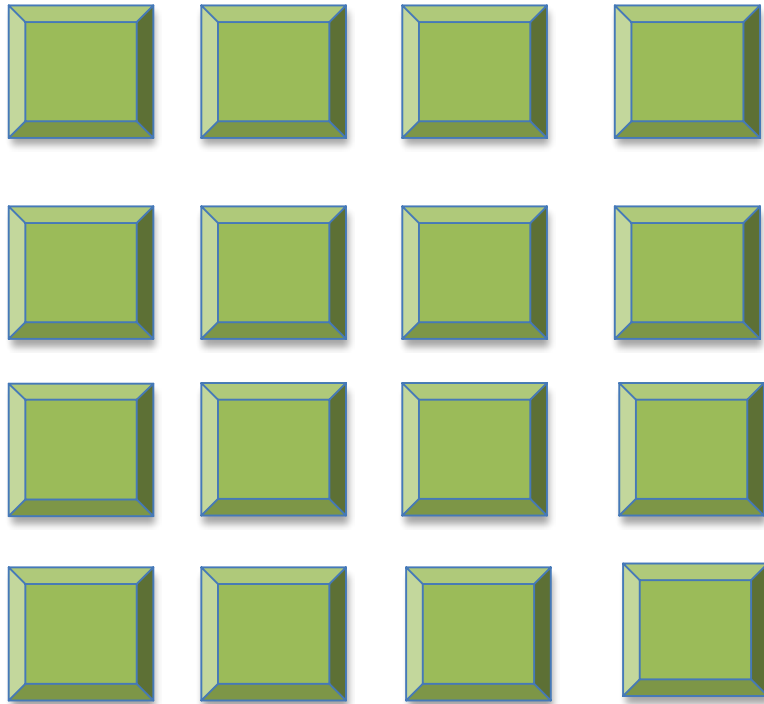
A resilient individual is able to grow through positive and negative experiences. A resilient person is able to identify challenges and adjust accordingly to help ensure success, which however, does not mean that those who are resilient are always successful. In fact failure is a key aspect of resiliency. The ability however to use adverse situations as learning opportunities allows someone to develop resiliency, grow and plan for future success. A resilient person is able to take obstacles and turn them into opportunities.

Activity:

“The Square Game of Doom” is an excellent way to teach students the importance of persevering through adverse situations. In this activity there is no solution to the puzzle the students are given. Students however are made to believe that there is. As the students progress through the activity the facilitator will notice that some students get frustrated and some may even give up. It is important to allow these emotions and responses to come to the forefront for the activity as they will be addressed in the debrief.

For the activity create a playing field by using 8.5x11 pieces of paper. Take the paper and create a square 4 x 4 field. The facilitator should pretend that they have the answer on a separate sheet, taking care to not show students the fake sheet. On the one end of the playing field write “start” and on the other write “finish”. Then have students line up at the “start” square. Before they begin tell them that there is only one correct path from the “start” square to the “finish square”. Only 1 student may be on the playing field at once. Ask one student to be only an observer and record their observations of the team as they go through this activity. As students attempt to navigate the field and solve the puzzle the facilitator will arbitrarily decide which squares are correct and which are not. As students believe there is an actual answer to the puzzle they will try their best to solve it. As they progress their frustration will increase as they cannot understand why they can’t find a solution. When the facilitator feels that the students have reached their limit they should end the activity.

Start



Finish

Debrief with the students right away about the activity. After telling them that there was no solution they may be upset. These are not bad emotions as they are similar to the emotions felt when failure occurs in real life. Ask students how they feel, have them discuss what they did to try and solve the puzzle. Ask them if they had to do the activity again what they would do differently. Explain to students that sometimes in life they will face obstacles that seem impossible to overcome. Sometimes they will fail in their attempts to achieve something. Explain to them that developing resilience doesn't mean they won't fail, it means that when they do fail they use the negative experience as a learning opportunity to prepare them for the future.