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BUILDING BLOCK I: MENTOR'S PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

UNIT VII - MANAGING STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

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UNIT VII - MANAGING STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are often faced with stressful situations in their work, arising from the different circumstances of teaching. A teacher mentee is mostly exposed to similar situations or challenges as a teacher mentor-in the classroom, he/she has to react immediately to various unforeseen situations (reacting to inappropriate behaviour of pupils; assessment of the knowledge, etc.); establish and develop relationships with different stakeholders (pupils, their parents, colleagues, management); and see/assess the effectiveness of his/her work.

This module aims to encourage teacher to empower him/her to deal constructively with the stressful situations he/she encounters daily. To be successful in the teaching profession, it is essential to deal with stress in a timely and constructive manner, and this module presents some possible ideas and models for constructively dealing with stress.

OBJECTIVES

- To present common stressors that teachers face in their work
- To sensitize for the recognition of stress symptoms
- To learn constructive coping strategies to deal with stress at different stages of its duration

CONTENTS

- The evolution and symptoms of stress
- Systematically identifying coping strategies and pathways (the balance wheel)
- Discussion of possible problems and their solution using the pyramid of logical levels (R. Dilts)
- Self-reflection on explanatory style (M. Seligman)

DURATION, ACTIVITIES AND DYNAMICS

Estimated working time: 80m

Running time for activity and dynamic:

Activity	Dynamic	Duration	Total Duration
1. What I know/can do and what I need	1. Stressful situations I	20m	20m
2. Balance Wheel	1. Balance Wheel	30m	30m
3. Pyramid Of Logical Levels (Dilts)	1. Pyramid Of Logical Levels (Dilts)	30m	30m
			80m

Activity 1: What I Know/Can Do And What I Need | 20 Minutes

When dealing with stressful situations, it is important to be aware of what you need to be successful in a particular situation. This requires an awareness of one's strengths and competencies, as well as



one's areas of weakness, where one may need help from others. Strong, quality coaching questions that encourage exploration of the problem situation can be very helpful in raising awareness of this.

Dynamic 1 – Stressful situations I | 20 Minutes

Describe two different (current) stressful situations you are experiencing, clearly identifying the stressor and how you should react. Pay attention to the physical and mental (emotions, thoughts) reactions, and also how this is expressed in your behaviour. Also, assess how long the stressful situations described have been going on.

Activity 2: Balance Wheel | 30 Minutes

By analysing the stressful situation in more detail, we can identify several important areas of the situation, which are often of varying importance for the resolution of the situation. Identifying these important areas, and assessing them according to certain criteria, can help us to determine the beginning and the path to resolving the situation. By using the balance wheel (a balance wheel), we can plan step by step how to achieve our goals and avoid any unnecessary stress.

Dynamic 1 – Balance Wheel | 30 Minutes

Identify one of the stressful important areas of a teacher mentor's work and divide it into smaller areas (6 or 8 areas). Write these areas on a balance wheel and, depending on your achievement, rate them from 0 (completely unsuccessful) to 10 (I have mastered this area as much as I can, or as much as I am capable of, etc.). Based on the ratings and the criteria you have developed (importance of the area; the area where you can have the biggest impact with the least changes...), choose an area that you can break down in the same way. In this way, identify one area where you can start to make changes that lead to a solution/overcoming of the stress (see [Annex 19](#)).

Activity 3: Pyramid of logical levels (DILTS)| 30 Minutes

Individual similar stressful situations often stem from similar causes and if/when the cause is systematically eliminated, all these stresses are also eliminated/overcome. Therefore, Dilts (1994) suggests eliminating causes at a systemic level one level above the level of the cause of the stress.

Dynamic 1 – Pyramid of logical levels (DILTS)| 30 Minutes

Choose a realistic stressful situation (maybe one from a previous activity) and use the pyramid of logical levels to find out which level it comes from. Start at the lowest level (environment) and work your way up. To resolve the situation as permanently as possible, look for a solution one level up (from the level of the cause). Explore several possibilities of what and how could be changed at the upper level, so that the change has a constructive impact on the lower levels (see [Annex 20](#)).

ANNEXES

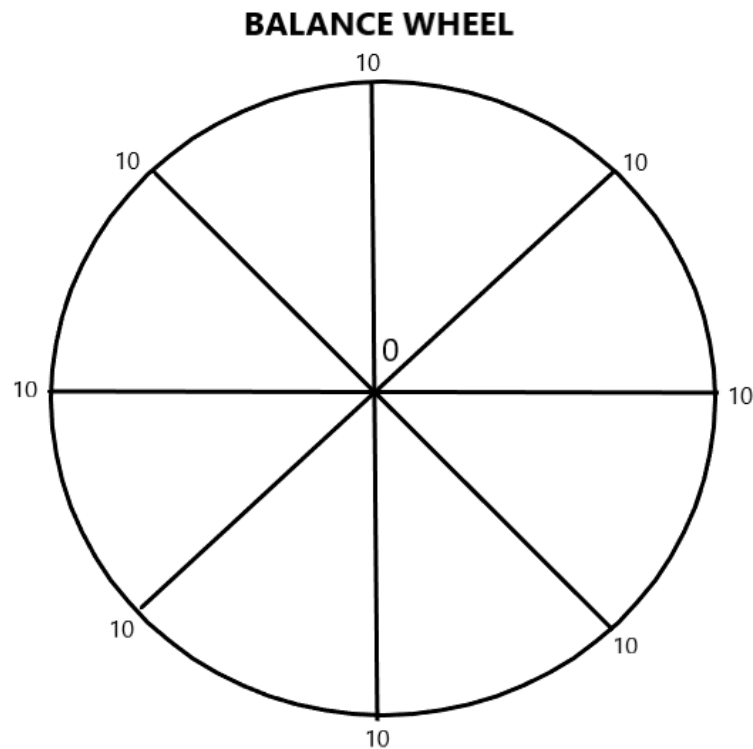


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Annex 19 - Balance Wheel

Identify one of the stressful important areas of a teacher's work (relationships, teaching, assessment, etc.) and divide it into smaller areas (6 or 8 areas). Write these areas on a balance wheel and, depending on your achievement, rate them from 0 (completely unsuccessful) to 10 (I have mastered this area as much as I can, or as much as I am capable of, etc.). Based on the ratings and the criteria you have developed (importance of the area; the area where you can have the biggest impact with the least changes...), choose an area that you can break down in the same way. In this way, identify one area where you can start to make changes that lead to a solution/overcoming of the stress.



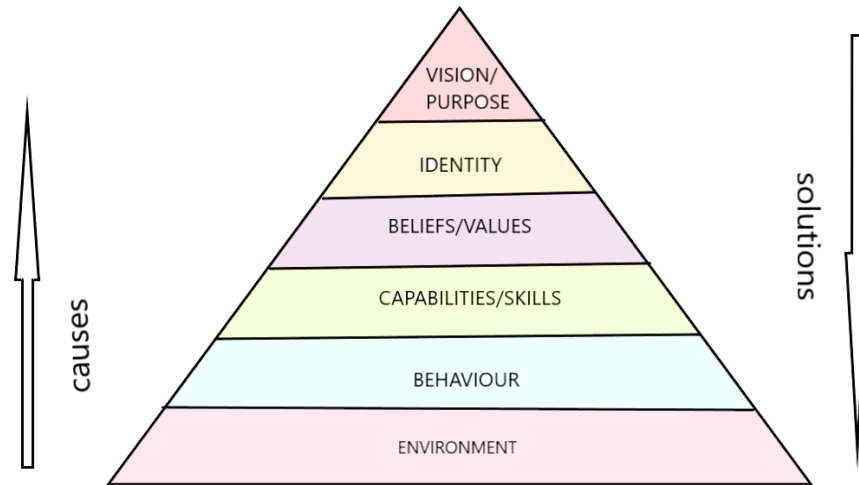


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Annex 20 - Pyramid of logical levels (Dilts)

Choose a really stressful situation (maybe one from a previous activity) and use the pyramid of logical levels to find out which level it comes from. Start at the lowest level (environment) and work your way up. To resolve the situation as permanently as possible, look for a solution one level up (from the level of the cause). Explore several possibilities of what and how could be changed at the upper level, so that the change has a constructive impact on the lower levels.



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