Translated Introduction for C.N.

Introduction

**Prolonged Exposure to Crises**

We enjoy taking our children to school every day. We believe that the teaching staff will welcome them with open arms and professionally, provide them with the emotional care they require, so that they can learn how to cope with life’s challenges. However, have we ever considered what happens to a staff member on the way to school? Today the educational staff is expected to cope with the daily pressures that characterize the school system, to take responsibility for the pupils’ grades and for their social and emotional skills. This pressure is turned up even higher in times of crisis.  Studies on school and staff resilience as a protective factor for the students and the community, in general, created the need to take a fresh look at the school’s role as a protective factor which increases resilience among children and youth in times of crisis. Fundamental to the educational systems ability to promote growth in times of crisis are the relationships among those in the system. Environments that support growth in times of crisis require genuine relationships full of concern and caring, in which there is an adult who understands the harsh experience the person in crisis is undergoing and believes in his ability to cope. This article focuses on pedagogical staffs that are constantly overworked, and takes a careful look at the consequences of their exposure to a prolonged crisis.

Schools provide balance and are a source of protection from threatening internal or external realities. School is the place that functions as a protective barrier in crisis situations. The following elements are among those which make this possible: maintaining continuous functioning, preserving a sense of safety, and preventing a sense of loss of control and safety or security. These components require a systems-wide perspective, or, in other words, the educational system is expected to use these elements to cope with threats and crises.

Kameda and Okada (2001) present the critical importance of adult education in the community, so that the adults can take a significant part in crisis management. Within the school community we relate to the educational staff as the significant adult in terms of working with the students and managing the crisis. The teacher is a key figure functioning as an anchor for the students in school in times of crisis. Therefore, the information at the teachers’ fingertips cannot be limited to their educational expertise but must also include those concepts related to coping in crises situations. According to Glaser, this situation requires the teachers be made aware of psychological and behavioral processes that occur under crisis conditions both among their students and, even more importantly, within themselves. In order to create a climate that allows the teachers to provide empathy and support for the students, we must also carefully observe the teachers’ own experiences in the context of a school crisis.

Much research has been devoted to organizational resilience. This notwithstanding, the variables influencing resilience in a school setting or the factors promoting or retarding it have received very little attention. Furthermore, we still lack insight into the factors retarding or promoting resilience among the educational staff. This study wishes to examine the influence that exposure to a prolonged crisis has on this staff. It also wishes to examine the roles of the school climate and flexibility as factors mediating the teachers’ coping ability under prolonged exposure.

The studies that were devoted to developing resilience in the educational system focused on students and on the reduction of post-traumatic responses in the event of stressful events occurring in the student population. In these studies, the educational staff was the means to improving the students’ resilience.

The studies that were dedicated to the resilience of the school itself emphasized the resilience that stemmed from the ability to adapt swiftly, provide an immediate response to change, and dedicate the necessary resources required to transform the crisis into an opportunity. Somekh (2014) presents a model that focuses on the educational staff as promoters of resilience. Her research demonstrated that the educational staff functions as “social capital” and, therefore, it must be provided with the conditions necessary to strengthen its resilience.

Furthermore, very few empirical studies have been conducted that assess organizational resilience, particularly that within the educational system. (9) There are measures examining the level of organizational mindfulness; however, there are no measures examining the perception of the educational staff’s flexibility along with the perception of the school climate. All the studies we have found focused on the organizational perspective and the teachers’ contribution to resilience; however, we found no studies examining the consequences of prolonged exposure on the educational staff in the school.

**Psychopathology among the Educational Staff with a Focus on Depression and Anxiety**

Teaching as a profession has psychological risks and is a highly stressful profession (Kyriancou, 2000). Several studies have been dedicated to teacher well-being and mental health (Parker, Martin, Colmat & Liem, 2012; Van Droogenbroek & Spruit, 2015). The current study examines the relationship between the degree of the educational staff’s exposure to a crisis situation in school and their own mental health. The study focuses on the school’s entire workforce, including principals, counselors, teachers, and those holding various positions in the school system.

Studies that investigate the staff who deal with at-risk children or refugees mainly focused on professionals, for instance, psychologists and social workers; this notwithstanding, over the last decade, the basic assumption made by researchers was that teachers are key to work done with students, and, therefore, the teachers must be trained to be capable of assisting in threatening situations or crises (Mayor, 2019; Fujioka, 2014, 2016; Oda, 2015). In these studies, very little attention is paid to examining the effect of prolonged crises on the teachers themselves or on the factors promoting their ability to help the population under their care in case of crisis.