

Rising from the Ashes:

Application of Art Coaching in Public Administration Trainings in Times of Crisis

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Abstract

As academics, HR professionals, trainers, coaches or other agents devoted to human development our mission is to search for new ways to unleash our clients' full potential. In the VUCA world this quest is not an easy one. Year 2020 pushed us to the limits. Pandemics, increased level of negative stress, emotional, physical and financial uncertainty have taken a heavy toll. It has become clear: cognitive programs alone are not fit to face this challenge. The paper argues that there is a need to shift away from the traditional model of adult learning and development. Resilience is about transformation, renewal, flexibility and capability to adapt creatively to the ever present change in the world. Consequently, when we wish to develop resilience (at individual, group or organizational level) we have to look for tools that are compatible with the afore mentioned elements of the phenomenon. We need programs that embrace creativity and activate not only the mind but also, heart, body and soul. The holistic nature of art coaching compliments the cognitive approach thus is capable of elevating resilience programs to a higher and richer level of effectiveness. It helps our students and clients to reach deeper understanding, it gives them a clear sense of their own potential and ability to cope. In more poetic words: through arts, our clients may discover their inner Phoenix rising from the ashes. The methodology combines scientific literature with own experience. The paper gives details on how art coaching techniques provide support throughout the entire training/coaching process from rapport building through problem mapping to the elaboration of concrete steps to strengthen resilience. The examples stem from selected trainings for Hungarian public sector employees (2018-2020) and students of the University of Public Service (2020-2021). Cognitive learning is combined with co-creation through group collage, painting, sculpture, music, photography, poetry or body movement. The examined exercises stimulate multiple senses, they are playful and experiential in nature. Through the examples the reader is invited to follow how the training participants identify their unique toolkit, i.e. their very own competencies and strategies to bounce back from hardship. The paper touches upon the emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual dimensions of resilience. It examines why and how art coaching may further the success of resilience programs.

Keywords:

Resilience, Art Coaching, Training, COVID crisis, Kintsugi

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