



Teachers and students improve school climate together



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

GUARDIAN ANGEL



MAIN FEATURES

Strengthened skills	CONSTRUCT, LEADERSHIP, SUPPORT, Focus on SOLUTIONS
Suitable for	Teachers, students
Difficulty level	Medium
Setting	Group
Minimum number of participants	6
Average duration	60 minutes per session
Special equipment/materials	No
Online version	No



PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO



MCMXXII
VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY





1. DESCRIPTION

It is a group activity in which each participant begins to take care of another member of the group (the protégé) for a certain period, without being noticed.

At the end of the established time period, each participant can try to guess who was his "Guardian Angel".

2. PURPOSE/BENEFITS

The exercise trains participants (e.g., teachers) to care for another person by stepping back without the protégé noticing.

This practice also facilitates the development of a solution-oriented approach in which each "Guardian Angel" must intervene promptly to take care of their protégé, thus exercising their proactivity.

3. RELATED SKILLS CLUSTERS

- CONSTRUCT (cluster n.1)
- LEADERSHIP (cluster n.2)
- SUPPORT (cluster n.4)
- FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS (cluster n.5)

Because

1. Dimension of BUILDING, which in this case refers to the idea that both students and teachers can take responsibility for their active participation in the life of the classroom to improve its climate. The ability aroused in this cluster is Proactivity because the person acting as a "Guardian Angel" must intervene promptly to take care of his protégé, trying to anticipate his needs;
2. Dimension of LEADERSHIP, which in this case refers to the idea that the teacher can be a point of reference for the class and assume a leadership role in caring for the class and improving its quality level. The ability aroused in this cluster - which is the main skill that this activity brings me to form - is the ability to lead by taking a step back, since people acting in the role of "Guardian Angels" take care of and positively influence their protégés with their actions trying not to be noticed;
3. Dimension of SUPPORT, which in this case refers to the idea that both teachers and students can actively support each other in improving the school climate's quality by showing respect for their different roles and narratives and providing space for discussion and comparison. The skill aroused in this cluster is empathy because people who act as "Guardian Angels" must try to put themselves in the shoes of their protégé to anticipate his needs and support him.
4. Focus on SOLUTIONS, which in this case refers to the idea that teachers focus on the rapid development of effective strategies and action plans to manage emerging issues within the school environment. The skill aroused in this cluster is the solution-centred approach as people acting in the role of "Guardian Angel" must think of concrete actions to quickly find solutions in order to take care of their protégé.





4. HOW TO DO THE PRACTICE

Step 1 - Preparation:

Each participant writes his name on a piece of paper that will be folded and placed in an envelope, then extracts a piece from the same envelope and becomes the "Guardian Angel" of the extracted person.

Participant pulls out the piece with his name, is allowed to put it back in the envelope and takes another. At the end of this step, each participant will ideally become the "Guardian Angel" of another person and will at the same time be supported by a "Guardian Angel".

This exercise is actually an activity that takes place in the "background", in parallel with other activities, for a duration that must be established a priori. More specifically:

1. It can be a single-session activity if the facilitator wants the group to reflect on the idea of "leading by taking a step back". In this case, the facilitator proposes to the group activity (for example, another educational practice suggested under the TASC framework) and, while this activity is ongoing, each participant acts as a "Guardian Angel" of another member of the group and at the same time receives support from his "Guardian Angel";
2. It can be an activity carried out in the background during one or more work sessions related to other activities or exercises proposed by the facilitator. This could help the group develop the ability to "drive one step behind."

Step 2 - Take care of your protégé

During the appointed time, each "Guardian Angel" tries to help his protégé by paying great attention not to be noticed and supporting his protégé in different ways. For example:

- He/she can take actions to meet practical needs (e.g. or, providing a glass of water);
- He/she can give suggestions and ideas;
- He/she can emotionally support (e.g., complimenting, reassuring, comforting) the protégé.

Step 3 - Conclusion

At the end of the established period, the whole group meets, and each member, in turn, tells the aspects of the experience that he found most exciting or that struck him the most and thinks about what could be influenced by his "Guardian Angel".

After this sharing, all the other group members try to guess who might have been the Guardian Angel of the person who spoke.

When all participants have shared their experiences, they will reveal their role as "Guardian Angel" by delivering the piece of paper chosen at the beginning.





5. FINAL REFLECTION

It may be helpful for participants to reflect on what has changed in their attitude toward other group members after assuming the role of "Guardian Angels" and how they might use this activity in class.

Here are some questions the facilitator might ask:

- *What was it like for you to support others while trying not to be seen or noticed?*
- *What was it like for you to try to take care of your protégé by managing his problems?*
- *What personal resources were you able to apply while supporting your protégé?*
- *What was it like for you to know that you can be supported subtly and discreetly? How did this affect how you experienced the activities in which you were involved in the context of group work?*
- *How do you think the "Guardian Angel" attitude can help you in class?*
- *How could it be helpful for your students if you applied the ability to "drive one step behind" in the classroom?*
- *If you helped students in the class take on the role of "Guardian Angels" to their classmates, what do you think would happen?*

6. SPECIAL MATERIALS

- Easy-to-fold paper curlers
- Pens

7. TIPS

From time to time, the facilitator should remind the participants that, in addition to the group activities they are doing at that time, there is the activity of "Guardian Angel" to be experienced in parallel. It is advisable not to oblige anyone to assume the "Guardian Angel" role.

If some members do not want to assume the "Guardian Angel" role, they will only become the protégés of other "Guardian Angels". Also, there will be other members who will not receive support.

The facilitator should explain this point at the beginning of the activity, making it clear that no one can be forced to take on a role involving a more significant amount of attention; each participant is, therefore, free to participate or not in this practice.

Finally, it is not necessary that during this activity, the facilitator knows who the "Guardian Angels" are and their protégés. If you have this information, you must be careful not to disclose it!

8. ON-LINE VERSION

Due to the nature of the activity, an online version is impossible, as Guardian Angels have to rely on various actions to support their protégés, both verbally and non-verbally.

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY - SITOGRAPHY





Teachers and students improve school climate together



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

-
- Kelly, M.S., & Bluestone-Miller, R. (2009). *Working on what works (WOWW): Coaching teachers to do more of what is working* ([link](#)). *A Journal of the National Association of Social Workers*, **31**(1), 35-38.



PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO



MCMXXII
VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY

