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Does participating in delivering Forest School increase resilience?

Jane Jennison

Autonomous Ideas Limited, UK

This paper seeks to build on the body of research on Forest School. It addresses the sparsity of scientifically rigorous research into resilience and subjective wellbeing, particularly with reference to the adults engaged in delivering Forest School. The research was conducted with 56 adults who deliver Forest School activities during term-time. The majority of participants were Forest School Practitioners

and were female. The research was a longitudinal mixed methods study, using two quantitative measures with seven-point Likert scales. The first was the Satisfaction with Life Scale, and the second was Taormina's Resilience Scale. The participants completed the measures at the beginning of the year, six weeks into Forest School, and at the end of the twelve-week term. At the end of the third survey, participants were also sent six qualitative questions, which tapped into their positive and negative experiences of participating in Forest School. The results show a statistically significant increase in satisfaction with Life from 4

to 4.13 (Cohen's $d = 0.04$), and from 5.76 to 6.6 ($d = 0.59$) in resilience. Thematic analysis indicates the key themes are: the natural environment; positive impact on emotions; relationships, and the role of the participant in Forest School. The conclusions are that Forest School impacts positively on satisfaction with life, and on resilience.

Biography

Jane Jennison is passionate about Positive Psychology, with a particular interest in increasing resilience in adults. She has an integrative practice and works with teams and individuals to increase well-being. Her research combines statistical analysis with thematic analysis to give depth and meaning to the quantitative data.

jane@autonomousideas.co.uk