

# BACK TO SCHOOL DURING COVID-19 (AND OTHER CHALLENGES)

Here are some questions that you can use to structure a SF discussion or activity with teachers who are returning to work during the pandemic. These questions can be adapted and used in meetings and with individuals. (They can also be used for discussions, writing assignments and art projects for students. )

Remember that, in general, people will answer the question you ask. If you ask neutral questions like, "How was it?", you are likely to get mixed answers, including a lot of talk about problems. If you want to help teachers talk about their resilience and coping, it is important to ask specific questions about it.

And remember, when they talk about what was difficult, take the time to listen and acknowledge what they are saying without trying to minimize it. Then turn your curiosity to coping and resilience. What did they do to cope? What did they learn? How did they keep things from getting worse?

## 1. Checking in

- *This is difficult for everyone. But I know that we will find a way to get through it, because we always do (add compliments specific to the team).*

*Now that we are back, what would you like the rest of the year to be like?*

*What would it look like if that happened?*

- *What do we need to see to move forward?*
- *Imagine the pandemic helps us to make some positive changes. What would they be?*
- *What do we need as a group to end this year on a good note?*

## 2. Highlighting strengths

- *We have never been through anything quite like this, but we have all weathered storms of different types. Think about a time when we had to face a major challenge at work (individually or as a team).*

*What did you do that made it a bit easier?*

*What are you surprised that you were able to do?*

*What are you most proud of?*

*What did you do to keep it from getting any worse?*

- *Right now, we need to \_\_\_\_\_. Even if the context or the difficult level were quite different, what are some examples in the past where we were able to \_\_\_\_\_?*

*How did we manage to be so \_\_\_\_\_? (compliment)*

*What did we tell ourselves?*

*How did we plan?*

*What did we do differently?*

*How did we keep things from getting worse?*

*What ingredients for success can we recycle for the current challenge, even if the situation is quite different?*

*Tell me more about that.*

- *On a scale of 1 to 10, where are we right now on our ability to weather the storm?*

*What are we doing to keep it from dropping down to \_\_\_\_ (today - 1)?*

*How do we manage to be so \_\_\_\_\_? (compliment)*

*What are we doing that seems to be working, even a little?*

*Tell me more about that.*

- *With everything going on around us right now, maybe it's not realistic to give it our all. What if we decided to give it our **some**? What does that look like? Let's identify some examples from before all this happened where we managed to give it our some.*

*What did we do differently?*

*How did we keep things from getting worse?*

*What ingredients for success can we recycle for the current challenge?*

*Tell me more about that.*

## 3. Planning the next steps

- *What do we need to repeat or keep on doing to finish the year in the best way possible?*
- *What do we need to add or change?*
- *Who will do what?*
- *How can I help?*

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### Author's note:

This document was written for principals who have training in using the solution-focused (SF) approach. If you are interested in SF and would like to learn more, you can find information about training and free material in English at [www.lavoiesolutions.com/english](http://www.lavoiesolutions.com/english).

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