

The right to dream – Why is it worth discussing this topic?

Is it worth dreaming? "If you can dream it, you can do it" – Walt Disney. Dreams give people strength and a sense of power, help them find their niche, are the building blocks of self-esteem and identity. Being a teenager means being full of enthusiasm, emotional commitment and intensity of thought and action, which on the one hand gives great energy to fulfil one's dreams, and on the other hand makes potential disappointments particularly painful.

The Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, who protests against climate change in front of the the Swedish Parliament, is a positive example of a person making her dream come true. She is fulfilling her dream of stopping climate change by infecting people around the world with a conscious, ecological lifestyle for the good of the planet.

What can we, as adults, do to help young people dream? We can make their dreams come true without clipping their wings – we can give the young dreamers more self-confidence, support them and at the same time help them perceive their capabilities realistically.

Psychotherapists often see teenagers with low self-esteem, without dreams, because they were not supported by the adults who were important to them. There was no one to say: "try, don't give up, I'm with you." However, there are also those who break down because their dreams do not come true, because paradoxically everyone believed in them and said that they were the best, that they would succeed, but their lives turned out different, they did not manage to achieve what they had dreamed of. That's not how it was supposed to be! I didn't go through the casting, I didn't win the contest, I haven't been accepted to my dream school. It is difficult for them to get over such a disappointment because their whole life plan was based on it.

If you connect support for making one's dreams come true with acceptance and at the same time improving logical thinking skills which allows people to understand and predict the effects of one's own actions, dreams will be one of the ways for a young person to develop, and not the only thing around which one's life revolves and on which one's self-esteem depends.

It's good for teenagers to dream about different things, give themselves a chance in different fields, to set themselves different goals, look for role models, develop and learn that it's worth dreaming and taking actions, but sometimes things may not work out, yet it's not a failure but the next step to new dreams. It is worth being brave enough to dream and to reach for one's goals, armed with resilience, that is, our resources, which make up the ability to overcome adversity and adapt flexibly to difficult living conditions. These resources are like rivers that supply fresh water to the dream lake. The more of such resources exist, the more chances a young person has to dream and fulfil their dreams because even if one tributary is cut off, the other tributaries will supply water to the lake.

In order to find out who they are, teenagers must fill themselves with good thoughts about themselves, successes, positive experiences and situations that build in them a sense of strength and power and give confidence in themselves, energy to act. The process can be different both when their dreams prove to be unrealistic and when they have dreams that give them a sense of freedom, fulfilment and joy of their actions.

Curiosity about the world which teenagers show and questioning norms and principles which is typical at this age with the accepting but attentive support of the adults who are important to them can help them make their dreams and desires come true, and discover who they really are, what gives them joy and in what direction they want to go. Well, then, let them dream!



| DEAR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS!

The topic of today's class was: *Freedom to pursue your dreams and goals*

Proposals for activities:

- Consider whether you know what your child dreams of. Talk to them about it.
- Think about how well you know your child. Do you know what your child's resources (skills, strengths) are? How can you use them to develop the child's potential?
- Say good things about your child. Appreciate it when they are trying hard. If you say something good, don't add "but...", because that will cancel out the previous part of the statement. The way we capture information is that we remember being criticised more than being praised. If we want to help our children grow, let's provide them with support, notice their efforts, say good things to show we appreciate it, so that we build their will to act. Criticism weakens and demotivates people. Of course, we can talk about what needs to be improved. Sometimes when we support children and improve their self-esteem, they will come up with an idea about how to increase the effectiveness of their actions. If they discover that on their own, it means that the motivation is internal. This shapes independence and responsibility.
- Think about whether there is anything you can do to support your child on the way to making their dreams come true. Talk to them about it, maybe they've got their own ideas about how to achieve it.
- Tell the child about your dreams. About one you made come true and how you did it.
- Also tell them about a dream you didn't manage to make come true. Consider what could have helped you achieve that goal.
- Think about the dreams of each of your family members. Write them down and then check if you know what your loved ones dream of. Talk about it.