

DOTT. LUCA VENTURA

Psychologist

COORDINATOR of the EDUCATIONAL PROJECT " To Be Siblings of ..."

1) Luca, how long have you been cooperating with RING14 and what is your activity?

I have been cooperating with RING14 for about one year. My job consists, on one side, in observing and gathering information with respect to the emotional and relational experiences of children and, on the other, to forward project proposals in order to guide the activity of educators.

2) What do you specialize in?

I am a psychologist with clinical and community focus and I am completing a course of psycho-analytical oriented specialization. For many years, I have also been working as an educator for children with psycho-physical or psycho-social disability.

3) Tell us about the project "Being brothers of..." Why was it conceived, to whom is it addressed and with what aims?

The project "Being brothers and sisters of..." was to acknowledge and pay specific attention to those who, being brothers and sisters of people with more or less severe disabilities, tend to be "neglected" from an emotional point of view by their parents, usually very busy coping with the needs (sometimes enormous) of the ill brother/sister. The main aim of the project is to give them the opportunity to develop a sound awareness with regard to their experiences, through the reading, recognition and reprocessing of their emotions and feelings in a group context, in order to create a psychological wellness. The project also provides a space for the parents, managed by my colleagues, where they have the opportunity to compare their personal experiences with regard to their children experiences.

4) You deal with following the children who participated to the project, what activities do you carry out during the year and how?

The activities we offer to children range from group games to moments of theatrical animation, and recreational exercises and sports up to the viewing and discussions of films and moments of confrontation in a circle. In short, all the activities ranging, on one side, to stimulate the spirit and the group fellowship and, on the other side, to stimulate the emotional confrontation in everyone of them.

To carry out these activities, we normally go, one weekend a month or for several days vacations, in suitable places like big rooms or adventure parks or in open spaces that are suitably equipped.

5) What sensations do the brothers/sisters of children affected by severe disability feel?

These children, as highlighted also in the short literature available on the subject, often appear over-responsibilized, complacent, with the trend to be "perfect" in order to not require attentions to the parents already engaged with their brothers or on the contrary, present challenging behaviors with psycho-physical distress in order to recall the attention on themselves. In their feelings, we often find fear, embarrassment/shame and anxiety which may even affect their self-esteem. However, a common aspect is that of being very sensitive.

6) What initiatives are you planning for the future?

For the next months, we are planning very interesting activities with the children. Just to draw out some examples, we are in contact with Dynamo Radio to organize an educational experience at the radio level and we would then like to show them a "behind the scenes" of a

theater. Besides, we are planning a ten-day vacation at Pistoia "Dynamo Camp" and we are thinking over a weekend to be spent biking on a not too difficult lane of the Tuscan-Emilian Appennines. The aim is to suggest interesting activities to be carried out in pleasant and amusing environmental backgrounds, but also offering the space to face deeper contents useful for their growth process.