

# The Life Skills Handbook

An active learning handbook for working  
with children and young people



By Clare Hanbury  
November 2008

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November 2008

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## INTRODUCTION: The purpose of this handbook

This handbook provides advice and active learning activities for teaching life skills to children and young people. It supports and guides all people who plan, manage, teach or work on formal and non-formal education programmes. It can be adapted and used in different cultural contexts worldwide.

The handbook contains practical information on:

- Approaches to teaching life skills
- Advice on how to plan and develop a life skills programme
- Teaching ideas and support for educators
- User friendly step-by-step instructions on how to conduct 61 life skills activities.

### How to use this handbook

Use this handbook:

- To support existing formal and non-formal school programmes in personal, social or health education
- To support existing life skills training programmes
- To introduce life skills into other education programmes for children, for example, literacy and numeracy classes or vocational training
- To train life skills educators or
- To develop a life skills programme where none exists.

This handbook is for people working with children and young people aged 8-16. The sessions need to be adapted to the needs, experiences of the children you work with and many people use these activities with adult groups.

The information is divided into three sections:

**Section One** explains what the handbook means by life skills and why a life skills programme is important for children and young people.

**Section Two** is for those who plan, manage and implement life skills programmes. It suggests what organisations need to do in order to support a life skills programme and gives guidance on how to set up and run an overall programme and on planning individual lifeskills sessions. It examines participatory active thinking and learning and suggests practical 'tips and tools' for educators. At the end of the section, there is a suggested schedule for a five-day lifeskills training workshop.

### Section Three

This is the longest section and contains 61 life skills activities grouped into three parts:

- Part 1: **Where are we now?** focusing on core skills;
- Part 2: **How can we move forward?** Focusing on applying life skills to present issues faced by many children and young people; and
- Part 3: **Our future** focuses on skills that prepare children for the future.

## Origins

The Lifeskills Handbook 2008 is a revised and updated version of *Lifeskills, an active learning handbook for Working with Street Children*, commissioned by Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) and published in 2002. The original handbook was inspired by a life skills programme developed by VSO and Tanzanian educators working at *Kuleana*, an organisation based in Mwanza, Tanzania. It included contributions from VSO partner organisations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Since it was published, the handbook has been used widely internationally and in the UK (where the author is based). It has been used well beyond its target audience of street educators. For example, the handbook is being used to support work by women's groups in the Philippines and as a resource book for Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) programmes with teenagers in schools the UK. In recent times, the book became out of print and this has provided the author with an opportunity to revise and update it and to make it available to readers in a digital format and through a print-on-demand publisher.

## About the author

Clare Hanbury is a trained teacher who has worked in classrooms in primary and secondary schools in Kenya, London and Hong Kong. For six years she worked as a full time member of staff with *The Child-to-Child Trust* based at the University of London's *Institute of Education*. The Child-to-Child Trust is a world leader in children and young people's participation in health promotion and health education. She continues her association with *The Child-to-Child Trust* up to today. She specialises in **writing** material for teachers, health workers and others, in **training**, and in providing **advice and mentoring**. She has worked in numerous developing countries and in the UK where she now lives with her husband and two children. In 2008, Clare founded the organisation, ***Young Solutions international***. Its purpose is to bring the participation of children and young people more fully and effectively into mainstream education and health services. More information and other titles by Clare Hanbury can be found on the websites: [www.lifeskillshandbooks.com](http://www.lifeskillshandbooks.com) and at [www.youngsolutionsinternational.com](http://www.youngsolutionsinternational.com). **Other titles by Clare Hanbury include:**

- *Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation in Health and Development: a manual for Project Managers*. October 2007. Available from [www.child-to-child.org](http://www.child-to-child.org)
- *Child-to-Child approaches to HIV and AIDS: a manual for teachers, health workers and facilitators of children and young people*. 2005. Available from [www.child-to-child.org](http://www.child-to-child.org)



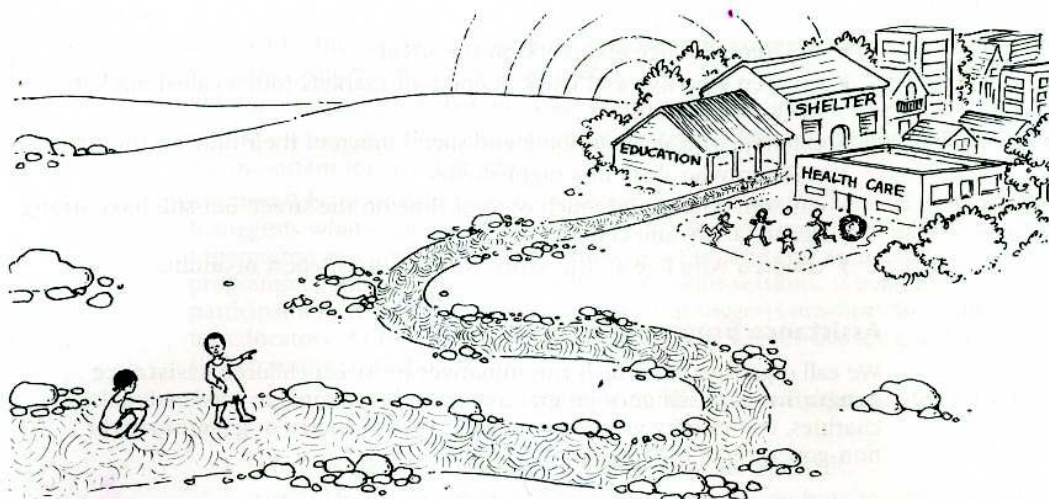
## Definitions

Before we start, let's define how we use certain terms in this handbook.

- **Programmes:** The groups helping children and young people are referred to in this handbook as **programmes**. Programmes may be schools, national or international charities, community groups or religious organisations or government or non-government organisations.
- **Educators:** People working with children may be called *mentors, counsellors, social workers, trainers, teachers, youth workers, facilitators* or **educators**. In this handbook, we use the term **educators** for anyone who is teaching or working with young people.
- **Children:** In this book we refer to the participants in life skills activities as children. Many people will use this book and the activities with adults to great effect.
- **Session:** A period of training time can be called a *lesson* or sometimes a *meeting*. We use the term **session**.
- **Life skills:** We explain what we mean by life skills in **Section One**.

## Life skills and Children's Rights

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN CRC, 1989) which has been approved by 191 countries, explains how societies can enable children to develop well. It lists: the services children should be **provided** with (including health, education, a chance to play); the factors that children need to be **protected** from (for example, exploitation and abuse); and the need for the children to **participate** in decisions that effect them. For many children, this may seem like a distant dream. However securing these rights is the most fundamental change needed for children. We believe that achieving these rights should be the ultimate goal of every programme. A life skills programme is a pathway to this goal.



***We should be realistic in our programming but idealistic in our vision for children's futures.'***

Sarah Thomas de Benitez, describing the approach of Juconi, Mexico

## SECTION ONE

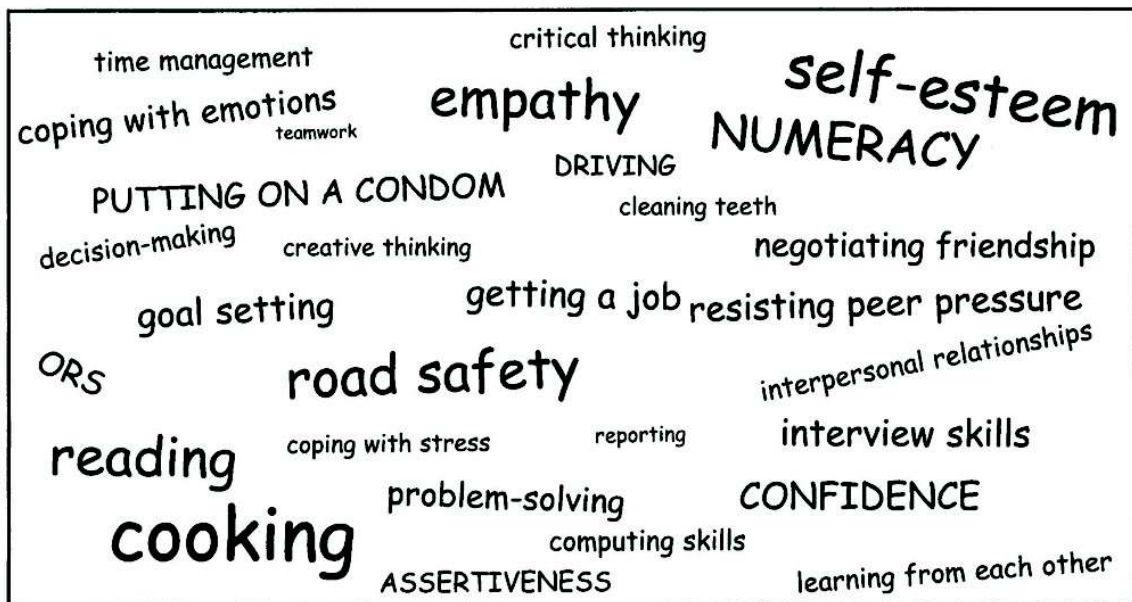
### What are life skills and how can they meet the needs of children and young people?

#### What are life skills?

This section looks at some different ways of thinking about life skills and explains the definition and approach we use in this handbook.

#### What are life skills?

A group of educators made this list in a workshop when they were asked: What are life skills?



Many of these skills are not *life skills* as we use the term in this handbook. They are:

- *technical* skills (how to cross a road safely)
- *health* skills (how to brush your teeth)
- *livelihood* skills, such as time management.

These skills may be helpful in life, but they are not what we call 'lifeskills' in this handbook

In this book, we use the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition of lifeskills:

***“Life skills are abilities that help us to adapt and behave positively so that we can deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life.”***

Using this definition, we can separate the life skills from the other types of skills, like this:

<b>Life skills</b>	<i>Decision-making, goal setting, problem-solving, coping with stress, coping with emotions, negotiating, friendship, interpersonal relationships, empathy (concern for others), critical thinking, creative thinking, resisting peer pressure, assertiveness</i>
<b>Livelihood skills</b>	<i>Time management, getting a job, interview, computer, cooking, driving etc</i>
<b>Learning skills</b>	<i>Reading, reporting, numeracy etc</i>
<b>Technical/ health skills</b>	<i>Cleaning teeth, condom, road safety, giving oral rehydration etc</i>
<b>Outcomes of life skills</b>	<i>Teamwork, self-esteem, learning from each other, confidence etc</i>

The most important life skills are grouped into five related areas. They are called the core skills. Here is a list of the areas and one example of how each core skill is developed in a life skills session:

### The five core life skills and examples of a life skills activity

<b>1</b>	Decision-making	A group of children decide with the educator to give up smoking and help others do the same. They set goals to encourage themselves and each other and try to think what problems and benefits may happen.
	Problem-solving	A group of older boys shout at and threaten two girls. The girls have to work out whose help to seek if this happens again.
<b>2</b>	Critical thinking	A girl is able to assess the risks involved in accepting an invitation from a male stranger to accept a lift across the town.
	Creative thinking	A young person is able to think about different future job options and to think how to work towards these options
<b>3</b>	Communication & Interpersonal relationships	A child is able to discuss problems with parents or an appropriate adult A child is able to resist peer pressure when his friends ridicule his refusal to drink alcohol
	Self-awareness	A young woman develops an awareness of her sexual feeling and how these feelings can 'take over' sensible decisions. This awareness helps her avoid situations where she might risk unsafe sex.
<b>4</b>	Empathy	A group of children think about how they can help a disabled child who is alone a lot.
	<b>5</b> Coping with Stress & Emotion	A child learns how to cope with the conflicting pressures of needing to work and wanting to study
A boy learns to cope with the anger he feels towards his abusive father		

In Section Three, each activity develops one or more of these five core life skills.

## **Why are life skills important for children and young people?**

Life skills are important because they give children and young people more control to improve their lives. We all want the life skills programme to work and have an impact on the behaviour and choices made by the children. It's important that while focusing teaching life skills that we keep an eye on three other key areas that work with lifeskills to make it work. These four key areas work like the wheels on the bus... they must all be pumped up and in good shape for the bus to move forward! These four areas are:

### **1. Information:**

Of the right kind, at the right time, taught in the right way

### **2. Life skills/Ability to act**

If a child is taught that abstaining from sex is important and has skills to support this then it will be easier for her to make safe healthy choices e.g.

- Resisting peer pressure
- Knowing about and being able to avoid risky situations
- Knowing how to seek help if an adult is harassing her for sex
- Negotiating with a boyfriend who is putting pressure on her to have sex

### **3. Motivation**

If a child feels motivated to act on the information s/he knows and has the skills to do so then it is more likely to happen. Motivation can come from outside or inside a person. Strong family, spiritual or peer values can provide motivation and inspiration!

### **4. Environment**

Supportive external influences of peers, family, school, community, society as a whole, cultural and religious influences, media, government policy and law

Here are some ideas on what to do to for each of these four key areas:

#### **1. Information**

- Fact sheets, text books and story books with accurate content
- Radio and TV shows
- Factual component of leaning sessions in formal or non-formal settings

#### **2. Life skills/Ability to act**

Sessions to develop lifeskills as main strategy in learning sessions within or outside formal learning settings. These need to be delivered in a fun and engaging way.

#### **3. Motivation**

- Parent education
- Community meetings where strategies are discussed and where children's ideas and feeling could be given a voice
- 'Health safe choices' being advocated by other children come into contact with
- Religious or spiritual education where appropriate

#### **4. Environment**

- Child protection policies or ideals known about and promoted in all settings where children learn, live and gather (see a sample CPP at the back of the handbook).

- Life skills messages (e.g. condom use, regular STD check ups) supported by children being able to access services.
- Law and police support to act upon reports of sexual abuse

### **Do life skills programmes work?**

NOT ON THEIR OWN THEY DON'T! When making claims for the success (or failure) of a life skills programme it is important to factor in what else is going on to influence the behaviour of the children. Children will be strongly influenced by the ideas and values practised around them at home and in their community. A life skills programme that considers these and involves key people in the children's lives will have more impact than one that does not.

Much HIV/Aids education (and other health education) focuses only on giving information with the view to changing behaviour without considering individuals values and beliefs, the environment in which they live and the skills they have to have to make those changes. When activities involve these other factors, change becomes more likely.

Different groups and societies place different emphasis on individual actions and values and on group actions and values.

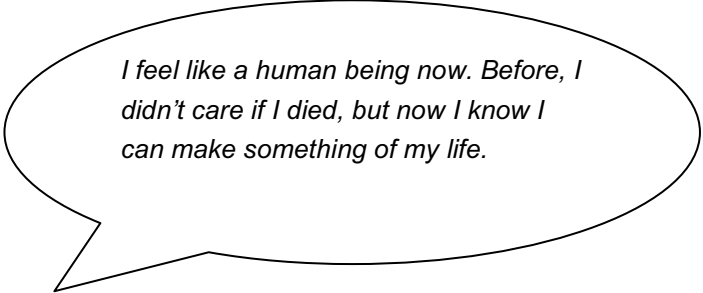


*Our external relationships also make us unique*

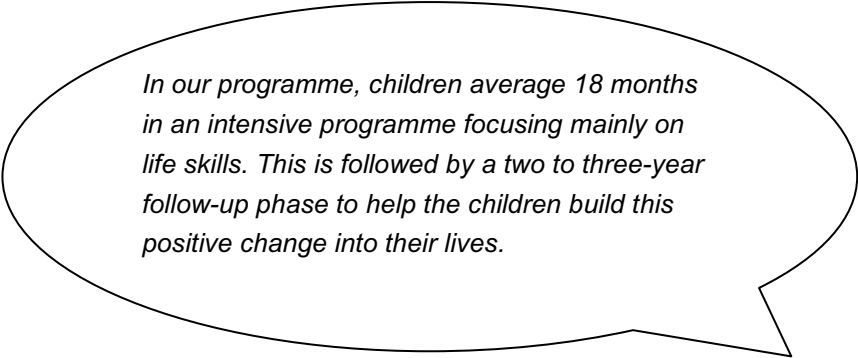
### **How life skills can help children**

- Many children live in circumstances that makes them especially vulnerable and limits their choices and future potential
- Life skills learning does not change events, but helps children to cope better with these events and enrich the world they live in

- Life skills learning should help children become more aware of:
  - what they are doing
  - how they are doing things
  - how they obtain information
  - how they think, feel and behave
- With better understanding about themselves and others, they can make better choices.
- A sensitive educator can help children look deep inside themselves, discover causes for problems and start to develop positive behaviour.



*I feel like a human being now. Before, I didn't care if I died, but now I know I can make something of my life.*



*In our programme, children average 18 months in an intensive programme focusing mainly on life skills. This is followed by a two to three-year follow-up phase to help the children build this positive change into their lives.*

**Please note!** The task of teaching life skills to children who face hurdles in their personal development is not easy. Educators must be prepared for the time it takes children to use and improve upon their life skills, programmes (and their funders) must be patient.



## Section Two

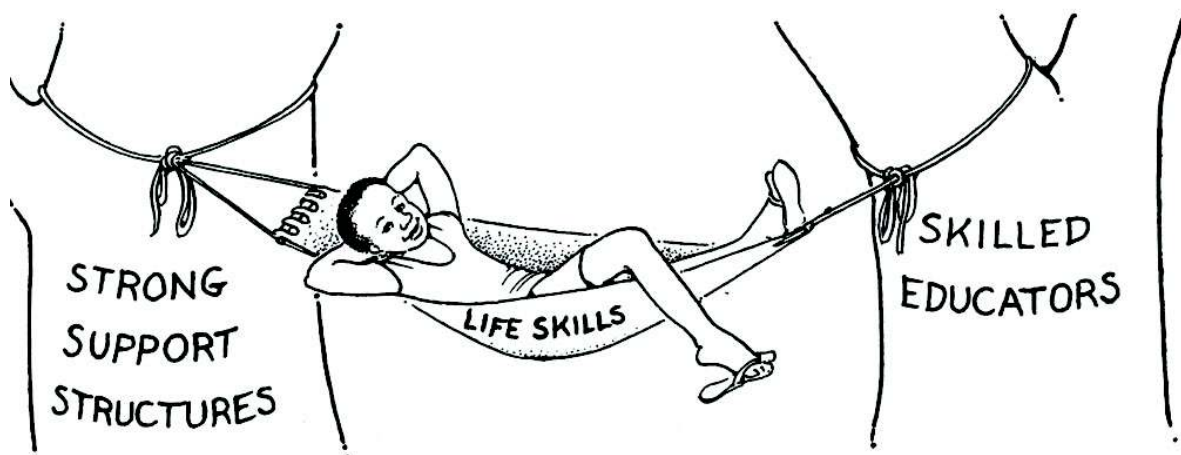
### Planning, Managing and Implementing a Life Skills Programme

This section provides guidance on how to plan and develop a life skills programme and gives advice to educators on session planning and teaching methods. It explains what is meant by active thinking and learning and describes teaching methods that promote it. There are practical tips and tools for educators.

#### Fitting life skills with an overall approach

There are many types of programmes for children with different aims, philosophical approaches and styles of working. It is possible to teach life skills separately or alongside literacy, vocational skills health and hygiene education or other elements.

To work well a life skills programme needs to have a **strong support structure** and **skilled educators** to work creatively with children.



*Lifeskills programmes need support structures and skilled educators.*

#### What are strong support structures?

- 1. An organisation with a clear purpose**
  - The organisation has a statement of purpose or mission
  - The organisation has policies, systems and procedures
  - Staff have a clear understanding of the organisation's purpose and objectives
- 2. A strong management system**
  - Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities (contracts and job descriptions). This is important for both paid and voluntary workers

- There is a clear salary structure based on qualifications and experience
  - Staff meetings are held regularly and there are clear communication channels between staff and managers
  - All staff members are made aware of and can contribute to the development of new programmes such as a life skills programme
3. **Staff development opportunities**
- There are opportunities for staff training, assessment and promotion
4. **Systems to monitor and evaluate its work**
- There is basic 'baseline' information to establish a starting point for the lifeskills and other programmes. This is essential so that progress can be measured.
  - Educators involve children in evaluating the sessions and the programme
  - Managers have formal and informal methods of checking the progress of the programme (for example, meetings both with the children and the staff involved), questionnaires, quick chats etc)
  - Programmes are regularly reviewed
5. **Funds to cover the basic costs of new programmes**
- The costs of life skills materials - handbooks and stationery
  - The costs of training
  - The costs of more staff or extra time for existing staff to train and develop the new programme
  - The costs of finding other sources of support and information to keep the programme going

### **Skilled educators**

Educators need to have or develop the following skills:

- To be able to create an appropriate lifeskills programme by being able to:
  - *Identify appropriate life skills activities for their group*
  - *Adapting life skills activities for their group*
- To listen to children in a non-judgmental way
- To encourage children to work positively with others in a group
- To deal positively with children who behave in an aggressive manner
- To create a trusting atmosphere in which children feel able to express their feelings
- To help each child feel they are making progress
- To use teaching methods that help children express themselves.
- To create and use monitoring and evaluation tools on a regular basis
- To ask for support when they need it

See [www.youngsolutionsinternational.com](http://www.youngsolutionsinternational.com) for further information on the 'Building Foundations' course. This develops educators' confidence and communication skills in working well with young people.



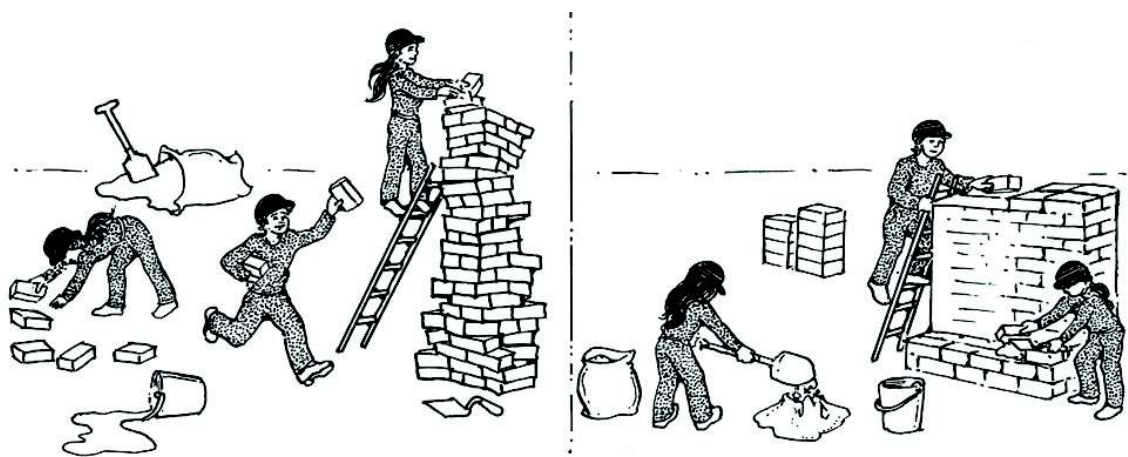
## Stability

A sense of stability is important, especially if working with vulnerable groups who live disordered lives. For example:

- Activities take place at regular times
- Staff work together to create a sense of order
- There is enough funding to meet basic costs for the programme at least 2 years
- There are managers and educators who plan to stay in the organisation for at least two years
- The learning environment is safe, peaceful and tidy to enable staff and children to conduct activities effectively
- There are partnerships with other organisations to share support and information
- The local community understand and support the activities

## Planning a life skills programme

It is important to develop a life skills programme slowly and steadily. The strong support structure (see previous section) is a foundation on which the life skills programme is built.

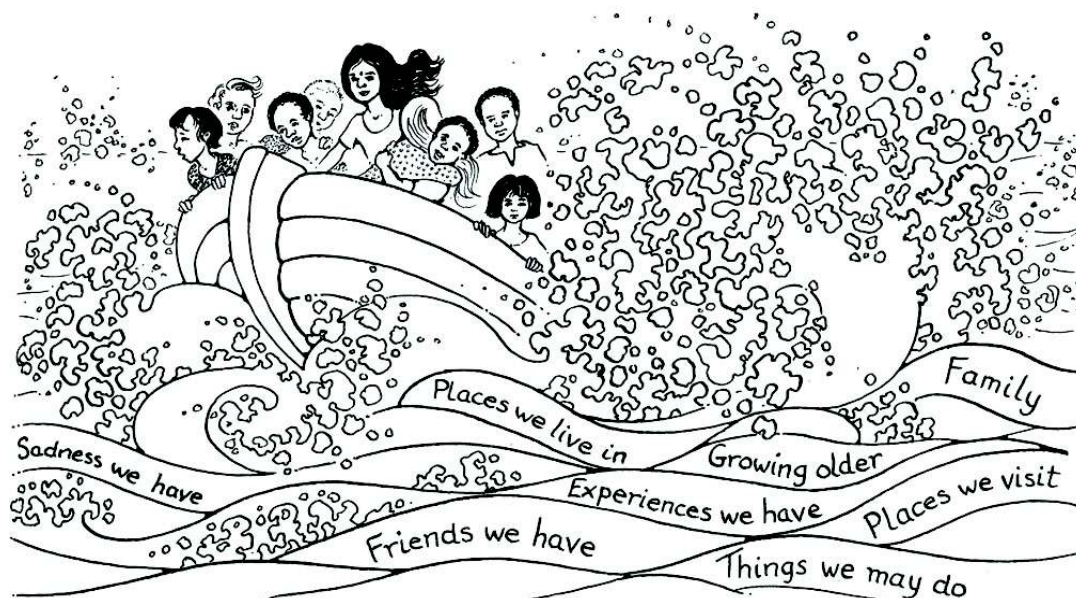


*Don't be tempted to build your lifeskills programme too quickly. Building slowly and steadily will make the programme stronger.*

When you are at the planning stage, and before planning the topics themselves, take the following steps:

- Identify the needs of the children with whom you are working.
- Reach a common understanding of life skills among all those involved (managers, donors, programme staff, educators, children, parents and community members).
- Generate support for the life skills programme from all involved.
- Identify life skills learning opportunities already offered to children (formally and informally).
- Assess whether life skills activities can be combined with existing activities or whether to set up a new programme.

- Decide when and how often life skills sessions take place. Again, this may be within an existing learning programme or separate from it.
- Agree aims and objectives for the life skills programme.
- Decide what needs to be made before the life skills programme can begin for example:
  - set up additional training for educators
  - buy materials to support the programme
  - plan the life skills sessions.
- Decide how the programme might be monitored and evaluated.



*Find out about the children's lives: each child's needs is different*

## How to organise the order of topics

The most common way to organise life skills topics is to start with issues around the self, family and the immediate environment, and then move outward to wider social issues and finally to issues to do with the children's future.

The activities in Section Three are grouped in this way:

Part 1: Where are we now?

Part 2: Moving forward

Part 3: Our future

When planning your life skills programme, look first at any life skills activities being done in an existing school or programme. Then they need to think about the opportunities there are to increase or strengthen these existing activities. Then look at the topics in this handbook and select the relevant ones. This can be done in a training workshop, by self-study, in a meeting with other colleagues or a combination of these.

Planning a life skills programme **TAKES TIME**. The educator needs to be able to spend time planning the sessions, discussing it with colleagues and trying things out. One

programme suggests that for six months, 20% of the educator's time should be spent on this task!

The *Butterflies Programme* in India, who tested some of the activities in the handbook, commented: '*Encourage organisations to select the activities that they find fit together best, that can be facilitated with their children in a logical sequence, in a time available for maximum benefit.*' They introduced many of the activities they tested using puppets and picture cards. They found that these methods helped to catch the children's interest and attention.

## **Planning a life skills session**

A life skills session is the block of time the educator has with the children to conduct a life skills activity or activities. A life skills session may have more than one activity depending on the time available, on the activity chosen and the methods used to conduct the activity. When selecting an activity the educators must try to build on the content and outcomes of the previous session. Sometimes this might mean selecting an activity that will help to address a specific problem that arose. Educators should note interesting comments made by children and \*use these to plan other lifeskills work. An educator's plan for a life skills session may have the following framework. The timings are a guideline only. For example, you may want to spend longer than 5-10 mins on an introductory activity and less time on the main activity.

## **Sample Life skills Session Plan (60 mins)**

### **Purpose of the session**

*Think about the skills that you want the children to have by the end of the session.*

### **Introduction (5 mins)**

- *Think about how you will explain the purpose of the session to the children and if you need to relate this session to earlier sessions on related topics. Write down brief point to remind you of the main points to make when you introduce the topic.*
- *Write here how you will conduct an introductory activity and how long it will take*

### **Activity/Activities (45 mins)**

- *Write down the materials needed and each step*
- *Try to imagine how long each step will take*
- *Use the handbook as a guide, you may want to change steps or change the methods you use*

### **End of session discussion (5 mins)**

*Write down the questions you will ask what the children learned and the effects of the activities on each child*

### **Closing activity (5 mins)**

*If you think the topic may have been difficult or stressful for the children, do a light-hearted fun activity to change the mood!*

**Notes:** *At the end of the session write down any thoughts you had about the session and any comments from the children. Use this to decide what you will change next time you use the activity and to plan the next session. Note how the children were affected.*

## **Adapting an activity**

Educators need to select and adapt the activities to their culture and to their specific life skills programme. Read through the activities in Section Three and decide:

- *Can I use this activity as it is?*
- *Do I need to adapt it? If so, how?*
- *Can I combine it with other activities from this topic?*
- *Can I combine it with another part of the learning programme?*

The decision will usually be based on:

- *The purpose of the learning programme*
- *The purpose of the life skills programme*
- *The needs of the children (their age and stage)*
- *The confidence and skills of the educator*
- *Logistics (how long the session is, where it is, when it is etc)*

Depending on the answers to these questions, the educator can plan a life skills session that uses one or more of the life skills activities.

In life skills learning the experience of the children matters more than the age. The important thing is to adapt the activities to the needs of the group. However, do not **underestimate** what the children can do. This is a common mistake.

## Teaching a life skills session

### Teaching methods

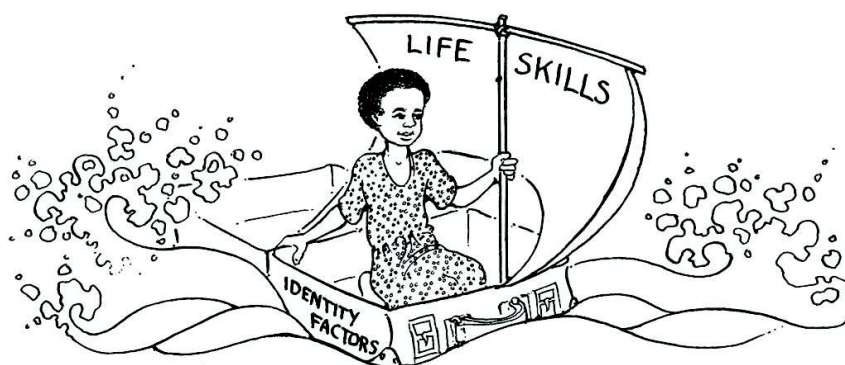
Children respond well to methods that make them think in an active way. Younger children like to move physically and can learn well 'on their feet'. The learning programme needs to meet their needs. It is important that educators have experience of (or understand) active thinking and learning methods.

Methods for teaching life skills activities	
<i>Group discussions</i>	<i>Feedback</i>
<i>Picture cards</i>	<i>Puppets</i>
<i>Surveys</i>	<i>Silent reflection</i>
<i>Role play</i>	<i>Out of class projects</i>
<i>Games and exercises</i>	<i>Interviews</i>
<i>Drawing</i>	<i>Reading quietly</i>

### Active thinking and learning

You can see from the list of methods above, that active learning does not always mean being active. A child can learn or think actively while reading quietly, listening to others speaking or while writing. Active thinking and learning means that the child responds while learning. They do not just receive information passively. Active learning encourages children to think for themselves, to develop ideas and to suggest possible solutions. They can then apply the knowledge and skills in their life. This is different from teaching methods where the teacher talks and the child receives information in a passive way. If children simply repeat and memorise information given to them by the teacher, they may not know what it means and they may not be able to apply the knowledge in their own life. This does not develop life skills.

While planning, teaching, and reflecting on life skills learning and teaching, the educator needs to remember that change will come about by building on children's life skills in a way that recognises who they are and how the child will use and practise the skills.



## **Coping with powerful emotions**

In life skills learning, the educator will want to encourage children to express themselves at a deep level. Many children do not find it easy to respond to direct questions about feelings. In some of the activities, it is suggested that children draw symbols or representations of their thoughts as a record for further discussions. This is especially useful if the children are not literate. When skills are new to children, it may be best to have a special session in which you show how symbols can represent thoughts and feelings.

## **Confidentiality**

It is important that both the educators and the children understand clearly what is confidential and what is not. During the life skills sessions, the children need to know when it is safe to talk about their feelings. A good general rule is that most information in the life skills sessions should be kept confidential.

However, there may be exceptions to this. Some children are subjected to sexual, physical, emotional abuse by adults or by their peers. It is therefore very important for programmes to have a clear policy to guide educators on what to do if a child reveals a serious problem, for example, sexual abuse by an adult. Some programmes have a policy which requires educators to report all instances of abuse to a government body such as social services or the police.

If the educator promises confidentiality to the child, the educator must tell the child this. The educator must explain that if the child reveals a problem, the educator has to act. It is important that the child consents to and participates in whatever action is taken. It is also important that the child is supported in whatever decision s/he takes. The child might need additional one-to-one support and counselling.

During a life skills programme, educators will encounter strong emotions and distressing situations which the children face and talk about. Educators need to support each other to cope with this.

## Tips and tools for life skills educators

The effectiveness of life skills learning depends greatly on the abilities of the life skills educator and their relationship with the children. This section gives guidance on how the educator can create a safe environment for learning to take place and tips and tools the educators have developed and found to work well.

### **Creating a safe learning environment**

#### **Where?**

- *A place that children want to be*

#### **When?**

- *A time when they want to gather*
- *For long enough*
- *At regular intervals*

#### **Who?**

##### *The children*

- *In mixed age and mixed ability groups, children learn well from each other*
- *Gender sensitive topics may require single sex groups but all gender-sensitive issues benefit from mixed sex debate*
- *Particular 'problems' may need separate work within a particular group*
- *Small groups: no more than 15 children per educator (bigger groups can work well if peer educators support the adult educator).*

##### **The educator**

- *Appreciates the need for life skills work*
- *Communicates well with the children*
- *Understands the children's circumstances*
- *Understands and responsive to the cultural norms about who children can talk to, when and about what*
- *Talks to the children in a language that they want to use*
- *Talks with the children as equals and not at the children as a superior*
- *Listens well to what children are saying and hears what they are not saying*
- *Is non-judgemental*
- *Respects children's views and backgrounds*
- *Encourages respect among children before , during and after the session*
- *Allows all children in a group to have a say and uses methods to involve quieter children (e.g. girls in a mixed sex group)*
- *Thinks about the benefits of lifeskills activities when alone and when with the children and manage.*



- 1. Life skills sessions belong to the children and to you**  
The best sessions are a partnership between what the children need from the session and can bring to it and the support that the educators can give the children through structure and guidance.
- 2. The educator is the children's partner in life skills learning**  
Let go of the power and control that an educator is the teacher who controls the children and the learning. Life skills learning depends on what the children and the educator bring to the sessions and how they develop.
- 3. Listen well but don't try to hard**  
Children know when you are listening too them. Don't try to be the perfect professional listener: this is another way to control. Admit any problems and weaknesses you have and negotiating a solutions with the children.
- 4. Children know themselves and their lives best**  
Respect their experience

## Tools

- 1. Establish ground rules for life skills sessions**  
Ground rules can help life skills sessions work well. It is best if the educator and the group of children can create them together. Express rules that focus on the positive behaviour, for example: *We arrive on time; not don't be late!*  
  
Here are some important issues for which it is good to agree rules:
  - dealing with negative comments
  - dealing with children interrupting or talking on top of each other
  - respecting a person's right *not* to speak
  - sticking to the topic
  - confidentiality and trust: what is said during the session stays in the session.Make a **Ground Rules** poster and display it at each life skills session to remind everyone of the rules and refer to them if necessary. If there are many changes in the group, it is important to have a short discussion on the rules so that all children in the group understand and follow them. See Section Three for a session plan on how to set ground rules.
- 2. Use physical movement to support learning**  
Using physical movement in activities improves life skills learning. This is learning by doing: if children can physically 'do' something which is related to the learning point, they will remember it better. *For example*, rather than saying *I agree* or *I disagree*, the children move to an *I agree* or *I disagree* positions in the room.
- 3. Questions and comments**  
At the end of each session, ask children for their questions and comments before asking them specific questions on the activity. Try to get into the habit of this even if the children do not say anything at first. This will help to build their confidence.



#### 4. Dealing with painful topics

The educator can use imaginative communication tools to help the children think about and discuss intensely personal and other painful issues. It is important to put the issue into a bigger picture. This helps the children to see the painful discussion as part of a bigger process, moving towards a positive outcome. For example: **the snail**: This visualisation technique helps the children reflect on their progress during a lifeskills programme. When the children start the life skills learning, they imagine they are a snail inside its shell. During the life skills learning, the children come out of their snail's shell. When they complete the life skills learning, the children imagine how their skills and identities have grown. They reflect on how it was possible to fit into that small snail's shell!

#### 5. Provide feedback to the children

**The feedback sandwich:** This is a positive way educators can give feedback to individuals or groups:

- something positive.
- something to think more about/to improve upon
- something positive

For example:

- *That was an imaginative idea*
- *Now spend a few minutes thinking of an example from your own life*
- *You spoke very clearly, well done.*

#### 6. Encourage respect in the group

Encourage the children to say after expressing an opinion about something. '*And that's me*'. This helps children learn that everyone has their own unique view of the world. For example, *I think that girls and boys should be treated equally, and that's me!*

##### **I liked what you said about...**

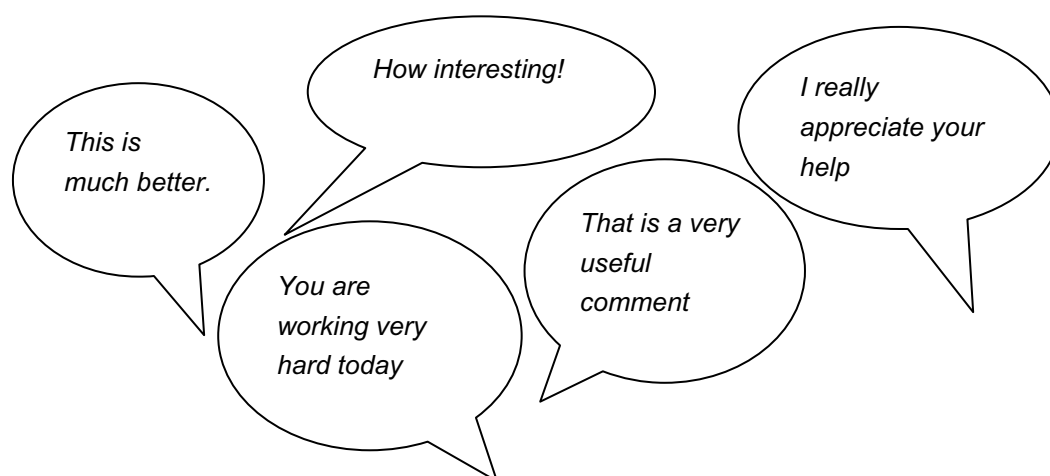
In a discussion, before criticising or adding to an opinion, encourage children to say first what they liked about the idea (even how it was said, when it was said). For example, '*I liked what you said about smoking and I agree that it stops me feeling hungry. But I think smoking is bad for our bodies and that we should stop*'. The children could add, '*and that's us*', if you have taught them this technique!

#### 7. Bad behaviour, not bad person

This is an important point and the educator can teach this to the children: it is a child's **behaviour** that is bad; it is not the child, the **person** who is bad. The children should feel that 'being bad' is not part of an unchanging identity. Reinforce this by using words which focus on the behaviour and not the person. For example, *Shouting at others is not helpful*.

## 8. Give praise and recognition

Praise and recognition should focus on the children's efforts and improvement. Give sincere praise to children as often as possible.



## 9. Avoid value judgements

Use value-free language to deal constructively with difficult situations and controversial issues (and continue to highlight unacceptable words or behaviour). This useful phrase responds to hurtful words or behaviour in a value-free way which reduces conflict.

- *When you say/do X ... I feel Y ... because Z ...*
- *When you interrupt me, I feel annoyed because I want you to hear what I have to say.*

Educators can teach this tool to the children.

## 10. Build on the positive

Ask children to identify *what's good about x* and discuss, *How can we make x happen more or more often?*

## 11. Visualise the positive

When we say '*don't smoke*' to children we focus attention on smoking. It is better to focus messages on the positive or desirable things, for example, '*I want to be healthy*'. Try to get children to visualise the behaviour we want them to adopt.

## 12. Asking sensitive questions

If the children have the writing skills, they can write sensitive questions on pieces of paper. These questions can be put anonymously in a box. The questions can be answered in front of the group. This allows children to have sensitive questions answered without fear or embarrassment.

## 13. Create a good environment for the sessions

Use an informal style of seating. A circle or a semi-circle is good for most of the activities. If possible, sit, draw and write on the floor. Have a wall or a board that all the children can see easily to put pictures or posters. Have a simple way to attach these pictures or posters. Have enough room for children to break into small groups or pairs.

#### 14. Group work

In this handbook, there is lots of group work. Use imaginative ways to divide children into groups for example the fruit salad game you will find at the end of this section. If some of the children are shy to speak, ask them to discuss things first in pairs, then share these ideas with a small group and then, if appropriate, with the whole group. You can make groups of different sizes for different reasons. Keep your group work varied. Children can become as bored with group work, just like they can with 'chalk and talk'.

#### 15. The literacy question

Groups using this book may include literate and non-literate children. Even if the majority in the group are non-literate, you can use large pieces of paper (or a flipchart) and pens or crayons to share and record ideas. Use slips of paper with tasks or posters etc as described by the activity. Children will understand the different of uses of literacy by observing them and this will help to motivate and encourage them to gain more literacy skills. However, do not present large amounts of text on charts as this may act to discourage children.

#### 18. Monitoring and evaluation tools

Some monitoring tools you can use in addition to the monitoring questions suggested after each activity.

##### Movement evaluation

- Set up a line of five chairs across the room. Label the chairs to indicate that they represent a range of feelings from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

**Strongly Agree                  Agree                  Neutral                  Disagree                  Strongly Disagree**

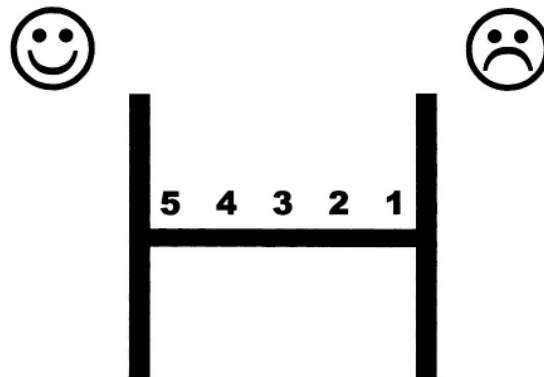
You can use drawings of faces of the children are not literate

- Read statements such as :
  - *The lifeskills session was interesting*
  - *I understand more about (this topic) now*
- Ask the children to stand behind the chair that represents their answer to each question.
- You can also ask the children to explain why they have chosen that answer.

##### H assessment

- Divide the children into groups. The groups sit around a large piece of paper with the letter, 'H' written onto it. (see illustration below)
- Under the happy face in the left column, the children list all the things they liked about the activity/workshop/programme.
- Under the sad face in the left in the right column, the children list all the things they didn't like.
- Write a scale of 1-5 across the middle horizontal line. Ask each child to make a cross to show how good they thought the activity/workshop/programme was. (You could use pebbles or seeds instead). Work out the average score for each group and is written in the upper middle section of the 'H'.
- In the lower middle section, children are asked to list ideas for the future improvements of the workshop.

- Using the H diagram, each group feeds back their scores and their ideas. (If there are more than three groups, each group can put up their diagram and the whole group visit each others' diagrams.)



**TIP**

If the children do not write easily then do this with the whole group verbally, with the children giving their responses and the educator recording them in writing, drawing or using the agreed symbols.

# TRAINING FOR LIFE SKILLS EDUCATORS

Before starting a life skills programme, programmes should identify if they really need to train staff to begin the programme. Many programmes may think they need to train staff when in fact they need to build a better support structure for the programme. It is also important to ensure that educators have the correct skills. A well-trained teacher may not be as successful at teaching life skills to children as a semi-literate teenager who has a good relationship with the children. Each educator will have different experiences and skills, any training should be designed to fill the gaps.

This section outlines topics that could be used in a training workshop and suggests a timetable. The final design of the training workshop will depend on the needs of your programme and the skills of the educators. The workshop will take five days. The sessions can be spread out over several weeks or they can be done on consecutive days. There are advantages and disadvantages of both.

The person(s) conducting the training needs to be an experienced in life skills education and training. To increase the effectiveness of the training, plan a follow-up meeting where educators can share their ideas and plans, their problems and successes. This handbook can be used as the resource book for a training workshop.

## Day 1

### 1. What are life skills?

This session can use the example given in the handbook where participants are asked what 'skills' are 'life skills'.

- Sort out this list into different categories
- Explain the five categories of life skills
- Give examples of each life skill.

If time, it is useful to do group work in which participants think about a problem situation in which life skills are used or needed, to role play this situation and to discuss which life skills were needed to deal with the problem. For example: *A teenager is being pressured into taking drugs by his group of friends, what does he do? How does he cope? What life skills did he use? What life skills (if any) should he use? What life skills does he need to deal with this situation?*

### 2. A support structure for the life skills programme

Without a strong support structure, it is difficult for a programme to keep a life skills programme going well. In this session, participants can discuss what support is needed for life skills programmes. Then they assess the support structure of their own programmes and identify any gaps.

### 3. Understanding the children and young people in the programme

In this session, it would be useful for participants to work with children and young people to find out their needs and issues. It is best if there are more children than adults in each group. Participants can design a survey and/or some questions for a discussion with the children, then conduct this survey/discussion and report it back to the group. Participants then need to discuss the circumstances of the children in their

programme and the developmental problems and needs of the children and how a programme could respond. For example, the participants can work with children and young people to complete the solutions chart.

### The solutions chart

A problem analysis chart can be done using a number of methods such as drawing, discussion or role-play. A method that has been used successfully by a number of projects is for groups to develop charts in the following way:

1. In groups of 5-10, children and/or adults are asked to identify 3-5 problems affecting children's health in the community. For the purposes of the life skills planning, may want to make it more general.
2. In this example, the topic is HIV and AIDS and the task is to discuss what problems HIV and AIDS cause the children and the community.
3. The group identify the problems and write these in the left hand column.
4. They use a points system for example
  - 5/5 = most serious/most common and 1/1 = least serious/least common
5. They then discuss how serious each problem is and how common in their community and then allocate scores in these columns.
6. They discuss how much children can do about each of these problems and they write and score this column.
7. They total the points awarded against each problem and discuss the outcome.

<b>Problems and issues relating to HIV and AIDS in our community</b>				
<b>Problem</b>	<b>How Serious</b>	<b>How Common</b>	<b>How much can children do + examples</b>	<b>Importance</b>
People with Aids-related illnesses do not eat a healthy diet	4	4	3 Children can help raise awareness about the importance of good nutrition for people with AIDS-related illnesses.	11
Not enough teachers at school. Two have died from an AIDS-related illness	5	2	2 Children can help to raise awareness about the dangers of HIV and AIDS	9
Some children have dropped out of school to care for sick relatives	5	4	3 Children can help other children to keep up with basic school work. They can encourage children to come back to school and help to organise alternative care for relatives during school hours	12
Children do not want to be friends with children whose family members have HIV or AIDS	4	5	4 Children can learn about HIV and AIDS and learn how to support children who have family members with HIV or AIDS	13

This method helps identify a key topic or a sequence of sub-topics on a health issues. It is a simple method but one which generates useful discussion. Once the groups have completed their charts, if time and if appropriate, a whole group chart can then be created putting together the most popular ideas from all the charts. This chart method can be used with children who cannot read, using pictures or symbols for the key ideas.

## Day 2

### 4. **Power issues: Be a guide on the side not a sage on the stage**

In this session, participants arrange themselves in order of power from those at the top of the power ladder to those lower down. If participants do not know each other well, the session can be an introductory exercise where participants exchange information on age, jobs, family, experiences, qualifications etc. Ask each participant to explain why they chose their position. Ask where they feel children would stand in relation to themselves and why. Encourage educators to analyse how this difference in power affects their relationships with children. Discuss the ideal relationship between a child and an educator and write down key words to describe this. Discuss how this relationship might be achieved.

### 5. **What skills are needed to work with the children? What are my skills, what skills do I lack? How to I learn these skills?**

Discuss the knowledge and skills educators need to work with children and draw up a list. For example, to know what life skills are; to have ideas for activities which develop life skills; and to know how to adapt activities. Ask the participants to prioritise the list. Discuss how best to gain the knowledge and skills (through training, self-study, practice with someone more experienced etc). Decide what can be included in the training workshop or, if the training timetable is already set, decide if the planned training will meet the needs of the participants or if the timetable needs to be changed.

### 6. **Active learning and thinking**

This session helps participants to gain a better understanding of active learning and the difference between active learning and 'being active'. The participants can discuss examples of active learning from the participants' own experiences (as learners or as teachers). They can demonstrate the differences in using active learning and using traditional methods in approaching one given issue.

## Day 3

### 7. **Creating a good environment for life skills learning**

Using the ideas listed in this handbook, participants can discuss how they would create a good environment for life skills learning and how they will overcome any potential obstacles.

### 8. **Practising communication tools**

Using ideas from this handbook, participants role play situations in which educators are with groups of children and they use one of the teaching tools. After each role-play, participants can discuss the use and effectiveness of the tool.

9. **Teaching methods to promote active learning and life skills**

In this training session, divide participants into groups of three or four and ask them to design an activity on the topic of, *'how to be a good friend'* using one of the following methods:

- Role play
- Drawing symbols
- Puppets
- Using picture cards
- Song
- Poetry
- Story-telling

Ask each group to present their activity and as a whole group discuss the use of this method in life skills learning. Make sure that the *message(s)* which each activity presents is accurate and useful.

10. **Managing group work**

In this session, participants can share their experiences of participating in groups and managing groups. First brainstorm different ways in which to form groups then talk about the purposes of different sized groups and different ways in which feedback can be given by the groups. Remember that listening to more than 3 or 4 groups giving feedback will send most groups to sleep! Remember also that group work can become boring if it is used all the time. Group work needs to be well planned, well focused and well managed!

## **Day 4**

11. **A review of an existing life skills programme**

This session will vary from programme to programme. It gives participants a chance to build a timetable for life skills activities alongside existing activities in their programme. It is important to start with a few activities and to allocate plenty of time to think about and adapt the activities so that they work well.

12. **Creating aims and objectives for a life skills programme**

It is useful for the educators to examine the overall programme aims and objectives and identify how the life skills programme links to these. Ask the participants to think about four levels of aims and objectives:

- the overall aims and objectives of the programme
- the overall aims of the life skills programme
- the specific objectives for the life skills programme
- purposes for each life skills activity.

It is useful if objectives/purposes fit the SMART criteria: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-tabled.

13. **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an important issue for the children and it is useful to discuss this issue in as part of training. We suggest that each programme should have a clear policy on confidentiality and child protection to guide educators.



Generally, educators and children should keep things said in the lifeskills sessions confidential. However, in some cases, it may not be in the best interests of the child, for example if a child reveals sexual abuse. Any action the educator takes should be with the agreement and participation of the child. In the training session, educators can discuss different examples from their experience and how they would deal with each example.

#### **14. The issue of literacy**

In this session, participants discuss the literacy levels of the children they work with and think about how they will manage mixed-ability literacy in the life skills sessions.

It is a good idea to involve those children who have literacy to help the others, but do not ask too much from them. Use large pieces of paper (or flip charts) and marker pens or crayons to draw and write. Children who have limited literacy will be motivated by the many ways in which literacy skills are used in life skills work. Teach children at an early stage of the programme to use recognise and design symbols to represent feelings and ideas.

#### **15. Monitoring and evaluating life skills activities**

In the *Tips and Tools* section, some games help with evaluation. Participants can practice the games and look at the monitoring questions. They can discuss why they think such questions have been included and how they might use these questions. Clarify with participants the differences between monitoring and evaluation. (Monitoring is on-going and happens during the life skills programme, and evaluation takes place periodically during the whole life of the programme and most commonly at three stages: before, during and after the programme. Monitoring activities feed evaluation.

Collect information on the children's behaviour and skills before starting the life skills programme and again after the programme. This will show whether the life skills programme is having a positive effect and in what areas. This information on achievements and effectiveness can help get support for the programme.

At the training event, participants can discuss what kind of information could be collected and how this might be done. It is also important that participants find out and then examine how the programme approaches its overall monitoring and evaluation. Many programmes do very little monitoring and evaluation.

You can contact the author for more resources on monitoring and evaluation at [www.lifeskillshandbooks.com](http://www.lifeskillshandbooks.com)

### **Day 5**

#### **16. Selecting life skills topics**

Using this handbook for ideas, participants select up to 10 topics that meet the objectives of their programme. In pairs, participants should examine one or two of the session plans and discuss how to adapt the session to meet the needs of children in their group.

### **17. Planning and conducting a life skills session**

Using the handbook as reference and in pairs, participants select, adapt and run a life skills activity. As this can take some time, it may be useful to split the group in two for the actual demonstrations of the activities. If time does not allow, participants can present their session plans and present a small part of the session. Allow time for discussion after each presentation.

### **18. Review and evaluation of the workshop**

This is best done using a mix of verbal feedback and anonymous written feedback in response to several questions such as:

- *On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate this workshop?*
- *What knowledge, skills and ideas are you taking away*
- *What was the highlight for you?*
- *What can we improve on next time?*
- *Is there anything further that you need to help you implement a life skills programme? If so, what is it?*

## SECTION THREE

# LIFE SKILLS ACTIVITIES

### Introduction

In all the activities, children may be asked to think and talk about their ideas and feelings; work in groups and pairs; speak to the whole group and or draw. The children do not need to read and write well for most of the activities although some activities will be easier if they can. Educators may need to work with individual children (or in pairs) to give them the confidence to communicate well in the group.

It is best to introduce the children to life skills learning by starting with a selection of activities from Part 1. The activities in Part 2 and 3 are designed for children who already have some experience of life skills learning.

### Adapt, Adapt, Adapt!

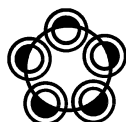
The activities have been written in a general way, so that they can be adapted to your group and your situation. It is important to make sure the activities suit the age and the needs of the children you are working with. The activities present many examples of role-plays and questions and so on. These are shown in *italics*. Use these ideas but where possible, use your own words and ideas which suit the needs of your group.

### Time

Most activities take approximately 45 minutes although because a lot of the activities involve group work and discussions, this depends on the educator and the children. Educators may want to add an introductory activity at the beginning of the session and a closing activity at the end. Ideas for these activities are at the end of Section 3. With these extra activities the sessions will take approximately 60 minutes.

### Monitoring questions

You should ask monitoring questions at the end of every session to find out what they have learned. There are some general questions at the end of Activity 1 and these can be used and adapted to be used at the end of every activity. A symbol has been inserted at the end of each activity to remind you to undertake some kind of monitoring activity. Try not to leave out this part of the session. Ask the children to sit in a circle and ask for their questions and comments. Then ask specific questions as appropriate. Spend time getting comments from each child if possible. When the children become more accustomed to this, it can be done less formally.



## Part One: Where Are We Now?

The topics and activities in Part one help children to understand themselves better by developing:

- An awareness of themselves, their strengths, weaknesses and values.
- An understanding of the general influences on them from their families, friends and society
- An understanding of what friendship is and how to manage friendships

### Ground rules for life skills sessions

**Purpose of activity:** To agree ground rules for the lifeskills sessions

In the first session with children, create the basic rules (ground rules). These rules help everyone work together well, they create and maintain a good atmosphere and they make the children feel valued and safe. Try to express all the rules in a positive way, for example:

*Let everyone have a chance to speak*  
instead of  
*Don't let one person talk all the time.*

### Materials

- Large piece of paper
- Marker pen or crayon

### Steps

1. Explain to the children that you will agree the rules for the group that everyone must try to obey during the life skills sessions. The rules are to help everyone get on well with each other.
2. Using the example of the rule in the box above, explain that in lifeskills we focus on positive behaviour so we make rules about what we should do not what we should not do. The group can discuss this all together or in pairs or groups and then make the suggestions in the whole group.

### Examples

- *We arrive on time*
- *Let everyone have a chance to speak*
- *Stick to the subject*
- *Listen to each other*
- *If you disagree with someone, say it in a nice way*
- *Speak one at a time*
- *Keep what has been said in the meetings private (do not gossip!)*
- *If you do not want to join a discussion, you can just listen*

3. After each suggestion, ask the children why they think each rule is important. If some children disagree with suggestions, encourage them to explain why and to suggest a better rule.
4. If the children are having problems thinking of rules, prompt them by using scenarios such as the example below: Read them out then ask the children why the situation is not acceptable and then ask them for a rule which could help to avoid it.

*In the life skills session, Chacha and Tina talked about a personal problem. Later, during the lunchtime break, Chacha overhears Tina laughing and giggling with her friends about the lesson and telling them the things that Chacha had said. He is very upset.*

*Rule: Keep what has been said in the meetings private.*

5. When each rule is agreed, write it down on a large piece of paper and display this at all life skills sessions. It's a good idea to put a symbol beside each rule e.g. a clock beside 'we arrive on time'
6. Read through the list of rules and make sure that the children agree with them all.

**Final discussion:**

*How can we help each other remember the rules? What do we do if someone breaks a rule? What do we do if someone breaks a rule over and over again?*

## Activity 1

### Self Awareness: special me

#### Purpose of activity

- To give children a chance to recognise their own special qualities and to tell others about these.
- To hear about their own qualities from others.
- To recognise and tell others about their qualities.
- To talk about how they feel when they hear bad things said about them.

**Life skills:** self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking

#### Important points

This activity can help children begin to think about themselves and how other people see them.

In this activity children have to draw symbols. If children have not done this before it may be useful to do an introductory session in which you show them how a symbol can represent a thought and feeling. Show them some symbols (e.g. a happy face or a sad face) ask them to draw these symbols. Ask them to draw other symbols they know and then ask them to make up a symbol to show a feeling or idea.

This activity is quite long; we have divided it into three stages. You can either take a break or spread the activity over more than one lifeskills session.

#### Materials

- Several small slips of paper per child
- A large sheet of paper to make a large poster, for example, two pieces of flipchart paper taped together
- Shield shapes for each child
- Drawing materials for the children
- Coloured pens or crayons
- Pictures cut from newspapers or magazines if used



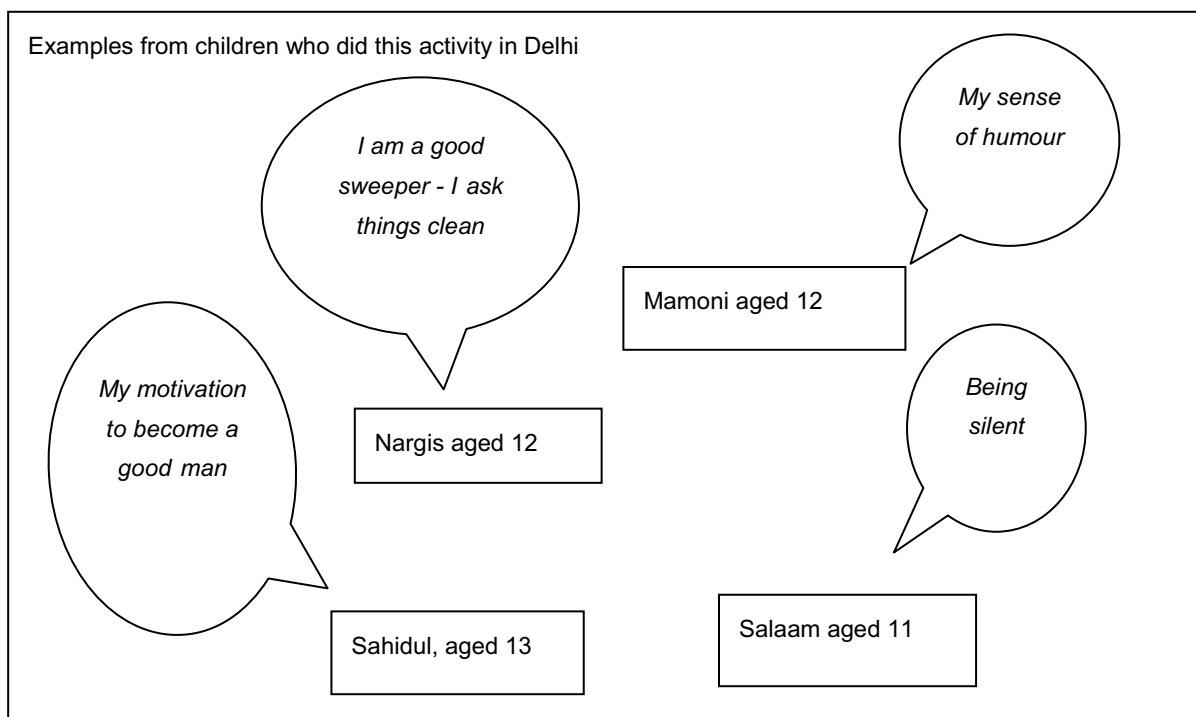
#### Preparation

- Draw an outline of a person on the large poster
- Copy and cut out shield shapes for each child

#### Steps

1. In pairs, children tell each other about someone they admire and why they admire this person (sports star, family member, friend etc)
2. In a circle, children name their partner's special person and one reason why they admire the person.
3. Next, ask each child to write down or draw symbols for three things they like about themselves. (These can be simple shapes e.g. a smile to show I am happy or stick men!). Or you can use pictures cut from newspapers or magazines, the children can

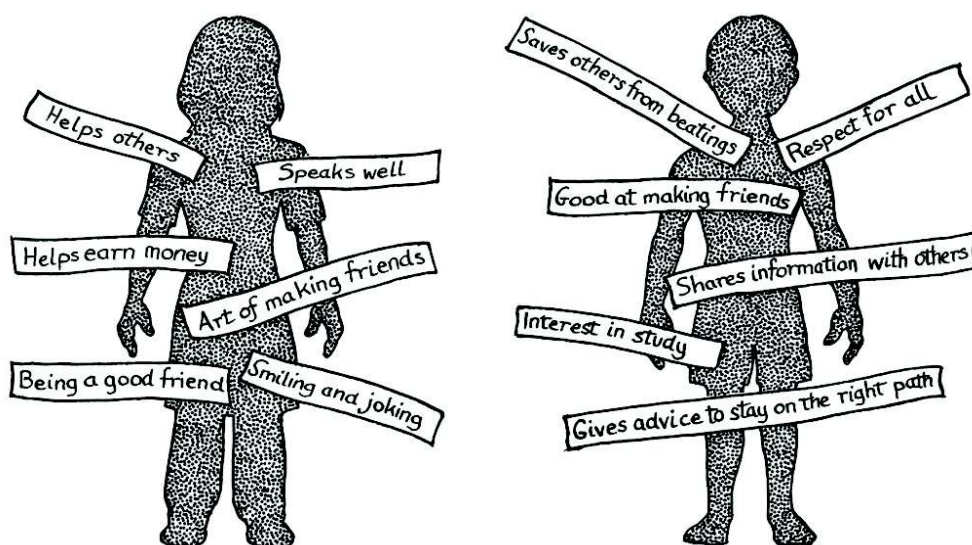
choose the pictures that have something in common with them. If children find this difficult, they can choose a partner to work with and write, draw or talk about three things about each other. These things may be physical characteristics or skills and talents.



## Stage Two: Steps

1. If you have taken a break or if you are doing stage two in a new session, remind the children of the things they like about themselves.
2. Ask children to walk around the room and at a sound (like a hand-clap) they tell the child nearest to them, one or two things that they most like or admire about them (if appropriate the children can hold each others' hands while they do this). Do this a few times.
3. The children write or draw symbols on pieces of paper to show the replies they have been given.
4. Show the children the outline of a person. Ask the children to give this person one of their qualities by drawing a symbol on the person, writing the quality or by putting a mark like a dot or a cross on the person. As they do this, they say what their *gift* is, for example:
  - *I am giving you my kindness*
  - *I am giving you my smile*
 Each child does this in turn.
5. Sitting in a circle to discuss the activity. These questions can help you.
  - *Was it easy to find something good to say about yourself? About others?*
  - *Which was easier? Why?*
  - *People will sometimes say unpleasant things to you. How does this make you feel? Why do you think they said these things?*

Here are examples from Delhi of 'bodies' created by girls and boys.



Extracts from the feedback session on the activity from children in Delhi

*'It was difficult to share about ourselves.'*

*'It was a difficult question as I don't know about myself.'*

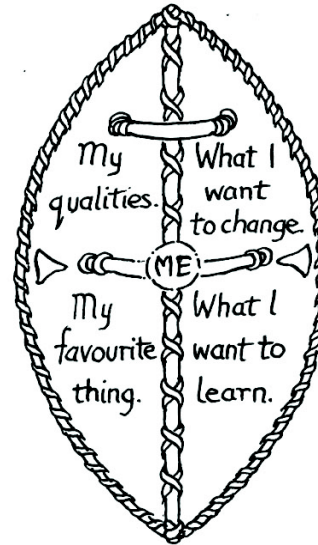
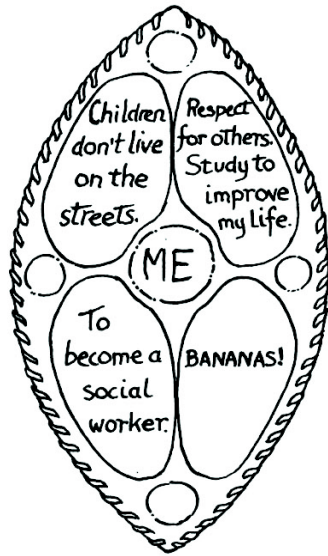
*'It was difficult as I know what is good about myself but I have some fear of disclosing things about myself in case it turns my friends against me.'*

*'It was easy for me to share.'*

### Stage three: Steps

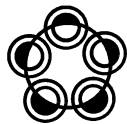
1. If you have taken a break or if are doing stage three in another session, remind the children what they did in the other two stages.
2. Give each child a cut out of a shield. Explain that warriors use shields to protect themselves in warfare. They will make a shield to show people who they are and to protect themselves from negative remarks. The shield is divided into four areas.
3. Ask the children to write or to draw a picture, a design or a symbol in each of the four areas. You can simplify the areas on the shield, for example, my favourite colour shape and/or ask the children to draw just one thing.
4. The children explain their completed shields to the group. If appropriate, other children and adults can be invited to an exhibition of the shields.





### Monitoring questions

Here are some monitoring questions that can be asked at the end of each activity. Whenever you see this symbol



remember the monitoring questions!

- *Do you have questions or comments on this activity?*
- *Did you enjoy doing these activities?*
- *What did you like doing most/least? Why?*
- *What was the hardest thing about these activities?*
- *What have you learned from doing this exercise?*
  - *about yourself*
  - *about others*
- *Is there something you want to do again?*

### Follow up

You can help the children make their fingerprints using ink pad and paper help the children make their finger prints. Tell the children that no two human beings have the same finger prints. Each of us is unique.

## Activity 2

### Self Awareness: my place on the tree

**Purpose of activity:** To develop children's self-awareness about their present lives.

**Life skills:** Self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking

**Important points:**

Try to ask the children to think deeply about their place on the tree and to find reasons for their choices. If children find this difficult, do not worry but note what the children feel or do not feel able to say. The activity can be repeated in Part 3 when children have improved their communication skills. If some children do not want to speak in the group, do not force them, but let them think about their ideas and if possible talk about their ideas to one friend.

### Materials

- A copy of the tree picture on a large poster for all the children to see



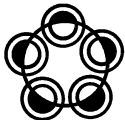
## Steps

1. Show the children the picture and explain that the tree represents life. The people on the tree are at different stages of their lives. They are doing different things for different reasons.
2. Ask the children to think of a well-known character in your country, for example a famous sports star, a character from a folktale or a famous person. *Perhaps this person feels like the person at the top of the tree because he looks sure of himself and powerful. She is smiling at everyone below her. She is pleased with her position!* Ask the children which figure in the picture is like the famous person. (The children will probably have different ideas and different reasons – that's fine).
3. Show the children the figure(s) on the tree which show where *you* feel you are in life today. Explain the reasons for your choice.  
*For example: I feel I am like the person doing a handstand halfway up the tree with one hand off the branch. I feel like this because I am feeling full of energy and I feel I am doing something a bit different today by starting this life skills work with you. I am not sure if it will be fun or a bit risky!*
4. Ask the children to choose one figure that is closest to themselves.
5. In pairs or small groups, children discuss why they identified with a particular figure. For example...

*I feel like I am at the bottom of the tree waving and looking happy because I am just beginning the life skills (so I am at the bottom of the tree). I am looking happy because I hope the class will help me and I am waving at my friends who will be with me.*

## Final discussion:

*Do we feel like different people on the tree at different times of the day or week? Were you happy to tell us about your figure? Why/Why not?*



### Activity 3

## Self Awareness: the timeline

#### Purpose of activity

- To help children identify and discuss past events
- To help children think about long term goals

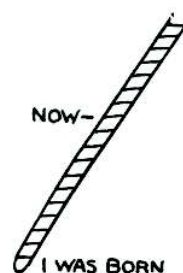
**Life skills:** Creative thinking

#### Important points

Girls often have a poor self-image and see fewer opportunities for themselves. Encourage girls to think about positive ambitions again. Talk about this with the group.

#### Materials







- Card
- Large sheet of blank paper, such as flipchart paper
- Coloured pens



#### Steps

1. Show a poster of a timeline.
2. Explain how to use the timeline by drawing symbols of your own life on it. Focus on the period of your life that matches the age range of the children in the group.

Special dates or events may include:

Symbol	Special date or event
	Special events (religious, circumcision, initiation, birthdays)
	Family events (births, deaths, marriages, separations, divorces, moves)
	Special relationships (meeting a best friend, joining a group)
	Sad events
	Other events (going to school, leaving school, going to work)
	Favourite times you remember (holidays, ceremonies etc.)

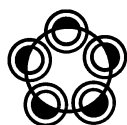
If the children are unable or unwilling to put the events into a specific order, have them draw their symbols inside a circle shape instead.



3. In small groups or pairs, children can show their timelines or circles.
4. Ask the children to draw or write in three future events that they hope will happen in the years ahead. These may include:
  - *Going to primary/secondary/high school*
  - *Getting a job*
  - *Getting a house*
  - *Starting college/training programme*
  - *Getting married*
  - *Moving to another place*
  - *Having children*

**Final discussion:**

In the large group, children talk about and/or show the symbols about their future goals. *Were you happy to draw/write your timeline? Why/why not? How did you feel/Did you find it difficult to remember past events? To think about the future?*



## Activity 4

### Identity Factors: what are identity factors?

**Purpose of activity:** To understand the factors that makes up a person's identity

**Lifeskills:** Self-awareness and creative thinking

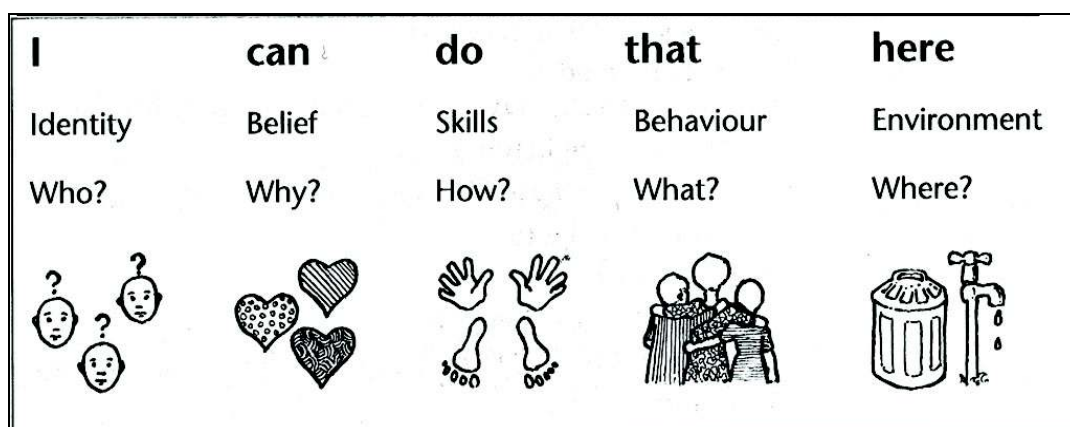
#### Important points

The point of this activity is to separate identity and behaviour. Children who regard themselves as 'bad people' may feel that nothing can be done about this. It is important to show them that **they** are not bad, though their **behaviour** may sometimes be bad. They can control and change behaviour.

These ideas are important but may seem a bit abstract. You can try the activity first with a group of friends, colleagues or older children and ask their feedback. Adapt this activity carefully if you are translating it into another language.

#### Materials

- Poster with the following sets of identity factor symbols.
- Sets of five cards, each card showing one identity factor symbol. You need enough sets for each pair for example five sets for 10 children.



#### Steps

1. In the whole group, repeat the sentence, *I can do it here*. For each word hold up the corresponding symbol.
2. Divide the children into groups of four and give each group a complete set of cards with the five identity factor symbols.
3. Each child repeats the sentence but putting different stresses on the words. The group discusses how this changes the meaning of the sentence. (If the children cannot read ask them to repeat the sentence after you.)



4. Do this again, this time one child holds up the relevant identity factor symbols in turn as another one repeats the sentence. The others in the group say which was the identity factor stressed.
5. When all the children in the group have done this, one child holds up the symbols in turn as the rest of the group repeats the sentence. The person with the symbols stands up when they want group to emphasise one of the symbols.
6. Divide the group into pairs. In pairs they then lay one set of symbols onto the floor in the following order:

**Identity**  
**Beliefs**  
**Skills**  
**Behaviour**  
**Environment**

7. The children step on each identity factor and say something about themselves in relation to this identity factor. The educator practices this with the whole group first by asking the children to repeat the following sentences. Then, in pairs, the children take it in turns to finish the sentence so that their partner can hear their answers.

<b>Identity factor</b>	<b>Begin the sentences with....</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Identity</b>	I am	<i>a boy, from Kilimanjaro, Tanzanian, a son, a friend, a boyfriend, a child in Dar Es Salaam</i>
<b>Beliefs</b>	I believe that	<i>You have to stick to your friends</i>
	It is important that	<i>You do not steal from your friends</i>
<b>Skills</b>	I can	<i>sell newspapers, crack jokes, comfort people who are upset, look after babies</i>
	I am getting better at	<i>The work I do at home, for my teachers</i>
	I am learning to	<i>Read and write</i>
	What I enjoy doing most is	<i>playing volleyball and football, talking by the beach with friends</i>
<b>Behaviour</b>	I do	<i>learning, playing, sleeping, washing , working</i>
<b>Environment</b>	All the different places that I spend time in my day are.	<i>My house, school, the market, the playing field etc</i>

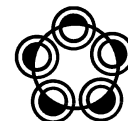
8. Ask children to volunteer to repeat their identity factors to the whole group

**Final discussion:**

*Were their aspects of your identity which you liked, did not like? Why?*

**Follow up**

Children can design their own identity factor symbols.



## Activity 5

### Identity Factors: changing behaviour

**Purpose of activity:** To become aware of what is needed to support the development of life skills

**Life skills:** Self-awareness

**Important points:** Do this activity after *Activity 4: What are Identity Factors?*

#### Materials

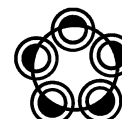
- Set of identity factor symbols from Activity 4

#### Steps

1. Ask each child to think of one change that they would like to make in their life in the near future. Ask the children to state the change they want by starting a sentence, *I want to...*  
For example:  
*I want to... learn to read*  
*I want to... return home to live with my mother*  
*I want to... be a member of the football team*  
*I want to... stop smoking*  
*I want to... be a happy person.*
2. Decide which identity factor it is, for example:  
*I want to learn to read (SKILLS)*  
*I want to return home to live with my mother (ENVIRONMENT)*  
*I want to be a member of the football team (SKILLS)*  
*I want to stop smoking (BEHAVIOUR)*  
*I want to be a happy person (IDENTITY)*
3. Ask each child in turn to stand on the corresponding identity factor. For example: for, *I want to be able to learn to read*, the child stand on the symbol for *SKILLS*. With the help of the whole group, the child then thinks about changes that are needed from the other identity factors so that change can happen. For example:  
*I want to learn how to read*  
*BEHAVIOUR* - she needs to attend her classes and practice  
*BELIEFS* - she needs to believe that it's important to read and write  
*ENVIRONMENT* - she needs to find an environment where she can practice

#### Final discussion:

- *Is it always our fault if we can't do what we want to do?*
- *What do we need to support our ideas?*
- *Was there anything you did not understand?*
- *Was there anything you would like to do again, or do more of next time?*





## Activity 6

### Influences: what is my network of relationships?

**Purpose of activity:** To recognise and explore important relationships

**Life skills:** Self-awareness, inter-personal relationships

#### Important points

Be prepared for a child to describe a problem relationship or even abuse during this activity. Find out before the session how children can be supported if it becomes necessary.

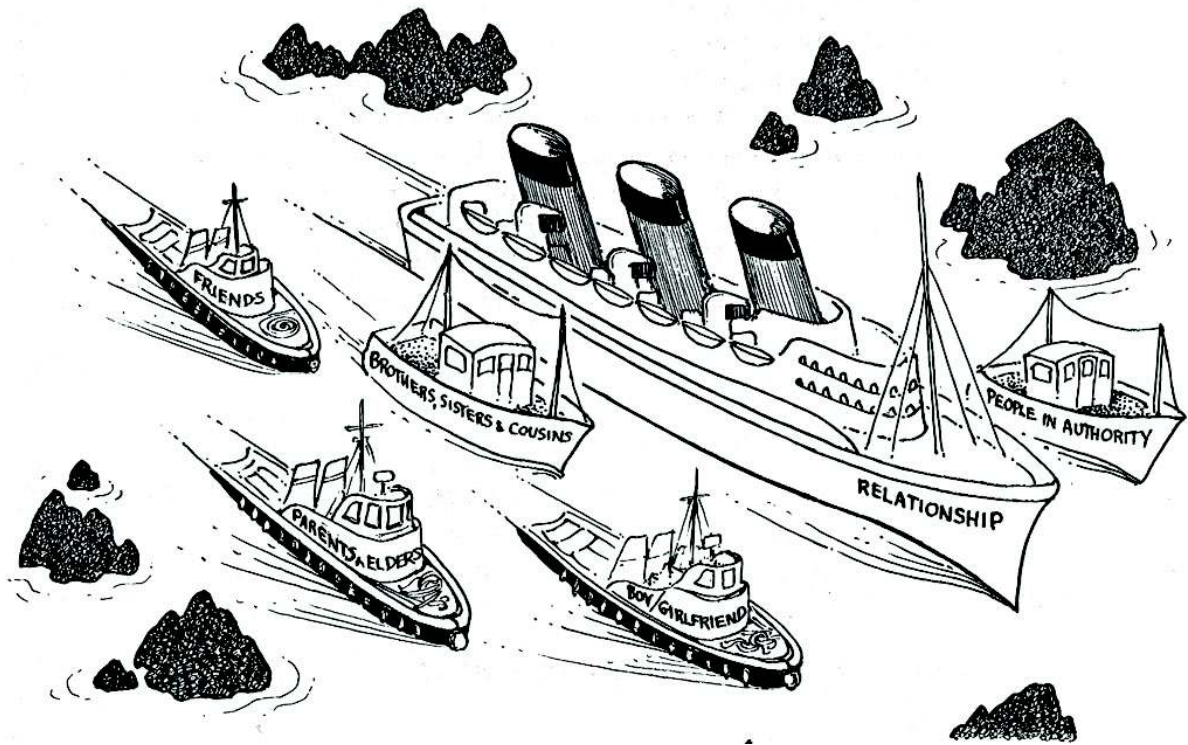
A 'ship' image is used in this activity because 'ship' is part of the English word 'relationSHIP'. If you are working in another language can choose to use the visual image of the ship (see picture) or you can use another visual image.

#### Materials

- One large outline picture of a ship for the whole group with the heading 'relation-SHIP' or as appropriate in the local language
- Five outline pictures of ships with one of the following headings
  - *Parents and elders*
  - *Brothers, sisters and cousins*
  - *Friends*
  - *People in authority (teachers, police, employers)*
  - *Boy/girlfriend.*
- Marker pens or crayons

#### Steps

1. Explain what a relationship is in your own words and in a way that is appropriate to your culture and that the children will understand.
2. Ask children to give examples of people with whom they have a relationship such as:
  - Parents and elders
  - Brothers, sisters and cousins
  - Friends
  - People in authority (teachers, employers)
  - Boy/girlfriend.
3. Show the picture of the relation-SHIP. Ask for an example of what makes a relationship strong (*saying kind things to someone*). These good things are needed to keep the ship working. Write the example in a suitable place on the ship (*hull, engine, etc*). Then ask for an example of something that can weaken or damage relationships (*Taking something from a person without them knowing*). Write it in the water/air surrounding the ship (*stormy water, strong wind, rocks*).
4. Divide children into pairs or groups. Each group takes one kind of relationship (*see list above*).



5. Using the five ships, each pair or group discusses two or more things that make the relationship strong. They write these on the ship. They discuss two or more things that could damage the relationship. They draw or write these in the water and the air surrounding the ship.
6. Hang their relation-SHIP posters on the wall. The pairs and groups visit each others posters and explain their drawing to the others.

**Final discussion:**

*What are the most important relationships? Is this the same for everyone? Why/Why not? What makes relationships good/bad?*

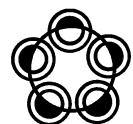
Spend some time thinking quietly about a relationship that is good. Then think about a relationship, which is not good. *Can you do anything about it?*

Ask children to volunteer to share these ideas with a friend or with the whole group.

- *Did it make you think of your own relationships?*
- *Has it given you ideas about the good and bad relationships you have?*
- *Has it given you ideas about how to make your relationships better?*

**Follow up activity**

Children can draw their own ships. This activity can be repeated in Part 3



## Activity 7

### Influences: adverts and media

**Purpose of activity:** To understand how adverts affect us. Advertisements are part of the environment and they can reflect the values of our society and create peer pressure.

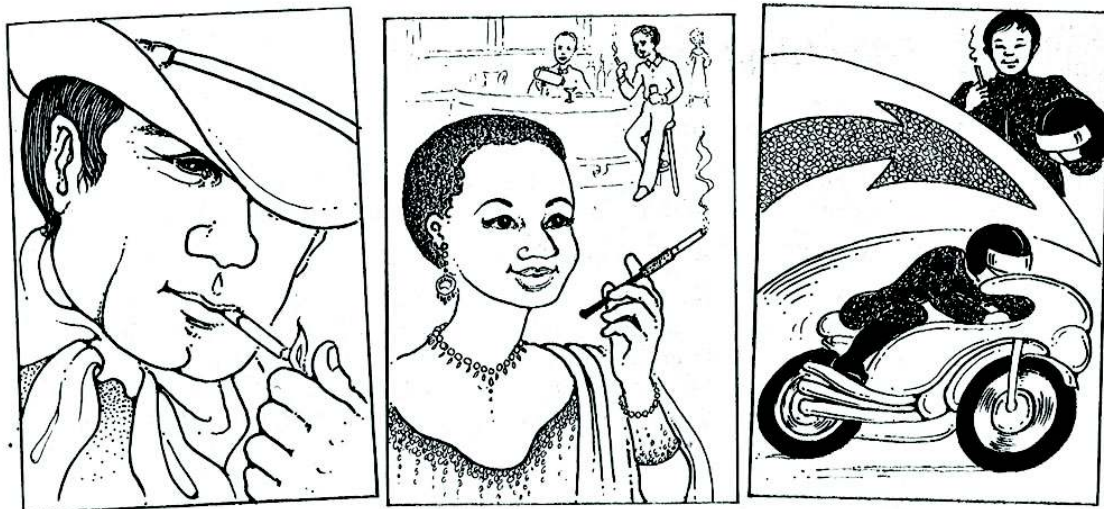
**Life skills:** Critical thinking, creative thinking

#### Important points

People who smoke cigarettes put their own and others health at risk. Advertisements for cigarettes try to influence people to start smoking and to buy cigarettes.

#### Materials

- Three adverts for smoking (and/or other adverts in the environment which the children may see often). You can use the illustrations below but it is better to cut out local ones from magazines or newspapers or go on the streets to look at billboards, where appropriate.



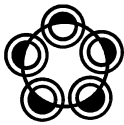
#### Steps

1. Ask the group what messages are being given by each advertisement. How does the advertisement try to affect us? For example:
  - *by being colourful and eye catching*
  - *by linking a good life with the product*
  - *by using sexy images*
  - *by using words that make us laugh or catch us by surprise*

2. Discuss whether these advertisements tell the truth.
3. Ask the children to describe or show a poster advert s/he likes very much and say why.
4. What other kinds of adverts which the children hear or see (radio, TV, magazines). Discuss why we like or dislike advertisements and how they affect the way people think.
5. In pairs or groups, act out a role-play in which one child has seen an advertisement for something that s/he wants to have or to do. S/he has to try to convince the group and the others in the group have to change his or her mind. Allow 10 minutes and then the pair or group have to declare the outcome.

**Final discussion:**

*Ask the group to remember how the discussion developed. Ask the children if they have been affected by an advertisement. Which advert? Should we be careful of adverts? (Think about how we gain or lose from having or doing what is advertised.)*



## Activity 8

### Friendship: what is a friend?

#### Purpose of activity

To explore what it means to be a friend and to think about what we expect from a friend.

**Life skills:** self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

People have different views on what makes a friend. Disagreeing and fighting can happen even between friends. Friends can have a good and bad influence. Friends should not ask too much of each other. If the group did the *self-awareness Activity 1: special me*, refer to this activity.

#### Materials

- Three sets of friendship cards

#### Steps

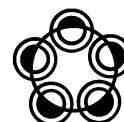
1. Divide the group into three. Give each group a set of friendship cards. Show the children each card and reads what it says. Ask each group to do the same. Make sure the children understand what each image means.
2. Ask the children to discuss each card in their groups and write a tick on the back of each card that most of them agree with and a cross on the back of a card that most of them disagree with. Say that there are no right or wrong answers and that they should have reasons for their answers.
3. After 10/15 minutes of discussion ask one child from each group to read out a card and say whether the group agrees or disagrees, and to explain why. If other groups disagree, they can explain why. Make an 'agree' and a 'disagree' pile of cards until all the cards are finished. You can also do this discussion by showing and reading the cards to all pairs or groups. The pairs or groups discuss whether they agree or disagree and then report their answer. The important part of this activity is a good discussion.
4. Ask the children to think about two other ways to describe a friend and write and/or draw these in the two remaining cards. For example:  
*A friend is someone who knows what to do when I am sad*  
*A friend shares her things with me*
5. Ask each group to share their new ideas.

#### Final discussion:

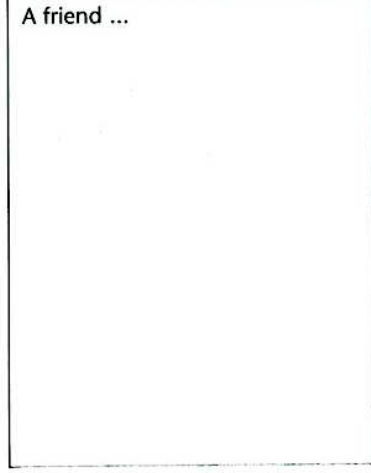
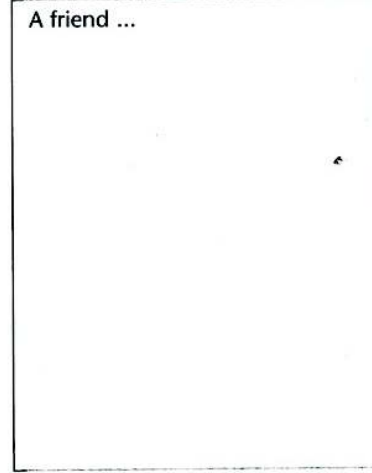
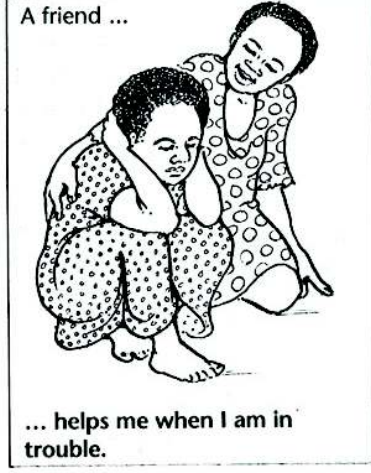
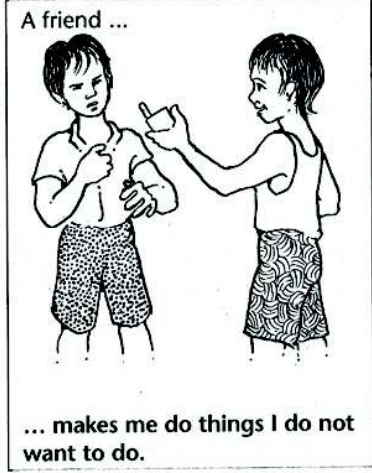
*How can friends make a difference to you? Can you be friends with anyone? What things make it difficult to be friends with someone? What things make it difficult to be friends with you? What did you learn about having friends from this activity?*

#### Follow up

Refer to this session when everyday things happen for example, when friends have an argument or do something considerate.







## Activity 9

### Friendship: being a friend

**Purpose of activity:** To explore how people show their friendship

**Life skills:** self awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, empathy

#### **Important points**

Friendship grows and changes through experiences and sharing feelings. You have to give friendship to receive it

#### **Materials**

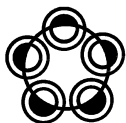
- None

#### **Steps**

1. Divide the children into pairs
2. Give each pair one role play:
  - A child falls down and is hurt
  - A child is hungry but is sick and cannot get up
  - A child is alone and wants to play
  - A group of children lost their football and you have oneIn each role play, one person is the child and the other a friend who helps. Puppets can also be used for children to develop these role-plays.
3. Children practice their role-plays for a few minutes.
4. In a circle, the group watches the role-plays. For each role play the group asks how the friend is helping.
5. Ask the children to change their roles: this time the person does not help the child but is unfriendly.

#### **Final discussion:**

*How does a friend behave and how does someone unfriendly behave? Describe a situation when someone behaved in a friendly way to you today and one where they behaved in an unfriendly way? When do people who are NOT friends behave in a friendly way to you (for example when they want something... when they want to change the relationship for some reason). Finish the sentence, 'A good friend always...'*



#### **Follow up**

Children can do role plays of actual situations they have faced. They first act out what happened and then they act out what they wish had happened. The group discusses the changes that are needed for the second situation to happen (for example; for a policeman to help a child they find injured or alone.)

## Activity 10

### Friendship: circles of friendship

**Purpose of activity:** To show that we have different kinds of friends

**Life skills:** self-awareness, creative thinking critical thinking

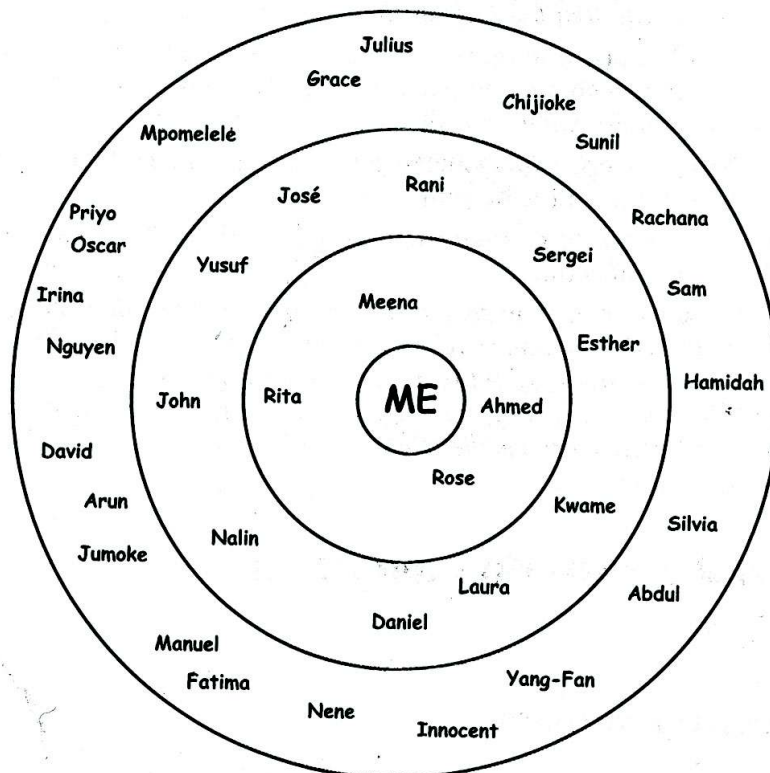
#### Important points

If the group of children are familiar with a story, which has a favourite central character, the character's circle of friends could be used as an example. With younger children, a puppet could be used as the example and the children can help to invent and place the puppets friends on the circle.

If you feel this activity is too sensitive for the group, ask them to make up nicknames or code names for people that they know. Pictures or symbols can be used to represent people.

#### Materials

- Large pieces of paper with example of a Circle of Friends
- One large piece of paper for each child
- At least one marker pen or crayon for each child
- Puppets if used



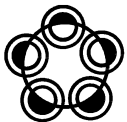


## Steps

1. Explain that not all friends are best friends, or even very close friends. We have different kinds of friends. Ask children to think about this and give examples of this.
2. Show the example of a *Circle of Friends*. Explain that this shows close friends in the circle close to the person in the centre, casual friends in the next circle, and acquaintances in the outside circle.
3. Ask the children to draw four circles like the example. Ask them to:
  - Write their own name in the middle (or draw a symbol or write their initials).
  - Write the name(s) of their closest friend(s) in the next circle.
  - Write the names of casual friends (people they enjoy talking to and visiting) in the middle circle.
  - Write the names of acquaintances (people they speak to sometimes but do not consider to be friends) in the outer circle.

**Final discussion:** Select some of the following questions:

- *How did you decide who was in your inside circle? In the middle circle? The outside circle? What makes a closest friend different from other friends?*
- *Have your friends moved from one circle to another? When and why?*
- *Some people have many best friends while others have one special friend; some have more casual friends and some have more acquaintances. What did you learn about your own friendships from this activity?*
- *How old are your closest friends? Casual friends? Why do people choose friends of a different age? What are the advantages or disadvantages of having older people or adults as friends?*
- *What are two things you would talk about with close friends but not with casual friends or acquaintances? Why?*
- *What three things could you do to get to know an acquaintance better?*
- *In your circle of friends are there things that make it difficult for newcomers to be accepted? How can you help newcomers in your community feel more welcome and comfortable?*



## Follow up activity

Do two role-plays. In one, a group welcomes a new child into the group and in the other, a child is not welcomed.

## Activity 11

### Friendship: resolving conflicts in a friendship

#### Purpose of activity

- To understand why arguments between friends happen and how to cope with them
- To help children think about how they react to arguments

**Life skills:** self-awareness, creative thinking, critical thinking

#### Important points

Before this activity, do an activity on what it means to be a friend for example Activities 8-10. Everyone reacts to arguments. Some people shout and hit out, others go quiet or leave. Arguments nearly always leave us feeling upset, weak and nervous.

Understanding arguments help children cope better.

### Materials

- Write out one role-play per group on a piece of paper.
- The role-plays below are examples. You may need to adapt them to suit situations faced by children in the group. If there has been a recent conflict between two members of the group do not use this as an example unless the children concerned talk about it and want to do a role-play.

*One day Rose went to her classmate Dinah and asked her to help her with her maths homework. She started showing Rose how to do a maths problem but unfortunately Rose was a slow learner and did not understand. Dinah got angry and started to scream to Rose, 'You are stupid,' and she hit her. Rose got angry too. And a fight began.*

*Adrian (15 years old) and Valentin (11) were playing cards. Valentin was winning. Suddenly Adrian got angry and hit Valentin right across the face. Valentin got angry and a fight began.*

*Shoba is Parveen's sister. When Parveen was coming home from school, Shoba ran to help her sister and acrried in her school bag. Shoba went inside the house and started to look at Parveen note books. When Parveen saw this, she started to shout at her sister.*

### Steps

1. Ask the children to work in pairs to do role-plays in which children get angry with each other.
2. Distribute the role-plays to the pairs. Give the children 10 minutes to work out their role-play. If the children are not literate, explain the role play to each group.
3. Ask all or some of the pairs to perform the role plays. After each ask the children to say why they think the person got angry.

For example:

- *Dinah felt frustrated and upset they she was not able to explain well.*
- *Rose felt ashamed*
- *Adrian felt annoyed with himself*
- *Valentin felt hurt and humiliated*
- *Parveen felt betrayed*

4. Ask the children how these fights could be prevented.

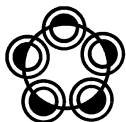
### You can have a break here

5. Ask the children to repeat their role play up to the point where one of the characters asks angry but this time it does not end up in a fight: for example:
  - *one character walks away*
  - *one character says or does something which stops the anger*
6. If appropriate write down the key words that describe the reasons for getting angry and ways in which we can stop the anger turning into a fight.

<i>Why we get angry</i>	<i>What we can do</i>
<i>Frustration Being betrayed Being annoyed with myself Being hurt (physically and inside)</i>	<i>Walk away Say sorry Say something that stops the anger getting worse Go somewhere else together to 'cool off'</i>

### Final discussion:

*When did you last argue with a friend? Why? Are you still friends? Why/why not? What happens to your friendships when you ask angry?*



### Follow up

Ask children to create role plays using real situations. See Activity 38: What makes me angry.

## Activity 12

### Friendship: negotiating roles and responsibilities in a group

**Purpose of activity:** To gain awareness of the roles and responsibilities of members of a group.

**Life skills:** self-awareness

**Important points**

It is useful to do Activities 4 and 5 on identity factors before doing this activity. Stress that a group identity is different from the identity of its members.

#### Materials

- A large piece of blank paper or an outline drawing of five or six children sitting in a group
- Large pieces of paper for each group
- Pens for each group

#### Steps

1. Divide children into groups of five or six
2. Explain that each group is an imaginary group of friends. They have to decide on the identity factors of the group as a whole. They can use the symbols to remind themselves
3. They will need to discuss:

Questions to discuss	Identity factor	Examples
Where the group meets	ENVIRONMENT	<i>At the park, near the beach, by the station</i>
What each member does in the group	BEHAVIOUR	<i>tells stories, sings, brings fruit, brings a game</i>
What skills each person brings to the group	SKILLS	<i>cracking jokes, telling stories, making peace when arguments happen etc</i>
What they believe is important in the group	BELIEFS	<i>Sharing money or food, helping each other when one is ill or sad or hungry etc</i>
The different roles they hold in the group		<i>the leaders, the followers, the peacemakers</i>
The people they are linked to in the group		<i>Shop keepers, youth workers, two of the members' mothers etc</i>

4. The group then prepares a presentation of their group identity and presents their results.

### **Final discussion:**

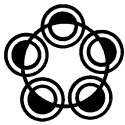
Select some of these ideas for discussion. Do not use all of them in a single session

#### About the results

- *Sometime a group feels like another being. It has its own identity. Do you agree? Why/why not?*
- *How is the group's identity different from your own? Could this be a problem? How?*

#### About the process

- *Did everyone participate equally?*
- *What roles did group members play, for example, who guided the discussion, who started the discussion, who made sure that they finished on time, who had the ideas, who did the drawing, writing, who was the leader, who made sure that everyone had a say?*
- *How were decisions made?*
- *Did you all respect each others views?*
- *Was everybody interested? Did they feel that there was trust, and support in the group, or was there any anxiety or conflict?*
- *How did they deal with any disagreements?*
- *Was there any sub-grouping?*
- *Was everyone happy with the conclusions you came to?*



## Activity 13

### Communication: missing the message

**Purpose of activity:** To understand what helps and what stops good communication

**Life skills:** self-awareness, communication, critical thinking

#### Important points

In this activity there is a lot of talking and discussing. It may be useful to do an active, physical game at the end before monitoring questions. For example, *Dragon Heads or Tails* or *Community of Five*. See the games section at the end of Part 2 on how to play this game.

#### Materials

- Blank paper for each group
- Pencils for each group

#### Steps

1. Divide children into groups of five. Explain that you want each group to draw a picture but that you will secretly tell one member of the team what you want drawn. This child secretly tells the next person. This is repeated until the last person in the group receives the message. S/he then draws the picture. The first team to draw the picture correctly wins.
2. Give each group a piece of paper and a pencil.
3. Call forward one child from each group. Tell them this once only...  
*Your last group member should draw a round table. In the middle of the table there is a plate of biscuits. To the left of the plate there is a spoon and to the right there is a cup without a saucer. Under the table there is a cat with a kitten.*
4. Show the drawings. They may be very different from your explanation!
5. Discuss what went wrong with the communication
  - *did not listen carefully*
  - *did not remember*
  - *explanation was too quick*
  - *too many details etc*
6. Explain the basic steps to communication:

Sender	<i>Creates and sends the message</i>
Receiver	<i>Responds to the message</i>
Message	<i>The information that the sender wants to communicate to someone. The message can be understood in the same way or differently by the sender and the receiver.)</i>
Feedback	<i>How the receiver shows s/he has received the message for example by repeating it or by asking a question.</i>

7. Read the example of communication below.

*Ali says to Hussein, 'I'm not going to school any more. I don't why I should be hungry just because of going to school. I'm going to town to find a way of making money.'*

Ask the following questions:

- Who is the sender? (Ali)
- Who is the receiver? (Hussein)
- What is the message Ali is sending Hussein? Here are some ideas:
  - *I want to ask a job and earn money*
  - *I'm tired of going hungry every day*
  - *It's not worth going hungry just to get an education*

**You can have a break here.**

8. Explain that the message is not just what a person says but the meaning behind the words. Look at the situation between Ali and Hussein again. How should Hussein reply?

- *He could ask a question, for example, why do you want to get a job when you are so young?*
- *He could tell Ali he doesn't understand. Then Ali will have to explain more*
- *He can advise Ali not to leave school.*

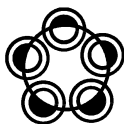
*Any of these make Ali say more.*

9. Explain that bad communication can be because:

- *The sender does not send a clear message. The words may not be clear or there is conflict between the words and the way the sender speaks them or behaves while speaking them.*
- *The receiver does not listen to the message or understand it.*
- *The receiver does not make sure s/he has understood the message by giving feedback to the sender*
- *The sender does not acknowledge or respond to the feedback*

**Final discussion:**

- *What do you think about the communication model? What went wrong with the communication in the game? In the game, the message being sent was too long for the receiver. The receiver may not have listened well and there was no chance for any feedback.*
- *What are the consequences of breakdown in communication? Conflicts, fights and wars are often the result of poor communication and misunderstanding.*
- *Have you ever had difficulty sending a message? What happened?*
- *Why is it sometimes difficult to express what we want to say?*
- *Has this activity helped you understand why?*



## Activity 14

### Communication: body language

#### Purpose of activity

- To understand how we send messages without using words.
- To understand the importance of body language
- To use body language more effectively

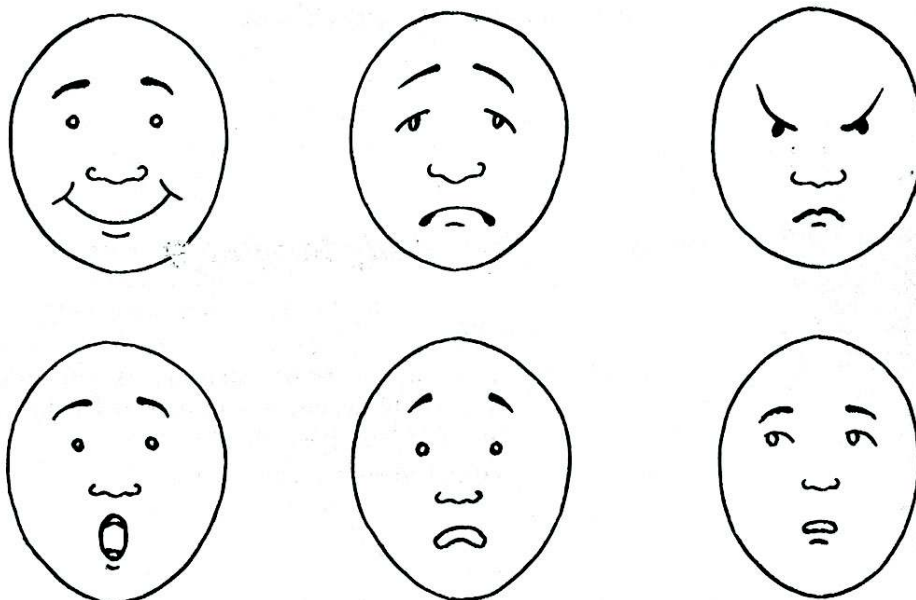
**Life skills:** communication, self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Materials

- Pieces of paper/card

#### Steps

1. Divide children into pairs.
2. Each pair should think of a discussion that one of them has had with someone else which became an argument or a conflict. You could also use the role-plays from Activity 11: resolving conflicts in a friendship.
3. The children then act out the argument using their bodies and faces only. They must not speak (this is called mime). After a few minutes of practising the mime, choose two pairs whose scenes look the clearest. Ask the first pair to act their scene. Ask the group what they think is happening. Point out how it is often easy to know more or less what is going on from our body movement and facial expressions.
4. Repeat the exercise with the second pair.
5. Brainstorm the different parts of the body we can use to communicate with (eyes, arms, mouth, whole body, fingers, legs, shoulders, etc.) and the emotions we can communicate through our bodies (pleasure, anger, weakness, disappointment, etc.). Write or draw symbols for emotions on paper/card.

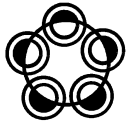




6. Give each child a paper showing one of the emotions (you can also do this in pairs). Ask them to model the emotion with their body. Go through the group guessing what the emotion each child or pair is modelling.

**Final discussion:**

- *Which is more effective in sending a message, body language or words? Why?*
- *What are some body language messages that are particularly positive? Negative?*



## Activity 15

### Communication: mime the lie

#### Purpose of activity

- To show how people can give confusing messages because their actions send a different message to their words.
- To notice how body language can be misinterpreted
- To practise effective body language effective and how to respond to threatening or inappropriate body language from others.

**Life skills:** Communication, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

The first game is a funny way to show how actions have more effect than words and can be used as a warm up. Stress that even though actions often DO show real feelings, this is not always true. Actions can also be misunderstood.

#### Materials

- None

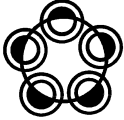
#### Steps

1. Ask children to stand in a circle
2. Go into the middle of the circle and mime an action, such as *brushing your teeth*
3. Ask one of the children to ask you what you are doing. Reply by saying something else, for example *I am digging a hole*.
4. Now ask the person who asked you the question to do the action you said you were doing (*digging a hole*) and ask another person to ask that person what s/he is doing. Again a wrong reply is given (*I'm dancing*).
5. Continue to give as many children as possible a chance but stop before the others lose interest.
6. Brainstorm situations where body language is confusing or goes against the words being said for example:
  - *a girl refusing to walk down the street with a man but her expression suggests she wants to*
  - *a person saying they are interested while yawning*Discuss whether words or actions show real feelings more.
7. Brainstorm situations where the body language of a person is threatening or inappropriate. Discuss how to react to these situations.
8. Divide children into groups. Give each group one situation to act out in mime. The groups can add an ending. The following are suggestions only.
  - *A teacher asks a girl student to take the books to his house. In the house he starts to show he likes her.*
  - *A girl you like visits you. You are very happy but then either you realise she has been drinking or she behaves in an aggressive manner towards you.*

- *Two girls are talking. A man nearby keeps on looking at them. Then he comes and introduces himself. He stands very close while he is talking and is always looking at the body of one of the girls.*
- *You (boy or girl) are walking home in the evening. Suddenly you realise you are being followed by a man with a strange look on his face.*

**Final discussion:**

*How did the people in the role plays react and why did they react like that? Why do some people give the wrong signals? (they are not always aware of their body language, they are not confident, they are confused)*



## Activity 16

### Communication: I see, do you see?

#### Purpose of activity

- To understand how words can be used in different ways
- To think about how our identity influences the way we see and understand

**Life skills:** Communication & interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

Each new message we receive is affected by who we are (our identity our beliefs and so on). This is why different people understand the same message differently. The children understand that when people see things in a different way from us, it does not mean that they are wrong. It is important to respect others people's points of view.

#### Materials

- Pictures of houses, fashionable teenagers, a soldier, a child sleeping on the pavement.

#### Steps

1. Write up the following sentence for everyone to see.  
*Juma wants to take me dancing*
2. Ask children to think of as many different ways of saying this sentence as possible:
  - *stress different words*
  - *express different emotions e.g. sarcasm, excitement, no interest, surprise etc*
3. Tell the story of **Eshu the confuser** (This is a traditional story from Nigeria).

*Eshu walked between two farmers. He was wearing green on his left side and red on his right side. So one farmer saw he was wearing green and the other saw he was wearing red. After he passed, one farmer asked the other, 'Did you see that man wearing green walk past?' The other replied, 'He was wearing red.' They had a big argument about the issue until they nearly started fighting. Finally, they decided to continue working. Then Eshu walked back between the farmers again. Because he was coming the other way, the farmer who saw green now saw red, and the one who saw red now saw green. After Eshu had passed, the first farmer said, 'I'm sorry, you were right. He was wearing red.' The other replied 'No you were right, he was wearing green.' This time they had an even bigger argument because each farmer was convinced he was right.*

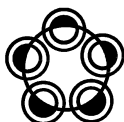
4. Explain that each farmer was right but he was looking from a different position. Each of us is different and that is why we all look at things differently.
5. Divide children into groups of three and ask them to look at the pictures. For each picture discuss:
  - *What each child sees*
  - *What each child feel about what they see*
  - *How other people might see it differently*
6. Groups give their ideas.

## You can have a break here

7. Explain that we are going to be visited by a person from another culture. In this culture:
  - It is rude to answer questions by saying more than 'yes' or 'no'
  - Therefore it is also rude to ask questions to which the answer is not 'yes' or 'no'
  - There is another rule that decides how the person will answer. It is the task of the children to find out what this rule is.
8. Ask for a volunteer and explain to her/him outside the room that the rule is:
  - If the person asking the question is male, the answer is no.
  - If the person is female the answer is yes.
9. The volunteer returns. People ask as many questions as they like until they find out the rule.
10. Repeat the game with a different volunteer. This time the rule could be that if the person asking the question is smiling, the answer is yes, if not the answer is no.

## Final discussion:

- *How difficult was it to find out what the rule of the culture was? Was it frustrating?*
- *If this had happened in real life, what problem might have occurred?*
- *Can you think of any real examples of cultural misunderstandings?*
- *When the children have given their examples, you can add some of these:*
- *If you say think-you when someone offers you something , in some cultures this means yes while in other cultures it means no;*
- *in some cultures you kiss people when you meet them, even if they are strangers;*
- *in some places, men hold hands as they walk down the street to show friendship, in others it is a sign of sexual orientation*
- *In some cultures, to nod the head means to disagree and in others it means to agree!*
- *What can we learn from this game about how we react to people from different cultures? (Make sure the children understand the importance of respecting different ways of behaving and different beliefs)*



## Activity 17

### Communication: drawing together

#### Purpose of activity

- To experience and reflect upon communication and mutual understanding
- To identify positive and negative ways of communicating
- To improve communications skills

**Life skills:** Communication & interpersonal relationships, self awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

This activity helps children look at how they work with others. Encourage the group to think deeply about what happened when they were drawing.

#### Materials

- Large sheets of paper for whole group
- Marker pens or crayons for half the group
- Sticky-tape

#### Steps

1. Divide the children into pairs and give each pair a large sheet of paper and a marker pen or crayon.
2. Ask each pair to sit at a table or on the floor. Then tell them to hold the marker pen or crayon together and without talking draw on their large sheet of paper:
  - A house
  - A place of worship (temple, mosque, church etc)
  - happinesswhen they have finished and still without talking ask them to score their own picture by writing a mark out of ten. Only talk when everyone has finished the drawing.
3. When the pairs have finished, each pair presents the picture to whole group and explains how they drew their picture.

#### Final discussion:

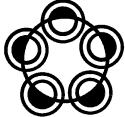
- *How did you communicate while drawing?*
- *What happened when you had different ideas?*
- *How did you reach agreement without speaking?*
- *Which was the easiest to draw? The most difficult? Why?*

#### Discussion ideas

- Some children will have used sign language using their free hand or their heads. This shows the importance of body language
- When the children had different ideas about the picture, one child had to lead and the other to follow. If that does not happen, they can end up tearing the paper and with no

picture. They might have taken it in turns to take the lead or maybe only one child made the decisions. Does this mean the non-leading partner needs to be more assertive? Or maybe s/he recognised the other child had a clear vision which was worth following.

- They needed to be very sensitive to each other's movements, otherwise all the lines would have been very unclear.
- Although it was difficult, when the picture succeeded, this happened because they worked together well on a common task. They were communicating to succeed.
- They probably found it easiest to draw the house, more difficult to draw the temple and most difficult to happiness. It is easier to reach agreement on concrete things and not so easy to agree on abstract things like values and concepts.



## Activity 18

### Communication: listening well

**Purpose of activity:** To develop skills to listen well

**Life skills:** communication & interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Materials

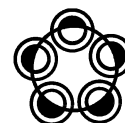
- Two sets of instruction cards

#### Steps

1. Divide children into groups of three by counting 1, 2, and 3 round the group.
2. Explain that the 1s are speakers, the 2s are listeners and the 3s are observers
3. the speakers should prepare to talk for three minutes about anything that interests them or that they can speak easily about, for example, a sport or hobby, *what they did today* etc
4. Give each listener a different card with ONE instruction on it (see the examples below). If the children do not read, give them the slip and whisper the instruction.
  - *Interrupt the speaker*
  - *Try to stop the speaker's story with a better one of your own.*
  - *Lean over and start whispering to the observer*
  - *Laugh for no reason*
  - *Examine the contents of your pocket*
  - *Make comment on what the speaker is saying 'That was stupid', 'You really did that?'*
  - *Change the subject to something unrelated to what the speaker is talking about*
  - *Look bored, yawn, and look around room.*
  - *Disagree with the speaker each time s/he says something*
5. The speaker starts speaking and the listener listens well for a short time.
6. After 3 minutes, ask children to change their positions. The observers become listeners, the listeners become speakers and the speakers become observers.
7. Give the listeners a new type of instruction such as those below. You may need to adapt the examples below. Or write new ones, to fit with your culture.
  - *Show interest in the speaker by making sounds such as uh huh, hmmn, etc, and nod your head in agreement*
  - *Look at the speaker and make eye contact. Lean forward to listen better*
  - *Ask questions to clarify what the speaker is saying*
  - *Compliment the speaker on what s/he is saying, for example, 'That is very interesting,' 'oh yes I agree'.*
8. Ask observers of the second round what they noticed and speakers how they felt.

#### Final discussion:

- *How do you feel when you tell someone something and they don't listen?*
- Have you ever had a misunderstanding because you were not listening? someone wants to talk to you about something serious and you are not in the mood, (because you are sleepy, distracted, worried etc) what can you do?





## Activity 19

### Communication: you and I

#### Purpose of activity

- To learn ways of talking effectively to someone with whom you have a problem
- To practise making non-judgemental statements
- To practice making statements which open the way to discussion rather than close it.

**Life skills:** Communication & interpersonal relationships, self awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

This is a language-based activity so it needs to be adapted carefully.

### Materials

- None

### Steps

1. Divide children into groups of three. Ask one of the groups to be an observer. The group prepares a 5-minute role play on an argument such as those below.
  - *Husband comes drunk. Wife is angry with him. Husband blames the wife*
  - *Father is angry with son/daughter because s/he never does homework and is often out with friends*
  - *Girl is angry with boyfriend because all he wants is sex*
  - *Woman standing in bus with a baby on her back complains that the young people do not offer her a seat*
2. Ask all the observers to come together in a group. Ask half of them to count the number of times the word **YOU** is used in each role-play and the other half to count how many times the word **I** is used.
3. Groups do their role-plays. At the end of each one, ask the observers to say how many times **YOU** or **I** was used in each drama.
4. Explain to the people that **YOU** statements tend to be judgement statements which are often full of blame. They do not consider the point of view of the other side so they cause more conflict. **I** statements usually try to clarify your point of view about a situation rather than to blame the other person. **I** statements help to find a way to a solution.
5. Explain the steps in **I** statements.
  - a. **The action:**  
*When ...*  
Make a specific and non-judgemental statement, for example, '*When you come home late at night ...*'  
NOT

*'When you finally decide to come home'*

**b. The response:**

*I feel...*

Your feelings are a fact and cannot be argued. For example...*'I feel sad and hurt...'*

NOT, *'I think you don't care'*. 'I think' can cause more conflict if the other person disagrees with you.

**c. The reason:**

*because...*

You can add an explanation but make sure that it is still a positive one and not a blaming statement, for example *'...because I like to have some time with you in the evening.'*

NOT *'because you never do anything for me.'*

**d. The suggestion:**

*What I'd like is...*

Make a statement of the change you would like, for example, *'What I'd like is to discuss this with you.'*

**You can take a break here**

6. Remind the children of the 'I' statements. In pairs, ask the children to discuss one of the conflict situations and to think of the ways in which the characters could use 'I' statements to avoid conflict and resolve the situation, for example:

*Father is angry with son/daughter because s/he never does homework and is often out with friends*

**I statement:** *When you do not do your homework, I feel disappointed because I want you to do well at school. What I'd like is to discuss why you do not want to work at home?*

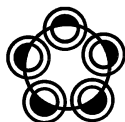
7. Discuss the results of this exercise. Point out that I statements can be used in many different situations, in the market, in the bus, etc. Ask children to try using I statements at least once before the next session.

**Final discussion:**

*What do you think of the I statement formula? Can you use it? Who do you think it could be more successful with? (adults? peers? partners?) Why?*

**Follow up**

Remember this formula and encourage the children to use it to resolve conflicts.



## Activity 20

### Communication: how assertive are you?

**Purpose of activity:** To find out how assertive we are

**Life skills:** Communication & interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

Assertiveness is about defending your right to what you want or need. Assertiveness requires two basic ways of communicating:

- asking for what you want
- refusing what you do not want.

How to be assertive:

- State clearly what you want or need.
- Defend your right to have what you want or need
- Say what you feel or think.
- Refuse to do what is not in your own best interest.
- Respect other people and never threaten, punish or humiliate each other.

Many people find it difficult to be assertive because they don't like conflict. They prefer to keep quiet and hope the conflict will go away. The problem is that the conflict does not go away. In addition, girls and women are often brought up not to be assertive.

It is also difficult to be assertive in some situation, for example, young people talk to older people. It is important to discuss with the group what are acceptable assertive behaviours with parents, teachers, religious leaders, elders etc.

#### Materials

- Signs:  
M = Most of the time  
S = Some of the time  
A = Almost never
- Poster of a scorecard  
0-5            *You need to practise hard*  
6-10          *You are doing okay, but you still need to practise.*  
11-15        *You are doing very well. Keep it up!*
- Paper and pencils for each child

## Steps

(Put the signs on the wall before starting the activity)

1. Explain that assertiveness is a way of being strong for yourself. It is the best way of communicating in many situations. This game will help the children find out how assertive they are.
2. Give each child a paper and pencil.
3. Go through the instructions for the activity:  
*I will read 15 statements. As I read each one, think about how often you do what the statement says. There are three signs along the wall marked with:*  
*M = Most of time*  
*S = Some of the time; and*  
*A = Almost never*  
*When I read a statement, move to the sign that indicates how often that statement is true for you. Take your pen and paper with you. For each statement, note on the paper where you are standing. Write **M** for most of the time, **S** for some of the time and **A** for almost never.*
4. Practice this once and then do the quiz

### Quiz: How assertive am I?

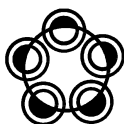
1. If I disagree with a friend, I say so, even if it means s/he might not like me.
2. I ask for help when I am hurt or confused.
3. I do what I think is right, even if I know it may make me unpopular.
4. I let people know when they disappoint me.
5. If a friend borrows money and is late paying it back, I remind him or her.
6. I say no when classmates want to copy my homework or test answers.
7. If a friend is talking or making noise during class, I ask him or her to be quiet.
8. If I have a friend who is always late, I tell him or her how I feel about it.
9. I ask my friends for a favour when I need one.
10. When someone asks me to do something that goes against my values, I refuse.
11. I express my views on important things, even if others disagree.
12. I don't do dangerous things with my friends.
13. When I don't understand what someone is telling me, I ask questions.
14. When it is clear that a point needs to be made and no one is making it, I say so.
15. When people hurt my feelings, I let them know how I feel.

5. Repeat this process for all 15 statements
6. Ask children to add up the number of **M's** on their papers
7. Show the assertiveness scorecard you have made. Go over the numbers on the scorecard and explain what they mean. Make the following points:
  - *Many people achieve only fairly low scores on this survey.*
  - *People with scores higher than 7 should be glad they have learned how to speak up for what they want and say 'no' to things they don't want.*

- *Boys and men generally score higher than girls and women on assertiveness surveys such as this one.*
  - *People are more likely to treat others with respect when they treat themselves with respect.*
  - *People with scores below six can easily improve their score by practising assertive behaviours.*
8. Say that many of us would like to behave assertively. We will practise being assertive in the next two activities.

**Final discussion:**

- *What makes it difficult to be assertive? (the other person is more powerful or stronger, for example, an adult or parent. The person is someone who you want to please, like a friend). Can you think of a situation in which you would like to be more assertive?*
- *Do you know someone in real life who is particularly good at being assertive and standing up for her/his rights? What about on radio or on television? Describe that person and her/his assertive behaviour.*
- *Can you describe a situation when you were assertive? What happened?*
- *Can you suggest how to be assertive without being aggressive? (for example: be calm but firm do not demand or threaten, be firm about standing up for yourself; use a normal tone of voice and keep your body language relaxed, use I statements.)*
- *Do you have a friend who needs to learn to be more assertive? Explain. How can you help?*



## Activity 21

### Communication: negotiation

**Purpose of activity:** To identify negotiating skills and methods to bring about a change.

**Life skills:** Communication & interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

Negotiations are more difficult when you are talking with someone with more power. They can use that power to threaten or silence you or to ignore you. It can be useful to look for *go-betweens* (an uncle, an older friend etc) who have similar power.

#### Materials

- A chart showing symbols for the six steps in negotiation



- 1.**  
Say what you feel using I statements.



- 4.**  
Together, think of as many ideas as possible that may bring a solution to the problem.



- 2.**  
Listen to what the other person has to say to find out what the other person needs or wants.



- 5.**  
Agree on a solution.



- 3.**  
Tell the person what you think the other person wants so you are sure you understand it.



- 6.**  
Try it. If it doesn't work, start again!

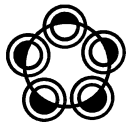
#### Steps

1. Explain that negotiation involves putting yourself in the place of the other person and understanding their point of view. This is good for several reasons:
  - It means you appreciate and respect the other person's point of view. This reduces the risk that you will say something that causes conflict and hurt.
  - If you recognise the other person's point of view, they will become more willing to recognise yours
  - Good negotiation should result in both people gaining something.
2. Explain there are six steps in negotiation:
  - Say what you feel using I statements
  - Listen to what the other person has to say to find out what they need or want

- Tell the person what you understood, so you are sure you understood it.
  - Together, think of as many ideas as possible that may bring a solution to the problem.
  - Agree on a solution
  - Try it. If it doesn't work, start again!
- Remember that sometimes you have to compromise.
3. Divide children into pairs and ask them to practice negotiating using one of the following situations. (Adapt these ideas to suit the experiences of your group but try to include some more simple situations and one or two serious ones.)
- *Your friend plays music loudly when you are trying to do your homework. He says it helps him concentrate.*
  - *A group of children tease you for attending life skills sessions. They call you 'the AIDS guy' and pay no attention when you want to share your ideas with them.*
  - *Your partner wants to have sex but you don't think you are ready yet.*
  - *You are a domestic worker. When you started work, you were promised a salary and that you would be sent to school. Six months have passed. You have received no money and you have received nothing.*
  - *Your stepmother pays all her attention to her own children. She makes you do all the household chores. (Cinderella!)*
  - *There is a new teacher who thinks that the only way to establish his authority is to cane the students as much as possible.*
  - *Your father is often drunk and then he shouts at your mother.*
4. After the pairs have practised, they demonstrate their role-plays. Encourage the group to make recommendations and act out different options. Encourage children to be realistic: often the powerful person will not accept ideas even if the reasons are good.

**Final discussion:**

- *How easy was it to negotiate in these situations? How do the negotiations change when you are negotiating with someone in authority? Or with a group of people?*
- *Do negotiations always work? If they don't, what else can you do?*



## Activity 22

### Communication: saying no

#### Purpose of activity

- To develop skills to help children when they are being teased or bullied by other children.
- To help children learn how to say 'No' to what they don't want.

**Life skills:** Communication & interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

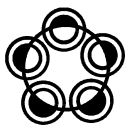
Girls in particular need to practice being assertive and be praised for assertive behaviour.

#### Materials

- None

#### Steps

1. Explain that one way of negotiating is to make a very clear statement when you don't want something. Ask the children what they would say if someone in the market says, *'Come with me I have a special present for you.'*
2. Divide children into groups of girls and boys only. Ask them to discuss the main pressures they face in their lives (demands for sex being forced to work etc). Here are some examples from a group of children in Delhi:
  - *If someone wants you to go with them*
  - *If someone tries to ask you to take bad things (drugs, cigarettes)*
  - *If a man tries to give you a gift*
3. Explain that we have to practise saying **NO** to these pressures. For example, in the case of girls, they can practise saying 'No' to a man who strokes them on the while talking to them. The girl turns round fast and shouts **NO** loudly before moving away quickly. Here are some other examples: For girls
  - *A friend is trying to make you steal fruit from the market stalls.*
  - *A man asks a girl to go to the cinema with him*For boys
  - *A boy is trying to make you smoke cigarettes*
  - *A group of boys thinks it is funny to tease girls and he wants you to join them*Puppets can help children role-play situations and responses.
4. Continue practicing until you are sure that everyone has overcome fears and embarrassment. Make sure all say, 'NO' firmly, loudly and clearly. A group of children were asked what were the hardest situations for them to say, NO. Here are some replies: *If my friend is cheating in exams and he wants me to join him; When you don't want to go somewhere with someone; When your friends encourage you to do something e.g. to smoke, to go to the cinema on a school day.*





## Activity 23

### Communication: fight and flight

**Purpose of activity:** To understand that in some situations, assertiveness and negotiation don't work

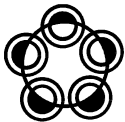
**Life skills:** communication & interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Materials

- Small prizes for the winners of the race and the screaming contest.

#### Steps

1. Take children into a large open space where they can run and scream without disturbing anyone.
2. Tell them that you are going to teach them two methods of being assertive. However, first you want them to race each other. (Find a short race they can run, for example, to a nearby tree or wall and back again.)
3. After the race, explain that there are some situations where assertiveness and discussion (fight) do not work. These are usually situations where you are threatened with violence. In these situations, flight (running away) is the best options.
4. Announce that now you will have a screaming contest. The person who screams loudest wins.
5. After the contest, explain that in some situations, screaming may be the best defence, particularly if many other people are nearby. These situations include children being followed or touched by people they do not know or like.
6. Give prizes to the best runner and loudest screamer.
7. Ask the children to brainstorm some situations and to explain whether they would run or scream, and why.
8. You can finish your session with some games.



## Activity 24

### Rights and Responsibilities

#### Purpose of activity

- To share ideas about children's rights and responsibilities
- To discuss how to ask closer to achieving their rights

**Lifeskills:** Critical thinking, creative thinking

#### Important points

Before the session, find out about *the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the laws on children's rights in the country.

#### Materials

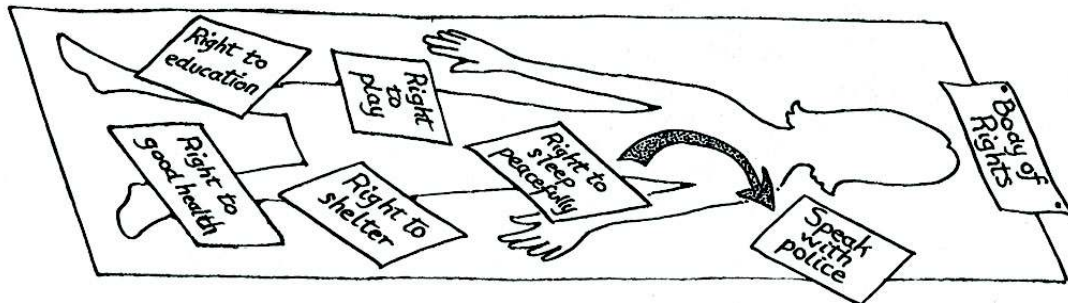
- Pieces of paper large enough to make a life-size drawing of a child
- Marker pens or crayons
- Stickers (optional)

#### Steps

1. Explain that this activity explores children's rights and responsibilities  
**Rights:** *what children should have (food, shelter, safe water, health care play etc) and Responsibilities: what children should do (respect others' rights, help one another etc)*
2. Ask a volunteer to lie down on the large piece of paper on the floor and draw the outline of their body shape.
3. Ask all the children to sit around the body drawing. Explain that the body drawing will become a child's rights and responsibilities.
4. Children brainstorm all the rights they think children should have. The educator writes all these suggestions inside the 'body' using a pen in one colour.
5. Children are then asked to list the responsibilities they have. To help them, show them that many rights have a corresponding responsibility, for example: *A right to speak and a responsibility to listen.*
6. Tell the children about the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and your country's laws.

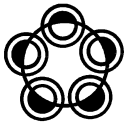
#### You can have a break here

7. Read through all the rights that the children listed inside the body.
8. Ask each child to vote for the three rights that are most important to them. Children can make three dots beside three different rights using a pen in a different colour, or if possible, give each child three stickers. If the children are not literate you can create symbols for different rights. Make sure the children can easily identify what the symbols represent. Then children tell the educator which rights they want to vote for and the educator shows them where to put their mark or sticker.
9. Select the three rights with the most votes and discuss how this right can be realised, for example: What needs to happen for children to ask the right to protection from violence?
10. Draw a thin line from each of these three rights. On a card outside the body, write children's ideas about how to achieve this right.



### Follow up

Encourage the children to work together to develop and implement an action plan to improve their rights



### Case study

In India, children in a project formed a Child Rights Club. The children were interviewed by the media about their rights at the launch of the club. Here are some of the replies...

- *I was not allowed to play because I am a girl.*
- *My mother does not send my sister to school, but she sends me. [ a boy]*
- *A right to live a proper life is important because it is only after having this right that we can ask for the other rights [in the UN CRC]. For example, if a girl does not even have the right to live, then what will she do with the other rights?*
- *Because I was not educated, a vegetable seller cheated me.*
- *The police beat me up and put me in an observation home. I wish I could live freely and safely. I hope the police will not beat me in future.*

## Part Two: How can we Move Forward?

The topics and activities in Part Two help children identify obstacles they may face and suggest building blocks to help them deal with these obstacles. Repeat the session on Ground Rules.

### Activity 25

#### Problem-Solving: identifying our problems

**Purpose of activity:** To help children learn how to identify their problems, think of solutions and think who can help.

**Life skills:** Problem-solving, creative thinking

**Important points**

Help the children identify problems in their lives for themselves. This is the best start to finding a solution. Listen to how children look at their problems. It is often different from how adults see them.

#### Materials

- Large piece of paper with the following chart:

Problem	How Serious	How Common	How much can children do to solve problem + examples	Importance to the programme
Not getting enough food	+++++	+++++	++ (sharing food, helping to find or buy food, showing which foods are best)	12
Being beaten by other children	+++++	++	+++ ( how to defend yourself, getting friends to help so you don't ask attacked)	10

- Marker pens or crayons. You can also draw this chart on the ground with chalk or sand. Use pebbles, seeds, or other objects to score. (In one programme the educators built up the chart with the children)
- Large pieces of paper for each group
- Puppets if used.

## Steps

1. Explain that the children will think about a problem in their life, and find ways to solve or cope with the problem. Puppets can be used to introduce the activity.
2. Explain the chart to the children. Five points is the highest score and one point is the lowest score.
3. In groups, ask the children to think of five or six problems they are facing. They can write these, draw symbols for them or ask the educator to write them in the left-hand column under the heading 'problems'. If possible, children think of their own problems. If they find this very difficult, you could use picture cards to give an example but try not to lead the children's ideas. It is very helpful to find out what the children think of as their most important problems.
4. Using a marker pen or crayon (or chalk or pebbles), children discuss each problem. (How common it is, how serious it is and what they think other children can do to solve it). They give them a mark out of five. When the chart is completed, the children or the educator add up the scores for each problem and identify the top problems.

## You can have a break here

5. Each group shows their chart and explains the scores. The whole group discusses each chart.
6. If you have time, make a whole group chart, combining all the top problems identified by the smaller groups.
7. Final discussion. *What were the top problems that you chose? Why? Were there disagreements? How did you resolve these? How can we use the charts to plan future lifeskills sessions?*

## Follow up

The problem chart also is used to think more deeply about one problem.

Here is a sample chart made by street children in India.

Problem	How Serious	How Common	How much can children do to solve problem + examples	Importance
Harassment and abuse from police	++++	+++	++ (run away form police)	8
Not being able to go to school	+++++	++	+++ (We cannot do much - adults can do something)	10
No good food	+++++	++++	++ (we can make our own food or get it from a hotel)	11
Fighting amongst ourselves	+	++++	+++ (we can try to stop our fights)	8
Peer pressure to smoke	+++++	+++	++++ (we can stop smoking and make our friends understand)	12
Harassment of girls	+++++	+++++	++++ (The girls should get together to tell the boys how they feel).	14

### The 'But why?' game

Other ways to look at underlying problems or causes is to use the phrase 'but why', for example:

People shout at me in the street

...*But why?*

Because they think I will steal from them

...*But why?*

Because they can see I am poor

...*But why?*

Because I do not have good clean clothes

...*But why?*

Because I do not spend money for clothes

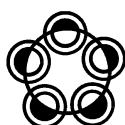
...*But why?*

Because I spend my money on food and smoking

...*But why?*

To stay alive and to feel less hungry

This game can help children break down a problem into smaller causes. Some of the smaller causes may be easier to tackle than the big cause. In the example above a first step might be to try to stop smoking in order to have some more money for food.



## Activity 26

### Problem-solving: What risks do we take and why?

#### Purpose of activity

- To understand better the concept of risk-taking
- To consider when a risk is acceptable or not

**Life skills:** critical thinking, creative thinking, problem-solving

#### Materials

- Marker pens or crayons (red, yellow and green)
- Sets of cards of three blank cards (red, yellow and green) one set for each pair
- Poster listing risk statements

#### Steps

1. Explain that we all take risks as part of everyday life. For example:
  - We cross the road (traffic accidents)
  - We work in the fields (snake bite)The important thing is to think about the risks first and decide carefully. This is not always easy.
2. Read a short story in which a character in the story takes a risk. For example: *Luis is selling cigarettes in the main street. He is approached by a man who buys two packets and then tells him that there is a better way to make money in the street. He tells the boy to follow him to his flat where they can talk about it more. Luis follows.*
3. In the whole group
  - *Is anyone in this story taking a risk?*
  - *Why did Luis decide to take a risk?*
  - *How do you think Luis felt at the time?*
  - *What might have happened because of taking that risk? Would it be good or bad?*
  - *What identity factors led to Simon taking this risk?*  
(Luis showed risk-taking **behaviour**. He lacks **skills** to think critically about the dangers of this situation. The **environment** in which he lives and works, as a street vendor with very little money encourages this risky behaviour.)
  - *What do you think about people taking risks?*
  - *Who take more risks? Young people or old people? Why?*
  - *Do you take risks?*
4. Ask everyone to think of occasions when they took a risk. Maybe it was a small risk or maybe it was a very important one. In pairs, ask them to answer the same questions as above
5. Ask some of the pairs to share with the whole group. Can you make any general observations on risk-taking behaviour?
6. Give each pair a set of three coloured cards
7. Read out the 'risk statements' below. Then read them out again, and after each one, ask the pairs to hold up one of the cards: Red for very risky; yellow for risky; green for very small risk.

Driving when drunk	Going to the market
Starting your own business	Arguing with your father
Cycling fast	Accepting gifts from someone you don't know
Crossing a road	Making fun of the teacher
Having unprotected sex	Getting married before the age of 18
Eating unwashed fruit	Riding a bicycle at night without lights
Having sex with a condom	Having children before the age of 18
Taking a drug	Living on your own
Sleeping without a mosquito net	Walking through a field of maize or corn
Stealing from a market stall	Walking barefoot
Dropping out of school	Carrying a knife
Walking home late at night	Doing what your friends do
Going to a disco	Going to pray
Accepting a lift from stranger	Getting an sexually transmitted infection (STI)
Accepting a lift from someone you know	Kissing and hugging someone
Smoking	Riding a bicycle without holding the handlebars

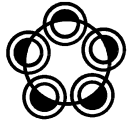
8. Record the results using the marker pens or crayons. The educator should be aware of what is acceptable locally. Some of these risks may be considered high risk in some places but not in others. The educator must also be prepared to give guidance if the children's assessment is inaccurate.
9. Divide the children into boy-only and girl-only groups of four. Ask each child to select three ways in which they have taken a risk (from the list, from real life or invent them).
10. Each child tells the group their three risks. They discuss why they take these risks, for example:
  - *Because it's fun/because it's exciting*
  - *Because I feel I have nothing to lose*
  - *Because I want to be a part of the group and they are all doing it*



- *Because I feel old enough*
  - *Because I am scared not to*
  - *Because I want to make money*
11. In the whole group discuss the risks and the reasons. If groups have common reasons, decide what lifeskills are needed to reduce this risk-taking behaviour. (Use the answers to chose future lifeskills activities).

**Final discussion:**

*Point out risks that the children did not think about during their discussion. Do you know when you are taking risks? What can you do to identify risks*



## Activity 27

### Decision-Making: the three Cs in decision-making

**Purpose of activity:** To learn skills to help make thoughtful decisions

**Life skills:** decision-making, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem-solving

**Important points**

Read through this activity carefully and work out your own decision-making example. It should be something important and relevant to the children in that group. It is best if the children can see how the example can help them with REAL decision-making.

#### Tip

If you work in another language you can find three words for the three C's which also begin with a similar letter. For example in Spanish, Juconi in Mexico used three D's: Desafío, Diyuntiva and Desenlace instead of the English 3 C's (challenges, choices and consequences).

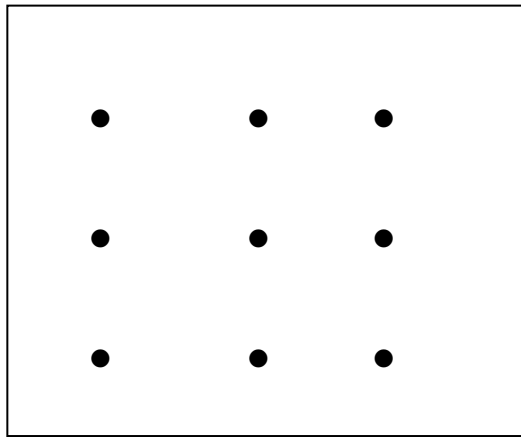
#### Materials:

- Poster showing *The three Cs in decision-making*

#### The 3 Cs in decision-making

1. **Challenge** (or decision you are facing)
2. **Choices**  
Choice 1  
Choice 2  
Choice 3  
And so on
3. **Consequences** (of each choice positive and negative)

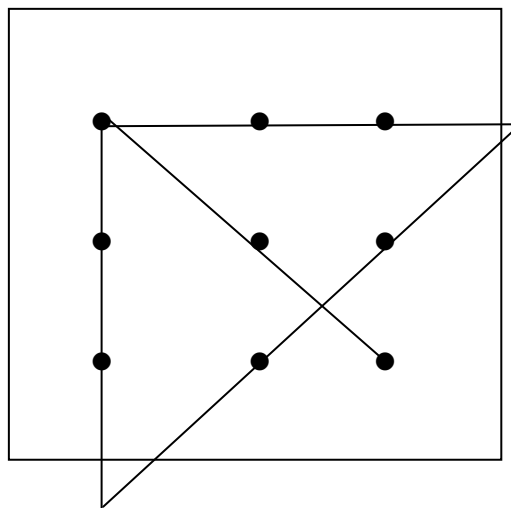
- Poster with the join the dots brainteaser



- Blank page for drawing outline of child
- Marker pens or crayons
- Pencils and blank sheets of paper for the children

**Steps:**

1. Give each child blank pieces of paper
2. Draw the nine dots on the large piece of paper and ask the children to copy the pattern. Tell them that they have to join all the dots using only four straight lines
3. After 5 minutes or so, give them the answer.



*Join-the-dots answer*

4. Ask what we can learn from this brainteaser. (To solve a problem you may have to go outside the most obvious answers)
5. Talk about how we make decisions:
  - *suddenly*
  - *putting off the decision until something else makes the decision for you*
  - *not deciding at all*
  - *letting others make the decision*
  - *looking at choices and then deciding*
6. Explain that this session focuses on looking at choices and then deciding. Draw an outline of a child on a poster. Ask them what decisions this child may be facing, for example, *should I join an after-school club?*

7. Point to the first C word, *challenge*, and explain that this is the first 'C'
8. Point to the word *Choices* on the poster say that this is the second 'C'. Ask children to think about the different choices that a child making this decision has. In this example:  
*Choice 1: To talk to other children who go to this club to find out more*  
*Choice 2: To find another club*  
*Choice 3: To carry on without going to a club*  
 (There should be at least three choices).
9. Point to the word *Consequences* and explain that this is the third C. Ask the children to think of good and bad consequences of each choice.

**Choice 1: To talk to other children who go to the club**

*The children may tell you useful information and encourage you to join them*

**BUT**

*You may not feel the same way as they do about the club*

**Choice 2: To find another club**

*This may be a better club with more opportunities for you*

**BUT**

*You have not tried it so you don't know if this one will help you. You may get frustrated*

**Choice 3: To carry on without going to a club**

*You will not be taking any risks*

**BUT**

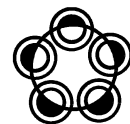
*You will not be taking the opportunities to make life any better.*

10. Ask everyone to give other examples of challenges from their lives. Choose one and practice the three Cs.
11. Ask everyone to agree or take a vote to find the most popular choice.
12. Explain that in life, you have to face your own challenges and make your own decisions but you can ask for other ideas before making a decision.
13. Summarise the three steps of three C's to good decision-making.

**Final discussion.**

*Has anyone made a decision that did not turn out well?*

*Would the 3 C's steps have helped? How?*



If you have time, it may be useful to finish this session with a game such as the Fishbowl game or team drawing (see the games section at the back).

**Follow up**

Follow this activity with further sessions in which the group works together to 'practice' the 3 Cs decision-making process.

## Activity 28

### Decision-making: practising making decisions

**Purpose of activity:** To practice using the 3 C's to make decisions

**Life skills:** decision-making, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, communication skills

**Important points**

Try to ask help from your colleagues in this activity so that children can ask them questions. They can be in the same room or nearby.

#### Materials

- Poster of the three Cs (see Activity 27)

#### Steps

1. Using the poster, go through the three Cs. Explain that it is not necessary to use the model to make small everyday decisions but it can help for those decisions that could have a big effect on your life.
2. Tell children that they are going to practice using the three Cs.
3. Divide people into groups and give each group 2-3 challenges they might face (using the ones they identified in the first session and any others you think are relevant). Each group writes or draws the decision-making model on a large sheet of paper and discusses the choices and consequences of each challenge. You may need to help groups identify choices and consequences.
4. Allow groups to continue working until the next part and remind them to be prepared to present their response. Encourage them to look for further information from other sources for example by discussing with other friends or with another educators or other adults, religious leaders etc.

#### Some difficult challenges

- *Meena's uncle says there is no money to pay for Meena's school fees. Her father always sent money before but recently he has sent nothing. Her mother tells her she is sure he will send the money but Meena doesn't believe it. She wants to run away early in the morning and go to town to find her father. She knows the area he lives in but she has never been to his room.*
- *Achieng belongs to a group of girls who are a little older than her. They like to show how grown up they are. All except Achieng have already had sex. They now tell Achieng that she doesn't deserve to belong to the same group. She does have a boyfriend but they have never had sex together.*
- *Nasir belongs to a group of boys who sell food and drinks to the big buses that stop in the village on the way to the city. The boys have discovered that it is easy to steal small things from the passengers as the bus drives away (earrings, handbags etc.) They pull them away as the bus gathers speed. Nasir has never dared try although it looks easy and his friends laugh at him and call him a coward.*
- *Matteus has been going out with his girlfriend for a year and they have been having sex for 6 months. They have always used a condom but*

*Matteus's girlfriend is tired of using a condom. They want to get married and she sees no reason why they should go on using a condom. She is becoming quite upset about it and threatening to end the relationship.*

- *Grace has discovered that she is pregnant. When she goes to her boyfriend, he chases her out and calls her a prostitute. She is afraid of telling anyone. Then a friend of hers tells her that there is an old woman who can help her ask rid of her baby.*
- *Augusto wants to go to secondary school but he has to pass an exam for government school. When he goes to find out the results, he finds he has missed his chance by only two places. A worker in the education office tells him that if he is prepared to give him a certain amount of money, he will make sure he is given a place, since he knows that some of the names on the list are not real.*

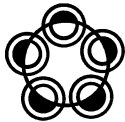
### **You can have a break here**

#### **Steps**

5. Give a few minutes for each group to finish their decisions (in case they consulted other people outside).
6. Ask groups to report their decisions to the whole group. The other children may ask questions and add other ideas for choices and consequences.
7. After all decisions have been discussed, end with the following questions.

#### **Final discussion:**

*Is it easy or difficult to make good decisions? What makes it difficult? (for example, the influence of emotions, or alcohol, pressure from peers or a partner etc). What makes it easy? (knowing how to resist pressure, being sure about your values or goals, getting good advice from people you trust) Have you made a decision that affected other people? What happened? How likely is it that one of your decisions will turn out badly? What do you do if that happens?*



## Activity 29

### Taking Harmful Substances: What do I think about substance abuse?

#### Purpose of activity:

- To explore children's attitudes about substance abuse and how they are affected by others
- To correct myths and incorrect information

**Life skills:** self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

You may not wish to deal with all these issues in one session. You may divide them up according to whether you are dealing with smoking, drinking or other drugs. Many people take risks by using harmful substances even though they know that these damage their health. Some people become addicted, which makes it difficult to give up.

#### Materials

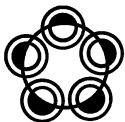
- 2 large signs, **Agree** and **Disagree**
- Attitude statements such as those below (adapt these to suit the needs of your group)

#### Steps

1. Place the sign **Agree** in one corner and the sign **Disagree** in the opposite corners of the room.
2. Ask the children to stand in the middle of the room.
3. Say that you are going to read out a statement, they should go immediately to either the agree or disagree corner. There is no room for 'not sure' – they have to decide.
4. Read out a statements and when the children have chosen their corners, ask why they chose to move there. If necessary, give information to correct any wrong information. Do this for about 10 statements. .
5. At the end, ask the children to choose a partner and discuss how they made their decisions: to what extent did they decide on their own, and to what extent did they looked at what others were doing. Use this to talk about the power of peer pressure in our lives.

#### Final discussion.:

*Why do you think some doctors smoke? If you were the leader of our country, what laws would you pass about smoking, alcohol and drugs?*



## Attitude statements and facts

Issues surrounding attitudes to smoking and drugs are complex and sensitive, and they are different in different countries. The information below is intended only as a starting point for discussions.

- **The risks of smoking are exaggerated. I know people who smoke but they don't have any health problems**  
*Not everyone who smokes has health problems now. But medical studies show a link between smoking cigarettes and diseases like lung cancer and heart disease. Over a quarter of all regular smokers die of smoking related diseases. Those people who start to smoke when they are young are more likely to die of smoking related diseases.*
- **People should be allowed to smoke as and where they wish. It's their right.**  
*A smoker risks their own life but also the health of other people who breathe the smoke from their cigarettes. This is why many countries have laws which do not allow smoking in public areas such as transport and buildings. Many organisations have made their offices smoke-free and some people do not allow smoking inside their homes.*
- **Smoking is not a serious risk like unprotected sex etc**  
*Over a quarter of all regular smokers die of smoking related diseases.*
- **Smoking is cool**  
*Smoking cigarettes seriously damages your health so it's foolish to start smoking. Fools are not cool. It is not cool to ignore avoidable risks and it is not cool if we are fooled by advertisements.*
- **Everything in life is dangerous, even crossing a road**  
*It is true that life is full of risks, and that everything has some element of danger. However, we have to accept some risks that are necessary and we can reject risks which are unnecessary and avoidable.*
- **People who take drugs should be punished**  
*It is important to find out how and why people started taking drugs. It is better to concentrate first on how to prevent people from starting to take drugs.*
- **Smoking tobacco is far more dangerous than smoking marijuana**  
*They are both dangerous. The tar produced by marijuana contains more cancer-producing agents than tobacco tar.*
- **Drug takers only have themselves to blame if they ask sick**  
*Some drug-taker deliberately started taking drugs but many are pushed into it by peer pressure, pressure in their lives or by drug dealers. Many people take drugs to escape from the difficulties or problems in their lives. Whatever the reason, once they are addicted, they need a lot of support to help them give up.*
- **People who don't drink are either religious fanatics or cowards**  
*Whether to drink alcohol or not is a personal decision. It may be determined by religious reasons or many other reasons.*
- **Alcohol is a part of our culture**  
*Alcohol may be a part of some cultures, but drunkenness is not.*



## Activity 30

### Taking Harmful Substances: responsibility and consequences (drugs and alcohol)

#### Purposes of activity

- To help children think about the reasons why people take harmful substances
- To help children think about the short term and long term consequences of taking harmful substances
- To help children think about the consequences of NOT taking harmful substances
- To give children practice how to resist pressure

**Life skills:** Creative thinking, critical thinking

#### Important points

There may be many reasons why children take harmful substances (tobacco, alcohol drugs etc). Many are motivated to start by reasons like “I wanted to be accepted in my group” rather than anything to do with the drug itself. Activities that aim to change harmful behaviour need to address all the factors that surround the child. Change is more likely to happen when it is linked to a positive outcome.

#### Materials

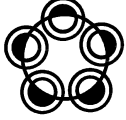
- Situation card.

#### Steps:

1. Read out the following situation to children:  
*Tshepo has just become part of a group. He's really happy to be part of the group and enjoys hanging around with them. Recently they've started to smoke dagga (use a local word or a word the children know for marijuana). Tshepo does not smoke and does not like the idea of smoking marijuana. He knows some other groups which use stronger, more harmful drugs. Some of his friends want to try these harder drugs too. Tshepo does not know what to do because he wants to stay part of the group but he does not want to get involved in smoking or taking drugs.*
2. Divide the group into three or four smaller groups and ask one child to be the leader in that group. Children discuss answers to the two following questions:
  - *What choices does Tshepo have?*
  - *What are the consequences of each?*
3. Ask each group to act out a role-play which illustrates positive and negative consequences for Tshepo.
4. The group can then discuss :
  - Why did Tshepo respond like he did?  
Guide the children towards considering the whole Tshepo
    - *his identity*
    - *his values and beliefs*
    - *his skills (to resist pressure to take harmful drugs)*
    - *his behaviour (how he usually is)*
    - *his environment (does it help him or not?)*
  - Why did other characters in the role plays behave as they did?

**Final discussion:**

*Do you know someone who was taking harmful substances? Why do you think that they did this? What happened to them? What is good and what is bad about taking drugs?*



## Activity 31

### Taking Harmful Substances: peer pressure

**Purpose of activity:** To enable children to look at their attitudes and decisions about drugs and explore the risks of drug-taking

**Life skills:**, critical thinking

#### **Important points**

Before or after this session, do or repeat communication skills activities such as Activity 19: *You and I*.

#### **Materials**

- Large sheets of paper
- Coloured pens

#### **Steps**

1. Tell this scenario to the whole group: *You meet some friends. Some of them begin to smoke marijuana. Your good friend decides to try it and wants you to join in too.*
2. Ask for ideas on what might lead you to try it. Make a list of these and divide the ideas to show if these pressures are from the outside (from other people) or the inside (from yourself)

#### **Outside**

- Friends
- Advertisements
- Seeing people in films
- Songs
- Having parents or relatives who drink or smoke to a level where there is a problem

#### **Inside**

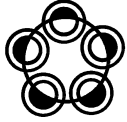
- feeling lonely
  - Having problems at home
  - Wanting to be one of the group
  - Wanting to show that I'm grown up
  - Not knowing who to ask for help with problems
3. Divide Children into groups. Give each group one of the situations below. Use local words for drugs

#### **Situations**

- *Life has been difficult for you. There are problems at home and you depend more and more on your friends. Someone that a friend of yours tells you that he has something you can take that will make you feel 100 times better.*
  - *You keep hearing stories about cocaine which say that it makes you feel great. You are curious and want to try it to see what happens. One day a friend offers you some.*
  - *You meet your friends. They are with a man who you don't know. He shows you a pill which he says 'will make you feel like a new person'. He says that they give you a good time and are totally safe and that he will give you one free.*
4. In the groups, draw a picture with a title, 'if only....' About what happens in the story. These stories could also be turned into raps (a spoken song with a beat),

songs or poems.

5. Ask the children to discuss how they would react. Refer to Activity 19: *You and I*.
  - *How will you react to this situation?*
  - *What problems might you have in refusing?*
  - *What consequences might you face if you accept? (Remind children of the three C's of decision-making)*
  - *If another person refused before you, would this help you? Why?*
  - *What identity factors will strengthen you or weaken you*
  - *Can practising, 'No' help in real life? Why/why not?*



### **Follow Up**

Act out more role plays using real problems situations of the children to practice dealing with different situations.

## Activity 32

### Taking Harmful substances: avoiding risks

**Purpose of activity:** To identify the deep reasons behind risk-taking so that children can learn to avoid risk

**Life skills:** problem-solving, creative thinking

**Important points:** Do or refer back to Activity 26: What risks do we take and why?

#### Materials

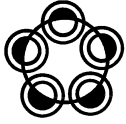
- None

#### Steps

1. Tell the group that sometimes we take action because we believe they give us short-term benefits, even if the action has no long-term benefit for us.
2. Explain that a risk is a chance or a possibility of harm. In groups of four or five, ask the children to discuss and draw risks that they or their peers or friends take in their lives. For example: *smoking, drug-taking, stealing, having unprotected sex etc*
3. Now ask each child to think of a risk that they do take or they would like to take.
4. Ask for one volunteer to come forward. Reassure them that they will not have to say anything personal or that will embarrass them! Ask them to close his/her eyes and then imagine themselves taking that risk. Now open the eyes and say what the benefits are from taking that risk. Ask...*What does that give you? What does it do for you?*
5. The educator lists all the positive benefits down.  
For example in one session, Anton said that he kept risking his health by smoking. When asked what it does for him, Anton said:
  - *It relaxes me even when I have problems*
  - *I feel happy with my friends*
  - *I feel part of my group*
6. In pairs, ask the group to do the same exercise with each other. Ask for volunteers to report the results back to the group
7. Ask volunteers to report back the results.
8. Now ask the children how they can have the same results but without taking the risk. Often children take risks (for example smoking or taking drugs) to escape, forget or become happier. Ask the whole groups to think creatively about how they can achieve this. For example, Anton decided he could relax and feel happy with the group by playing football more regularly.  
Still in the same pairs, one child repeats the benefits of the risk they take, and the other child thinks of ideas for achieving the effect without taking the risk. Give time for everybody to have a turn in each position. You can use the fishbowl game here where each child gets at least two suggestions from different people. (See games at the end of the handbook)
9. Finally ask the children to close their eyes and visualise how to get the benefits in a non-risky way.

**Final discussion:**

*Was it easy being creative with ideas? Why or why not? Do we get stuck into behaviour patterns? (it is easier, we don't know any alternatives, we are scared) How can we break risky behaviour patterns? If you have done Activities 22 and 27, remind children of the techniques of saying NO and the three C's in decision-making. Otherwise, you can do these activities next to develop their skills in changing their behaviour.)*



## Activity 33

### Sexuality: Special friendships

**Please note:** We have selected just five activities for this section on sexuality. Contact the author at [www.lifeskillshandbooks.com](http://www.lifeskillshandbooks.com) for the latest resources and recommendations on materials for sexuality and lifeskills education for young people. Visit the Aids Alliance website for their outstanding three-part 'Our Future' series for young people (grades 4-9) and their educators which you can download free at [www.aidsalliance.org](http://www.aidsalliance.org)

**Purpose of activity:** To understand what are early sexual feelings and that they are normal. To begin to talk about sexual feelings.

**Life skills:** self awareness, creative thinking, interpersonal skills

#### Materials

- None

#### Steps

1. Explain that the first special feelings we get for other children are sometimes described as a 'crush' on the person, 'fancying' the person or of a feeling of being 'in love' with that person. The feelings may last a short time or for many weeks. Girls can have special feelings for another girl, boys for another boy or girls and boys may start to have special feelings for one another. All of these are normal.
2. Read out this letter from Felix to a newspaper column which he writes about his feelings for Fatima

*Dear Auntie,*

*My friend Fatima and I really like each other. We are 11 years old and we have been going around together since last term. We have lots of other friends who like us both. We can talk about everything and we relax and laugh together. We like to tell each other our problems and we do our school work together. At weekends we go to the same singing group. A few weeks ago I began to feel very warm inside every time I thought of Fatima. She is in my mind all the time. I bring her mangoes from our garden. I want to hold her hand and kiss her. I think I have fallen in love with my friend! Shall I tell her about my feelings?*

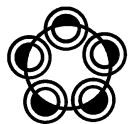
*Felix*

3. *Divide children into pairs or three's. Ask them to discuss and make a list of the signs that the friendship between Felix and Fatima was turning into something more a special friendship. Ask the children to think of more signs. Here are some ideas:*
  - *daydreaming*
  - *writing the loved one's name*
  - *feeling that the loved one is handsome or pretty*
  - *feeling dreamy*
  - *listening to love songs*

- *giving the loved one gifts*
  - *feeling shy when you are with the loved one*
  - *wanting to see the loved one all the time*
4. Ask the children to share their ideas.
  5. Explain that these special feelings are a normal part of growing up and happen to most children. For some of them it happens when they are young for others it happens later. Sometimes children who have special feelings for someone else may want to tell this person. Sometimes they may want to keep their feelings secret or talk about their feelings with a good friend.
  6. Show the children a box with a slot in it. Explain that this box is place where the children can put any questions they like and they do not have to write their name. The **anonymous box** will be there for all the activities to do with sexual health (and other activities if needed). Answering the children's questions can become a regular part of the sessions.
  7. In the same pairs or threes, children discuss these questions:
    - What do you think are the best kinds of friendships for children of your age?
      - *To have one special boyfriend or girlfriend*
      - *To be friends with many boys and/or girls*
      - *To have a mixed group and leave special friendships for later*
  8. In pairs or on your own, write a letter to reply to Felix.
  9. (If time). Ask children to act out a scene in which a child is talking with a friend about their feelings for someone. The friend advises them. The example of Felix or Fatima can be used.

### **Final discussion:**

*Is it normal for children to start having special feelings for other children at our age?  
What is good advice to someone who has started to have special feelings for another person?*



### **Follow up**

What do parents or older brothers, sisters or friends think about starting special friendships? The same as you or different? Tell them about the letter from Felix. How would they reply?



## Activity 34

### Sexuality: love and sexual feelings

#### Purpose of the session

- to explore feelings about forming relationships
- to examine children's ideas about love and sexual feelings

**Lifeskills:** Problem-solving, Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Communication & Interpersonal relationships

#### Important points

This session is divided into two parts. Think carefully about the timing and do what suits your group first. In the second part you may need to adapt the agony aunt letters. Use the everyday words and phrases that children find most appropriate to describe aspects of sex and sexual behaviour. If the children cannot read, simplify the session focusing on one or two agony aunt letters only.

#### Materials

- Large pieces of paper or a flip chart
- Marker pens or crayons
- Agony aunt letters (sometimes called 'problem-page' letters.)

#### Steps

1. Divide the children into girls only and boys-only groups of five or six. Ask all the groups to discuss both these questions:
  - *What are the four most important things a girl looks for in a boyfriend?*
  - *What are the four most important things a boy looks for in a girlfriend?*
2. Copy the chart below onto the paper or flip chart. As they give their ideas, fill in the chart.

#### What do boys look for in a girlfriend?

Girls answers'	Boys' answers

## What do girls look for in a boyfriend?

Girls' answers	Boys' answers

3. Discuss: *What qualities are mentioned most often? Are there differences between the boys' answers and the girls' answers? If so, why?*

### You can have a break here

- Divide children into groups of three or four
- Explain that you are going to read out some letters from children to an 'agony aunt'. (An agony aunt is someone who works for a newspaper, magazine, radio station or even on television, and who gives you advice on problems sent in by readers or the audience). *Imagine that you are the agony aunt, what response would you give to the person writing in?*
- Give a different letter to each group  
(If there are no readers in the group, read out one problem letter then ask the groups to discuss each of the questions after the letter. You may want to use just two of the letters in one lifeskills session. Do not give the groups the notes.)

<b>Letter 1</b>	Dear Auntie,  Can you tell me what is wrong with me? I have now fallen in love four times. Each time the girl is very beautiful and I cannot sleep until she agrees to my proposal. But after making love, I lose interest in them. How can you find a girl who you love for ever?
<b>Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you think the boy has really fallen in love four times?</i></li> <li>• <i>Why do you think he loses interest after making love?</i></li> <li>• <i>What can we say about what love is or is not from this letter?</i></li> <li>• <i>What would you say in reply to this letter?</i></li> </ul>
<b>Notes (educator only)</b>	<i>The boy does not love the girl but has strong sexual feelings. He should control his feelings and ask to know girls better. If he thinks only about having sex with a girl then this is not love.</i>

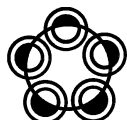
<b>Letter 2</b>	<p>Dear Auntie,</p> <p>I am 15 years old and I love this girl very much. We go out together every weekend and we have a very good time together. The problem is I don't want to hurry into making love to her until we get to know each other better but she seems to be getting impatient. She tells me if we love each other then we should show it. Do you have to have sex if you are in love?</p>
<b>Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do you think of the boy? Is he being a coward? Is he behaving in a loving way?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you think about the girl? Do you agree with her? Do you have to have sex to show you are in love with each other?</i></li> <li>• <i>What can we say about love from this letter?</i></li> <li>• <i>What would you say in reply to this letter?</i></li> </ul>
<b>Notes (educator only)</b>	<p>The boy and girl seem to love each other. She wants to have sex to show her feelings. She is right to say that sex can show you love someone. But if you love someone you also respect their feelings. The boy prefers to wait because they still don't know each other well, and because of the consequences of having sex at a young age.</p>

<b>Letter 3</b>	<p>Dear Auntie,</p> <p>I have been with my girlfriend for about 2 months and I really enjoy being with her. The problem is I am not sure if she feels the same. Last Sunday we went to watch a football match together but she spend the whole afternoon talking with another boy who lives nearby. I got so upset I left her there and went home. Now she has written me a note asking me why I abandoned her at the football match. What should I say to her? Do you think she loves me?</p>
<b>Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do you think of the girl? Does she care about the boy's feelings?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you think of the boy? Does he love her? Is he jealous?</i></li> <li>• <i>Was the boy right to leave the girl at the football match? What would you have done?</i></li> <li>• <i>What would you say in reply to this letter?</i></li> <li>• <i>Does the same thing happen to girls that has happened to this boy? More often or less often? What should the girl do?</i></li> <li>• <i>What can we say about love from this letter?</i></li> </ul>
<b>Notes (educator only)</b>	<p>Maybe the girl was being selfish and did not realise that she was upsetting the boy or maybe she really does not care about the boy's feelings. It is also possible that the boy is easily jealous, so he is exaggerating. In many societies, boys and men grow up to believe that they should control their girlfriends. They get angry if they talk to other people, especially boys. The boy could reply to her note asking to meet so that they can discuss the issue together. If they cannot compromise, then they do not love each other enough.</p>

<b>Letter 4</b>	<p><i>Dear Auntie,</i></p> <p><i>My family is poor and my mother really has to struggle to send me to school. At school, I have met this boy who comes from a rich family. He has bought me food once or twice and he tells me that he really loves me. But he laughs at my clothes and when I told him that my mother sells buns in the morning to get the money for me to go and school, he laughed and ever since he has been calling me daughter of a bun. If I ask upset, he laughs even more. Do you think he really loves me?</i></p>
<b>Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do you think of the boy in this letter? Does he love the girl?</i></li> <li>• <i>Write a letter advising the girl.</i></li> <li>• <i>What can we say about love from this letter?</i></li> </ul>
<b>Notes (educator only)</b>	<p><i>The boy may have some feelings which are similar to love for this girl but he certainly does not have any respect, which is part of love. He is being unkind and insensitive. Maybe he is confusing sexual attraction for the girl with love.</i></p>

**Final discussion:**

*What is the most important aspect of love? What makes love last? If you feel attracted to someone, is it love? Why do you feel this?*



## Activity 35: Sexuality: the myths

### Purpose of the session

- to explore and clarify information about sex and sexuality
- to encourage children to talk about sex and sexuality

**Lifeskills:** Problem-solving, Critical thinking

### Important points

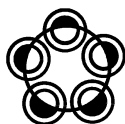
It may be useful to conduct the quiz separately with girls and boys but do not organise it so that it is a competition of girls against boys.

### Materials

- An even number of quiz questions (see ideas below)
- A large sheet of paper or flip chart
- A marker pen

### Steps

1. Explain that this activity is a quiz for two teams on knowledge of information about sex and sexuality.
2. Divide the children into two teams.
3. Reads a statement and give the two teams 2 minutes or so to discuss if it is:
  - *True*
  - *False; or*
  - *Sometimes true or false*and give a reason for their answer.
4. The teams take it in turns to answer the questions. If a team does not know the answer or does not give the correct reason for their answer, then the question is given to the other team.
5. A point is given for the right answer and good reasoning. Record the points on the paper.
6. If neither team gives the right answer and correct reason, share the correct information with the group. This can either be done as the quiz progresses or at the end.



## Ideas for a quiz

1. **Girls cannot ask pregnant before they have had their first period.** *False. The first period marks the end of the first menstrual cycle. Girls can ask pregnant during that first cycle.*
2. **Girls agree to sex with older men because they want men to give them money.** *Sometimes true and sometimes false. This may be true of some and not others. It is a stereotype. Stereotypes may be partly true but they are not helpful in understanding why individual people behave the way they do.*
3. **Girls wearing mini dresses or who put on a lot of makeup are asking to be raped.** *False. The rapist is responsible for his own decisions. He cannot justify his actions by blaming the person they rape. In any case, girls are often raped by someone they know so clothes and make up are irrelevant.*
4. **Girls who carry condoms are prostitutes.** *If a girl carries a condom because she thinks she may have sex, it means that she is thinking ahead and protecting herself. She is acting responsibly.*
5. **Girls are more likely to get HIV than boys.** *True. Girls are 5-6 times more likely to ask HIV than boys between the ages of 10 and 24.*
6. **Before a girl reaches 18, her sexual organs are not fully developed and can easily tear.** *The sexual organs of a girl are not fully developed before the age of 18. She therefore is in danger of tearing the lining of the vagina, which means she is more vulnerable to HIV.*
7. **When a girl says no, she really means yes.** *False. This is another stereotype. Men like to believe this because it gives them an excuse to ignore the women's wishes. Most girls say what they mean. Men and boys need to learn to accept a woman's wishes.*
8. **It is wrong for a girl to refuse a boy when he wants to make love.** *False. A girl always has the right to say no, just like a boy has the right to say no if a girl wants to make love. However, this may be the traditional custom in some cultures and it shows the inequality between men and women. It is a problem because girls often are brought up to be less assertive than boys.*
9. **You can't catch STD's from anal sex.** *False. Sexually transmitted infections can be transmitted from anal sex and this includes HIV.*
10. **If a girl accepts a boy's gifts or drinks, it means she has accepted to have sex with the man.** *False, it means she has accepted his gifts or drinks, nothing more. This stereotype treats sex as a business transaction.*
11. **Most boys exaggerate their sexual experiences when talking about them.** *True. Studies have shown that most boys tend to do this.*
12. **Girls want sex as much as boys, it is only that they fear to ask for it.** *True. In most cultures, girls are brought up to be less assertive and open about their sexual feelings than boys.*
13. **Boys should have sex before marriage so that they know what to do but girls should be virgins at marriage.** *False, there is no reason for this. It is another stereotype.*
14. **If a boy or man does not have sex, his penis shrinks and he begins to suffer from backache.** *False. This is a myth which is used by men to justify their demands for sex.*
15. **Clean people do not get Sexually Transmitted Infections.** *False. Anyone can get STI's if they have unprotected sex (no condom).*
16. **A boy cannot be raped, only a girl can.** *False. Boys and men can also be raped. They can be forced to have sex against their will..*
17. **A boy should not say, 'No' to a girl who has shown she wants to have sex. It is cowardly.** *False. It is never cowardly to act on one's own principles. Doing something just because of what others say is being cowardly.*

## Activity 36

### Sexuality: bad touch

#### Purpose of activity

- To help children understand unwanted sexual actions
- To discuss the types of people and places where 'bad touch' can occur
- To find information on the law relating to sexual abuse

**Lifeskills:** Problem-solving, Critical thinking, Self-awareness, Empathy  
Coping with Stress & Emotion

#### Important points

In this activity, the phrase 'bad touch' is used to mean sexual abuse or any sexual touch or advance on a child.

As your group may include a child who has been sexually abused, before this session, make sure that support (such as counselling) is available. Think about how you will cope if a child tells you they have been or are being sexually abused (see the section at the beginning of the handbook on confidentiality). This is called **disclosure**. Does the assistance programme have procedures for dealing with this? If a child tells you something but asks you before or after the discussion that s/he wants you to keep it secret, what would you do? How will you cope with the knowledge that people have or are abusing children under your guidance?

There are no easy answers to these questions but make sure that you have thought about them and discussed them with other staff and managers BEFORE conducting the session. If any children in the groups are known to be victims of sexual abuse, talk to them first about the session; ask them if they want to discuss the subject with others. Respect their right to be silent or absent from the session. It may be useful to do this session in single sex groups and in two parts.

#### Children's rights

It may be useful to conduct **Activity 24** on *Rights and Responsibilities* before this activity.

#### Materials

- Puppets (three puppets: an adult, a child and an 'advocate' puppet)
- Body maps on large sheets of paper
- The educators demonstration body map
- Coloured pens or crayons
- Picture cards

#### Preparation

- Prepare the introductory puppet show. Adapt this to the probable experiences of the children.
- Draw 'body maps' (a child-size outline of a body - front and back) onto sheets of paper. Enough for one per group of four children plus one extra.

- Find out about national and international laws on sexual abuse and the relevant parts of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
- Prepare the advocate puppet's explanation.
- Draw or paste picture cards with settings familiar to the children (market, under a bridge, a shop front, etc)

### Steps

1. Explain the subject of the session. Refer back to Activity 24 on children's rights and talk about a child's right to protection.
2. Using puppets, present a situation where a child is befriended by an adult who is giving them food and letting them stay in their home. This adult then starts to sexually abuse the child.
3. Discuss with the children if this kind of abuse ever occurs.
4. Ask children to form groups of four and give each group a body map and a coloured pen. Children are asked to mark:
  - Parts of the body where they would not like to be touched by someone without their permission; or
  - Parts where they have been touched which made them feel uncomfortable
 Explain that both of these are forms of bad touch.
5. If they want to, children can then show their body maps with one other group or with the whole group.

### You can have a break here

6. Using the picture cards, discuss:
  - where can bad touch happen?
  - who does bad touch?
7. Using one of these settings children act out a role play which shows adults approaching children with the aim of bad touching.
8. The groups present their drama. Encourage children to think and discuss how the abuse makes children feel and behave.
9. Using the advocate puppet the educator explains that all forms of sexual abuse against children is unacceptable in society and most are illegal in most countries.
10. If you have already done **Activity 22: Saying NO** and **Activity 23: Fight or Flight**, it may be appropriate for the advocate puppet to remind children what they can do if they have been or are being abused. For example:
  - tell an adult whom they trust;
  - shout No or FIRE if someone approaches from the street; or
  - run away.

### Follow up activities

If sexual abuse is a significant problem for the group, you can do further work on preventative and protective measures. Other activities which may help with this follow up include:

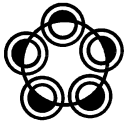
- *Activity 22: Communication: Saying No'*
- *Activity 23: Communication: Fight and flight*
- *Activities 49-53 on Coping with emotions*

The children can develop a safety chart such as the one below



### Four rules for safety

1. **Check first** with an adult or older child whom I know and trust before going anywhere with someone I don't know well.
2. When going to different places I try to be in the **company** of others I know and trust
3. **I say NO** if someone tries to touch me in a way which makes me feel uncomfortable, frightened or confused. Then I go to tell an adult I trust what happened
4. **I listen to my feelings** and talk to adults about problems that are confusing



## Activity 37

### Sexuality: fleet of hope

#### Purpose of activity

- To discuss and explore sexual behaviour linked to HIV/AIDS with a focus on transmission of the virus through sexual intercourse (80% of cases).
- To clarify the **choices** available to each of us.
- To help children's ability to adopt and maintain safer sexual behaviour

**Lifeskills:** Decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication & interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, empathy, coping with stress & emotion

#### Important points

This is a powerful activity which develops all lifeskills. We have provided *in italics* guidelines on what the educator should say to help ensure that the learning points are clear. In order for this activity to be effective, children should be able to imagine a flood, a boat and an island. (It may not be such a good image in places where there is little experience of boats, a river, a lake or the sea or in areas near the sea where recent traumatic events have happened like the tsunami.) You may need to do a preparatory exercise to help with this using pictures from magazines. You may also want to make time to do Activity 36 afterwards or in the next session.

Arrange the training area so that everyone can sit around the cloth or drawing representing the flood on the ground in the middle of the area. If this is not practical, hang the cloth or paper up on a wall or tree.

Think carefully about how long this activity will take with your group. You may want to divide the activity into two or three sessions. (This activity is adapted from a series of activities developed by Bernard Joinet and Peter Labouchere. Further information on this work can be found here: <http://www.bridgesofhope.info> )

#### Materials

- A piece of blue material/card/paper with three colourful boats either sewn or drawn on it. Cloth or paper pockets for those who are in the water.
- A cut out picture of a crocodile or monster (see below)
- 25 or more cut-out card characters representative of different types of people in the local community. There should be a mix of age, sex, job, and status. You can cut out pictures from magazines and stick them or draw them onto card.
  - One of the characters should be a young man dressed in fashionable clothes.
  - Others should include\* a pregnant woman, a businessman and a woman with a baby on her back.
  - An island
- At least one blank sheet of paper or card for each child
- Pens
- Sticky tape or blu-tack

## Steps

### 1. Introduction

*This is a story about a serious flood and how people in one community dealt with it. I will start the story, and then we will all develop it.*

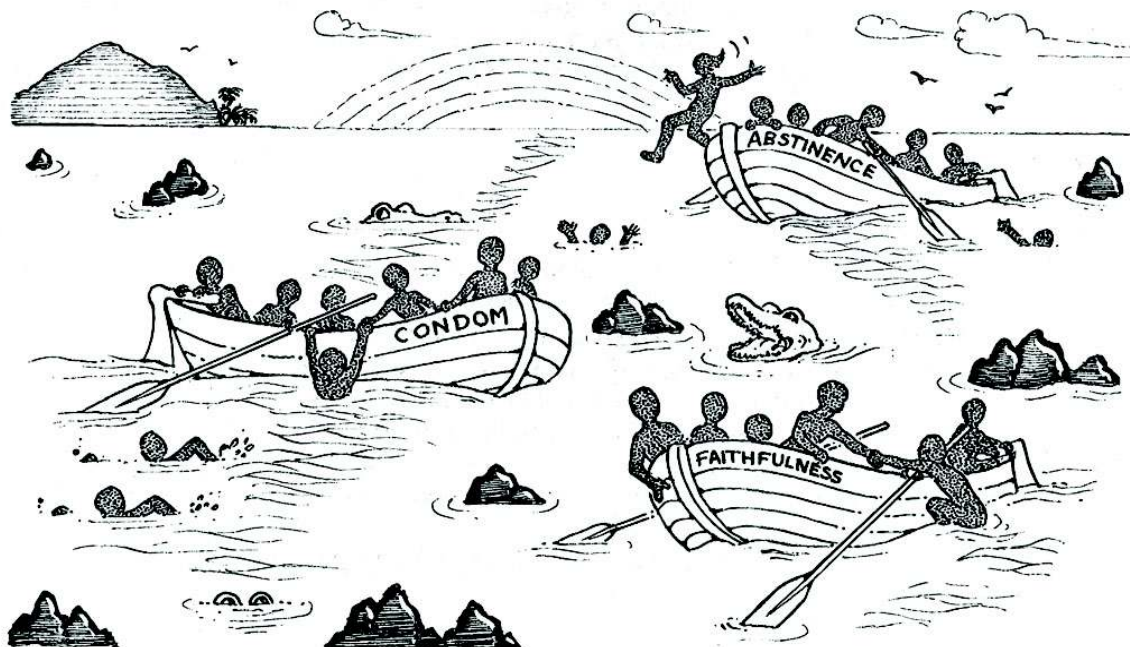
*The waters of this flood have been rising for several years, flooding houses, villages, towns and whole countries. And the flood is still rising. (Lay the sheet on the ground). This is the flood, and in this flood, there may be some hidden dangers (Put the crocodile on the sheet). This is a dangerous flood. It is the flood of HIV and AIDS.*

*At the beginning, people do not notice the flood coming. When they notice it, they do not know what caused it. Some people climb onto the roof of their house, or move to higher ground to escape the flood. But the flood waters keep rising.*

- *How can you escape from a flood...? (Answer: On a boat.)*

*There are three different boats available for people to escape the flood called*

- *Abstinence*
- *Faithfulness; and*
- *Condom.*



2. Discuss what each of these means. Label each of the three boat with these word or with more common words and phrases used by the children.
3. Continue the story...

*Each person in the community can choose which boat they want to get on, depending on their culture, religion, character and way of life. Different people climb onto each of the three boats. The boats stay close together so that it is possible to change safely to another boat.*

*Some people are swimming in the flood water. Some did not notice the flood coming until it was too late. Others saw the flood waters coming, but found it very hard to leave their way of life and change their life, so the flood caught them. Some are trying hard to climb back onto the boats.*

4. Ask the children which boat would they choose?

Go over the three choices:

- Abstinence
- Faithfulness; and
- Condom

Children should be encouraged to choose the boat that suits them (remind them that they can change boats later). The important thing is to stay on the boats. For example, some people, even those with strong religious beliefs, find it hard to stay on the Abstinence and Faithfulness boats all the time. If they are not clear that the Condom boat is available, they may feel forced into the water which is dangerous.

### You can have a break here

5. If children are unclear about the ways HIV and AIDS are transmitted add this game: place two cardboard characters, one male and one female into the abstinence boat. Explain that they met each other recently but they are now on the Abstinence boat. Ask them: *If the following things happen, will these people stay safely on their boat or will they land up in the water?*
- *They share cutlery* (totally safe)
  - *They hold hands / hug each other* (totally safe)
  - *They kiss* (totally safe, unless they both have bleeding sores on their mouths)
  - *A traditional healer cuts tattoos in them and several other people, one after another using the same knife* (very risky – into the water)
  - *A mosquito bites both of them* (totally safe)
  - *They have sex using a condom* (onto the condom boat – very safe. 99% safe if used properly)
  - *They have unprotected sex* (very risky – into the water, maybe head first, so just their feet are left sticking out – this adds humour and impact)

Take the cardboard character of the pregnant woman and/or the woman with a baby on her back. Ask: *If this woman is living with HIV/AIDS, what does this mean for her baby?* (approximately two in three chance of baby being HIV negative, even if the mother has the HIV virus during pregnancy.)

### You can have another break here

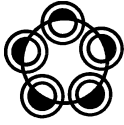
6. Introduce some of the people in the community. Give each of children one of the cut out characters (except for the fashionably dressed young man). Try to give each child a figure that is very different from them.
7. Ask children to introduce their character, to give them a name and to tell their story, and then to place them either in one of the three boats, or in the water. Ask children to say why they have put them there.
- *What are the issues facing that character to do with staying on or getting onto one of the boats?*
  - *How can we help this person to deal with issues/problems they are facing?*
8. Explain why some people change boats.

### Example

*(Show a cardboard character who looks like a businessman.) This businessman has a faithful relationship with his wife and goes away on a business trip. He gets on the Abstinence boat. After a week away, he meets a pretty woman. If he decides to have sex with her, he must get on the Condom boat, otherwise he will take a dive into the water.*

*If you cannot face staying on the boat you are on, change boats. Just stay out of the water.*

Using these characters, the discussion can develop in many directions, covering a range of different issues related to HIV and AIDS.



## Activity 38

### Sexuality: islands of the future

#### Purpose of activity

- To help children imagine a positive future
- To create an island of the future which shows how they want their life to be
- To identify the choices and first steps they need to make to achieve this.

**Lifeskills:** Creative thinking, self awareness, decision-making, problem-solving

**Important points:** People work towards the future they want for themselves. Our behaviour tends to direct us towards what we focus on most. That is why it is important to identify and focus on what we do want and not just on what we want to avoid. In this activity, the children use a technique called visualisation. This using the imagination which works best in a relaxed environment, so help the children to relax. You can do this by softening your voice and slowing the pace.

#### Materials

Some materials as for previous activity plus drawings or cut-out pictures of: *A football stadium, A footballer, A nice house.*

1. Remind everyone of the Fleet of Hope activity and ask:
  - *What will help people who are in the water to climb back onto one of the boats?*
  - *What will help those who are already on the boats to stay on the boats?*Have a discussion about this.
2. Give an example of an island of the future using the cardboard characters showing the fashionably dressed young man.

*This is Kofi. Kofi is handsome and witty. He asks on well with a group of friends with whom he plays football for his local team. He is unemployed, and jobs are very hard to find. He sees no real future for himself. He is on the Condom boat. It is hot and boring and the boats seem to be going nowhere. Kofi sees some friends of his playing together in the water. It looks far more fun and refreshing in the water – better than ‘eating a banana with the skin on’ (a phrase that means sex is better without a condom). Kofi knows that the water is dangerous, but he has heard the condom boat may leak occasionally so it is not 100% safe. Then he thinks he may as well risk it and he prepare to dive in.*

As you tell the next part of Kofi’s story, use your voice to show Kofi’s emotions to show the excitement that Kofi might feel when he scores that winning goal.

*Kofi is about to throw himself into the water when he looks up and notices an island far away. [Put the island in the top right hand corner of the sheet]. He looks closer, and there on the island is a large football stadium. [Put the picture of the football stadium on the island] He recognises it to be the Osu national stadium. His favourite Premier Division football team is playing in the stadium. Then he sees that it is actually him on the football pitch, playing as part of the team. [Put the picture of the football player on the stadium]. He can taste the sweat pouring down his forehead. He runs forward and scores the winning goal. He hears the crowd going wild with joy. His friends are waving and cheering. He*

*feels totally exhilarated. He leaves the stadium eating a juicy and refreshing slice of pineapple, and walks to his home. [Put the picture of the house on the island]. As he approaches, his young son runs out to greet him, and gives him a big hug.*

*Kofi sees that on his island of the future, he is married with healthy children. He goes inside his house and he embraces his wife, he can smell the perfume she is wearing. Life feels wonderful.*

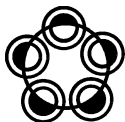
*Then Kofi looks back down at the water. With this beautiful island of his future in mind, the idea of going swimming now seems crazy, and far too risky. He is determined to stay safely on the three boats and direct them purposefully towards his island.*

*Then Kofi turned to his friend [pick out a female character] and said to her excitedly, 'Look over there. It's a beautiful island. Osu football stadium is in the middle of it, and I am there playing for my Premier division team. I have just scored the winning goal'. 'But I don't like football', said the woman. 'That is my future island,' said Kofi. 'Your island of the future will be different. It is yours.'*

3. Create your own island of the future. (For the rest of this section, speak with a relaxed, softer voice, with pauses between sentences.)

*I wonder what your future island is like. Sit back, relax and imagine what your future island might be like. Close your eyes so that you can see it in your mind. Your island of the future is how you would like things to be at some point in the future. Choose a time, maybe one, 2 or 3 years from now. What does the island look like? Imagine arriving safely, getting out of your boat and walking up on to the island. You are there on your island. Who is there with you? What do you find on the island? What sounds can you hear? What can you smell? Maybe there are some things you can taste to drink or eat. How do you feel? What are you doing on your future island? What skills and capabilities do you have? How would you describe yourself? Who are you on this island? For a few minutes, relax and imagine what it is like being on your future island. When you are ready, take a bit of paper and a pen and create a drawing of your future island with you there on it.*

4. After 5 minutes of silent visualization, ask the children to open their eyes again. Give them paper, pens, scissors, so children can create a presentation of their own future islands. Give enough time to do this (at least 20 minutes and more is better). You could have a special session to make the future islands.
5. Place the islands around Kofi's island.
6. Tell the children  
*Look again at your own island and imagine once more how good it is to be on that island. Then come back to the present and ask yourself: How will I get to my future island? Which boats shall I choose to start the journey on? What is the first thing I need to do now to start moving towards my future island? Just think about these questions for yourself, so that you find your own answers. [Do not ask the children to give their answers to the group.*
7. If appropriate, children can take their future island with them to remind them what it is like. They can add to and change their island if they want.



## Activity 39

### Behaviour that hurts: what makes me angry?

**Purpose of activity:** To help children understand how anger begins.

**Life skills:** Self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, coping with stress and emotion, communication and inter-personal relationships.

**Important points**

What makes people angry differs from person to person. People need to understand what makes them angry and can learn to control their anger.

#### Materials

- Large sheets of paper
- Marker pens or crayons

#### Steps

1. Divide group into groups of five or six.
2. Ask each group to sit in a circle. Begin the activity by saying the phrase... '*Mr Nje gets angry when someone calls him stupid names*'. Ask one child in the circle to repeat this phrase and add another reason why Mr Nje gets angry. The next child in the circle repeats these two and adds another and so on until all the children in the circle have added a reason. (This is an adaptation of a memory game!).  
*Other 'anger' ideas are:*
  - *when someone shouts at him*
  - *when someone steals something from him*
  - *when people ignore him*
  - *when someone pushes into him on the*
  - *when he is hungry and has no money for food*
3. Ask children to think back to the last time they got angry. IN pairs, ask them to describe this to a friend without saying names and without saying what happened when they got angry, like this: *I got angry yesterday when someone pointed at me and laughed at my clothes.*
4. Ask each child to describe their partner's reason for getting angry. Write these on a flip chart. If an idea is repeated, do not write it twice but put a tick next to the first reason.
5. Ask children to think of the two reasons that that mad them the angriest. Each child comes up to the list and (with the help of the educator if necessary), places a tick beside each of their two top reasons.



### **What makes me angry?**

Examples from a group of children in Delhi...

*When I cannot sell my coconuts ✓*

*When my mum hits me ✓✓*

*When I don't have time to play, as I have to spend all my time working ✓✓*

*When I have too much work ✓✓✓*

*When someone beats you ✓✓✓✓✓*

*When someone harasses us while we are working ✓✓*


*When someone teases you or uses bad language ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓*

*When I don't want to work but I have to ✓*

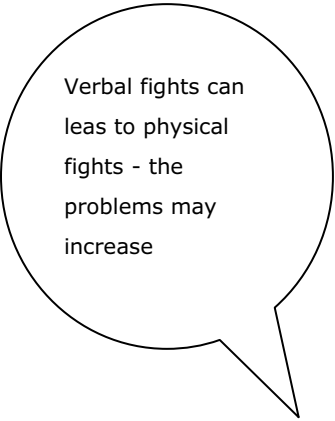
*When someone steals the materials we have collected for selling ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓*

### **Final discussion:**

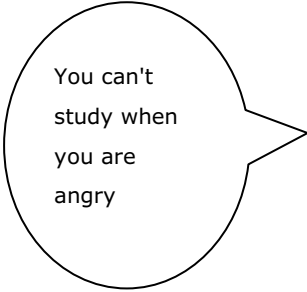
*Is there anyone that does not get angry? Can you solve problems well when you are angry? What is good about being angry? What is bad about it?*



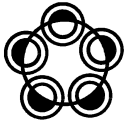
We have less control over what we are doing



Verbal fights can lead to physical fights - the problems may increase



You can't study when you are angry



## Activity 40

### Behaviour that Hurts: What happens to us when we get angry?

**Purpose of activity:** To become aware of our physical reactions when we get angry and how anger might be controlled.

**Life skills:** problem-solving, creative thinking

**Important points:** Do Activity 39: What makes me get angry? before this activity.

#### Materials

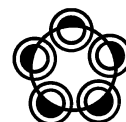
- None

#### Steps

1. In pairs, children select one idea from the list they made in Activity 43: *What makes me get angry?* In pairs, children act out one of these situations.
2. In the whole group, ask the children to say what happens to their bodies when they get angry (these responses are different for everybody and in different situations).
  - *shouting*
  - *head pulses*
  - *stomach aches*
  - *clenching the fists*
  - *frown*
  - *face turns red*
  - *crying*
  - *feeling scared*
3. In the whole group ask children to say what people might do when they angry.
  - *hit someone*
  - *throw something*
  - *shout sounds*
  - *shout insults (which they may later regret)*
4. In pairs, the children make two short role-plays from one of the situations identified in the Activity 43. In the first role-play, shows how things quickly go from bad to worse when someone asks angry. The second shows how the person controlled their anger.  
For example by:
  - *walking away*
  - *reasoning*
  - *ignoring*
  - *getting someone else to help*
5. The pairs perform their plays. After each, the whole group can comment on how the anger was controlled.

#### Final discussion:

*In an argument, is one person always more to blame than the other? Can you do something about your anger in the same way each time?*



## Activity 41

### Behaviour which hurts: helping to resolve a conflict

**Purpose of activity:** To explore how to help as a go-between in a conflict.

**Life skills:** problem-solving, creative thinking, empathy

**Important points**

It would be helpful to do Activities 39: What make me angry? and Activity 40: What happens to us when we get angry? before this activity.

#### Materials

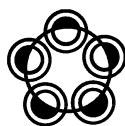
- None

#### Steps

1. Remind the children of the discussions they have had in Activities 43 and 44. Explain that sometimes it is hard to sort out conflict or arguments, for example when:
  - All people in the argument think they are right and will not back down
  - If one side is not telling the truth
  - If one or other or both are VERY angryWhen this is the case, someone may be needed to act as a go-between: this is someone who negotiates between people in an argument.
2. Ask children to give examples of when this has happened. Discuss who helped and how - teachers? friends? relatives?
3. Divide children into groups of three or four and ask them to do a role-play either around a situation known to them or an example from Activity 43 or 44. In this role-play, the problem is not resolved so another person is called in to help. The groups have to decide who this person is.
4. Children perform the role-plays and after each, the whole group comments on how this extra person helped solve the argument (for example by calming everyone down, by suggesting a compromise or an alternative that no-one had thought of.)

#### Final discussion:

*How can a go-between help sort out an argument. Is it good to be a go-between? Why/why not? Have you ever been a go-between?*



## Activity 42

### Behaviour which hurts: spiralling into trouble

**Purpose of activity:** To show how a small step into criminal activity can lead to bigger Problems.

**Lifeskills:** Problem-solving, Critical thinking

**Important points**

In the lifeskills activities, it is important to address children's existing anti-social behaviour where it exists and to try to help them break the cycle of this behaviour.

**Materials**

- Picture cards showing common crimes

**Steps**

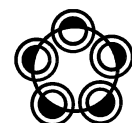
1. Introduce the activity to the children. Use words appropriate to your group. If you are working with children who are involved in crime, you will need to do several sessions to help children look at all the aspects that support this behaviour and to help them to break the cycle. The important points to make include the following:
  - *every crime is a choice to do something wrong*
  - *even if you think you have no choice, you have*
  - *small crimes often lead to bigger crimes*
  - *crimes hurt people*
  - *the person who will be most hurt by your crime is you.*
2. In groups, ask the children to look at the pictures. Ask the children to tell you what each picture represents.
3. Ask children to sort the cards in order of seriousness starting with the least serious and building up to the most serious.
4. The first group presents their order and the other groups show where they have put the cards in a different order and why. Try to achieve an order with which the whole group agree. In the whole group and looking at the picture cards, ask who is hurt as a result of each crime.
5. Ask the children to select several picture cards and make them into a story where a small crime spiralled out of control into a much bigger and more serious crime.

**Final discussion:**

How many of these have been done by people you know? What other crimes are done by people you know? Why do you think children start to commit crimes?

- *they need money, drugs*
- *they are being pressured by other children or adults*
- *they have to survive and have nothing to eat*
- *they have no guilt and find it exciting and fun*

*What can children do to meet these needs and avoid crime? Try to smoke less and spend money on good food, say NO when they are under pressure, find other exciting but safe ways to pass the time.*





**Follow up:** Children can create role plays from the stories created in step 6. These can be presented and discussed.

## Activity 43

### Discrimination: gender roles in society and in the group

#### Purpose of the session

- Explore gender roles in society and in the group
- To assess how we feel about these roles
- To think about how children in the group face inequalities in their own lives and how they might deal with this.

**Lifeskills:** Empathy, communication & interpersonal relationships

#### Important Points

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* states clearly that all children have equal rights. For example, all children may need to help or to do some work, but if work is divided so that it discriminates against girls, this is wrong. Girls are often expected to do more work and this deprives them of equal opportunities to study and do well in school and can lead to illness. Division of labour should not affect the physical, mental, social and spiritual development of either the girls or the boys.

#### Materials

- Numbers or labels for the chairs
- Five chairs

#### Steps

1. Set out five chairs and either number them or label them as follows

5	4	3	2	1
<i>fully agree</i>	agree	in-between	disagree	Strongly disagree

Make sure that the children understand what the labels or numbers mean.

2. Read out this story

*When Ali comes back from school, his sister Ayesha, helps weed the garden then helps cook the evening meal. After the meal, she washes the dishes. Ali helps with weeding the garden after which he does some work for his lessons.*

3. Now read out a series of statements. Ask the children to stand behind the chair that corresponds to their answer.
  - *Boys are stronger than girls.*
  - *Cooking is a girl's job.*
  - *Girls don't have time to study because of the housework they do.*
  - *Girls wake up before boys.*
  - *In lessons, girls do more work than boys.*

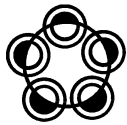
- *Boys do better in lessons because they are more intelligent than girls.*
  - *These days, boys and girls sharing housework.*
- (add others or adapt the above to suit the group)

The educator keeps a record of the boy's answers and girl's answers to each question. Ask selected children to give reason for their responses after each statement.

4. Separate the girls and boys into two groups. Ask each group to discuss
  - *Are there things which boys do which girls do not do? Why is this?*
  - *Are there things which girls do which boys do not do? Why is this?*
  - *Should we try to make the opposite sex respect our roles and share our responsibilities? How can we do this?*
5. Ask each group to feedback their answers. There may be several issues coming out of this activity that need further work.

### **Final Discussion**

- *What do you think about this situation?*
- *How did you feel when you were watching the mini drama? Why?*
- *What do our feelings show us about how we view the roles of men and women in society?*



### **Follow up**

Groups can present aspects of their discussion through role plays.

### **Role play**

An interesting activity is to ask children to act out a reverse role-play such as the one below...

*Mr Okello is busy cleaning the house. He is carrying a baby on his back and a small child is pulling at his legs wanting something. He is obviously tired but dinner is also cooking on the fire. He talks about his problems as he works, that there may not be enough food when his wife comes home from work. After he has sorted out his problems his wife returns. She is a little drunk and is angry that dinner is not ready. The children hide behind their father.*



## Activity 44

### Discrimination: coping with discrimination

#### Purpose of activity

- To understand what it feels like to be left out from a group.
- To be aware of people or groups who are left out in society

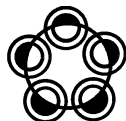
**Lifeskills:** Critical thinking, Empathy

#### Materials

- Sets of stickers in three colours – or bits of coloured paper and pins. There should be enough of each colour for one third of the children in the group.

#### Steps

1. Tell the children that in this game, they will greet everyone differently according to the colour of the sticker placed on their shirt at the back (or a sticker on their forehead!).
2. Each child has one of three colour stickers placed on the back of their shirt (or forehead). They don't know which colour they have. They must not tell each other what colour they have or it will spoil the game!
3. Tell the children that they can move around the room and greet each other in the following way:
  - **Green** sticker - *greet this person as if they are very important to you and who you haven't seen for a long time. You are VERY happy to see them and greet them warmly.*
  - **Yellow** sticker - *greet this person as if they are someone you pass everyday. You greet them but it is not a big greeting*
  - **Red** sticker - *this is someone you do not want to see or greet. Try to avoid them but if you must greet them, do so coldly and try to get away quickly.*
4. Children move around the room and make their greetings for 5-10 mins.
5. Now the children can look at their sticker and form groups according to their colour. The groups discuss what happened in the activity and what it felt like.
6. Mix the groups so that there are some of each colour in each group. These groups discuss:
  - *What did it feel like to have the red, yellow or green stickers?*
  - *Are there any people in society whom society does not like or leave out? (For example, people whose skin is a different colour people who have a disability, people who have HIV, women, people who are homosexual, people of a different religion)? Why?*
  - *How do you think those people feel when they are left out?*
  - *How can we help make those people feel more included?*
7. Each group presents their key points.





## Part Three: Our future

The topics and activities in Part Three are looking forward. After the topics are finished, educators can continue developing the life skills work in response to the needs of the children. It may be useful to start sessions from this part with a reminder session on Ground Rules.

### Activity 45

#### Goal Setting: returning to the tree of life

**Purpose of activity:** To develop children's self-awareness about their present lives.

**Life skills:** self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking

#### Important points

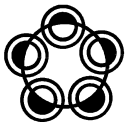
This activity is a repeat of Activity 2. The children now should have better communication skills and more experience in dealing with abstract concepts and with expressing their feelings.

#### Materials

- One copy of the tree and a figure picture for each child or
- A drawing of the tree and figures on a large poster
- Small sheets of paper (at least one per child)
- Pencils or pens
- A large poster of a tree without figures.

#### Steps

1. If you have done this activity already from Part 1, remind the children of the session and ask them what they remember.
2. Follow the same steps as in Activity 2.
3. Show the children the tree picture and explain that the tree represents life and all the figures on the tree are people at different stages of their lives. They are doing different things for different reasons.
4. Final discussion. *Which figure did you choose? Why? Were you happy to choose a figure? Why/Why not? Were there other figures you thought were like you? If they have done the activity before, add do you remember the figure you chose to do the first time we did this activity? Did you choose the same or a different figure today? Why or why not?*



## Activity 46

### Goal Setting: Setting short term goals

#### Purposes of activity

- To understand the meaning and importance of goals
- To practice setting short-term goals

**Life skills:** Creative thinking, critical thinking

#### Important points

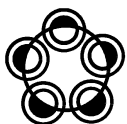
Long-term goals refer to goals that it will take a long time to achieve, for example, further education, getting a good job, building a house etc. Short-term goals are those that can be achieved in a short time like winning the next football match, passing a test, smoking one less cigarette each day.

#### Materials

- a large piece of paper, flip chart paper, or a blackboard

#### Steps

1. Write the word goal or draw a football goal.
2. Explain to children that you are using the word goal to describe something we want to achieve in life, for example:
  - *something you want to do*
  - *somewhere to go*
  - *something you want to have.*
3. Ask children to name a goal. If it is a short-term goal, tell them to go to the right of the room. If it is a long-term goal, tell them to go to other side of the room.
4. When they have all been divided, ask if anyone can see a reason why some children are on the left and others are on the right. If they cannot guess, explain.
5. Still in the two groups, each child says why they think their goal is short term or long term.
6. Write down their goal for the next session (Activity 51)



## Activity 47

### Goal Setting: reaching the goal

**Purpose of activity:** To practice setting and accomplishing short-term goals

**Life skills:** Creative thinking, critical thinking

#### Important points

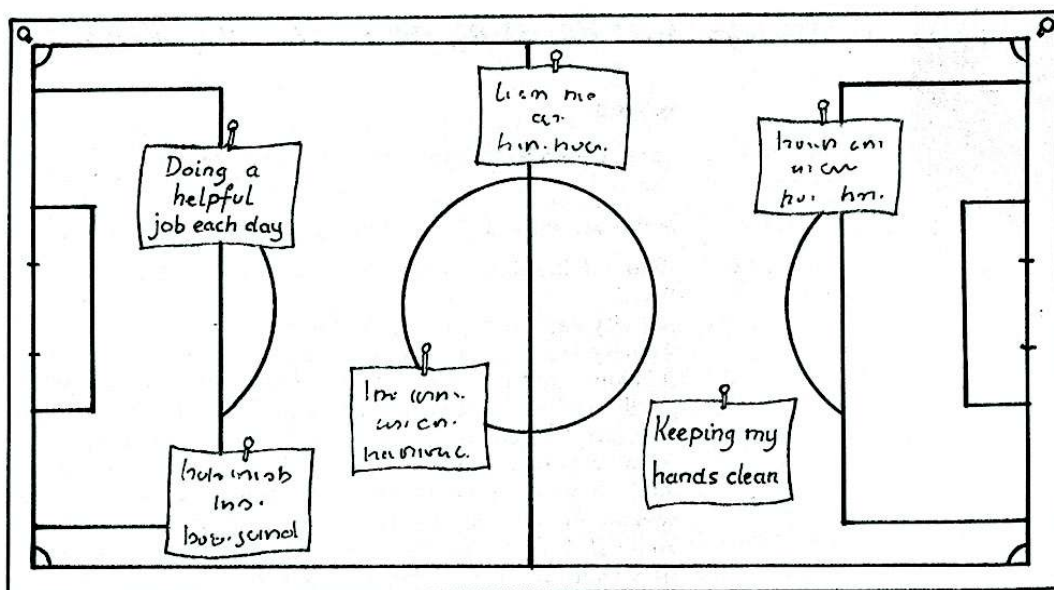
Link this activity with Goal-Setting/Activity 2 on *Setting short-term Goals*. Setting goals is a useful skill to have especially when life is confusing or difficult. This is also the most difficult time to set goals! Educators need to encourage children to help each other set goals.

#### Materials

- Poster of a football pitch
- Strips of paper for all the children.

#### Steps

1. Put the poster of the football pitch where everyone can see it.
2. Ask children to write or draw one short-term goal on the card (something to achieve before the next meeting). Depending on the age or stage of the child, these can be small or medium goals. For example:
  - *keeping my hands clean*
  - *saying something good about my life to my friend every day*
  - *controlling my anger for one week*
  - *doing something helpful at the centre once per day*
  - *giving up smoking for one week*
3. Children then find a friend and discuss their goal. If they want to, they can change it.
4. Each child then sticks or places their goal onto the football pitch near the centre.



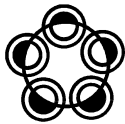
5. Explain that in the next meeting they will show if they have:

- not met their goal,
- partly met their goal
- fully met their goal or not, or to what extent.

Then they can move their cards closer to or into the goal.

### **Final discussion**

- *How would a time out be useful in real life?* (a time out is used in basket ball: it is a short period of time during the play when the teams can stop to discuss tactics). *How could you gain time outs for yourself?* (When you are under pressure to do something, you could ask for more time to think about it or to complete it.)
- *In most games, there are fouls and penalties. What are the fouls in your real life?* (Things that stop you reaching the goal: getting sick; getting into trouble, getting drunk).
- *What happens when a sports-person tries and fails to score a goal?* (Try harder, more team-work, become frustrated, try a new position etc.
- *Have you ever thought having goals before? Is it useful to set goals? Why/why not*
- *When is it useful to set goals?*
- *Can you help others set goals? When is a good time to do this?*



## Activity 48

### A Stronger Me: resisting pressure using SWISH!

**Purpose of activity:** To practice a technique to help to resist pressure to take risks

**Life skills:** self-awareness, problem-solving

#### Important points

Before doing this activity, repeat these two activities from Activity 25: Identifying our problems and Activity 28: Practising making decisions.

It is important to focus on real problems and decisions that children face. Ask colleagues to help you with this session so that the children have more adult guidance. Children can make their own problem charts and discuss them with an adult they like and trust, and then come back to the next session with ideas on how this activity has helped them.

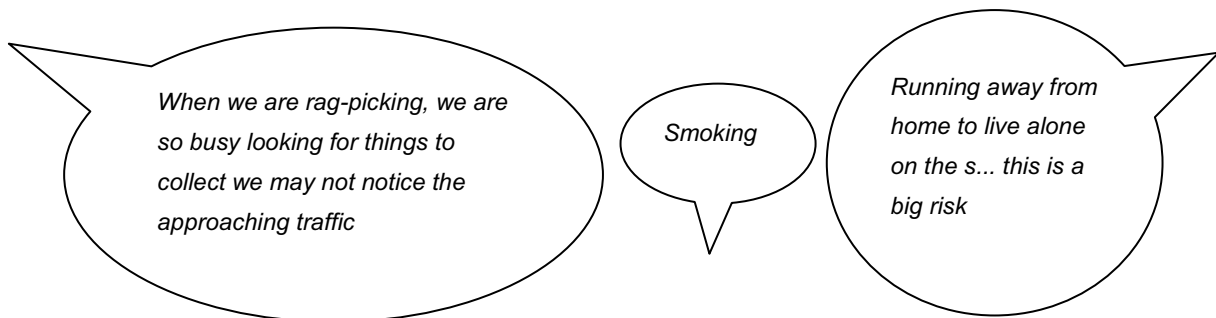
To resist risk-taking behaviour, children must be sure that they want to say NO. They must know the benefits of refusing and the alternatives or choices they have. Puppets can be used to introduce the activity.

#### Materials

- Puppets if used.

#### Steps

1. Explain that this lifeskills session is about the dangers of taking risks. Give an example of the kind of risks that children in the group may take. If you have already done activity 26, you can use some of the risks the children identified. Some people enjoy taking risks and others are more cautious.
2. Ask children to give examples of the types of risks they take. Here are some examples from a group of children in India who did this activity:



3. Ask children to think **when** they may take risks, for example drinking a lot of alcohol:
  - *Is it at a certain time of day when they are most lonely/down?*
  - *Is it at a certain time of the year (birthdays, religious festivals)?*
  - *Is it when they are with certain people?*
4. Ask the children to discuss in pairs or groups:
  - *What risk do I sometimes take?*
  - *Do I want to take this risk?*
  - *What will happen if I say NO to the risk?*
  - *What can I do instead of taking this risk?*

5. Explain that saying no to the risky behaviour, they will be stronger.
6. In pairs, the children to say to each other:
  - *I am stronger because...*
  - *and because of this, I don't want to...*
  - *Instead, I want to...*
7. Encourage the children to say these sentences out loud.

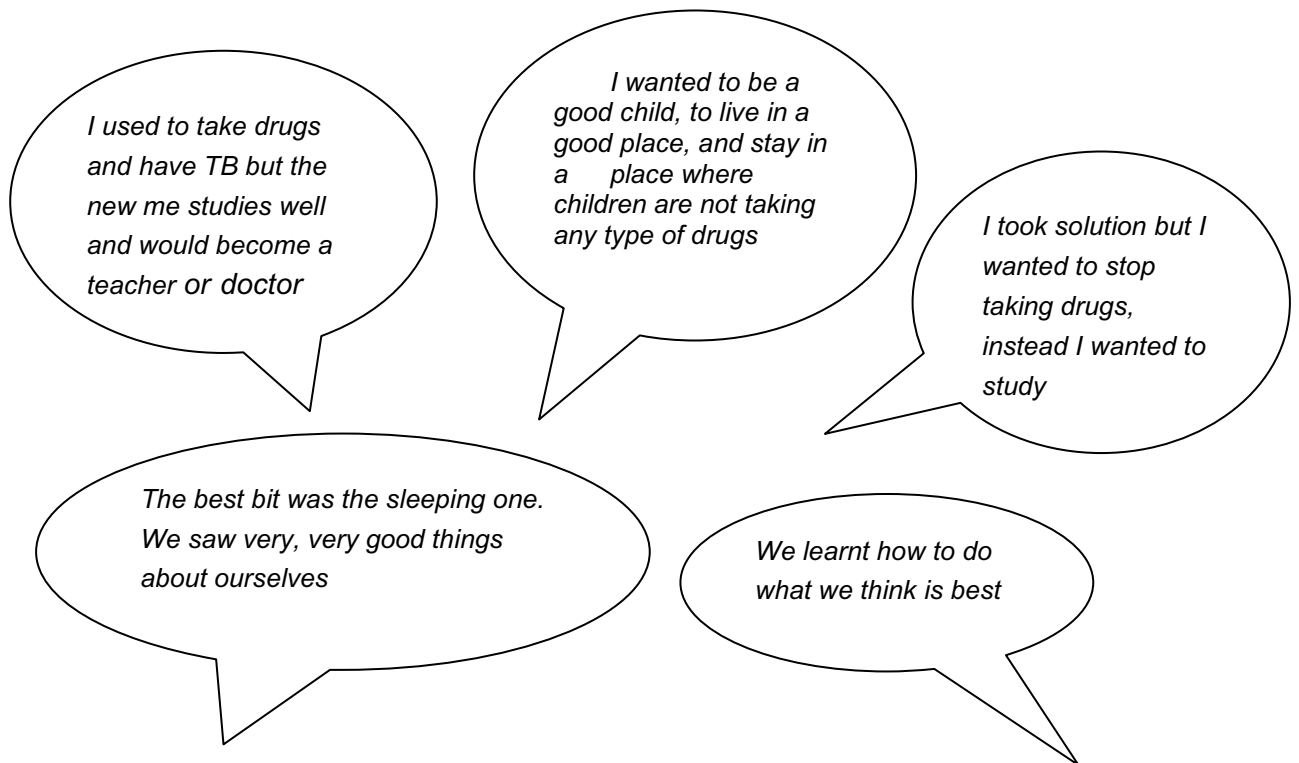
### **You can have a break here**

8. Ask children to lie down and close their eyes, and to visualise (imagine) the following:
  - *Imagine yourself taking that risk.*
  - *Imagine that picture of yourself going further and further into the distance until it is a small dot.*
  - *Imagine from that small dot a bright picture of a new strong you coming back towards you.*

*For example: Segei imagined himself coughing and looking grey smoking a cigarette. The picture disappeared into a dot in the distance and coming back he saw a picture of himself looking fit and strong, without a cigarette and with lots of people admiring him!*
9. Explain that this technique is called a *SWISH* because as you practice doing this you can do it faster and faster and imagine a *SWISH* noise. Every time you feel like taking the risk, do the *SWISH* pattern and this will help you to be strong.

### **Final discussion**

*Do you think you will try to use SWISH?* Here are some comments from children who used *SWISH* for the first time...



## Activity 49

### A Stronger Me: preparing for the unexpected

**Purpose of activity:** To identify possible obstacles/problems that make it difficult to reach long term goals.

**Life skills:** Problem-solving, Critical thinking, Self-awareness

**Important points**

It is useful for this activity to refer back to the Activity 4: Timeline

#### Materials

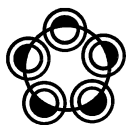
- One piece of card or folded paper per child with one of the following changes to the future statements written on them. Adapt these to suit the needs of the group.

#### Changes to the Future

- *You were selected to go to college*
- *A friend or relative you love, died*
- *You decided to leave school and look for a job*
- *You had an accident and lost your leg*
- *You got a sexually transmitted disease*
- *You won a scholarship to go abroad*
- *You set up your own business/farm*
- *You found out that you can't have children*
- *You were arrested for taking drugs*
- *You/your partner had a baby*

#### Steps

1. Repeat or refer back to the Activity 3: The Timeline.
2. Ask each child to select three important goals they want to achieve before they are 30. Say that everyone needs to be prepared for the unexpected because usually life does not go to plan!
3. Ask each child to come forward and pick one change to the future card. (If children are not literate, you can go around the group reading the card to each child)
4. In pairs, children discuss how such a change would affect the goals they had and how they could reduce the bad effects. (make it clear that these are imaginary situations only).
5. Ask volunteers to present to the whole group for further discussion.
6. Final discussion. *How did you feel about the change?* If they were unhappy, say that this is normal. The important thing is how we face up to the situation and our feelings. *What can we do in such situations?*
  - *Are our long term goals achievable?*
  - *What are we doing to reach these goals?*
  - *What threatens our plans? Can we control this?* (for example economic status, civil unrest or war, death of a parent, our own sexual behaviour, substance abuse, impatience)



## Activity 50

### Coping with Emotions: emotional pressure

**Purpose of activity:** To find ways of reacting to emotional pressure.

**Life skills:** Coping with stress and emotion

#### Important points

Before doing this activity, do Activity 21: Negotiation. It is helpful for children to recognise, understand and cope with their emotions so they can use them positively. Children can be angry when their rights are disregarded and they can use this anger to help give them energy to make decisions. High stress levels are bad for our health but some stress makes us think more clearly and work harder to achieve whatever we want.

#### Materials

- Two sets of pressure statements like the ones below.
  - *Oh come on, everyone's doing it!*
  - *Just this once!*
  - *Don't you trust me?*
  - *Come on, we've been friends for 3 months now.*
  - *Have just one drink and you'll feel much better.*
  - *You're not a man until you start smoking.*
  - *Using a condom is like eating a sweet with the wrapper on.*
  - *You would do this if you loved me.*
  - *If you don't want to, then go home. We've no place for little kids here.*
  - *They'll never catch us.*
  - *When you smoke this, you'll feel a completely new person.*
  - *How dare you accuse me of having other lovers?*
  - *I promise you you'll really enjoy it.*
  - *You're too young to know what you're talking about.*
  - *When I say do something, you do it!*
  - *Whenever I look at your clothes, I feel sorry for you because you don't know what you are missing in life by having no boyfriend.*

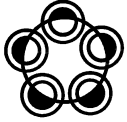
#### Steps

1. Divide group into two teams, A and B. Within the teams, ask children to pair up. (If numbers are uneven, this activity can be done in groups of )
2. Give each pair two or three pressure statements and ask them to create role plays in which one person uses at least two of the phrases and the other finds answers to resisting this pressure.
3. All the pairs from both teams perform their role plays and the group discuss which role plays were better at showing resistance to emotional pressure. Discuss why. If appropriate, give the winning pair a point and at the end see which team has won.



**Final discussion:**

*How have people tried to make you do things you do not want to do? What did you do? Was it easy? What is needed to resist pressure? Were some statements easier to respond to than others? Which ones? Why? What made some more difficult? Did some of the statements make you angry or embarrassed or confused? Which ones? Why?*



## Activity 51

### Coping with Emotions: attack and avoid

#### Purpose of activity

- To develop understanding about assertive behaviour
- To remind ourselves of verbal and body language which warn us of an attitude or type of behaviour in others.
- To notice these signs in ourselves and use them as an opportunity to recognise what kind of response we are likely to use and check that it is appropriate

**Life skills:** Coping with Stress & Emotion, Creative thinking, Critical Thinking, self awareness

#### Important points

Being polite is different from being passive because you can be polite and still make your point. / statements are a good example of politeness without passivity, see Activity 19: You and I.

#### Materials

- Large sheet of paper
- A marker pen or crayon

#### Steps

1. Ask children to listen to the list of actions you are going to read out
  - If they think they do something **often**, they should put both hands in the air
  - If they think they do something **sometimes**, they should put one hand in the air
  - If they think they **never do something**, they should keep both hands down.
 You can join in with these actions too.
2. Read out all the actions in the first column first and then those in the second. (These may need adapting to fit the group)

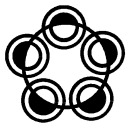
ATTACK!	AVOID
Nagging	Going away
Shouting	Sulking in silence
Interrupting	Taking it out on someone else
Exploding (becoming very angry)	Saying you are being unfairly treated
Warning (if you don't do this...)	Talking behind someone's back
Correcting (Look at the facts...)	Trying to forget about the problem
Persisting	Feeling ill or pretending to feel ill
Insulting	Not wanting to hurt the other person
Sarcastic	Feeling low and depressed
Finger shaking/pointing	Being polite but feeling angry

3. Explain that the actions in the first column are **attacking** behaviours while the second lot of actions are **avoiding** behaviours.

4. Ask everyone to think which they do more often.
5. Brainstorm what the 2 words **attack** and **avoid** mean. Write down all the ideas on a chart.
6. Ask group to think of one reason why they behave in an attacking or avoiding way. Ask them to describe their examples.
  - *What did they say?*
  - *How did they say it?*
  - *What did they do with their bodies?*
7. In pairs, ask the children to create an attack response and an avoid response to a conflict situation. Ask them to work on it again using the 'I' statements.

**Final discussion:**

- *What signs can help us to see how someone is behaving. How can this help us respond in the right way?*
- *What signs do we show which warn us that we are not going to be assertive? How can we change this?*
- *How does it feel to change our body position when saying the same words?*
- *What is the difference between being polite and being weak?*



## Activity 52

### Coping with Emotions: stress

**Purpose of activity:** To identify how stress can build up and cause outbursts

**Life skills:** Coping with Stress & Emotion, Creative thinking, Critical thinking

**Important points**

It is useful to do the *Behaviour which Hurts/Activities 2-4* (see page xxx) before doing this activity.

If the children are not familiar with the idea of a volcano another image can be used instead e.g. a bomb

#### Materials

- A picture of a volcano or bomb
- Squares of card or paper
- Paper bags

#### Steps

1. Explain that many things can cause feelings to build up and that can lead to stress and anger. Explain the three types of stress and ask children to give examples for each.
  - **Frustration** – occurs when someone is blocked when they want to do or ask something and they can't because they are blocked by others or by the situation as a whole
  - **Conflict** - occurs when a difficult choice must be made
  - **Pressure** - occurs when someone feels forced to do something s/he does not really want to do, or forced to do too much.
2. Show the picture of the volcano or bomb. Explain that some people will explode like a volcano if the level of stress builds up too high.
3. Ask the group to give examples of causes of stress. Here are some of the responses from children who did this activity.
  - *When people harass me*
  - *When I work hard for a little payment*
  - *When we girls have to work more than our brothers*
  - *People using bad language against us*
  - *Hunger*
  - *A sick friend*
  - *Loneliness*
  - *When we are beaten at home*
  - *Noise*
  - *Smell*
  - *Health problems such as headache, tooth ache, sports injury, spots on the face, toothache, heavy cold*
  - *Heat or cold*
  - *Doing unhealthy things in order to cope such as drinking, smoking, acting irritably with others, driving too fast*

4. Ask what happens when people explode (become very angry)
  - They may harm others
  - They may harm themselves
  - They may run away
5. Divide the children into groups of three and ask them to discuss or draw causes of stress in their own lives. Ask them to decide the point at which someone may explode if all these causes came together. Give each group a paper bag.
6. Each group tells the whole group the causes of stress they have discussed, and they blow up and burst the paper bag at the point where they think someone might explode because as a result of all this stress.

You can also use physical movement for feedback. In their presentations, the group can take one step forward every time they mention one stress and then shout loudly for the explosion!



#### **Final discussion:**

*What are your main sources of stress? (peers, family, school, media, police, others?)*

*What signs are there that stress is building up?*

- lose temper
- small things become frustrating
- thoughts going round and round in your mind
- sinking feeling in the stomach

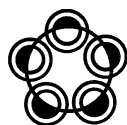
*How can stress be reduced?*

- deep breathing
- moving away from the cause of the stress
- go for a walk/run/play sport
- listen to music

*How can you tell a if someone is stressed*

- changes in behaviour
- drop in school work
- conflicts with someone respected
- smoking or drinking more
- drugs
- refusing to admit that s/he is stressed etc

*What can you do if a friend has reached that stage?*



## Activity 53

### Coping with Emotions: fear and courage

#### Purpose of activity

- To understand how fear works
- To explore how to control their fears and where their courage comes from

**Life skills:** Coping with Stress & Emotion, Creative thinking, Critical thinking

#### Materials

- None

#### Steps

1. Before the session, ask a volunteer to stand outside the room and bang on the door at the signal.
2. Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine the following situation

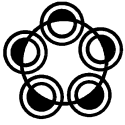
#### Situation

*You are walking on the street one night. There is no moon and everywhere is quiet. There have been rumours of armed bandits (thieves) in the area and every sound seems to be dangerous to you. Suddenly someone jumps out from behind a tree just in front of you, clamps a hand tightly over your mouth and starts to pull you to a half-built house. You can see he is carrying a big knife with him.*

3. Tell people to keep their eyes closed and say how they would be feeling at this moment if this happened. What physical feelings would they have?
4. As they begin to answer, the volunteer should slam the door. Then ask again for physical sensations. Example are:
  - *Muscles tighten*
  - *Body starts to sweat*
  - *Armpits tingle*
  - *Hands become damp*
  - *Heart beats faster*
  - *Breathing becomes faster*
  - *Stomach feels uneasy*
  - *Stomach jumps into the mouth*
  - *Trembling*
5. Explain that these responses are caused by a chemical in the body called adrenalin. When we are afraid, it creates energy to help us fight or run away.
6. In pairs ask children to tell each other
  - what makes them afraid?
  - what happens to them when they are afraid?
7. Ask volunteers to tell their partner's story. The whole group can give suggestions for how they cope with fear. Where does their courage come from? The fishbowl game can be used to do this discussion. See games at the end of this section. If the children feel awkward about discussing their fears, go around the room collecting the ideas and then talk about them without mentioning any names.

**Final discussion:**

*Is it bad to have fears? Why or Why not? Can fear help us? What can we do with our fears?*

**Follow up activities**

Much poetry and words for songs are about people's difficulties and fears. Children can make up songs or poems using ideas from this session. They can write these down or ask others to help write them down. These can be performed in the group; they can be published in newspapers or appropriate newsletters.

## Activity 54

### Coping with Emotions: breaking the cycle of hurt

**Purpose of activity:** To find ways of changing a pattern of behaviour that hurts other people.

**Life skills:** Coping with stress & emotion, creative thinking, critical thinking, communication & Interpersonal relationships, empathy

#### Important Points

If you have not done Activities 4 & 5 Identity factors, do these first. If you have done them, remind the children of the activities and the discussions. This activity uses a technique called visualisation: the children have to use their imagination to be someone else and in another situation. It can be a useful tool to help change behaviour and make sense of events where we lost control.

In a conflict situation, remember that if you want to change another person's behaviour, you have to change your own behaviour first.

This activity gives guidelines on what can be said in the session. This is shown in italics. It may be best to try out this activity with a small group first.

#### Materials

- None

#### Steps

1. Remind children that behaviour is separate from identity.
2. Ask everyone to stand up and imagine an occasion when their behaviour hurt someone else or they have been hurt/angry/sad. *Close your eyes and picture yourself. You are looking at the other person(s) in that situation. What do you feel? What do you see? What are you hearing? What are you telling yourself?*
3. After 5 mins or so, ask them to now open their eyes, step to one side and shake that picture out of your body.
4. Then ask the children to close their eyes again and to imagine they are the other person. *When you are ready, step into the other person's shoes looking at you. What do you hear? What are you feeling, and what are you telling yourself. Give yourself time to experience being this other person.*
5. After 5 minutes or so, ask them to open their eyes, step to the side and shake that picture out of your body.
6. *Now imagine you are in a cinema. Imagine that you are in the audience watching a film on the screen. As you see the first character walk onto the screen you, you realise that this character is you! Keep watching yourself in the film. How do you see yourself? If you find yourself feeling emotions as you watch, imagine that the screen is further away until you can watch only. Now the other person comes into the scene of the film. From this position in the audience, what advice would you give yourself?*
7. *Now you join the film as yourself. Follow the advice that you have just given yourself. What do you see now, what do you hear, and what are you feeling. Now*

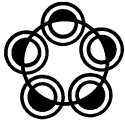


*put yourself in the other person's place and look at yourself. Take on the other person's posture, how would they stand, hold themselves and experience the situation from their position. What do they see, hear and feel?*

8. After 5 minutes or so, ask them to open their eyes, step to the side and shake that picture out of your body.

**Final discussion:**

*In pairs, what did you experience in the two different scenarios? Was it easier to give yourself advice and see the situation differently when you stepped out of your shoes and saw yourself in the scene? How do you think the experience would be different for the other person from the first scenario to the second?*



**Follow-up activity**

One person explains their two scenarios, and they role-play the scenarios to the rest of the class.

## Activity 59: Preparation for Relationships: long-term, intimate relationships

**Purpose of activity:** To examine the challenges of long-term intimate relationships

**Life skills:** Communication & interpersonal relationships, self awareness, creative thinking

### Important points

The 6 qualities discussed in this session are as follows:

- **Respect:** To value people, their ideas and beliefs (even if they are different) and to treat them well and to treat them the way you would like to be treated.
- **Responsibility:** To be dependable or reliable. People can trust you to carry out your duties in a good way.
- **Understanding:** To know about and understand another person, what s/he believes, feels, wants etc. To be able to put yourself in their place and imagine what life looks like for them. Listening is an important part of understanding.
- **Effort:** All relationships go through difficult times. People have to work hard to make sure the relationship succeeds. Many partnerships break up because people do not work hard at them. When things go wrong, they just want to leave the relationship and as a result, they do not benefit from the relationship in the way they could have.
- **Care:** To be concerned about other people and to do what is best for them. You can show care by helping a family member who is sick, or helping in the farm or with school work etc.
- **Sharing:** There are many ways of sharing. You can share things like food, but you can also share ideas and values. Being open and honest about your ideas on issues that concern you and your partner or friend is very important in building a lasting relationship. Finally sharing means supporting one another, even in difficulties. That is why the proverb says '*A friend in need is a friend indeed*'.

### Materials

- Large piece of paper (with the six qualities written up in words and/or symbols in advance if possible)
- Marker pen or crayon
- Case studies on small pieces of paper
- Two copies of the roles for Marianna and Romano for the role plays

### Steps

1. Write up these 6 qualities. Draw symbols for them if necessary.
2. The whole group discusses what each quality means. Use their words to write a definition of each on the board.
3. Explain that in a good relationship, both sides contribute all these qualities. Explain that relationships are not perfect. They take time and hard work to develop.
4. Divide the children into five groups and give them (or tell them) the following case studies:

*Juma and Said are good friends. Yesterday they fought when playing football. They want to be friends again but they are not sure how to start.*

*Sara and Alberto are becoming good friends. However, Alberto thinks that a relationship between a boy and a girl should be more than just talking about school and what they want to do in life.*

*A girl has come to stay in Thabile's house from a place where there is war. Sara welcomed her warmly but the girl wants Sara to be with her all the time as she feels nervous when she is on her own. Sara wants more time to do her school work and be with her friends.*

*Alexei lives with his father and stepmother. He is angry that his mother is no longer there and has difficulty in accepting his stepmother, especially when she does things differently (cooking, dressing etc) from his mother. However, he is trying to build a better relationship.*

*Rashid is a lively boy who can be quite naughty. However, he feels that the teacher is always picking on him and punishing him for no reason. It's not his fault when someone makes a good joke in class and he laughs!*

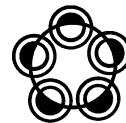
5. Each group discusses its case study and identifies two things the characters could do (from the list of six qualities) that will improve the relationships. They then develop these into a mini drama

#### **You can have a break here**

6. Groups present their mini dramas in turn
7. Discuss them. Ask the group which are the long-term and which the short-term relationships. What are the differences?
8. Ask everyone to write on a sheet of paper one relationship in their own lives they would like to improve. They should then list the various things they can do to improve it, using the behaviours from Activity 58.
9. Ask them to share their relationship with their neighbour and discuss further.
10. Invite volunteers to share their relationship with the rest of the group.

#### **Final discussion:**

- *If you had to give up one quality in your relationship with a parent or adult, which of the six would you be most willing to give up? Why? What about with a friend? Or a boy/girlfriend?*
- *Which of the six qualities would you never be willing to give up? Why?*
- *How can we develop these six qualities in our relationships?*
- *How would you feel about a friend who does not respect you or who does not listen to your ideas and choices? What can you do about it?*
- *How would you feel if an adult who is important to you does not understand you? What can you do about it?*
- *When a relationship is going wrong, it is easy to blame the other for lacking the six qualities. How can you be sure that you are not the problem yourself?*



## Activity 60

### Preparation for Relationships: the job of being a parent

**Purpose of activity:** To identify the qualities and resources needed for parenthood. To understand the responsibilities of parenthood.

**Life skills:** Critical thinking communication & interpersonal relationships, Self-awareness

**Important points**

Girls before the age of 18 are not ready, physically, emotionally or mentally to start having and bringing up children. If they do, they need lots of support. You may want to do this activity in more than one session.

#### Materials

- Cut out or copy two job adverts from the local newspaper, listing qualities such as:
  - *education and skills required*
  - *qualifications*
  - *experience*
  - *know how to operate equipment or machinery (e.g. computer)*
  - *other resources (e.g. driving licence)*and which gives other information such as:
  - *work hours*
  - *salary and benefits*
- A list of suggested questions for the parent interview

#### Preparation

Before the session choose a boy and a girl who want to role play Romano and Marianna. Give them the roles and spend some time helping them plan how to act their roles.

#### Role play

**Marianna**

*You are 15 years old and finished primary education a year ago. Since then you have been helping your mother with her informal cooking business. You go to an evening secondary school because that is all your mother can afford but the standard of teaching is low and you think you are wasting your time. You love children and spend a lot of time looking after the baby daughter of your eldest sister. You met Romano a year ago and you really love him and want to have a baby with him. You think your mother would help with the baby but you haven't talked about it to her.*

**Romano**

*You are 17 years old and you live with your father in the room he has rented. He is a long distance lorry driver so he is often away from home and you have learnt how to look after yourself. After primary school, you started a small business selling food and sweets on the street. Sometimes you make a little extra money and you have managed to save enough to buy a dress for Marianna. You love*

*Marianna very much and think she would be a perfect mother and wife. Since you have met the person you love, you see no reason why you should wait and you feel being a husband and father will make you more mature. You are willing to work hard to earn more money. Marianna's mother likes you a lot and you try and help her with small things in her business.*

### **Steps**

1. Using the posters or advertisements, explain how job advertisements work.
2. In groups, ask the children to prepare a job advertisement for the job of parents of a 6 month-old baby. Include all the qualities and characteristics the applicant should have. Also, include the work hours and the benefits of the job.
3. Groups prepare advertisements on a large sheet of paper and display them.
4. Allow everyone to go round looking at the advertisements.
5. Final discussion. *What are the most important qualities a parent should have? Does experience as a parent help you to ask other jobs? Which ones?*

### **You can have a break here**

6. Explain that in this activity, two teenagers apply for the job as parents. Tell the group that it is the future year 2150. Because of the difficult time faced by children in the past, everyone now has to apply for permission to have children before they can get pregnant. They apply to the Child Development Office where experts interview them.
7. Tell the group to imagine they are workers at the Child Development Office. Two teenagers, Romano and Marianna are coming to be interviewed as parents.
8. Discuss the questions they would ask and write these on a chart. Here are some ideas:
  - *Where do you plan to live with the baby? How much space is there?*
  - *How much money do you earn each day? Is this enough to look after a baby?*
  - *How will having a baby affect your relationship with each other?*
  - *Why do you want to be parents at this time of your life?*
  - *Do you have any experience with babies and young children? How much patience will you have when children make a mess or cry?*
  - *What help can you expect from parents, relatives and friends?*
  - *What would be the best thing about being a parent? The most difficult?*
  - *What job do you want in the future? How will having a baby now affect your goals?*
  - *What are your plans for continuing education after the baby is born?*
  - *How do your parents feel about becoming grandparents now?*
  - *Would becoming a parent now affect your relationships with your friends?*

### **You can have a break here**

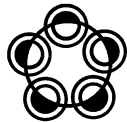
9. Ask three volunteers to act as the Child Development experts who are interviewing. They should be polite and kind but also ask tough probing questions. Each expert can ask two of the questions selected.
10. Ask the two children acting as Romano and Marianne to come forward. Give the experts 10 minutes to ask their question. Then give other children in the group a chance to ask any follow up questions.
11. At the end of the interview, ask Romano and Marianna to leave and the experts

discuss whether they are qualified to become parents at this time. Hopefully, the children will reach the answer, 'no' but if they give the answer 'yes', help the experts look at difficult situation of Romano and Marianna.

- They have a good relationship now but they are young and inexperienced and in love. If their relationship ended, their child will not live with both parents
- Neither has much money. It takes money to support a child
- Neither has finished secondary school or has a reliable job. Becoming a parent makes it more difficult to improve their chances later.
- Their families cannot give them extra money.
- Marianna is young to have a baby. There are many health risks for her and the baby.

**Final discussion:**

*Is it important to be ready to be a parent? How do most adolescents become parents? (usually accidental and unplanned). What pressure does this put on them? Are you ready to be a parent?*



## Activity 57

### Endings and Beginnings: making a stronger me

**Purpose of the activity:** To create a tool which can be used to bring back good and strong feelings

**Lifeskills activity:** Self-awareness, creative thinking

**Important points:** Do Activity 35: Fleet of hope and Activity 36: Islands of the future before this activity. Guidelines on what words the educator can actually use are shown in italics for this activity.

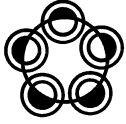
#### Materials

- none

#### Steps

1. Explain to children that there are methods to use in our minds to help lift our spirits and make us feel strong and positive when we are feeling low and weak. *For example in Activity 36: Islands of the future, you drew an island which showed your ideas about your future. Your island of the future can help you feel better if you remember it when you are feeling sad. The picture can act as an 'anchor' to help tie you strongly to good, positive feelings*
2. Explain that in this activity, they will create their own personal 'anchor' to bring back good feelings. Creating an anchor involves two things:
  - an unusual and special physical action like squeezing the thumb and little finger on your left hand together
  - Saying something quietly to yourself, like *'Be happy'* or *'it will work out'*. They can choose their own special words.
3. Ask children to think of a difficult situation. What feelings would help these children make a decision that keeps them safe?
4. Ask children to think of a situation in the past when you have been strong and said, 'NO!' Remember what it was like: *As you remember it, put yourself in that situation, and relive it as strongly as you can: see what you saw then, hear what you heard then, and feel what it is like to be strong and say 'NO!'. As those feelings build up, do your special little action and say your special words. To strengthen the anchor, picture your future island, imagine you are there. See what you see, hear the sounds and experience the good feelings of being there on your future island. As those good feelings get stronger, do the special action and say the special words.*
5. Ask children to strongly imagine a situation where they were in danger. *Be aware of what is happening and how you feel. Then do your special action and say your special words.*

6. Ask children how they felt when they did this. Using the anchor *should bring back feelings of being strong and able to say 'NO'*. This anchor can be used whenever you want or need those feelings, and it can have a powerful effect on helping you make good decisions in difficult situations.





## Activity 58

### Endings and Beginnings: where am I now?

#### Purpose of this activity

- to reflect on new skills they have to help them move forward.
- to think about their support network

**Lifeskills:** Self-awareness, creative thinking

#### Important points

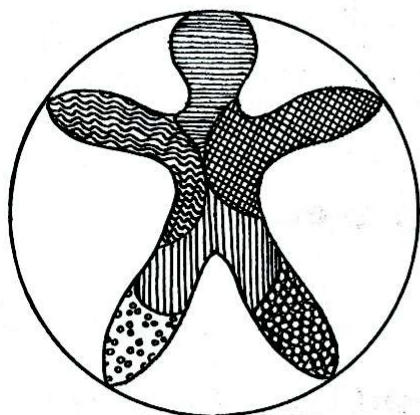
This activity begins with a visualisation activity as described in Activity 47: Resisting pressure using 'SWISH'. It may be useful to do Activity 47 first.







#### Materials

- large circle with a body map
- a smaller circle with a body map for each child

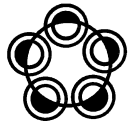
#### Steps

1. Remind children of the SWISH activity. Explain that we are going to use SWISH in this activity.
2. Ask children lie down or sit with their heads in their hands or their eyes closed and they think about themselves as they were the first time they came to a life skills session. They watch that person that they were walk further and further away until s/he disappears completely!
3. They then think about the different activities they have done since that time and how the activities have helped create a 'me' with new ideas and skills. They watch this stronger person coming towards them from far away. Who are these new stronger children? In this session, we want to talk to them!
4. Put up the large body map and explain what different things you, the educator, have learnt since working on the life skills sessions. Draw a pattern that represents one learning point onto the body with a black pen. Try to fill the body with different patterns representing different learning points. For example,
  - *I've learnt that am not a bad person but that sometimes my behaviour is bad.*



-  I've learnt that I am not a bad person, but that sometimes my behaviour is bad.
-  I've learnt to control my anger better when others do not behave as I want them to.
-  I've learnt to be better at respecting others' right to speak.
-  I've learnt to listen better.
-  I've learnt how to set myself realistic short-term goals.
-  I've learnt how to say 'No' to things I don't want.

5. Ask the children to fill in their own body maps.
6. The children can share the meaning of their body maps with two or three friends. One or two volunteers can share their maps with the whole group.
7. Explain that it is not possible to learn these things or use them by ourselves. We need other people to support us especially when we are feeling sad or weak. These people are our network. Some people are very close and others are important but not so close to us. Remind children of Activity 10: circles of friendship. You can draw inner and outer circles around the body on the large poster. You draw and label stick figures to show people who are close within the inner circle and then draw figures who are not so close (but who are also important) in the outer circle.
8. Ask the children to do the same. This is a personal session so don't let children become bored. It is better if they discuss with one or two friends rather than the whole group.



## Activity 59

### Endings and Beginnings: my timeline

#### Purpose of activity

- To help children identify and discuss past events
- To help children think about long term goals

**Life skills:** Self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

This activity develops further Activity 3: the timeline. Timelines help children visualise the future and think about the steps they need to take to ask to that future.

#### Materials

- Example of a timeline.

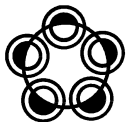
#### Steps

(If the group participated in Activity 3: the timeline, refer back to the results and the discussions from this session.)

1. Prepare or present an example of a timeline.
2. In small groups or pairs, children draw out or explain their past timelines to each other.
3. Ask the children to draw or write in three future events that they hope will happen in the years ahead. These may include:
  5. *Going to primary/secondary/high school*
  6. *Getting a job*
  7. *Getting married*
  8. *Moving to another place*
  9. *Having children*
4. Ask children to cut or tear the drawings or words and sort them into three piles:
  - *Next year*
  - *Before I am 20*
  - *After 20 and before I am 30*
5. In pairs or small groups, children explain their timelines to each other.

#### Final discussion:

*Is your timeline about your dream or reality? Is it helpful to think of the future? Why or why not? Does your timeline frighten you or help you? If you have done this before, have the life skills sessions helped you make improvements? How?*



## Activity 60

### Endings and Beginnings: my new network

**Purpose of activity:** To look at our personal support structures.

**Lifeskills:** Self-awareness, inter-personal relationships

**Important points**

Make sure you have done Activity 6: What is my network of relationships? before trying this activity.

#### Materials

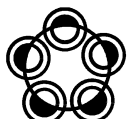
- Outline picture of a ship for the whole group with the name 'relation-SHIP' or as appropriate in the local language.  
Figures on the ship waving representing
  - parents and elders
  - brothers, sisters and cousins
  - friends
  - people in authority (teachers, police, employers)
  - boy/girlfriend.
- Marker pens or crayons in at least three colours, enough for one between two children in the group
- Outline of a ship for each child in the group.

#### Steps

1. Explain what a relationship is (refer back to Activity 6).
2. Ask children to identify the figures as people with whom they have relationships, for example:
  - That is my Uncle
  - There is my mum holding my sister
  - There is Samson (the manager of the programme!)
  - There is Clara (the group's lifeskills educator!)
3. Give each child an outline of a ship and ask them to draw in the figures that are 'on their own 'relation-SHIPS'
4. Explain that relationships help to support us. Ask children to draw a ring of colour around the head of the people on the ship who love, support and help them. They can add more figures if they need to.
5. Ask children to draw on the ship people who they may not know now but who might be important to them in the future, for example:
  - an employer
  - a neighbour
  - a wife/husband
6. Ask children how they will make sure that these people will support and help them in the future, for example:
  - By being friendly
  - by showing respect
  - by being helpful
  - by doing things that you say you will do (reliable)
7. What might stop people giving you support and help? Examples are:
  - a problem they have which is nothing to do with you
  - a problem they have which has something to do with you.

## You can have a break here

8. Ask the children to practice role-plays of their first meeting with a new employer. This employer may be a shop keeper, a market stall holder, a tradesman or some other employer. Make it appropriate to children in the group.
9. Children present the role plays and discuss:
  - *Was it a good meeting? Why or why not?*
  - *What kind of problems might there be in the future?*
  - *What can be done to sort out any problems early on*
  - *What makes this meeting easy? Difficult?*
  - *Other questions...*



### Follow up activity

Children might find it difficult to trust and speak to some adults. Additional role-play can help them to practice. The group can examine what was good about the communication and what needed to be improved. Some children may need individual support or counselling.

## Activity 61

### Endings and Beginnings: moving on

#### Purpose of the session

- To help children realise the important of endings and beginnings.
- To learn different ways to make an ending.

**Lifeskills:** Self-awareness, critical thinking

#### Important points

It is likely that by the time you are looking at this activity, the children in the group are at different stages in the life skills programme. Some may be ready to move on to something else, some children may be leaving the programme altogether or perhaps you, the educator, are leaving the programme. Whatever the specific situation you are in, this activity can be used to help children understand the importance of proper endings and this helps with new beginnings. This is an important lesson even if there are no real endings to celebrate in the session.

#### Materials

- Large pieces of paper or flipchart
- Marker pen or crayon

#### Steps

1. Introduces the activity by asking the children to think about endings and beginnings. Give a few examples and then try to build up a list such as the one below. You can write this on the paper or flip chart.

Endings	Beginnings
<i>A death and a funeral</i>	<i>A birth</i>
<i>Exam results</i>	<i>A marriage</i>
<i>The end of a school term/year</i>	<i>The first sexual relationship</i>
<i>The end of a relationship - divorce</i>	<i>Arriving in a new place</i>
<i>The loss of virginity</i>	<i>The first day of a new job</i>
<i>Moving to a new place</i>	<i>The start of a new school year or term</i>
<i>The last day in a job</i>	<i>The start of a programme</i>
<i>Saying goodbye to a teacher</i>	<i>Birthdays</i>
<i>The end of a programme</i>	<i>The start of a new year</i>
<i>Birthdays</i>	<i>Dawn</i>
<i>The last day of the year</i>	
<i>Sunset</i>	

2. Make sure the children that an ending very often goes with a beginning for example, one educator leaving and another arriving. Ask the children to describe their feelings at endings and beginnings. To start them off mention some emotions and ask the children to shout out 'ending', 'beginning' or 'both'
  - Sadness
  - Excitement
  - Worried
  - Happy
  - Relieved
3. Explain that it is often helpful to mark an ending or a beginning as it helps us to cope better. Ask the children to say how they might mark an ending such as...
  - A death
  - The end of a relationship
  - The end of the year.Or a beginning such as:
  - a marriage
  - a new year
  - the first day of a new job.

(Use any events that are significant and appropriate for your group)

Here are some ideas...

- a party or gathering of people
  - a speech
  - a meeting
  - a show or display of work
  - a meal or a drink
  - a visit
  - a chance to share thoughts with a person/people involved
  - a gift/card
  - a special 'closing' game/activity
4. Read out this short story (or use another which is more relevant to your group)

### **Story**

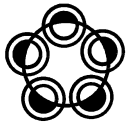
*Mary had been working at the shop with her boss, the shop owner, Rose for 6 years. It was her last day at work as she was going to leave the town to get married to her boyfriend who lived in another town. She got on well with Rose. On Mary's last day they were busy with customers and at lunchtime Rose said that she had to go to the bank. Mary ate alone in the back of the shop. Rose was a long time and only came back just before Mary had to leave. 'Bye then' Rose said to Mary, 'Good Luck'. Mary said, 'Bye' and smiled but she felt sad as she walked home. Something did not feel quite right.*

5. In pairs discuss the following questions
  - *Why do you think Mary felt sad?*
  - *What do you think Mary needed?*

- *What would you have done that day if you had been Rose? Why?*

Discuss the questions with the whole group.

6. Using the example from the group, ask how an 'ending' could be marked for this event. For example...
  - The end of the lifeskills programme for this group
  - A lifeskills educator leaving
  - One of the children leaving the group
7. Finish the session with one of the closing games suggested in the last part of this section:
  - *The **Suitcase game***
  - *The **Chair game***
  - *The **Web game***





## Games and Closing activities

### Games

Lifeskills sessions can get children to dig deep into themselves. Activities that are light-hearted, quick and fun can help break the tension. Games can be used at any stage of the session. Some games have a specific purpose and some simply raise or lower the energy level. It is important to adapt games to suit the needs of your group.

#### Name game 1: Memory list

1. Divide children into groups of nine or 10
2. Each group forms a circle
3. The first participant says the name they would like to be called and the name of a favourite colour, animal, fruit, vegetable, occupation etc which begins with the same letter as the name e.g. *My name is Clara and I like carrots*. The next participant repeats this and adds his/her name e.g. *Her name is Clara and she likes carrots. My name is Alberto and I like avocados*. The list *builds up* as you go around the circle.

#### Name game 2: Call a name

You need a ball for this activity.

1. All children stand in a large circle.
2. One player stands in the centre with a ball. The player throws the ball high in the air and calls the name of another player. The named person has to run and try to catch the ball or at least retrieve it when it bounces.
3. Continue until everyone has had a turn in the middle.

#### Rhythm Clap

1. Children sit in a circle with their eyes closed and they each think of a rhythm.
2. At a signal they begin tapping or clapping their rhythms at the same time.
3. Listen to see if people gradually begin to move in similar rhythms: from the initial jumble of sound you will find a growing order and after awhile the whole group tapping or clapping in a single rhythm.

#### Fruit salad

This game increases the energy of the group. Play it after lunch or mid afternoon when energy levels are usually at their lowest! It is also a good way to divide children into groups. Here is an example of the game where 25 children divided into 5 groups of 5 children in each group.

1. Children sit on chairs in a circle.
2. Five children are asked to call out the name of a fruit in turn.
3. When five children have called out a fruit name e.g. pear, apple, peach, banana, mango, the 20 remaining children continue around the circle repeating the same sequence of five fruits until everyone has a fruit name.
4. One child (the caller) stands in the middle of the circle and takes their chair out of the circle. The caller calls out one of the fruits.
5. All the children with that fruit name stand up and run to a vacant seat, including the caller. One person is left without a seat and they then become the caller.
6. Repeat the game calling one or more fruit names at a time.
7. When the caller calls 'fruit salad', everyone must stand up and change places.

At the end of this game, the 'fruit groups' can be used as working groups for another activity.

### Points down

1. Explain to the group that there are seven points of the body that can touch the floor in this game - two hands, two elbows, two knees, 1 forehead.
2. Call a number up to seven and each player must touch the floor with that number of 'points'.
3. Ask for groups of people to work together -pairs, then threes then fours etc.

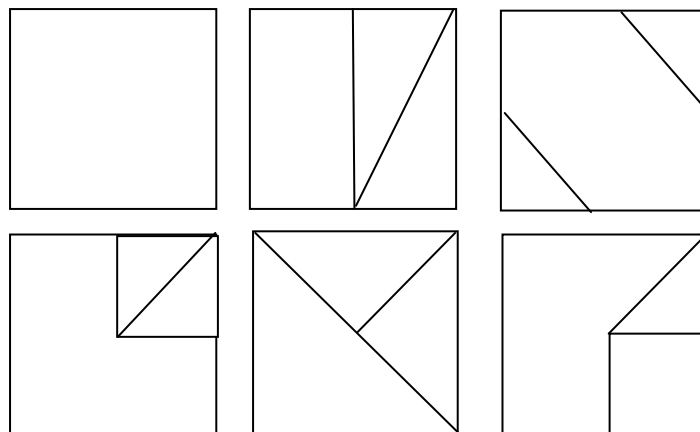
Remember that although the number called may not be higher than seven times the number of people in the group, it may be lower than the number of people in the group (for example a group of four can go as low as two points by giving piggy- backs while standing on one leg!)

### Sort the squares

This exercise helps to show what is meant by working as part of a team. The children may go through a frustrating time during the game. Make sure that they understand the instructions before the game begins.

### Materials

- Sets of the six squares you see below. Make as many sets as you will have groups when you do this exercise, so if you have five groups; make five sets of six squares. The squares should be of equal size, but five squares should be cut up differently. Cut along each line and put all the pieces from the five squares together.
- Keep the complete square separate



1. Divide the children into groups of 5. Appoint one observer per group, the rest are the square makers.
2. Explain the rules: Talking, whispering and sign language are not allowed. No-one can take a piece of square from another player but anyone can **give** a piece of square to another person.

Make sure the children are clear about the rules. You may want to spend time on this, as the children will not be able to ask for advice once the game has begun.

3. Ask observers to look out for:
  - *The reactions of children*
  - *Rules being broken. If rules are being broken, which ones? by whom?*
4. Now ask the groups to sit on the floor or at a table. Give each group one set of the mixed up pieces for the squares 2-6. Then give each group the complete square (square 1).

5. Ask each member of the group to make one square which is the same size as the complete square using a combination of the mixed up pieces.
6. The game is over when each player in the group has made a square and all the pieces are used up. The game can take anything from 15 minutes to hours! Although it is difficult, it is better not to interrupt.
7. **Final discussion.** Asks the children how they feel about the game. Observers make their comments and the relevant players can say why they broke the rules.

Conclusions emerge about working together for example:

- *it is difficult*
- *personal needs often have to be given up for the benefit of the group*
- *some people are more helpful than others*
- *everyone must know the aims of the whole group*

### **Take your turn**

This game develops the idea that we must value what everyone has to say and give shy or quiet people 'room' to contribute.

1. Divide the children into groups of four or five and have them sit in a circle.
2. Ask them to talk about a simple topic like, *Accidents that have happened in our area.*
3. Give each child six markers (you can use stones, matches, coins, small twigs etc). Each time a child speaks they must place one of their markers in the centre. Practice this several times -it is enjoyable as well as difficult at first. Even when the children say *Hmm, Yes, Pardon, What did you say?* They must place a marker in the middle. When a person runs out of markers, they can no longer take part.
  - *Who gets rid of their markers the fastest?*
  - *Are there some people who should have more chances to speak?*
  - *In a teaching situation who does most of the talking, the educator or the students? Why? Who does most of the listening? Why? Are the listeners really listening?*

### **Dragons heads and tails**

1. Children line up, each holding the shoulders of the one in front.
2. The child at the front is the dragon's head the child at the back is its tail.
3. The game begins with the dragon in a straight line, standing still. The dragon is asleep.
4. It wakes up when the one of the children in the middle of the body shouts, *Chase!* Then the head begins to chase the tail which in turn tries to keep out of its way.

The fun of this game is that the body must stay together while the chasing goes on. None of the players may let go of the players in the front.

### **Fishbowl game**

This game is a useful problem-solving game.

Children make an inner and outer circle with partners facing each other.

1. Children in the inner circle think of a problem, and ask their partner in the outer circle to suggest advice. The partner makes a suggestion.
2. After a few minutes, all the people in the outside circle move one place to the right. The children with problems ask the same question to their new partner in the outer circle.
3. The game continues.
4. The circles can change places so the other half is asking the questions.

## Continuous storytelling

1. Divide children into groups of four or five. Ask them to stand or sit in a circle.
2. Someone starts a story and stops in the middle of a sentence.
3. The next person in the circle continues the story, and so on round the circle until the story ends.

## Who is the leader?

1. Children sit in a circle.
2. One child volunteers to leave the room.
3. While the volunteer is out, invite any one group member to act as the leader while two others in the circle act as mirrors. The leader's job is to start some action (such as clapping) and keep it going rhythmically for a few moments, then change to another action (such as stamping one foot) and again, after a few seconds to another.
4. The *mirrors* should watch the leader and copy the movements but without letting the volunteer notice that they are *copying* not *starting the action*. The rest of the group should ask the cues for the action from the *mirrors* rather than the leader, to confuse the volunteer who is trying to identify the leader.
5. After the group has done a few actions, the volunteer should try to guess which person in the circle has acted as the leader of the game.

## The Virus Carriers

1. Cut and fold as many piece of paper as there are children in the group. Leave all of them blank except for one, which should have the words 'virus carrier' written on it.
2. Fold them carefully and pass them out for children to pick out as in a lottery. People look at the papers they have picked without letting others see them.
3. Children then walk around the room looking at each other as they do so. The virus carrier must try to catch someone's eye and wink. That person then imagines they have caught a virus and falls to the ground or falls out of the group taking one or two other persons along (whoever the infected person touches while falling).
4. All these people leave the game as soon as infected but should not let others know who infected them.

The game goes on until children guess who the virus carrier is before the person has had a chance to wink at them.

## Community of five

1. Ask children to stand in groups of five at the start of this activity.
2. Tell them that you are going to call out different numbers and they should break up their groups and make new groups of a size matching the number you call. You may call out 3, for example, then 6, 4, 2, and maybe 5 again.
3. Each time the children have to decide quickly who joins or who should be let go or excluded. Those who are not in groups corresponding in size to the number you have called out have to drop out of the game at that point.

At the conclusion of this game, you could open a discussion of how the children felt about belonging to or being left out of groups.

## Theme park

1. Explain to children that they will be given a theme and they immediately have to form a frozen action relating to that theme. If the educator approaches and touches them, they can unfreeze and start the actions.  
*For example: The theme is 'Park'. A child might freeze in a pose which shows they are playing with a ball. If the educator touches them, they can do this action - running or throwing a ball.*
2. The educator calls a theme. All children freeze in action. The educator touches some of the children so they freeze and share their actions

Ideas for themes: *Park, Railway station, Hospital, Market, Forest*

## The Whistle Blowers

1. While all the children are talking before an activity (or at the start of a lifeskills session), quietly ask one child to whistle.
  2. The children are called together and then asked if they heard one child whistling. The educator then talks about how one voice is not often heard in a crowd but if people unite, then their voices together can be heard more loudly.
  3. The children are asked to carry on their talking but if they hear anyone whistling then they too start whistling.
  4. Within a few minutes all children should be whistling and the sound should be quite powerful
- If the children have trouble whistling then they could use clapping instead.

## The Trust Fall

This game is about putting complete trust in a team. It highlights the importance of trust and team work.

1. In groups of seven to nine, the children make a tight circle by standing shoulder to shoulder. From each group, one child is asked to volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle with eyes closed (or blindfolded).
2. The remaining children take a step forward so that they form a tight circle around the volunteer.
3. With their eyes closed and their body relaxed, the volunteer is asked to fall in any directions. Tell the child that their team members will catch them and prevent them from falling.
4. The children in the circle put both their hands up to support the falling volunteer and gently push them back up into an upright position.
5. The educator talks softly about the importance of the group to gently support the volunteer.
6. After a few minutes, another child can be asked to volunteer to stand in the middle.
7. At the end of the game, children think about the importance of trust
  - *What did you learn from this game?*
  - *Is trust important?*
  - *Is it easy to trust in a group? Why?*
  - *Why makes it easy or difficult to trust someone?*
  - *How does trust help a group to work well?*

## Team Drawing

This game emphasises the benefits of working together and having an agreed idea before starting a project.

1. Ask the children to working silently in group of six to 10. They take it in turns to make 'one stroke' with a marker pen or crayon on a large sheet of paper. As each child adds their stroke, the team make a drawing (but without speaking).
2. After 5-10 mins or when most teams have made some kind of drawing, ask the children to share their drawing and discuss what they felt when they were creating it.

Many children raise the point that if they had agreed on an idea before they began they would have been able to make a better drawing.

## Closing activities

### Physical and mental relaxation

1. Ask children to lie on the floor or to put their head in their hands on a table in front of them.
2. Ask them to tense up their whole bodies and then relax. Ask them to do the same put taking each part of the body. For example  
*Tense your feet and your toes then relax your feet and relax your toes.*
  - *your calf muscles*
  - *your thighs*
  - *your chest*
  - *your shoulders*
  - *your arms and fingers*
  - *your neck and face*
3. The final part of the relaxation is to leave the group in silence for 5-10 minutes. Encourage them to breathe deeply and listen to their own breathing. Many children love this experience or peacefulness and relaxation is very refreshing. It is good to play soft music and/or burn incense while you do this.

### Knots game

This is a good game to use if the activity has involved problem-solving activities.

1. Divide children into groups of six to nine.
2. Each group stands in a close circle with their eyes closed. Ask the children to stretch out their arms in front of them and grasp another person's hand so that they are holding another person's hand in each of theirs.
3. Once connected hand-in-hand the children are asked to open their eyes. The whole group is in a knot. Without letting go of their partners hand they have to work together to try to undo the knot so that they are standing together in a circle.
4. Once the children have managed to untangle themselves, you can all cheer loudly!
5. Ask children to think about the meaning behind the game. (*working together and co-operating helps overcome difficult problems*)

### Chair game

1. Children sit either side of a chair in the middle of the room. Explain that the chair represents movement towards or away from your goal, for example:
  - being able to resist pressure to have sex before you feel ready
  - trying to give up smoking

- putting into practice lessons learning in the lifeskills sessions.
2. In turn each child comes up to the chair and moves it forward or back as they like with a statement about why they feel they are 'moving in that direction'. (You can ask the children to begin each phrase with - *I am moving the chair forward/back because....*)

### **The suitcase game**

1. Either draw a suitcase or bring one with you to the session. Explain that this is the suitcase that you brought with you to the lifeskills session/programme. It was full of all the things you brought to the session:
  - *your experiences*
  - *your ideas*
  - *your confidence*
  - *(perhaps your bad behaviour!)*
  - *your fears*
  - *your worries.*

Now that the session/programme is over you are going away with your suitcase but you will be taking extra things away with you and leaving some things behind.

2. In turn, each child says what they are leaving behind and what they are taking with them. For example... *I am taking with me new ideas and confidence I am leaving behind my cigarettes and my fears about what others are saying about me.*

### **Circle Reflection**

Children sit in a circle. In turn, they say what they learned from and what they liked about a session, a programme, a child, an educator. This is a simple but very effective way to develop a positive and loving atmosphere.

### **The Web Game**

This activity is particularly suitable if the children are graduating from the programme. Be careful to keep the activity positive. Endings are always a little sad so be sure to emphasise the positive things that you have all earned together so that moving on feels positive.

1. The children stand in a circle. The educator stands with them and has a ball of wool or string the end of which is tied to one of the educators wrists.
2. You as the educator explain to the children that you will say something about what you have learned from the group during the session/programme. When you have finished, you will throw the ball of string to another person. This person must then tie the string around a finger or wrist (a neighbour can help!) and then say something he or she has learned from the group. You do this.
3. The game continues until everyone has said something and everyone is connected to each other with string.
4. The educator finishes this by saying... *We have shared a lot and become connected together during the lifeskills programme. Let's look at each other and think about all the things we have learned and shared. Each of us is a stronger me. I will cut the string to show we are ready and can move on. If you like, you can keep the string around your wrist to remind you of the group and what we have learned together.*