

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Manual

2024



COVER PHOTO: Children participating in FCA organised extracurricular activities and remedial teaching, following a devastating earthquake in Aleppo, Syria in 2023.

PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN / FINN CHURCH AID.

FCA

Finn Church Aid (FCA) is Finland's largest international aid organization with operations in 12 countries.

FCA specializes in supporting local communities within three priority areas: Right to Quality Education, Right to Livelihood, and Right to Peace. FCA works with people in the most fragile contexts, regardless of their religious beliefs, ethnic background, political convictions etc.

FCA's work is anchored in international human rights frameworks, and cuts across development and humanitarian contexts. FCA vision is a world comprised of resilient and just societies where everyone's right to peace, quality education and sustainable livelihood has been fulfilled.

By working for the Right to Quality Education,

through direct programming and advocacy, FCA strives for ensuring safe, inclusive schools with quality learning for all children and youth. The inclusion focus is on children with disabilities, girls and the most marginalized in particular. The education programs are implemented through strategic focus on Education in Emergencies (EiE), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and linking learning to earning, teacher education and education sector development.

FCA works with a range of local and international partners and promotes accountability through its programmes, being the first Finnish organization to be certified against the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS).



TWB

Teachers Without Borders (TWB) Finland acts in response to the global learning crisis, promoting inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Qualified, motivated, and supported teachers are the key to quality education. TWB contributes to this through international education collaboration, building on Finnish education expertise in different forms depending on the contextual needs and resources. The network strengthens the professional capacity of teachers and other education sector personnel both in developing contexts and in Finland.

TWB operates under FCA as one of its volunteer

networks. The network's expertise primarily serves FCA's development cooperation programs focusing on the Right to Quality Education. The volunteers support education system development through, for example, pre- and in-service training, coaching, and mentoring local colleagues: teachers, principals, career guidance counsellors and other actors in the sector from early childhood and basic education levels to vocational and higher education, onsite or remotely. Quality professional volunteer work, mutual respect and two-way learning are at the core of TWB's work.

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16-year-old Nyaluit Tang Chuol leads her siblings and friends through the al-Sudd swamp in New Fangak, South Sudan, on their way to school in June 2024.

PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN / FINN CHURCH AID

Foreword

A warm welcome to the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Manual for Teacher Training. This manual has been developed by Finn Church Aid (FCA) and Teachers Without Borders (TWB) to help and support teachers and learners' wellbeing. It is part of the FCA Teacher Training Package specifically for MHPSS. The manual contains guidance and practical steps for integrating elements of psychosocial support in the teaching and learning process. It is designed to be facilitated by trainers, local educators and community workers to the benefit of teachers, children and youth.

Contents

This teacher training manual consists of six modules. The modules can be used together or separately. The first three (1. Stress and Relaxation and 2. Compassion for yourself and 3. How to identify learners with MHPSS concerns) are meant for teachers – although there are exercises you can use in the classroom, too. The last three the modules (4. Recreational activities, 5. Socio-emotional Learning and 6. Life skills) are meant for the classroom.

How to use this manual

Each module consists of 2-3 sessions. Sessions are approximately 1-2 hours long. We state the duration as well as the equipment needed at the beginning of each session. In the sessions, we use many learner-centred exercises to get the participants thinking for themselves. It is important to get everyone's voice heard. To achieve that, we use brainstorming, reflection, pair discussions and group discussions. In all the sessions we hope you do your best to create an open atmosphere, where it is easy to discuss and share feelings and even trials. Peer support is one of the most effective ways to support mental health. However, this manual cannot replace professional help. As a facilitator, it is a good idea to think in advance about who to turn to if the need arises and you notice something you cannot deal with by yourself. This can be a mental state or the overall situation of a learner or a participant. We have stated the referral pathways on a general level in module 3. However, places and situations differ, so your local context may have some different guidelines.

Maintaining one's mental health should be considered as natural a part of daily routines as tending to one's physical health. We need a well-balanced diet both for our body and our mind. However, it can feel easier or even more important to tend to physical injuries or illnesses than those of the mind. Mental state is not as easily perceived by others, so there is a risk it can be overlooked. Learners bring with them to the classroom their life events and trials, sorrows and insecurities. Many of them tend to show in the learners' performance. Sometimes it is not easy to make connections and find the root cause of children's behaviour. However, only when the learners' MHPSS needs are at least somehow addressed, are the learners ready to learn and study new skills.

You can do many things to seek balance and develop your own resilience towards the difficulties of life. As a teacher you offer a model for your learners in ways you don't always even notice. A teacher who is at ease creates an atmosphere of trust.

We did our best to make this manual as easy-to-use as possible.

How to use this manual

i Text highlighted in light green and indicated with an exclamation mark contains hints, comments, and action prompts for the facilitator – they are not to be shared directly with the participants. Sections which start with Facilitator can be read out loud.

We have included a proverb for each module. It is to inspire and give new perspective. You can use it if you wish – it can be read aloud and discussed with the participants. It is to summarise the content of the module, and as such, it is a way to remember the content later. Annexes are at the end of each module for easy access.

The facilitator is asked to take time before the training to adapt the training and module(s) to optimally serve the training context and participants' needs. You are the expert on your own surroundings and challenges. Please select the most relevant and suitable activities for your group and prepare accordingly. Feel free to leave out some activities to avoid rushing anything. Less is often more.

As always, consider in your teaching the following values:

- Do No Harm
- Commitment to Confidentiality
- Transparency & Accountability
- Clear instructions of different activities considering the diversity of learners' needs
- Giving opportunities to all learners, considering their age and gender

The materials in the manual have been developed by the FCA Education Community of Practice with its education specialists across FCA's Country Programmes and with Teacher Without Borders network volunteers. Teachers Without Borders volunteers Kati and Leena edited these drafts into one manual in the summer of 2024.

We hope you find new perspectives, have fruitful sessions and a good time with the material!

27.6.2024

Kati Karjalainen-Rimppi and Leena Nurmenniemi

Teachers Without Borders experts

PART 1. TOOLS AND IDEAS FOR TEACHERS



NTEZIRYAYO P/S DR DIP
SUB. PROJECT 1/Y 2021/22
CONTR. DENKA BUILDING CO.

Primary school teachers Roset and Annet working at the school library in Nteziryayo primary school in Uganda, in October 2024.

PHOTO: VILLE LINTUSAARI / FINN CHURCH AID



Guttyiel Lony Gutluuk teaching a class in South Sudan in 2024, helping children and youth in the village to learn, so that his community can further develop.

PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN / FINN CHURCH AID.

Module 1. Stress and relaxation

Welcome to the first module of the MHPSS Manual. This module is designed for teachers for their self-support and peer support purposes. It is important to learn to help oneself and the colleagues – teaching is rewarding but it can be taxing, and peaks in the workload can cause stress. Teachers easily influence hundreds of learners and if they feel at ease and resilient towards trials, their mood is transferred to the learners. Unfortunately, challenging emotions, like hopelessness and irritation, also tend to affect the learners. It is said that most learning taking place is non-verbal – that means, not the things we are actually teaching but all the things we simply radiate. These include the way we speak to others, how we look at them or whether we seem relaxed and present. This goes to show that teacher well-being matters, obviously for teachers' sakes, but also for learners.

However important it is to learn ways to support oneself and colleagues, it is not always enough. Sometimes professional help is needed. This module does not compete with any psychological intervention. It is recommended to identify places of referral prior to the training, if these exercises seem to put someone into too deep waters (mentally or emotionally) or a training participant asks for specialised support. Teachers can do amazing things, but not wonders, and there is no shame in admitting it.

The famous Serenity Prayer goes like this:

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
(Reinhold Niebuhr)

Stress is inevitable in life. Sometimes it feels almost overwhelming. There seems to be so much to attend to. Maybe time is not on our side, and we feel rushed and flustered.

Stress can be caused by various reasons. Some stress factors we cannot influence at all, and then all there is to do is accept them and find ways to feel better despite them. Often, we need courage to move forward and find new ways to deal with things, but it is not easy – if it was, we probably would not feel so stressed at all. It is, however, sometimes difficult to know, which things are within our influence, and which are not. During this Stress and relaxation module, we practise relaxation techniques to feel calmer even in stressful situations (in all three sessions), discuss things the participants have found useful in problematic times (sessions 1 and 2) and try out Circle of Influence exercise to pinpoint those things we can change (in session 3).

1.1. Stress - how to define it, identify it and cope with it as a teacher?

Suggested duration: 1h 30 min

Objectives for the specific training session	<p>At the end of the training, the participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and identify external and internal stressors within themselves and in their work community/in their colleagues • Practise basic techniques of stress management
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Box Breathing • Definition of Stress and what symptoms it can cause • Identifying Stress • Emotional coping tree • Energizer Apple, Orange, Banana • Conclusion
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts of Emotional coping-trees, • Blackboard or similar, • Means to play soft background music for the breathing exercise (optional)

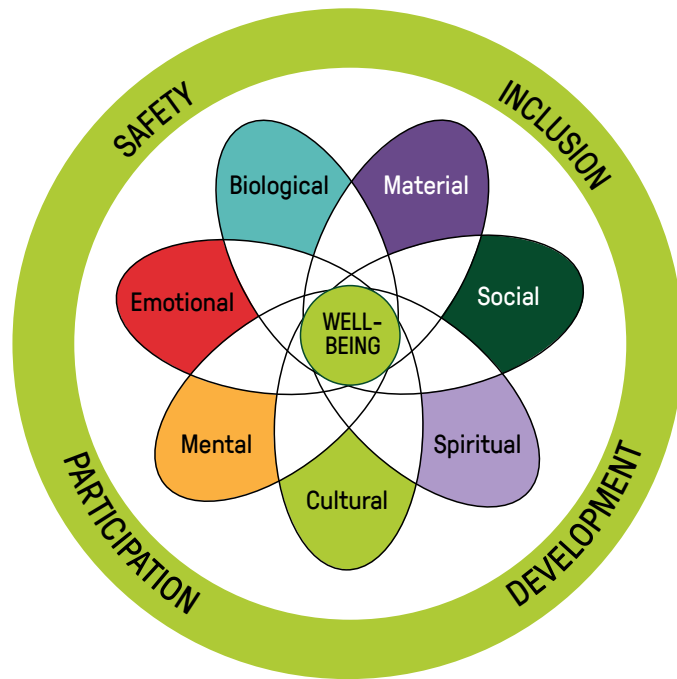
Welcome (10')

Facilitator: Welcome everyone. In this session we are going to discuss teacher well-being and stress management. By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of teacher well-being.
- Use basic stress management techniques.
- Identify methods to support your own well-being.

Facilitator: As you have seen, teaching is a profession that involves many different roles and this can be stressful. However, teaching is rewarding, and teachers are essential in refugee and displacement contexts. To continue to stay motivated, and to have a positive impact on your students' well-being, it is important to take care of your own well-being.

Explain to the participants that well-being does not only refer to our physical health. It also refers to our emotional, social, and mental health. Take a look at the Well-being flower. Well-being includes what is good for a person in many different ways. For example, it might include participating in a meaningful social role, feeling happy and hopeful, living according to your values and having positive social relations and a supportive environment.



Picture: FCA "well-being flower"

Activity 1. Belly / Box breathing (10')

Also known as four-square breathing, box breathing is very simple to learn and practice. In fact, if you've ever noticed yourself inhaling and exhaling to the rhythm of a song, you're already familiar with this type of paced breathing.

Facilitator: Take a comfortable seat and check your posture. Begin by shifting your focus to your breath:

With your eyes open or closed, notice your breath. Focus on the air as you breathe in. Is it hot? Cold? Feel the oxygenated air expand your lungs and your chest rising.

Then observe the decompression of your chest as you release.

Facilitator: Exhale to a count of four. 1-2-3-4. Hold your breath. 1-2-3-4. Inhale to a count of four. 1-2-3-4. Hold the air in your lungs for a count of four. 1-2-3-4.

Exhale and begin the pattern anew. Count in your own rhythm, it doesn't need to be paced with the person next to you. Make sure your belly and diaphragm are relaxed. The belly should become round with inhalation and "empty" with exhalation.

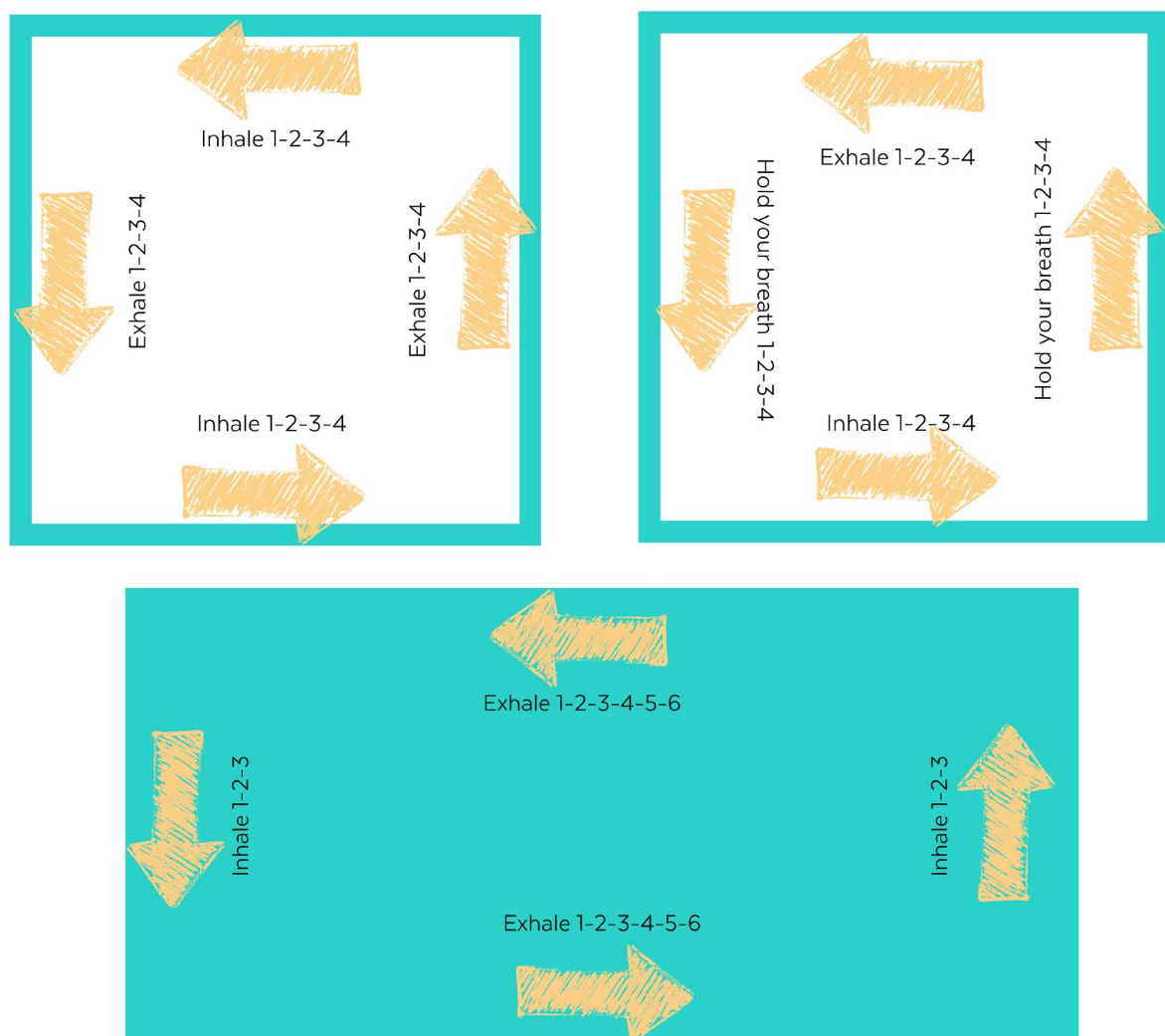
Continue to focus your attention on your breathing, with no changes or expectations, only awareness of your breath in the present moment.

! Continue for some 2-3 minutes. You can add relaxing music in the background, if possible.

Facilitator: How do you feel? Do you notice any difference?

You can point out to the participants that if they get dizzy, just breathe normally or change the inhale and exhale a little shorter.

You can tell the participants that box breathing is an instant way to feel a little better. You can show picture: box breathing and explain how it is easy to vary as well, for example, you can try how it feels to elongate your exhale. That is said to be the quickest way to relax.



Picture: Box breathing

Activity 2. Defining stress (10')

Facilitator: According to the WHO definition, stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives.

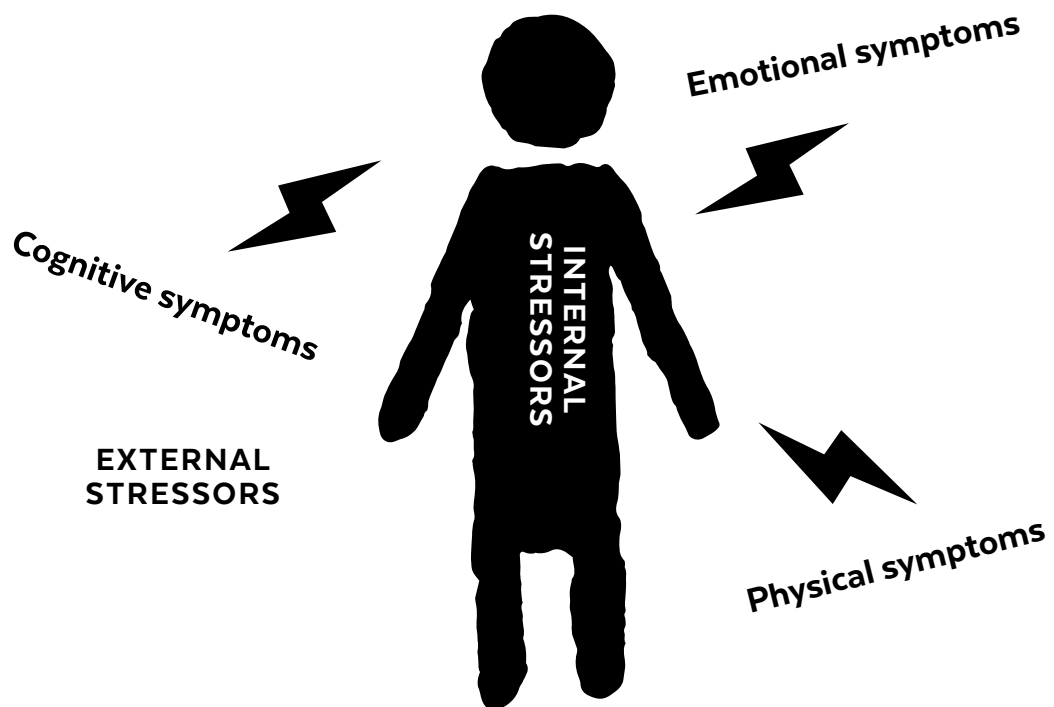
Explain to the participants that everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way we respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to our overall well-being. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Coping styles and symptoms of stress vary from person to person.

Continue by describing how stress affects both the mind and the body. A little bit of stress is good and can help us perform daily activities. Too much stress can cause physical and mental health problems.

Ask the participants how stress may manifest in a person. You can refer to the different symptoms below:

- **Emotional symptoms:** Stress makes it hard for us to relax and can come with a range of emotions, including anxiety, irritability, impatience or reduced motivation.
- **Cognitive symptoms:** When stressed, we may find it difficult to concentrate/focus or learn new things.
- **Physical symptoms:** We may experience headaches or other body pains, an upset stomach or trouble sleeping.
- **Chronic stress** can worsen pre-existing health problems.

! Show the participants picture: Stress and its symptoms. Remind them that everyone has stress occasionally, but there is always something we can do to make us feel at least a little bit better.



Picture: Stress and its symptoms.

Activity 3. Identifying stress (15')

Facilitator: So, everyone is familiar with stress. Why do we feel stressed?

Let everyone think of reasons from their own point of view. Ask someone to share their reasons and write them on a blackboard or flipchart, if possible.

Facilitator: Thank you for sharing! I bet these reasons feel familiar to many of us. The reasons behind our stress are called stressors and they can be divided in two categories, external stressors and internal stressors.

! Give examples of external and internal stressors, below are some good examples you may use.

! External Stressors

In society:

- War, conflict, crisis
- Death of a loved one
- Noise
- Insecure situation

At school:

- Over-crowded classrooms
- Noise
- Language-related issues (e.g. learners who don't speak the same language as the teacher)
- Learners with challenging behaviour etc.

! Internal Stressors

Person's state of mind:

- Self-criticism
- Low self-esteem
- Poor or unhealthy diet (can be external)
- Overloaded schedule
- Lack of sleep
- Unrealistic expectations

At school, internal stressors can be:

- Insecurity as a teacher
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Difficulties to prioritise and organise the workload

Facilitator: Now when you know this, you can take another look at the reasons someone gave for their stress. It is not always easy to tell whether the stressor is external or internal. For example, an overloaded schedule can be both.


Explain to the participants that we have now classified the causes of stress and placed them either outside or inside of us. Tell the participants that when choosing to do something about

the stressors, it can help to notice where the cause of the stress lies. If the stress comes from the outside world, we can try to keep our peace and not let it settle in. Then, with a calm mind, we can decide what action we want to take.

If we conclude that the outside world is not threatening us, and the stress we feel is completely internal, it is a clue for us to take better care of ourselves to enable us to feel more at ease. Maybe we need to rest, exercise, or have a good chat with a trusted friend.

Activity 4. Coping with stress / Managing stress (25')

Facilitator: Learning how to manage stress can help us feel less overwhelmed and support our mental and physical well-being. Stress management begins with attempting to look after your own well-being. Think about what makes you feel good and how you act when you are well.

Hand out copies of the Emotional coping-tree  [appendix 1](#). Alternatively, the participants can draw the tree on a piece of paper. Let everyone write down as many things as they can think of which help them feel better and relax. This is their unique toolbox against stress. Some of the tools can be too personal to share, and that is quite all right. You can encourage the participants to use initials or little drawings as reminders of those tools.

Tell participants that these relaxation aids should be diverse: some can require time and money (like going to the cinema, cooking for the family) and others should be easier (like having some water, singing or brushing one's hair.)

After everyone has thought of their own ways, ask some of the participants to share some tips. Encourage others to write them down, if they think they could use these tools, too.

It may be needed to point out that not all coping mechanisms are healthy. For example, drugs or alcohol can seem very tempting in times of trouble, but they can cause a lot of new problems.

Activity 5. Energizer Apple, Orange, Banana (10')

Facilitator: Sometimes the stress eases when you do something so complicated that you cannot think of your worries at the same time. If this complicated thing is also something that makes your heart go faster and deepens your breathing, you have hit two birds with one stone. This little exercise should make you forget your troubles for a moment and put a smile on your face.

Facilitator: Please, stand up and form a circle. Then you all turn clockwise and put your hands on the shoulders of the person on your left. I will say "Apple", and everyone will jump forward. If I say "Orange", everyone jumps backwards. And if the command is "Banana!", everyone turns facing the opposite direction and grabs the next person on the shoulders.

Go over the rules a couple of times and then try it out. You will find out that it is impossible to dwell on troubles doing this and laughing will make you feel good.

You can tell the participants that this energizer is easy to use with learners as well.

Thank everyone for their hard work. Remind them to try to feel compassion and be nice to themselves every day, whether feeling stressed out or not.

If you wish, you can end the session by practising another round of box breathing together. Maybe this time you could try it with shorter inhales and longer exhales.

Conclusion (10')

Thank everyone for their hard work. Remind them to try to feel compassion and be nice to themselves every day, whether feeling stressed out or not.

If you wish, you can end the session by practising another round of box breathing together. Maybe this time you could try it with shorter inhales and longer exhales.



Ugandan teachers playing Apple, Orange, Banana.

PHOTO: KATI KARJALAINEN-RIMPPÄ / FINN CHURCH AID.

1.2. Common reasons teachers feel stressed and how to come up with a plan

Suggested duration: 1h 15 min

Objectives for the specific training session	<p>During the session, the participants will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarise themselves with two different methods to ease stress • Discuss some of the main stressors teachers have • Find some solutions to these common reasons for stress <p>Note: This session includes a lot of guided conversation. Let the participants know and feel you respect their thoughts. The material includes some example answers in case your conversation starts slowly. It is important to note that these are not “the right answers” and the participants can come up with far better solutions. Create an atmosphere where it is easy to be present and listen carefully what others have to say.</p> <p>! Consider arranging the room so that everyone can see one another. As the facilitator, you should join the participants, to create a calm atmosphere where you are sharing your thoughts as equals, as colleagues.</p>
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and energizer • Group conversation • Wrapping up the conversation • Conclusion • Guided Meditation
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky notes • Pens

Agenda (5')

Welcome everyone to the second session of the Stress and relaxation module. Tell the participants that today they will learn more about stress and internal and external stressors.

You can start by reminding the participants that internal stressors are the thoughts and feelings around the stressful situation and external stressors are the circumstances themselves.

Tell the participants that after the session they will have more tools to cope with internal stressors and some plans to start to make some difference to the circumstances.

Facilitator: Last time we practised box breathing. The breathing and making it slower is a powerful way to make the racing mind slower, too. Also, yoga, stretching and singing can make changes to breathing and therefore reduce stress. The other way to influence breathing is exercise. If you do something physical to lift your heart rate and make you a little breathless for a moment, after the exercise, the calming down can take the edge off your original anxiety. Today, we are taking this approach for a calmer mind.

Activity 1. Walk and run (10')

Instruct the participants to stand up. Then ask them to start walking in their place. After walking for a few seconds, ask the participants to start marching and lifting their knees high. Then instruct the participants to begin jogging and finally instruct them to run - and finally run as fast as you can, go, go, go! A few seconds should be enough.

Do the exercise again: walk, march, jog, run and go, go, go! Then ask everyone to sit down again. Does everyone feel ready to start today's work?

Facilitator: How did that feel? Does anyone want to share feelings on this?

You can point out that this is an easy little exercise to use in a classroom, too. It can lift the spirit of a tired group of learners and give a boost to continue work.

Activity 2. Group conversation (35')

Facilitator: A famous prayer called the Serenity prayer is usually phrased like this: "God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

To feel better despite the stress, we need some calming methods, for example, the box breathing or the energizer we just did. This refers to the first part of the prayer: there are things we cannot instantly change but we can try to affect our state of mind regardless of whether we can do anything or not. When we feel more at ease, it is time to try and take some action about the situation itself.

Next you can describe some common external stressors teachers experience. Ask the participants to divide into small groups of maximum 5 participants and brainstorm small plans a teacher could try out when facing the example stressors. After the exercise, each group should have at least 3 concrete little things one can do to make the situation less stressful.

Remind the participants that there are no right or wrong answers or easy solutions. Usually, the stressful problems in the classroom have no quick fixes. However, a teacher with a plan (and a back-up plan!) is better equipped to make a situation more tolerable for themselves and the learners. It also reduces the impact of internal stressors to think of different ways to deal with the situation.

! You can come up with your own, or use the below issues that can cause the teacher stress, and which can now be debated:

1. **Technology issues.** Teachers can feel constantly frustrated with coming and going electricity, the lack of internet, if it is part of their teaching equipment, poor connections, or old devices. Can you make some suggestions to form a plan to overcome these?
2. **No teaching materials or materials** are not updated. In changing circumstances, we sometimes need to teach things we have absolutely no material whatsoever or the materials we have don't cover the subject we need to teach. How should we try to teach in that case?
3. **Student engagement and motivation.** Keeping students engaged and motivated can be challenging in any learning environment, but it becomes even more so during a crisis when students may be dealing with additional stressors or distractions at home. What to do?
4. **Emotional well-being.** Learners may experience heightened anxiety, fear and stress, too. They can bring this to the classroom with them and it can cause a variety of problems. How can teachers support them?
5. **Communication with parents.** The guardians of our learners can be the most important resource of support for teachers. It is, however, possible that they either have no interest in the school or give the child little opportunity to study at all. Or guardians may have a lot of interest, but only a little trust and they criticise everything and do not respect the teacher and the school. Both situations can cause stress to the teacher. How should a teacher tackle these challenges?
6. **Supporting diverse learners.** Teachers should cater to the diverse needs of their students. Some learners may need more time and clearer instructions, some can find it very hard to adjust to any changes during the school day. What little steps can a teacher do to make their teaching more accessible to all?
7. **Groups that are difficult to manage.** It is quite a common problem to have an oversized group of learners. It is not possible to tell what size of group could be manageable: it depends on the learners, the size of the classroom, how diverse the needs of the learners are, do they have a common language and many other factors. However, if the teacher feels that the group is too big and demanding, it can feel very intimidating, especially if the group has difficulties concentrating and feels restless. Please come up with some easy steps a teacher could take in this situation.

Help to form the groups and give them their topic. If you use all the topics, you will need 7 groups. They need not be equally sized, so you can simply let them choose the topic they would like to discuss and provide 7 places, where the groups can converse.

Let the groups talk for 15 minutes. If possible, offer them sticky notes to write down their suggestions, one solution per note. You can write the 7 issues on the blackboard as a reminder.

When the time is up, ask for attention and let the groups share what easy first steps they suggest. Let others comment. If needed, you can fill in some of these answers. If you started to use the blackboard, write some of the solutions there – starting with the ones the group offered or let them stick their notes around their topic.

! Possible solutions to some of the common stressors:

TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

- Being on time and testing whether the devices are working today,
- Being less dependent on technology,
- Having plans for the lesson on paper,
- Being flexible and ready to adjust the plans,
- Having a traditional chalk board in the classroom,
- Planning ahead and doing things that require technology when it is available and some other things when it is not.

NO RELEVANT MATERIAL

- You are probably not alone with this matter. Try to find colleagues facing the same challenge. Maybe you can share materials or plan together.
- Make the objectives very clear to yourself. Ask yourself, what is it you want to teach. Then it can be easier to find ways to do it.
- If the learners are older, you can consider investigating the matter together. This is known to be effective when trying to learn a new computer programme without instructions – youngsters are usually very able to find out how it works, and the teacher can learn it from them.
- Try to simplify the matter to 3-5 main points. Then you can come up with some learner-centred methods and activating ways to teach these main points. You need to go over the points many times during the next lessons. They provide a simple structure for you to go over the finer details of the subject.
- Consider making an exercise to help the learners to remember the main points. Perhaps you can sing them together using a common tune or have a move for each point and then dance them over every now and then.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

- Planning the lessons so that they are interesting,
- Making sure students can understand you and the lessons (e.g. by using visual aids, speech and writing, incorporating active learning methods and learning through play activities),
- Telling the learners ahead what they are about to learn,
- Being interested in the learners and their circumstances but also reminding them that at school they are building their own future, and they can consider school as a little serene place a little outside of the chaotic world.

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Remember Look, Listen and Link be empathetic but make sure you know how to use the referral pathways to reach professionals to help the children, colleagues or any person who has shared their troubles with you.
- The school days should remain predictable and safe and offer a kind of safe haven in difficult situations.
- You can instil some relaxation and breathing exercises into your lessons.
- Drama, arts and crafts, music and sports can help the children express their feelings.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARENTS / GUARDIANS:

- Having a guardians' meeting or even open-doors-day at school,
- Being very friendly and explaining that you have the same goal, the best interests of the child,
- Letting them know more about the school and your ways as a teacher,
- Asking directly for their help in a particular matter and expressing your gratitude afterwards.
- Bear in mind that it is impossible to please everyone and if someone is using you to vent their own difficult feelings, it is not right and not your fault. Take another teacher with you to the meeting especially if you feel this can be the case. Do your bit to make the staffroom a place where everyone can share their problems and seek solutions together.

SUPPORTING DIVERSE LEARNERS

- Planning ahead is the key. You should know very well what the few most important points of your lesson are, not only the main objectives, but the exercises during the lesson which are the key points. Then you can offer concrete material for these key points. These could include for example a picture, a game, a drawing, a role play activity, lyrics for a known song. Use this to teach the key points to everyone, and all learners have a clear structure for finer details of the matter.
- Be patient and offer repetition as needed.
- Let the learners help each other, too, it will benefit them all.

GROUPS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO MANAGE:

- They can be noisy. Make sure everyone can hear you. You don't need to shout, but you can walk around amongst the students. If this is not possible, you can introduce a signal to tell everyone it is your turn to speak. Consider teaching everyone to follow a hand signal: When you raise your hand, everyone raises theirs and starts to listen to you. Another way to tell everyone you are starting to speak, and it is their turn to listen is to clap a rhythm and have them repeat it. You can also make a little chant together and then teach it as a signal to be quiet: you say (for example) "The Sun is shining" and everyone replies, "And now it is time to start the days' work." When this kind of practice is familiar to your learners, it helps you to start speaking without first asking for quiet in a possibly unfriendly tone.
- Make sure you say something worth listening - plan your lessons, know what you are trying to establish during the lesson and tell that to the learners, as well.
- Don't expect them to listen to you intently the whole day. You need activities, which allow them to talk and move a little.
- Take breaks.
- Make rules for the class together with the learners. Learners don't like the noise themselves, and you can all agree that everyone must listen when the teacher speaks.
- After activities, you can have a signal to let everyone know it is time to listen again: maybe use a bell or switch the lights off and on again or clap your hands. It can be the same signal you use in the beginning of the lesson. Then you can have a little competition: take time, how much it will take the learners to settle down and try to be quicker next time. This is a game of positive reinforcement. Praise the students for getting into their seats and calming down so quickly and you can say that you know that they have improved already but you believe in them, and you know next time you can beat your time and make a new record.
- Practice silence for short periods at first: maybe a little breathing exercise at the beginning and end of the lesson.

Activity 4. Conclusion (15')

See if you can form some groups of the solutions that were offered. Ask the participants if they can see similarities in some answers to make new headlines on the blackboard.

i These could be for example:

- Pedagogic tips
- Good planning
- Don't be alone, ask for help
- Mind the learners' view of things

Group the offered first steps under these. Now the sticky notes are handy to move to another spot on the blackboard. For example:

- Pedagogic tips (making the classroom rules together with the pupils)
- Good planning (making clear to oneself and the learners the most important aspects of the topic in lesson)
- Don't be alone, ask for help (reach out for colleagues, head teachers and parents)
- Mind the learners view of things (be gentle and patient, remember to give examples)

i It is possible that one solution could go into more than one category. If so, you can simply say it aloud and ask the participants where you decide to put it this time.

Activity 5. Guided meditation exercise (10')

Facilitator: We have now had a fruitful conversation of some of the common stressors teachers face and some simple ways that can help in their small ways. At the end of this session, we will try a little guided meditation.

Ask everyone to sit down and if they feel comfortable to close their eyes, they can do it.

i Then read the instructions in a calm voice:

Facilitator: Assume a good posture on the chair, let the soles of your feet rest firmly on the floor. The backs of your thighs rest against the seat, and your upper back against the backrest. Place both hands in your lap, and let your thighs support your hands, palms facing upwards and the back of your hands against your thighs.

Allow your breath to flow calmly at its own pace without separate effort in and out. During inhalation, the abdomen rises outward, and during exhalation, it descends. After inhaling and exhaling, take a short pause before the next inhalation begins. Breathing serves as an anchor during moments of rest, allowing you to regain focus on the peaceful rhythm of inhaling and exhaling if your thoughts wander too much and you find it difficult to concentrate.

Now, shift your attention to your face. Let your face relax. Release the tension from your forehead and let the expressions on your cheeks melt away. You may feel your facial expression becoming tranquil. Now, focus on the upper neck and shoulders. Let your shoulders

ders descend during exhalation. You don't need to support your shoulders, and you may feel them sinking down heavily and peacefully. The upper neck also relaxes, and you feel the tension releasing at the base of your skull. The sensation of warmth and softness may spread from the upper neck to the shoulders and from there to the upper arms.

Bring your attention to the upper arms resting in your lap. They feel heavy and peaceful in your lap. This sensation spreads from the back of the upper arms to the front and down to the forearms. Your palms feel heavy and warm in your lap. The feeling of tranquillity slowly spreads from the upper back to the fingers. Your breath flows freely in and out, calming with tranquillity. You can always return to your breathing if your thoughts begin to wander.

Now, feel how your upper back rests against the backrest. You feel both the sensation of tranquillity and heaviness spreading through your upper back, while at the same time, your chest rises gently with the rhythm of breathing and feels light. Breathing requires no effort, and pauses during breathing feel natural. Now, shift your attention to the lower back and down to the backs of your thighs. Feel how you sit firmly on the chair and from the lower back to the thighs, it feels tranquil and heavy. You may feel a sensation of warmth as blood circulation improves and tension releases.

Now, bring your attention to your calves, and feel the increasing sensation of weight in them. The feeling spreads all the way down to your ankles and then to the soles of your feet. Your feet rest on the ground, and from your calves to your toes, there is a heavy and tranquil feeling. You are now allowed to rest for a moment. Let go of your thoughts and be in this moment without worrying about the next.

Let everyone sit quietly for a few minutes. Then slowly open your eyes, maybe stretch a little and come back to this moment.

Thank everyone for their participation in the session. Tell the participants that as they leave, they can walk by the blackboard and select some notes for themselves, to offer possible solutions in their daily work.

1.3. The circle of influence

Suggested duration: 2 h

Objectives for the specific training session	By the end of the session, participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the Circle of Influence • Have an honest look at one's possibilities to change and influence the circumstances and not underestimate or overestimate them • Use one's own situation as a case study or an example, trying to concentrate on things one can have any influence over and find some small steps to start. • Have tried two new relaxation methods: progressive relaxation and mindfulness
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Silent line exercise • Circle of Influence introduction and exercise • Progressive relaxation • Mindfulness exercise • Conclusion • Silent line exercise
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tray, a plate and a little saucer for a group of maximum 5 participants • Sticky notes and pens • Means to play soft music from the speakers (optional) • Yoga matts or blankets, if participants wish to lie down for the relaxation exercise

Activity 1. Silent line (15')

Welcome everyone to the third session of stress and relaxation.

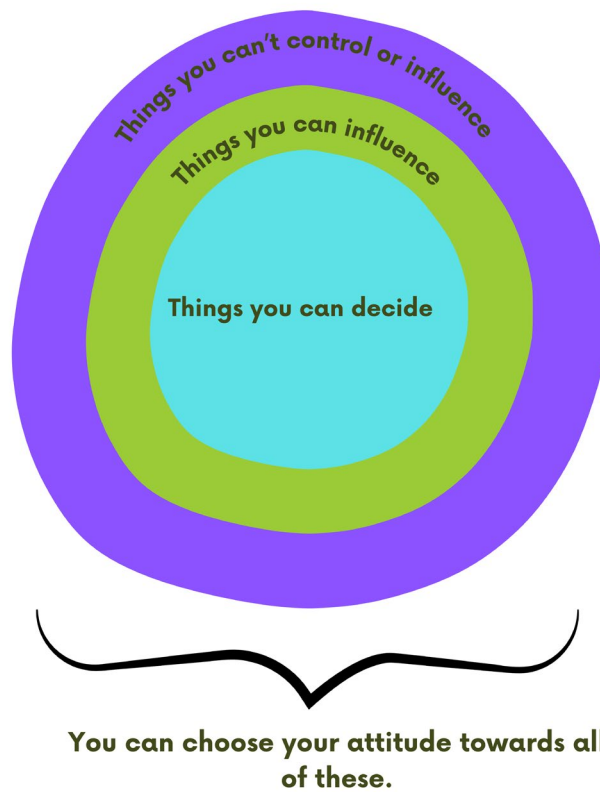
Ask the participants how they are feeling today.

Let them know that we will do a little silent exercise first. Ask everyone to stand up, without talking. Ask participants to imagine a line. At one end of the line, you are doing really great, never better. At the other end you are feeling low. Show the participants where the ends are.

Ask the participants how they are feeling at the moment. Instruct everyone to take a moment to listen to themselves and go to the line accordingly. Instruct the participants that they can simply acknowledge their mood, there is no need to shift it now. The reasons behind the current state of mind need not to be discussed at the moment.

Explain that we can be silent together and that everyone is welcome as they are, whether happy or sad, energetic or tired. Thank everyone for being here today. Ask the participants to return to their seats.

Circle of Influence



Picture: The Circle of Influence

Introduction to the Circle of Influence (15')

Facilitator: Today we are learning about the Circle of Influence. After the session, you will have a tool to use your strengths wisely on things you can change. We will also try some new relaxation exercises.

Explain to the participants that when things are not going how we would like them to, it is easy to feel frustrated about everything. Our mind races around all the problems we face, and we make no distinction between them. Some of them are quite useless to dwell on – if there is absolutely nothing we can actually do about them, there is no point in thinking of them so much and dwelling on them. The Circle of Influence exercise is to help to distinguish the things we can change from those we cannot.

Continue by asking the participants to imagine all their worries inside a big circle. Inside this circle is another, smaller one. The biggest circle is the things we can't control or influence. Like the weather. It can be annoying or dangerous, but as we can't make it change, there is no point dwelling on it. It is better to concentrate on something nearer the centre, like the next circle, the things we can influence, but not decide for ourselves. Maybe we can have a say in the days' schedule – at what time it would be best to go outside, the weather being what it is. The small circle is the most important, as it contains the things we can actually decide for ourselves. In this example, it is likely that we can decide what to wear. In every case we can choose our attitude towards things.

Show the participants The Circle of Influence picture and go it over once more to make it familiar to everyone.

Activity 2. Circle of Influence (30')

In this activity, divide the participants into small groups of maximum 5 persons, and give sticky notes to all the groups. Ask everyone to think of the last few weeks in classroom – did you find something difficult or frustrating?

Ask the participants to discuss this in the groups. Remind everyone that there is no shame in having problems and we all have them. People often feel their concerns are unique, but they seldom are – many of our worries are in fact universal. Instruct the groups to select some of the concerns they have had lately. Write those things down, one issue per sticky note.

Then you need the tray, big plate and a little saucer. If it is not convenient to use real things, you can simply draw a big circle on paper or on the blackboard.

Place all the concerns from all the groups on to the common tray, on the very edges of it. As an example, the issues could be “We don’t have common classroom rules”, “I have too many pupils”, “There is too much noise in my classroom”, “I feel rushed,” “Not all students are fluent in the language I teach in.”

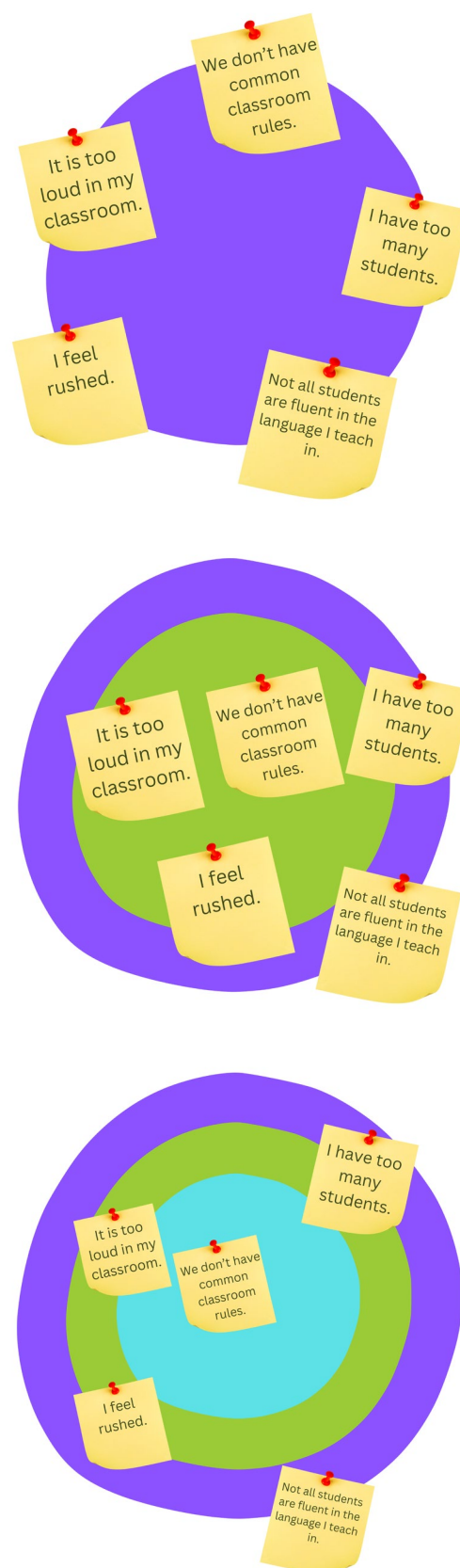
When you feel ready, take the plate or draw another circle inside the first one. Now discuss which of the issues you can have some influence on, even if you can’t decide them yourself.

! Please note that there are no correct answers every time and sometimes the discussion is the best this exercise has to offer! It is useful to ponder whether there actually is something you can do about the problem.

Select the issues you can move to the plate, on the edges of it. Then place the little saucer in the middle. This is the most important bit of this exercise: Which of the worries are easiest to solve?

The group can make new sticky notes if they wish. Sometimes the discussion helps to see new solutions, and, even if the first problem is something they have only little or no influence on, they can now separate a little part of it to those problems they can solve themselves.

In our example the conclusion could be: One can’t choose the size of the group nor their native language. One can influence the noise level there



Picture: An example of the circle of influence exercise

is in the classroom and the feeling of being rushed. One can decide to make classroom rules with the students.

When the groups are ready, they can share their thoughts with other groups. If there are many groups and no time to discuss for long, they can just share the thought on the saucer, or the smallest circle in the middle.

Facilitator: Thank you for your contribution! Maybe everyone got at least one new idea to try out at work or in their private lives? The very thought that there is something to be done about the problems often help one to feel less overwhelmed. However, in teaching things often take time and even for those problems there is a solution, it takes time to reach it. In the meantime, it is important to find ways to feel calm despite the circumstances.

Tell the participants that in the next activity we are going to try some relaxation methods, and first of them is called Progressive Muscle Relaxation.

Activity 3: Progressive Relaxation (20')

You can play soft music from the speakers, but it's optional.

Tell everyone to find a comfortable place to sit or lie down. Tell the participants that in this exercise, we will first tighten our muscles and then let them loose, relax them. Start from your feet and work your way up to your face, trying to only tense those muscles intended. Okay, let us start.

! You can read the following instructions out loud:

Sit comfortably with your back straight or lie down. Loosen clothing, take off your shoes, and get comfortable. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.

Breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.

Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.

Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls.

Take a few minutes to breathe in and out in slow, deep breaths.

When you're ready, shift your attention to your right foot. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.

Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10. Relax. Repeat. Relax.

Focus on the tension flowing away and how your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.

Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.

Shift your attention to your left foot. Slowly tense the muscles in your left foot, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10. Relax. Repeat. Relax.

Relax your foot. Focus on the tension flowing away and how your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.

Then, lower back and buttocks. Tense the muscles and hold the tension. Then relax. Repeat. Relax. You can roll a little from side to side and notice how different your whole lower body feels.

Upper body and shoulders. Lift your shoulders to your ears and tense the muscles. Count to ten. And relax. Once more – and relax.

Right arm. Tense the muscles, try to keep everything else loose. Keep it, keep it, and – relax. Again, tense it – and relax. Right hand: make it a fist, press it, press it – and relax. Once more – and relax.

Left arm. Tense the muscles, count to ten – relax. Repeat the tension – and relax. Left fist: Tighten it – and relax. Again – and relax.

Lastly, the face and the scalp. Squeeze everything together, count to ten – and relax. Once more – and relax.

To finish, focus again on your breathing. Breathe slowly and smoothly. Think about your body, from your feet to your head, enjoy noticing your head relax, and look for any sources of stress. As you exhale, release any tension you feel, enjoying the feelings of relaxation throughout your body. And when you're ready, bring your attention to where you are.

Activity 4. Mindfulness (10')

Explain that we are now ready for a little mindfulness-exercise. Tell the participants that if they want to shift their position, they can do so. You can mention that one could do just progressive relaxation or just mindfulness, but because we want to give an example of both, we are combining two little exercises into a longer one.

Tell the participants that when feeling ready, they can take a few deep breaths and close their eyes. Or they can simply soften their gaze.

! You can read the following instructions out loud:

Begin by taking a few deep breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth. With each breath, imagine roots growing from the base of your spine, reaching down into the earth, grounding you and providing stability. Feel the support of the ground beneath you as you continue to breathe deeply and steadily.

Shift your attention to your body. Starting from the top of your head, slowly scan down through your body, noticing any areas of tension or discomfort without judgement. As you become aware of these sensations, imagine breathing into those areas, allowing the breath to release any tightness or stress. Continue this scan down to your toes, bringing a gentle awareness to each part of your body.

As you continue to breathe, notice any thoughts or emotions that arise. Rather than getting caught up in them, simply acknowledge their presence without judgement, like clouds passing through the sky. Allow them to come and go, returning your focus to your breath whenever you find your mind wandering.

Shift your focus to gratitude. Think of three things you are grateful for in this moment, however small they may seem. It could be the support of a colleague, the smile of a student, or simply the warmth of the sun shining through the window. Take a moment to really savour each of these blessings, allowing yourself to feel a sense of appreciation and contentment.

As you prepare to end this practice, set an intention for the rest of your day or week. It could be a simple phrase or affirmation that resonates with you, such as "I choose calm amidst chaos" or "I am resilient and capable." Maybe you remember the thought you chose for your saucer in the Circle of Influence exercise. You can now feel capable of making a difference in the matter. Take a moment to repeat this intention to yourself, feeling its power and presence within you.

Slowly begin to bring your awareness back to the room, gently opening your eyes if they are closed. Take a moment to notice how you feel, perhaps more centred or grounded than before. Carry this sense of mindfulness with you as you continue with your day, knowing that you can always return to this practice whenever you need a moment of calm amidst the storm. Thank yourself for taking this time for self-care and nurturing your well-being.

❗ Let everyone be quiet for a moment. Then you start to stretch and yawn. Slowly, stand up and go to your seat.

Conclusion (15 min')

Facilitator: You have now completed the Stress and relaxation module. Congratulations! We started by discussing, what stress is and how we define it, and what causes us stress. In session two we found ways to overcome some of the common stressors teachers face. And in this third session, we concentrated on identifying the problems we can solve to find a way forward.

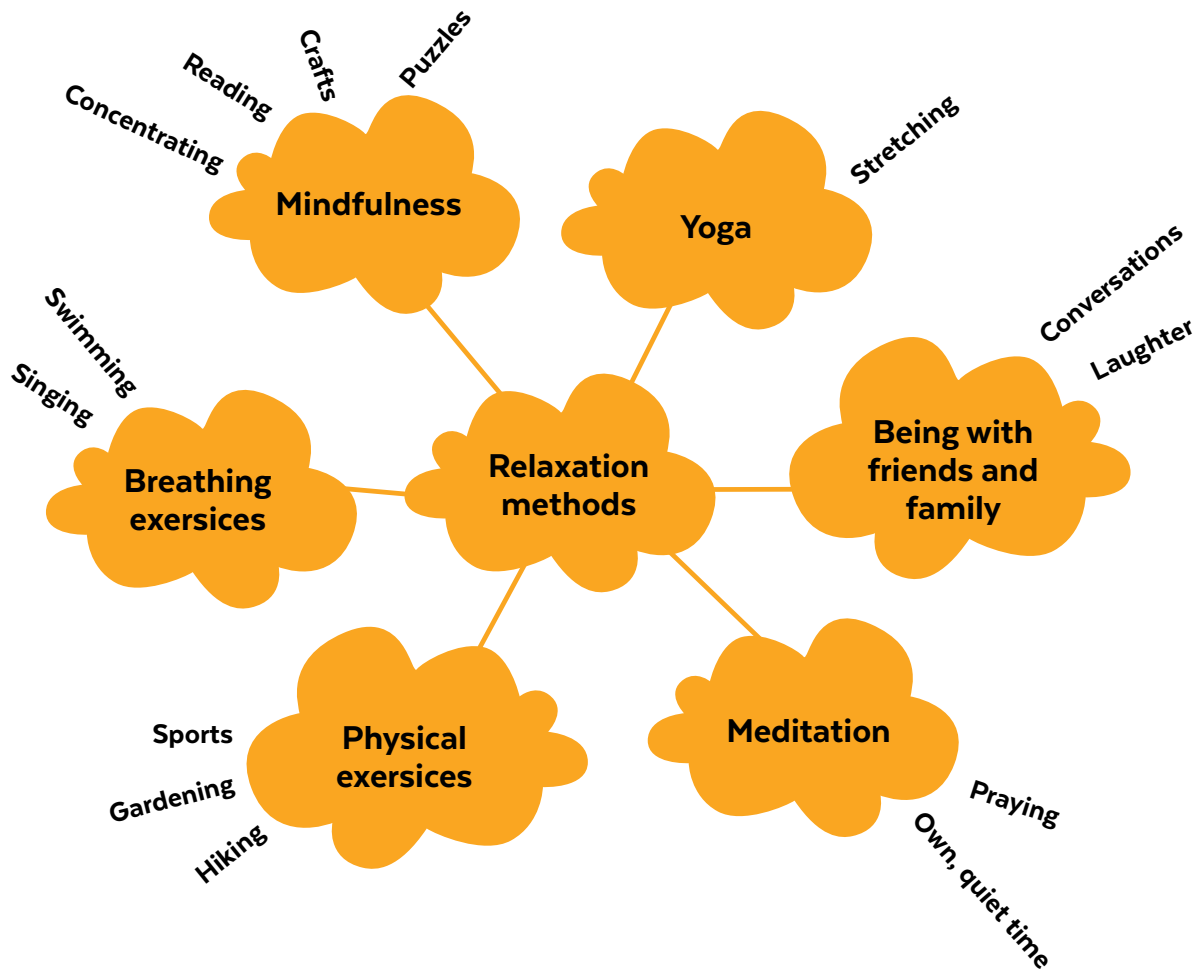
In the meantime, we practised stress control. We tried box breathing and its variations, energizers which take so much concentration that you can't feel worried at the same time, guided meditation, mindfulness and progressive relaxation. You also made your own personal suggestions of relaxation methods to your Emotional coping-tree.

Take a look at the mind map showing different ways to relax (picture 11.)

Facilitator: Children notice very easily how grown-ups are feeling – students mimic their teachers. It is very important for the teachers to take care of their own well-being, so they can best take care of the learners. Hopefully you got some new tools for your life to enhance your well-being and perhaps practise with your learners at school, as well.

Ask the group what the best part of the module was for them. Would anyone want to share their thoughts? Prompt the participants to describe which relaxation method (Picture: relaxation methods) they would like to try out next?

Allow some time for discussion.



Picture: Relaxation methods

Activity 5. Silent line (10')

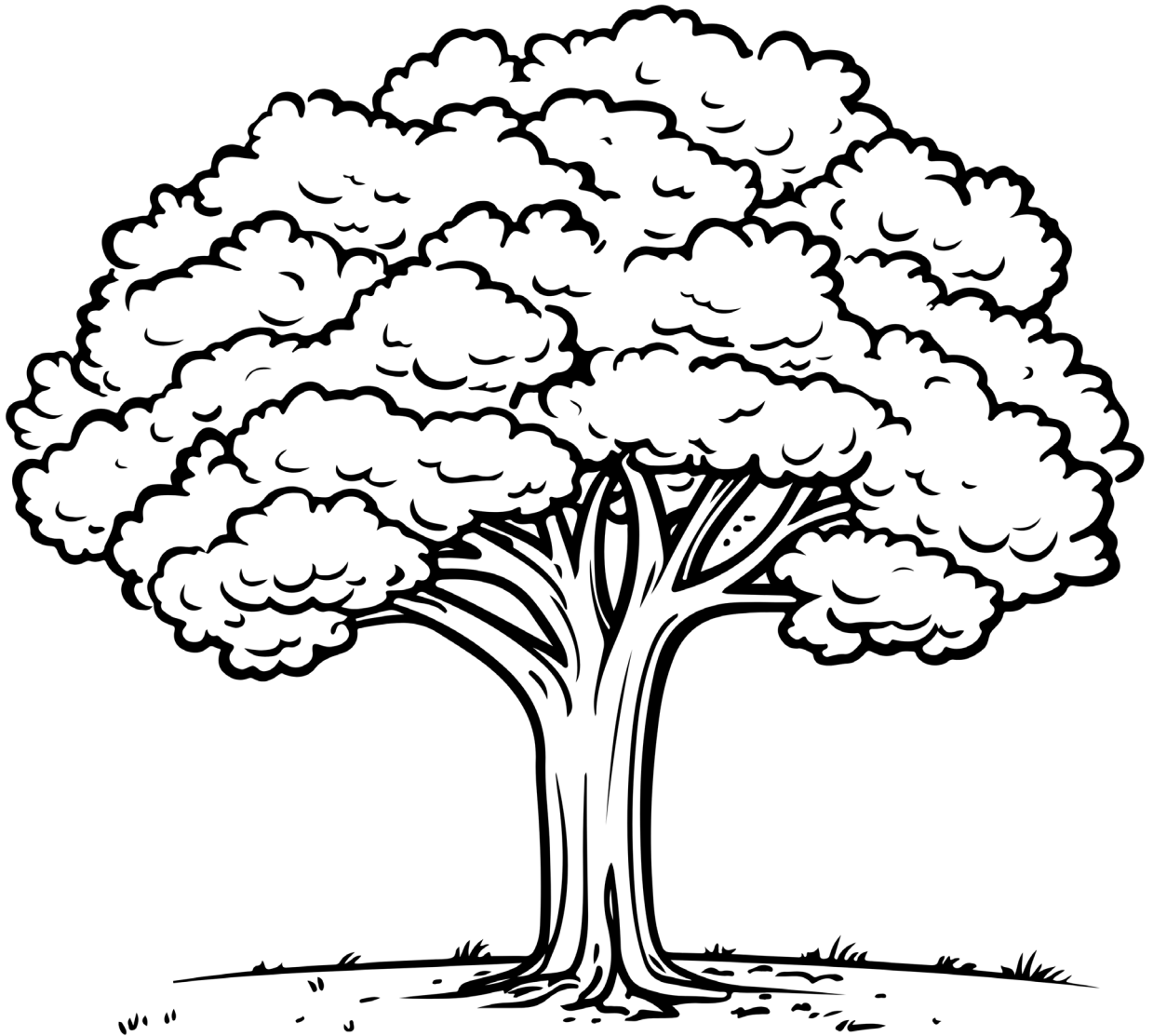
Tell the participants that the lesson began by forming a line without talking. We had one end of the line if you were doing great and the other if you were feeling low. Instruct the participants to ask themselves, how they are feeling now. How are they equipped to face the world outside and the rest of their day? Ask the participants to go silently to the queue again.

Let everyone select their place. Remind them that there are no right, or wrong answers and the exercise is just to full-heartedly listen to their own thoughts and feelings at the present moment.

Thank everyone for the session and the whole module and contributing so well.

Appendix 1

Emotional coping tree for session 1.1 Activity 4. Coping with stress / managing stress



What makes you feel better?

Write to branches as many personal wellbeing-tips as you can think of. If the tip is too personal, you can write initials or draw a little picture for a reminder. Remember to be good at yourself every day.



Eunice Komugabe teaches Geography and Religion at Ntenugi Secondary School in Rwamwanja refugee settlement, Uganda, in October 2024.

PHOTO: VILLE LINTUSAARI / FINN CHURCH AID.

Module 2. Compassion

“ You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.” – Buddha.

Kind words and a helping hand have more effect in the classroom than criticism. Many adults can still remember a teacher that spoke kindly to them or even looked at them approvingly. When learners have learning difficulties or misbehave, they often know themselves that they are not meeting expectations. They don't need the teacher to tell them. A teacher can disapprove and in some cases it may be needed, but that doesn't give learners new tools to make better choices. With a little compassion the teacher can find new approaches – what are the root causes behind the issues. When those are sufficiently dealt with, behaviour can improve without any other measures taken.

Sometimes it is easier to feel compassion towards others than oneself. We can shred ourselves apart the way we would never do to others. We can be our worst judges and cause ourselves a lot of stress with degrading, internal talk. It can make us feel intimidated, hurt and afraid. These are not a good starting point to learn new things and improve. When wanting to better oneself, there is a much better solution: self-compassion.

Self-compassion is the process of turning compassion inward. We are kind and understanding rather than harshly self-critical when we fail, make mistakes, or feel inadequate. We give ourselves support and encouragement rather than being cold or judgmental when challenges and difficulties arise in our lives.

Research indicates that self-compassion is one of the most powerful sources of coping and our resilience can radically improve our mental and physical well-being. It motivates us to make changes and reach our goals not because we are inadequate, but because we care and want to be happy. <https://self-compassion.org/>

Module 2 consists of 2 sessions. The first one concentrates on self-compassion and the second one broadens the view to challenging behaviour in learners and their peer relationships.



A man crossing the Nile River.

PHOTO: PHOTO: KATI KARJALAINEN-RIMPI / FINN CHURCH AID

2.1. Compassion for yourself and challenging feelings

Suggested duration: 2 h

Objectives for the specific training session	At the end of the training, the participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel kindness toward others and self • Identify self-compassion • Identify challenging emotions
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and expectations • Activity: Kindness • Activity on a Compassionate Character • Activity: Letter to yourself • Activity: Identification challenging emotions • Gratitude Circle • Feedback
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papers • Pens • Flipchart • Letter template • Envelopes • Emotion cards (attached)

Welcome (5')

Welcome everyone to this session Compassion for yourself. You can introduce the session by saying that the participants will learn about self-compassion and its importance for everyone, also for your learners.

Tell the participants that we will first have a warm-up activity.

Activity 1. Introduction and expectations (10')

The objective of the activity is to break the ice and allow everyone to learn a little more about each other and summarise their expectations for the training. Tools needed for the activity include sticky notes and a flipchart.

Facilitator: Write your name on one sticky note and your expectations for the training on the other sticky note/notes.

When everyone is ready, ask each participant to introduce themselves, starting with their name. Along with their name, each person shares a fun or interesting fact about themselves and describes their expectations for the training. The name tag will stay on everyone's shirt and the expectation notes will be put on the flipchart so everyone can see them.

Facilitator: Great! Now we look at our expectations. Is there anything you would like to add?

Tell the participants that the next activity is about kindness.

Activity 2: Kindness (20')

! This exercise should be done in a space where one can move around freely, like outside or in a gym.

You can tell the participants that the next exercise will help us feel kindness towards others. Tell the participants what to do, one instruction at a time.

Facilitator:

1. First, we walk around while looking down, not making eye contact with others.
2. Then we notice other people but still keep to ourselves.
3. Next, we look into the eyes of others when we meet them.
4. When we meet someone, we look into their eyes and give a small smile, just for ourselves.
5. Then we stop for a moment and silently wish good things for others. We might say in our minds: "I hope you're healthy. I hope you're safe. I wish you happiness."
6. Then we keep moving, and every time we meet someone, we look at them and say a kind sentence in our minds.
7. Finally, we stop and can thank ourselves for practising kindness towards others.

Facilitator: Kindness is defined as the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. If you describe someone or something as compassionate, you mean that they feel or show pity, sympathy, and understanding for people who are suffering. Next, we will meet a compassionate character.

Activity 3. Compassionate Character (20')

! The facilitator guides the participants through the following exercise, which can be done sitting, lying down, or standing in the classroom.

Facilitator can read out loud:

Please get into your place and notice how your feet touch the ground, how you sit in the chair, how your hands rest on your legs. Take a moment to notice your breath for a few breaths. Notice how air flows in and out, and how with each exhale, you can feel your body relaxing a bit.

Next, we'll do an imagination exercise about a compassionate character.


Think of a person or a character who you believe is compassionate. It could be someone from your home, a teacher, a friend, or a relative. It could also be someone you don't know, but you've gotten to know them through a book or a movie. If you think of more than one character, choose one of them.

Create a mental picture of this character with other people. Notice what they say, how they speak. What expression do they have on their face? What do they do? How do they treat people who are having a hard time? How do they react to other people's good days? Is the character friendly, do they help, how do they listen?

Next, notice what thinking about this character brings up in you. What feelings do you notice? What sensations do you feel in your body? What do you notice yourself thinking?

Share your feelings, ideas...

Activity 4: Letter to myself (20')

! Materials needed for this activity include paper/ letter templates, pens, letter envelopes. You can find the letter template in the end of module 2 under  **Appendix 1: Letter to myself.**

Facilitator: We all have something we do not like about ourselves, something that makes us feel ashamed, insecure, or not "good enough". The human condition is to be imperfect, and feelings of failure and inadequacy are part of the experience of living a human life.

Think about a problem you face that makes you feel incompetent or bad about yourself. What feelings do you have when you think about this aspect of your life?

Ask the participants to make a mind map or a bullet list about this.

Facilitator: Now think of an imaginary friend who is unconditionally loving, accepting, kind, and compassionate. Imagine that this friend can see all your strengths and all your weaknesses, including the aspect you were just writing about.

Think about how this friend feels about you, and how you are loved and accepted just as you are, with all your human imperfections. This friend understands the limits of human nature and is gentle and forgiving towards you. In his great wisdom this friend understands your life history and the millions of things that have happened in your life to create you as you are in this moment. Your own limitations are linked to many things that you didn't necessarily choose: your genes, your family history, your life circumstances – things that were beyond your control.

Next, ask the participants to write a letter to themselves from this imaginary friend's point of view – focusing on the perceived shortcomings for which you tend to judge yourself.

! You can prompt the participants with the following questions:

- What would this friend tell you about your "flaw" in terms of infinite compassion?
- How will this friend convey the deep sympathy they feel for you, especially the pain you feel when you judge yourself so harshly?
- What would this friend write to remind you that you are only human, and that all people have strengths and weaknesses?
- If you think that this friend will suggest possible changes that you should make, how do these suggestions embody feelings of unconditional understanding and compassion?


❗ Instruct the participants that as they write this letter to themselves from this imaginary friend, they should try to instil a strong sense of their acceptance, kindness, concern, and desire for your health and happiness.

Allow enough time for writing.

Ask the participants to keep the letter in the designated envelope, so that they can come back and read it later.

Facilitator: Guilt is the more formal cousin of “should.” When we believe that we are somehow performing below expectations, we feel guilt for not being able to match it. We turn inward. Learning to be kind and gracious towards yourself is extremely important. When things do not go our way, we are able to be warm and gracious toward ourselves. Doing your best is enough!

Activity 5. Identification challenging emotions (20')

❗ The objective of this activity is that the participants will learn, feel and notice challenging emotions. You will need the Challenging Emotions cards for the exercise. You can find the cards for printing or copying in the end of module 2 under  **Appendix 2: Challenging Emotions.**

There are 8 emotion cards. Deal the cards to the participants. Every participant reads aloud the content of the card, name of the emotion and definition. After every emotion, discuss it: how can you feel that emotion in your body, how do you notice it from others' body language?

After the emotions have been gone through, take the cards and put the cards in a hat or similar, where they can be picked up again.

Now instruct the participants that without speaking, they should pick up one card and not show it to anyone.

Then tell the participants to one by one express the emotion described in his/her card. The others try to find out what emotion it is.

You can ask the participants: how did you know which emotion it was?

Facilitator: Emotions are complicated, and before you can start to understand their reasons, you must know what you are feeling. So, step one is working through your feelings by labelling them, understanding what it physically feels like when you are experiencing them.

Primary emotions are how we react to events and situations. They tend to be instinctive and straightforward. Secondary emotions are habitual or learned responses that are often more difficult to understand.

You can give the following example: Anne gets home from work and sees a sink full of dirty dishes. She gets angry, why? Because of the dishes, but still why, what's the point? Because after a long day at work she is tired and feels overwhelmed. Getting angry is the secondary emotion and feeling overwhelmed is the primary emotion.

Explain to the participants that there is always a reason why we react as we do. As teachers we should always remember this in our work and try to find out the primary emotions behind those ones we see. For example, underneath the anger our learners, especially teenagers, are often experiencing frustration or sadness, shame, powerlessness or hurt. It often feels safer for teens to express feelings of anger when they do not recognise the feelings underneath.

Tell the participants that it is important to name and teach learners these primary emotions. It can help teenagers understand their emotions better and make them feel safer about communicating the root cause of their anger.

Activity 6. Gratitude Circle (10')

i The next exercise aims to foster resilience and well-being among teachers working in crisis areas by cultivating a sense of gratitude and connection within the group.

Ask the participants to form a circle, holding hands. As a facilitator you could join the activity. Each participant takes turns sharing something they're grateful for. It could be a small moment of joy, an act of kindness they witnessed, or a personal strength they've discovered amidst the challenges. Encourage the participants to be specific and detailed in their sharing.

Activity 7. Feedback (15')

The aim of this activity is to check if the training has met the expectations of the participants. Share sticky notes and pens for everyone.

Facilitator: Think about the expectations you had at the beginning of the training session and write if it is met, exceeded, or unmet after finishing the training.

Collect the sticky notes. Thank everyone for their participation.

2.2. Compassion - from empathy to action

Suggested duration: 2 h

Objectives for the specific training session	At the end of the training, participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the difference between empathy and compassion • Understand why it is important to foster compassion among learners • Have ideas how to foster compassion in the classroom
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations • A story of a starfish, empathy vs compassion • Activity: How to show empathy in a classroom • Activity: Poem • Group Activity: Teachers facing challenging situations and finding compassion for learners • Activity: Tips for teachers • Guided Meditation: Self-compassion • Conclusion
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipcharts / blackboard • Markers • Handout 1 and 2 • Attachments

Welcome participants to the session on compassion.

Activity 1. Expectations (10')

Hand out sticky notes to the participants and tell them that the notes are meant for the expectations for this session, from empathy to action. Instruct the participants to write one expectation on one sticky note. They can also get more sticky notes if needed.

Collect all the sticky notes on the blackboard/wall and read them aloud.

Facilitator: How are you feeling? Are you ready for activities? Great! Here's our agenda for the day.

Let's take a look at the agenda together.

To Flipchart

- Empathy is a feeling; compassion is acting to help others

Activity 2. Starfish (10')

The objective of this activity is to break the ice.

Tell the participants that you will first read a story of the Starfish by Ross Moore.

i Participants can simply listen to the story you read out loud:

Facilitator: The starfish story.

A father and his child were walking on a beach. The beach was covered with literally thousands of starfish that had washed up. The starfish were going to dry out obviously. The child started picking them up and throwing them in the water. The father rolled his eyes. The father looked at the vast number of starfish covering the beach in both directions as far as he could see and said,

“There’s too many of them. It can’t possibly matter.”

The child threw one starfish back into the ocean and said,

“It mattered to that one.”

Ask the participants if they have experienced similar situations.

Facilitator: Empathy is characterised by an awareness of other people’s emotional experiences and an attempt to feel those same emotions from their perspective. Compassion is characterised by the desire to take action to help the other person. While both involve responding to other people’s emotions, they differ in focus.

The Dalai Lama once said, “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

Explain to the participants how research shows that practising kindness and compassion makes positive changes in our brain. It increases activities in parts of the brain involved in emotional regulation, mood regulation, decision-making, and helps overcome empathic distress and strengthens resilience.

Remind the participants that like any other social and emotional skill, compassion can be cultivated with practice. And here, teachers have an important role.

Activity 3. Compassion in the classroom (15')

i The objective of this activity is to understand the teacher’s role in fostering compassion in the classroom.

Ask the participants to divide into groups of 3-4 persons. Instruct each group to discuss what compassion looks like in the classroom. Participants have 5 minutes for the group discussion.

Let every group share 1-2 different ideas, collect them on a flipchart. Be sure the following facts are included:

- Speak with kindness.


- Apologise when you have made a mistake.
- Listen carefully and without judgement.
- Use positive encouragement and reinforcement.
- Offer help to someone with a task.
- Be happy for someone else's success.
- Accept people for who they are.
- Practice respectful behaviour toward the teacher, peers, and the classroom.


Facilitator: As educators, we have a responsibility to be positive role models for our students. Modelling compassion is an effective way to teach these skills. By demonstrating empathy and understanding or showing kindness and respect towards others, we can inspire our students to do the same.

Show empathy towards your students by acknowledging and validating their emotions. Let them know that you understand and care about their well-being. This will create a safe and supportive environment where students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and concerns.

Activity 4. Poem (10')


The objective of this activity is to understand the consequences of our actions.

Continue with the same groups as before and give Handout 1 to everyone. Let them read the poem and share thoughts with their pairs. The Poem can be found in the end of session 2, under  **Appendix 3: Poem** After reading, let participants share their thoughts amongst the entire group. Then read the poem aloud once more, pair by pair, line by line.

 Optional discussion point: This exercise can enhance self-understanding, too. If you feel you missed something growing up, is there a way you can give it to yourself today?

Activity 5. Teachers facing challenging situations and finding compassion with learners - group discussion (40')

For the next activity, form groups of approximately 6 participants. You can do this by always combining two little groups into a bigger one.

Give one example story to each group, you can find the stories in the end of module 2 under from  **Appendix 4: Example Stories**.

The stories describe challenging behaviour teachers may face in the classroom. There are 4 different stories, one of them is about a learner named Paola, the second about Susan, the third about Mark and the fourth about Ismael.

One person in each group is to read aloud the beginning of the story. Then each group is to take some time for discussion. There are some questions to structure the conversation, however, instruct them that the groups may discuss other aspects of the situation as well. Tell the groups that when they are ready, they can read the end of the story.

The groups have 15 minutes for the exercise.

Facilitator: Okay, the time is up! Now it is time to share your discussions with others. Let's take the stories one by one. Tell others the beginning of the story, then we will take some comments from the others and then the group will describe their ideas and solutions. First, the group with Paola (allow 5 minutes).

Thank the group and invite the next group to go, those who discussed Susan (allow 5 minutes).

Facilitator: Then, Mark (allow 5 minutes).

And last, Ismael (allow 5 minutes).

Activity 6. Tips for teachers (15')

Give a copy of  Appendix 5: Tips for teachers to participants.

Facilitator: Let's look at more tips on how you can foster compassion in your classroom.

Read the examples and discuss with your pair:

- How could you use these ideas in your classroom?
- How would you develop these ideas?

Activity 7. Guided Meditation: Self-Compassion (10')

Facilitator to read out loud:

Begin by finding a comfortable place where you can sit or lie down without distractions. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose, and exhale slowly through your mouth. Inhale deeply... and as you exhale, let go of any tension in your body.

Feel your shoulders drop and your muscles relax. Focus on your breath. Inhale... and exhale... Allow your breath to become a natural rhythm, calming your mind and body.

As you continue to breathe, bring to mind any feelings of frustration, overwhelm, or inadequacy you might be experiencing. Acknowledge these feelings without judgement. It's okay to feel this way.

Place one hand over your heart and the other on your abdomen. Feel the warmth and gentle pressure. Silently say to yourself, "I am human. It's okay to feel overwhelmed. I am doing my best." Imagine breathing in compassion and understanding, and exhaling any self-criticism or negative thoughts.

Picture yourself surrounded by a soft, warm light. This light represents all the support and care you offer to your students, now being directed towards you. Imagine this light filling your body with kindness, patience, and love. Allow it to soothe and comfort you.

Bathe in this soft light and say to yourself silently:

"I am enough." (repeat)

"I am making a difference." (repeat)

"I deserve kindness and compassion." (repeat)

Slowly bring your awareness back to your breath. Feel the rise and fall of your chest. Take one more deep breath in... and exhale slowly. Wiggle your fingers and toes, gently bringing movement back to your body. When you're ready, open your eyes. Take a moment to notice how you feel. Remember, self-compassion is a practice. You need self-compassion to be compassionate towards others. Be kind to yourself as you navigate the challenges of teaching.

Carry this sense of compassion with you throughout your day, knowing that you are valuable and appreciated.

Activity 8. Feedback (10')

The objective of this last activity is to check if the training has met the expectations of the participants.

Take the expectations – sticky notes from the wall. Read them through and discuss if the expectations were met.

Thank everyone for their engagement.

Resources for learning more about compassion in the classroom

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/how-my-brain-works/202210/kindness-and-compassion-are-good-your-brain>

<https://everfi.com/blog/k-12/8-activities-for-building-a-compassionate-classroom-culture-with-elementary-students/#:~:text=Let%20your%20students%20think%20about,toward%20each%20person%20or%20pet.>

Appendices for module 2

Appendix 1: A letter to myself for Activity 4 in Session 2.1 Compassion for yourself and challenging feelings

Note: You write this letter for your eyes only, you don't need to share it with anyone. This exercise helps you to take some distance between yourself and your life and trials and to speak to yourself kindly, like you would to an old friend.

Dear Me

I write this to say that despite everything we have gone through, despite everything that has happened to you, I, with all my heart, love and respect you. Things haven't always been easy, sometimes it has been a struggle, but you have pulled through.

These are the things I like in my character....

And these are the things I would like to change....

I wonder who knows this about me, but someday I would like to....

These are my abilities that help me to overcome any obstacles...

Doing my best is enough! Always remember, that I am on your side.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2: Challenging Emotions for Activity 5 in session 2.1 Compassion for yourself and challenging feelings

<p>Anger: Anger is a strong feeling that happens when things don't go the way you want, or when you feel treated unfairly or threatened. It can make you feel annoyed, mad, or even like you want to do something without thinking first.</p>	<p>Sadness: Sadness is a deep feeling of being unhappy or sorrowful, often because you've lost something or feel let down. It can be a little sad or very sad, depending on what's happened.</p>
<p>Anxiety: Anxiety is when you feel worried or nervous about things that might happen in the future. It can make your body feel tense, like your heart beating fast or sweating. If you don't deal with it, it can make it hard to do everyday things.</p>	<p>Guilt: Guilt is feeling bad because you think you've done something wrong, like breaking a rule or hurting someone's feelings. It can push you to make things right, but if it gets too strong, it can make you feel really bad.</p>
<p>Shame: Shame is a feeling of being embarrassed or worthless because you think you haven't met expectations, either from others or yourself. It's different from guilt because it's about who you are, not just what you've done.</p>	<p>Jealousy: Jealousy is when you feel unhappy because you think someone has something you want, like a friend or a possession. It can come from feeling like you're not good enough or worrying about losing something important.</p>
<p>Frustration: Frustration is feeling annoyed or disappointed when things don't go the way you planned or when there are obstacles in your way. It can happen at work, in relationships, or when you're trying to achieve something.</p>	<p>Loneliness: Loneliness is when you feel alone or disconnected from others, even if there are people around you. It can happen if you don't feel close to anyone or if you feel like you're not good at making friends. It can make you feel sad and anxious.</p>

Appendix 3: Poem for Activity 4 in Session 2.2 Compassion - from empathy to action

Children Learn What They Live

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with tolerance, they learn to be patient.

If children live with praise, they learn to appreciate.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and others.

If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

By Dorothy Law Nolte

Appendix 4: Example stories for activity 5 in Session 2.2

Compassion - from empathy to action

1. Paola: Theft

Paola had always been a good student, respected by her teachers and loved by her classmates. However, one day, during recess, Paola noticed a beautiful pencil case on her friend Emma's desk. It was the most beautiful pencil case she had ever seen. Paola felt a pang of envy and longing.

Without thinking too much about the consequences, Paola slipped the pencil case into her backpack when no one was looking. Her heart pounded with guilt and fear, but she convinced herself that no one would ever know.

The next day, when Emma realised her pencil case was missing, she was devastated. The teacher, noticing Emma's distress, decided to address the class. "Has anyone seen Emma's pencil case?" she asked. "If you have it, please return it. It's important to be honest and considerate of each other's belongings."

Paola's heart raced. She wanted to return the pencil case, but the fear of being caught and punished held her back. As the teacher and her classmates searched the room and asked around, Paola denied fiercely having seen or taken it. Her face flushed with the intensity of her denial, and she avoided eye contact with everyone.

Can you imagine the reasons behind Paola's behaviour? How do you think Paola is feeling now? What would you advise Paola to do?

Days passed, and the guilt weighed heavily on Paola. She couldn't concentrate in class, and her friends noticed she was more withdrawn than usual. At home, she hid the pencil case at the back of her closet. She felt sad she had stolen the pencil case, as she understood she can never use it anyway. But above all she felt guilty for betraying her friend.

Finally, Paola couldn't take it anymore. One evening, she sat down with her parents and tearfully confessed what she had done. Her parents were shocked and disappointed, but they understood the pressure she had been under. Paola's home life had been difficult recently. Her parents were going through a tough time financially, and Paola often felt the burden of their stress. She knew her parents couldn't afford to buy her something like that pencil case.

They reassured her that they loved her and that making a mistake didn't define who she was. They encouraged her to make things right.

The next day, with her parents by her side, Paola went to school and asked to speak to her teacher privately. She returned the pencil case and apologised to Emma, her voice trembling with sincerity. The teacher used the incident as a teaching moment for the class, emphasising the importance of honesty and the courage it takes to admit when you're wrong. Paola learned a valuable lesson about integrity and the impact of her actions on others. Emma was hurt and surprised at first, but she appreciated Paola's honesty and forgave her.

Example stories: Feeling Compassion

2. Susan: Moodiness

Susan is a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl, who has a bad temper. She is often falling out with school friends and sometimes even talks back to her teachers and challenges their instructions. Her mood swings are very rapid – she gets irritated really quickly and then everyone gets their share of her feelings that tend to lash out with force. Once or twice she has even hit someone who, in her opinion, was in her way. She has had detentions, but the teachers feel they make little or no impact on her behaviour.

Can you imagine any reasons behind Susan's behaviour? How do you think Susan is really feeling? How would you advise her teachers to address the situation?

Ms. Thompson, Susan's homeroom teacher, had observed Susan's behaviour over several months. Recognising that traditional disciplinary measures were ineffective, Ms. Thompson decided to approach the situation with compassion and understanding. She had noticed that Susan's friendships were difficult because of her outbursts. Many of her classmates simply avoided her.

After another classroom incident, Ms. Thompson asked Susan to stay behind for a conversation. She addressed Susan calmly and empathetically, acknowledging her struggle with controlling her temper and expressing a genuine desire to help. Susan stared her with a frown at first, but after a while she started to sob. She told her teacher she had no friends and a difficult situation at home: her mother suffered from alcohol abuse, and she felt heavily the burden to help take care of her two baby sisters.

Ms. Thompson suggested that Susan meet with the school counsellor to discuss her feelings and learn strategies for managing her anger. Susan, though initially reluctant, agreed to try. The counsellor contacted Susan's mother, too. Turned out they had an aunt living next door, who could help with baby sisters so that the family situation didn't burden Susan too much.

Over the following weeks, Susan attended regular sessions with the counsellor. These sessions focused on teaching her coping mechanisms, such as deep breathing exercises and taking a moment to pause before reacting. Gradually, Susan began to apply these techniques, resulting in noticeable improvements in her behaviour. She started to spend some time with a new friend, Liza, during breaks. Ms. Thompson loved to see the two of them having vivid conversations and laughing together.

Example stories: Feeling Compassion

3. Mark: Poor Grades

Mark is a 14-year-old boy, who shows no aptitude towards his studies. All of his marks are low, and he does not seem interested in improving them. He doesn't usually ask questions in class, but when he does, the teacher notices that he has absolutely no idea what they had been studying recently. When the teacher asks Mark to answer a question, Mark has a special frown for those situations: he looks like he was thinking hard, but he never draws the right conclusion. He often leaves his homework unfinished and doesn't seem bothered about the fact he is constantly falling behind.

How does his teacher feel? How would you advise them to deal with the situation? What things should be considered, when helping Mark to perform better?

His teacher, Mrs. Johnson felt a mix of frustration, concern, and helplessness. She wanted to see Mark succeed, but his apparent lack of interest and engagement made it difficult to reach him. She worried about his future and the widening gap between him and his peers.

Mrs. Johnson decided to have a private, non-judgmental conversation with Mark to understand if there are any underlying issues. Is he struggling with a learning disability, personal issues, or simply a lack of interest in the subjects? It would be a good idea to meet Mark's parents to get insights about his studying and free time.

Mrs. Johnson adjusted her teaching to a more learner-centred manner. She started to use more visual aids and hands-on activities. She also made personalised goals for Mark: exams more often, but only a little bit to learn at one time. She used a lot of positive reinforcement and gave praise to Mark for any improvements, no matter how small. Although it can be understandable for a teacher to feel frustration when learning is hard for some learners, compassion, encouragement and positive feedback are the way to help them improve and learn better.

Example stories: Feeling Compassion

4. Ismael: Laziness

Ismael is a 10-year-old boy, who finds studying easy. He absorbs new information quickly and rarely struggles with his studies. Despite his natural talent, Ismael shows little interest in putting in the effort to achieve top grades. He never challenges himself. His homework is often incomplete or done hastily, lacking the depth and detail that matched his understanding. He is talented but doesn't want to make any effort to achieve good grades. His homework leaves a lot to be desired – he has a lot of knowledge but doesn't want to use time to put that in writing. His teachers feel he is arrogant and thinks he is better than others – only they know that natural talent can get you only so far in life.

Why do you think Ismael is underperforming and not using all his potential? How should his teachers address the issue?

The teachers decided to set him more challenging tasks. When learners find the material too easy, it doesn't motivate them to do their best. Despite Ismael's arrogant manner, it is possible he has a fear of failure. This can keep him from challenging himself and sticking to what he knows to avoid the risk of not meeting high expectations. In this case, he needs reassurance that he is valuable regardless of his academic pursuits, and it is not dangerous to make mistakes when learning new things.

The teachers agreed to have a private chat with Ismael. They wanted to know about his future goals. During this conversation they explained to Ismael how his current studies could help him along the way. Ismael needs to see the relevance of the schoolwork to stay motivated. They agreed it to be a good idea to praise Ismael not just for his natural abilities but for the effort he puts into his work. In their teaching they emphasise the value of effort, persistence, and learning from mistakes.

One of the best solutions to the situation turned out to be group work. The teachers got Ismael to work in groups, where he can both learn from and teach his peers. This helped him develop humility and see value in collaboration. It was also a good way to keep him accountable and motivated.

Appendix 5: Tips for teachers for activity 6 in Session 2.2 Compassion - from empathy to action

1. What would you say?

Empathy, Writing

Get the students to write a letter to a friend about an upsetting situation they are facing or may face in the future, like moving to a new school, missing a pet, or losing a championship sports game. Then ask the students to draft what a good friend would say in response to that letter. This compassion activity helps students understand the age-old concept Treat Others How You'd Like to Be Treated.

2. Compassion Round-Robin

Creativity, Communication, Writing

Round-Robin storytelling is an excellent way for your students to engage in storytelling and utilise their creativity. Divide your class into small groups and have each group tell a short story that involves an act of compassion. Have one student in each group start the story by saying "Once upon a time, there was a....". The next student in the group will add to the story, and so on and so forth until the story is complete. One student in each group should write down each part of the story so they can share it with the rest of the class. For example, the Round-Robin story could sound like: "Once upon a time, there was a boy riding his bike. The boy saw an old lady accidentally drop her keys. The old lady looked like she needed help picking up the keys. So, the boy went over to her and picked them up for her."

Student 1: Once upon a time, there was a boy riding his bike.

Student 2: The boy saw an old lady accidentally drop her keys.

Student 3: The old lady looked like she needed help picking up the keys.

Student 4: So, the boy went over to her and picked them up for her.

It may take some practice, but once your students get the hang of it, their stories will articulate their full depth of understanding of compassion!

3. Compassionate Casey

Critical Thinking, Empathy

After learning what it means to be compassionate, your students can now provide examples of compassion in action. Have students draw a stick figure on a piece of paper dubbed Compassionate Casey, who represents an incredibly compassionate person. They can add colour and details with crayons or markers to their drawings. Have your students write three things Compassionate Casey likes to do that would make him or her compassionate. Then have a few students share their ideas with the rest of the class or in pairs.

4. Caught with compassion

Empathy, Relationship Building

To encourage your students to show compassion to their classmates, designate a day or multiple days when you can “catch” your students showing compassion to their peers. Track how many times you caught each student showing compassion with a chart, and reward them based on how many times they demonstrated compassion that day.

5. Football story

Kindness, empathy

Read the story aloud and have a discussion with the learners.

The sun shone brightly over Greenwood Stadium as the Tigers and the Eagles faced off. The Tigers quickly took control. Leo scored twice in the first half, and then Max scored, too, so the Tigers were up 3-0 by halftime.

The Eagles fought back in the second half, with Alex scoring to make it 3-1. However, disaster struck when their captain, Jake, collided with Max and was carried off the field with an ankle injury.

The Tigers capitalised on the Eagles’ misfortune. Leo completed his hat trick in the 72nd minute, and Sam added another goal, making it 5-1. The final whistle blew, and the Tigers celebrated their victory, while the Eagles, though defeated, vowed to return stronger.

Who do you think needs comforting words now? (Jake for injuring his ankle, the Eagles, the Eagle goalkeeper for letting in all those goals)

Who needs your compassion more, the winners or the losers? (We celebrate the victory and there is nothing wrong with that. However, we should keep in mind that the losing team needs our comfort and encouragement more to keep on going.)

What does compassion look like in your classroom?

- Speaking with kindness.
- Apologise when you’ve made a mistake.
- Listen carefully and without judgement.
- Positive encouragement and reinforcement.
- Offering help to someone with a task.
- Being happy for someone else’s success.
- Accepting people for who they are.
- Respectful behaviour toward the teacher, peers, and the classroom.

All the exercises are from:

<https://everfi.com/blog/k-12/8-activities-for-building-a-compassionate-classroom-culture-with-elementary-students/#:~:text=Let%20your%20students%20think%20about,toward%20each%20person%20or%20pet.>



FCA supporting children's wellbeing through art and play in schools built into metrol tunnels in Harkova Ukraine, in 2023.

PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN / FINN CHURCH AID.

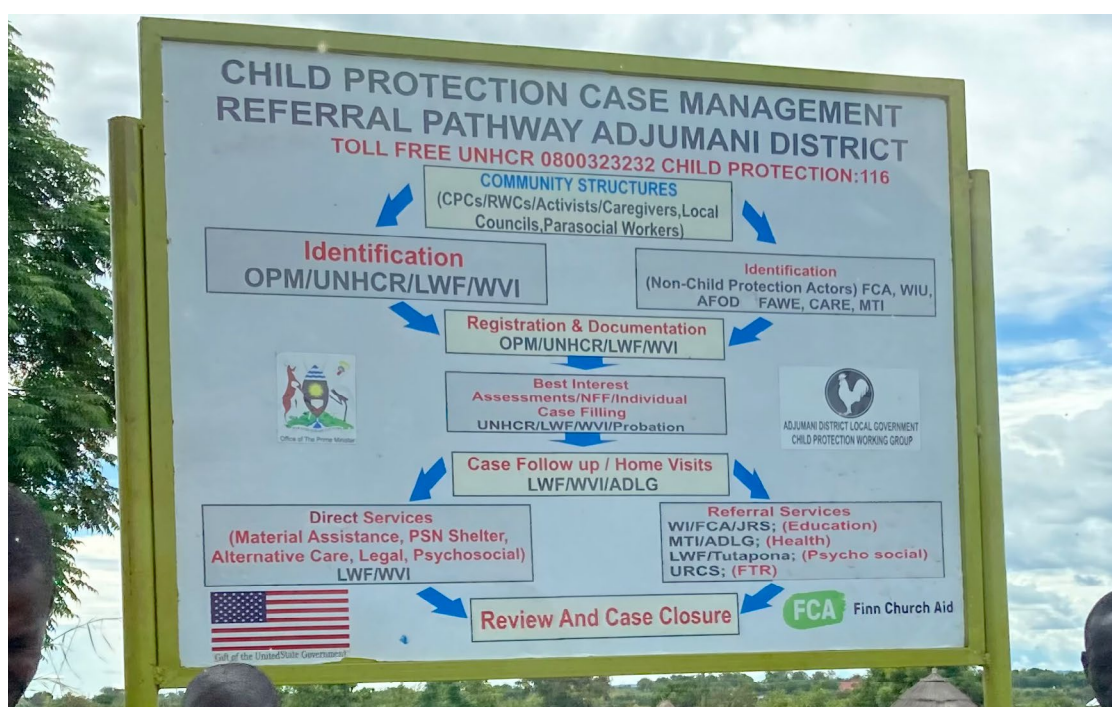
Module 3. How to identify and support learners with mental health and psychosocial concerns as a teacher (look, listen, link)

**“ The flower that is lovingly tended and watered grows.”
- Anonymous**

Teachers are often the first to notice emotional distress in a learner. Parents or other caregivers can be so close to the child, that gradual changes in their behaviour can go unnoticed. Teacher sees an individual learner among a group of peers, so changes may be noticed more easily.

In addressing matters, a teacher needs to be empathetic and sensitive. Taking issues into conversation can be challenging, but a good teacher cannot let learners' challenges pass. However, a teacher is not alone helping learners to live their lives to their full potential. Cooperation with other teachers and professionals is essential for reaching good outcomes. Other teachers and professionals provide a safety net also for the teacher – a safe place where to get support and talk things over without jeopardising confidence.

There are 3 sessions in this Module 3. The first session is about identification – how to notice those in need of assistance. The second session points out ways to support the learners, and the last session is about the role of the teacher and other professionals when addressing emotional health concerns in learners.



Child protection case management referral pathway billboard in Uganda, in 2024.

PHOTO: KATI-KARJALAINEN RIMPPÄ / FINN CHURCH AID.

3.1 Identifying learners with emotional distress

Suggested duration: 1 h 30 min

Objectives for the specific training session	<p>At the end of the training, the participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify possible signs and symptoms of emotional distress in children • Recognize signs of more severe challenges/problems
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Signs of Worrying Behaviour • Signs of Distress • Children Covering their Distress • Sexual Abuse • Involvement of Guardians • Wrap-up
Materials	<p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart • Markers • Sticky notes • Pens • Handouts

Introduction (5')

Welcome everyone to the session and explain that in this session you will discuss how to recognize children and youth who might need more support for their mental health and psychosocial well-being. While the previous module contained activities that benefit all children especially in crisis contexts, this module will go a bit deeper and find ways to support the well-being of distressed children. Remind participants about confidentiality: if they bring up individual cases, they should not mention names or any other personal details of the child in question.

! If needed, you can remind the participants throughout the session that in order to ensure confidentiality and protection of children, no names of individuals should be mentioned.

Facilitator: Children are all mentally affected by crises, but they can express their emotions and problems in many ways. If we can better identify and understand those problems, we can support the child better.

Activity 1: Worrying behaviour (30')

Ask each participant to find a pair (someone you do not know very well), and discuss for 15 minutes: What kind of behaviour in children has made you worried about a child? What actions have made you think that the child would need help? Write down key words while discussing.

❗ If there are many participants, you can form groups of 3-7 people in a creative but quick way, e.g. participants with a shirt with the same colour, same height or first name starting with the same letter.

After 15 minutes, ask the first pair or group to describe one type of concerning behaviour that they discussed. Write down a keyword on the board and ask the next group to mention another type of concerning behaviour. Go through all the groups and write down behaviours or issues which have not been mentioned yet.

❗ If possible, try to group similar descriptive words together, such as:

- **regression** (peeing in bed, not able to use the toilet, feed or dress him/herself any longer, thumb sucking, babyish behaviour, sticking to parents)
- **fearful**, edgy, extreme reactions to small events, annoyed by or afraid of sudden sounds, complains of headache or stomach-ache
- **restless**, noisy, difficult to stay in one place, short attention span, cannot concentrate
- **passive**, apathy, withdrawal, doesn't come near (no touching), refusal to eat, not seeming to react to the environment, not speaking
- **provoking behaviour**, swearing, aggression, breaking things. Particularly adolescents: stealing, lying, running away, bullying other children, skipping school, disturbing class and defying authorities
- **insecure**, does not want to move from one activity to another, stuck to routines and repetition (seeking safety), overly attached to one toy/thing/activity, seems unsure in new situations, keeps asking the same questions to be sure, reacts strongly to changes in routines
- **change in playing**: the child does not play or plays in "abnormal" ways (death, destruction, sex; sequences of events never have a happy end)

Facilitator: It is important to understand that these are all normal reactions to an abnormal situation. But it can be difficult to identify which children are most at risk, so teachers need to be very sensitive and observant. The teacher should observe particularly longer-term changes in behaviour.

Activity 2. Signs in a Child (25')

Ask the participants to go back to the same groups and instruct them that they should imagine looking at a distressed child and observe signs of distress. What could be hints in a child, in their face, body, or clothes, which would make you concerned? Ask each group to write down one key word on a big piece of paper and stick it on the wall.

Once there are 5-10 papers on the wall, discuss these signs and ask the participants for each one why that would make them concerned. Make sure that the words are diverse enough: sad, sleepy, withdrawn, passive, angry, defensive, neglected cleanliness or clothing, with injuries, bruises, exceptional body weight or height, dental issues etc.

Facilitator: Some children may try to hide how they are feeling or what they are doing. In the same small group, discuss for 5 minutes why they would do that.

Then again, ask each group to give one example, one group at a time.

❗ These points should come up in the discussion:

- children might think that others won't understand, believe or take them seriously,
- they have had negative experiences talking about their thoughts and feelings in the past,
- they don't know who to talk to or how to explain
- they feel that others cannot help them,
- they fear that others think they are strange or crazy,
- they fear possible negative consequences

Facilitator: This shows that distress is not always easily visible. Hence it is important to also observe those children who are not seeking attention. This can be prompted in a creative way too, such as encouraging them to do art or drama, and see if hidden fears, sadness or anger might come up.

Useful links


<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-health-development/child-mental-health>

Activity 3. Sexual Abuse (15')

Facilitator: Sexual abuse is always very distressing and can have serious long-lasting consequences particularly for young children. Adolescents who are still processing their sexual self can also be easily exploited. Do you have any experience of sexually abused children?

Ask a few participants to share their ideas.

You can mention or add to the conversation the following signs of sexual abuse: exaggerated sexual behaviour or non-age-appropriate sexual behaviour, obsessive masturbation, afraid of guardians or strange people, withdrawal, flirty behaviour, trying to attract or letting new people close very quickly, fearful, difficulties to go to toilet, soreness of private parts.

Share a copy of  **Appendix 1**, which can be found in the end of module 3 and discuss the content. Share and discuss.

Activity 4. Involvement of Guardians (15')

Tell the participants that it is important to remember that children and youth can react in many different ways. Also, note that some children might seem resilient and unaffected at first but will exhibit psychosocial problems later – once they feel safe to do so.

Facilitator: If you are concerned about a child, would it be a good idea to ask the parents? In which case would that not be a good idea? Why? How should you do it?

Ask participants to think by themselves and then ask a few to share their thoughts.

Facilitator: In some cases, the caregiver is the perpetrator or the cause of distress, e.g. child abuse, mental illness, drug abuse, and discussing with them could cause the child more harm.

Remind the participants that the teacher should first ask the child for consent to talk with his/her caregivers or check if there is an alternative adult in the community that s/he trusts. These could be child protection structures such as child protection committee members, case workers or community counsellors.

Explain to the participants that when discussing with the caregivers, the teacher should try to understand how the child behaves outside the school setting and how the people around them react or respond to such behaviour. Are they able to understand the child's reactions and to support the child in processing and healing from the adverse events? If the caregiver denies issues aggressively, there might be family problems affecting the well-being of the child.

Explain to the participants that due to confidentiality, the teacher should not discuss or share documents about an individual child with community members that are not involved. You can encourage the participants that in meetings the participants have a chance to emphasise how children express their distress in different ways. In such situations community members can come and speak with the teacher if they are worried about a child.


Thank the participants for the fruitful session.

3.2 Supporting learners with emotional distress

Suggested duration: 2 h

Objectives for the specific training session	At the end of the training, the participants will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic psychosocial support for children who need it • Select activities that could reduce distress and mitigate the risk of mental health problems in children
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 role-plays • Well-being flower and discussion • Things that make you happy • Psychological First Aid • Belly Breathing
Materials	Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart • Markers • Sticky notes • Pens • Role play instructions • Handouts • Ball (with a happy face drawn on it if possible).

Activity 1. Role plays (45')

i Before the session, give the role play instructions,  **Appendix 2: Role-play instructions**, to three different people. Appendix 2 can be found in the end of module 3.

Welcome everyone to the session and tell them that today we will talk about how to help children in distress.

Facilitator: We will now watch three role plays, as presented by three different people. The role-plays showcase children's possible reactions to difficult situations. For each role-play, I will request a volunteer, to try to approach the child as a teacher/an adult and resolve the situation. The others can provide guidance if they wish.

Ask for 3 volunteers from the participants, 1 for each role-play situation.

Remind everyone that there are no right or wrong methods, these are just examples of different ways of working.

Ask the first person to act in the given role-play situation as a child. Encourage the chosen volunteer to participate in the role play as a teacher/an adult and react to the child's behaviour. After some minutes, stop the role-play. Have a brief discussion and reflections

with the participants after the role-play. What do they think works best in this case and why? Note down the key points on the flipchart.

Go through the other two role-plays similarly. After all role-plays and discussions, ask which child they would be most worried about and why.

❗ Make sure to summarise the following points on the flipchart:

- We should not touch the child if s/he does not want to be touched. Ask permission before, unless the child is violent towards themselves/others and needs to be stopped.
- Establish a relationship with a sad child before starting to ask questions.
- Try to explain to the child the emotion they might be feeling, for example, “I think you are anxious and that is why you might not want to talk to me. It is okay, but I want to help you.”
- Never humiliate children in public or punish them because of their emotions: find a more constructive way e.g. sport, art, writing to process them.

Facilitator: We can see that children are different. They can react in different ways and need different kinds of support. However, all children need play, love and listening.

Activity 2. Well-being Flower and Discussion (15')

You can start the activity by telling the participants that children and young people are particularly vulnerable in a crisis situation. Their familiar world has been disrupted, and they might have lost people, places and routines that make them feel secure. The child does not trust the world being safe anymore. However, the routine of a school, and a stable, calm adult, helps them to cope better.

Facilitator: Now, remember the well-being flower. Even if we cannot have an impact on “all the petals”, meaning different dimensions of well-being, we can try to support the child wherever we can. In our three examples, as a teacher do you see any possibilities of supporting that child in any other petals than mental and emotional well-being?

Give a few participants a chance to share their thoughts.

Explain to the participants that while the recreational and the social emotional learning activities target everyone, there are children who are still suffering from negative experiences, and who might need more intense support.

Ask the participants how one can tell that a child needs individual support: what kind of worrying behaviour have the participants seen among the children that they work with? Ask if anyone can share an experience where they managed to support a child somehow.

Remind the participants to note if a child needs referral for comprehensive case management.



Picture: FCA “well-being flower”

Activity 3. Things that make you happy (20')

i You need a ball for this exercise.

Facilitator: Now let's do a few exercises for a simple kind of support. First let's all stand in a circle.

Give the ball to one participant.

Instruct the participant to throw the ball to another participant and to say one thing that makes them happy. And that participant will throw the ball to another one, saying one thing that makes him or her happy.

At the end note how just talking about good things and smiling can make you feel better.

Give the ball to one participant again.

Facilitator: Now throw the ball to some other participant and say one thing that makes you sad.

Continue until everyone has thrown the ball once.

After this exercise, emphasise that it is normal to be sad and depressed sometimes, it happens to everyone. Ask the participants for examples: When you were feeling down, could you give us an example of how somebody helped you feel better?

Resources for learning more about psychological first aid

Look, Listen and Link, reference: Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers. World Health Organization WHO, 2011


Activity 4. Psychological First Aid (30')

Facilitator: If someone has a bleeding wound, what do you do? First aid: stop the bleeding with a clean cloth. But what if the fresh wound is inside, in the mind or heart? Then we need "psychological first aid".

Tell the participants that we will now do an exercise with the following case: A learner has just told you how her father came home very drunk last night, beat up the mother and shouted that he is leaving the family for good.

Explain that you will next read out statements one by one. Each participant is to consider what they think, without thinking about how others are answering. Instruct the participants that if they think it would be a good thing to do, go to right side of the room "YES" but if someone thinks a teacher should not do that, go to this left side of the room, as "NO". Point the directions to participants and put a thumb up to represent YES, thumb down to NO. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Tell the child that of course the father will not leave.
2. Hug the child.
3. Ask the child to tell you exactly what happened, in detail.
4. Take the child in front of the class and tell her story, so that other learners can comfort her.
5. Take the child home with you, to protect her.
6. Tell the other teachers what the child told you.
7. Scream, cry, express strong feelings to join the emotions of the child.
8. Tell the child that she should have tried to stop the father.

After each reply, ask a few volunteers to explain why they chose that side, why they think that kind of response would be beneficial or harmful for the child. Share a copy of  **Appendix 3: Psychological First Aid (PFA)** which you can find in the end of module 3. Alternatively, you can ask one or two of the participants to write down the key principles of PFA on a flipchart or a blackboard.

Note that each reply has some ethical issues; check and consider the list of some key principles of Psychological First Aid (PFA).

PFA

Honesty

Respect

No pressure

Dignity

Code of Conduct

Confidentiality

Be calm

No judgement

Facilitator: In emergencies/crises we should provide quick, humane support to the child who is suffering – we call it Psychological First Aid (PFA). If something terrible has just happened, the teacher should care, comfort and listen to the child, but without pressuring him/her to talk about it. Make yourself available, and once the child approaches you, be gentle and encouraging.

Explain that a few sympathetic words such as “that was really awful; how do you feel now; you will get over it”, can make a big difference. It is important to assure the child that what happened is not her/his fault.

Tell the participants that the basic principles of PFA are three L’s: Look, Listen and Link. Ask the participants what they could mean and encourage a few participants to share their answers.

Facilitator: “Look” refers to looking for people in need of urgent basic needs, and for safety. “Listen” means listening to people’s needs and concerns. “Link” refers to helping people to address basic needs, access services and connect with social support.

Ask the participants if this can be adapted as a teacher with learners in the classroom.

Listen to a few replies and remind participants that a referral is always needed when they think that the learner needs more intense or specialised support beyond their capacities and expertise.

Activity 5. Belly Breathing (5’)

Facilitator: Now we will do an exercise on belly breathing. Please all stand up and shake your muscles a bit to feel more relaxed. Take a deep breath in, so that your stomach fills with air. Then slowly exhale the air out, while you tell yourself “It will be OK”. Do this at your own rhythm about 10 times.

This exercise could be done lying down or in a seated position as well.

Give the participants ample time to finish the breathing exercise.

Wrap-up (5’)

Facilitator: Now, how did that feel? Do you think this could be an exercise that you could do with learners?

Ask the participants how they would change the exercise for children? Ask if they have other exercises that they have been using with anxious children to help them calm down. You can also give examples, such as yoga, dancing, smiling, energizers and others.

Facilitator: Remember how we discussed different recreational activities in Module 2? Try to organise enough opportunities for simple art, music, dancing, drama, storytelling, hand-crafts, gardening or sport, especially for the distressed children, and observe how they react. The sad child should be encouraged to think about or do his/her favourite activities, together with others if possible. In your schools, do you have child clubs or youth councils that could organise inclusive activities, targeting the distressed children in particular?

Ask a few participants to share and discuss. Thank everyone for their active participation

3.3 Referral pathways and other support mechanisms; the role of a teacher

Suggested duration: 1 h 30 min

Objectives for the specific training session	<p>At the end of the training, the participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand their role and limitations in MHPSS • Reflect on the concept of Do No Harm • Refer individuals with more severe psychological problems or child protection concerns to relevant specialised services
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHPSS Pyramid • Referral Services Mapping • Role Play: Discussion with Guardians • Module 3 Wrap-up
Materials	<p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart • Markers • Sticky notes • Pen, • MHPSS pyramid picture, • Handouts on local referral pathways, • Attachments

Before the session, find out about local services on mental health for children and adults. Are there any specialists in psychosocial support in the hospitals, health clinics, NGOs, education institutions or religious institutions? Start from well-known reliable organisations and national actors such as the Ministry of Health. Contact them and find out what kind of services they can provide. Ask local professionals to join your session, if possible. Then make a handout listing those services, with their contact details. If there are absolutely no services, see the instructions below.

Introduction (5')

Facilitator: Welcome to the session on referral pathways. We are all experts on education, and we have the capacity to support distressed children in many ways. However, are we experts on mental health? Can we provide professional therapy?

! Make sure that the participants understand that as education actors, we do not have expertise on mental health and cannot offer professional therapy or other health services.

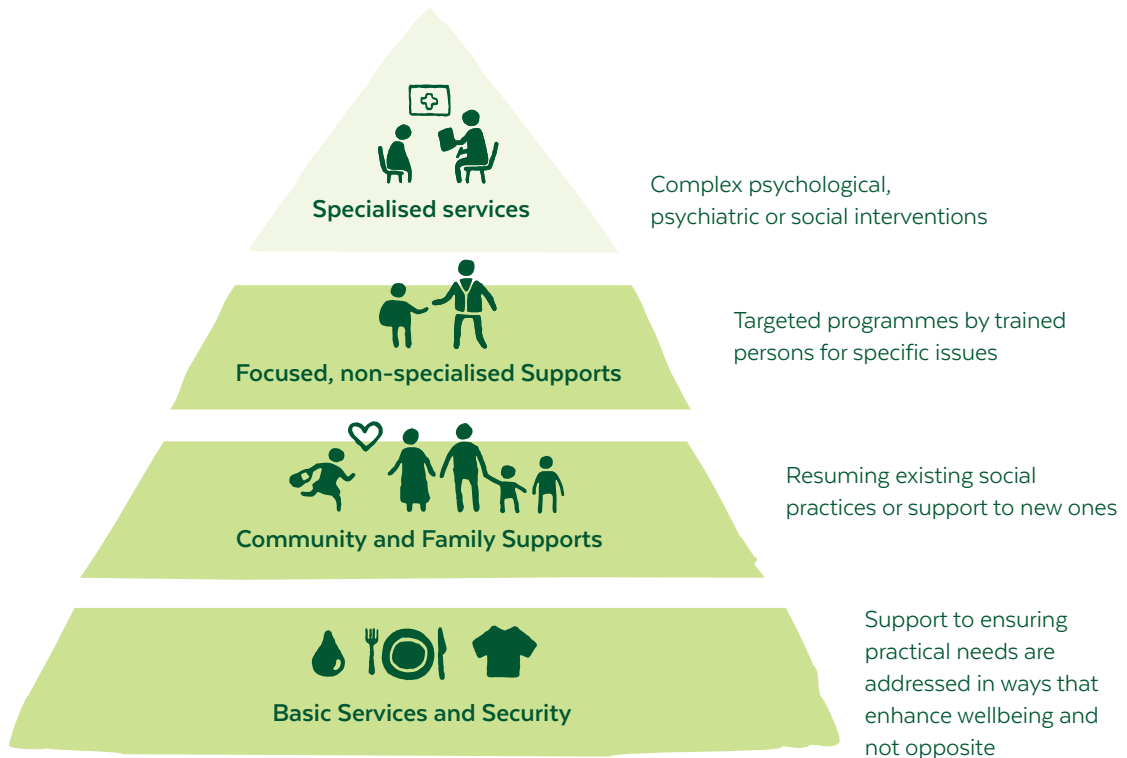
Facilitator: As we discussed in the previous session, there are children whose worrying behaviour lasts for so long or is so extreme that they would really need extra help.

MHPSS pyramid (10')

i Have the MHPSS Pyramid either printed or projected on the wall. Make sure everyone can see it.

Explain that in the next module (module 4) we will discuss more about recreational activities which are good for all children. These activities are mainly in the Community and Family Supports level of the MHPSS pyramid. The activities discussed in the previous session, “learners with emotional distress” would fall under Focused, Non-Specialized Supports on the pyramid. This session now is looking at the tip of the pyramid: those children who need Specialized Services.

Share a copy of **Appendix 4: The role of a teachers to everyone**. The handout can be found in the end of module 3.

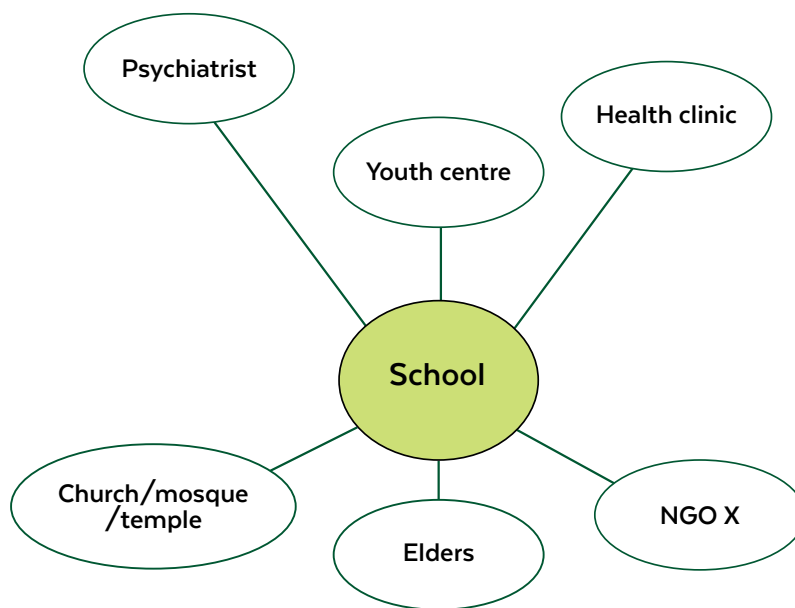


Picture: IASC (2007) Intervention Pyramid for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies

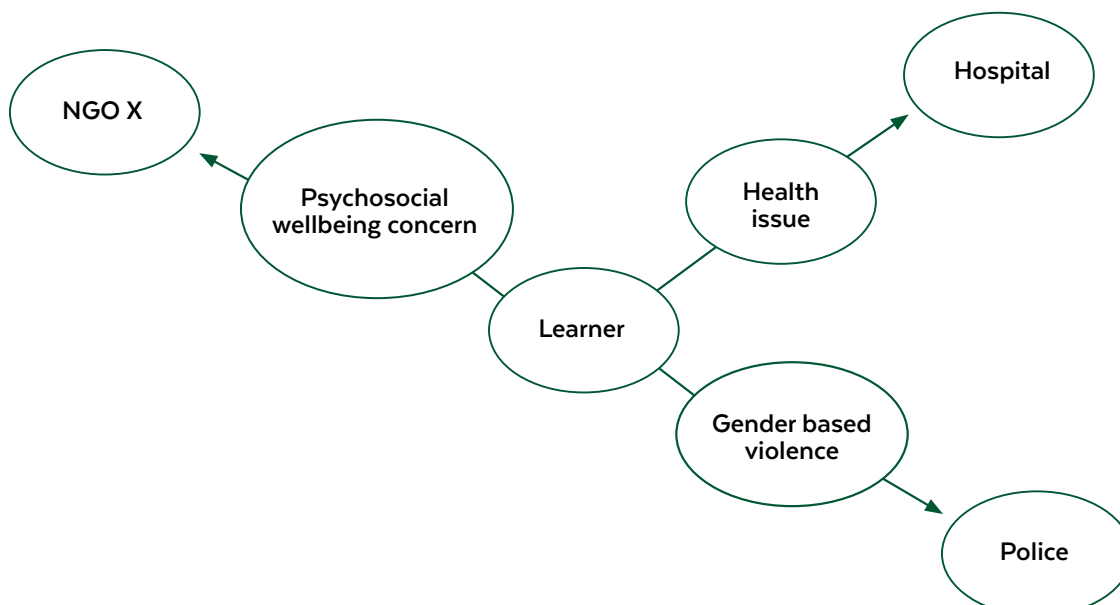
Activity 1. Referral Services (30')

Make a mind map together and discuss possible referral points: places or people to whom the child could be sent to for more support. The map can show the distances to each service, as shown in as shown in picture: referral services mind map 1, so that the closest circles to the school are those services available nearby the school.

Alternatively, you can discuss possible referral paths by first identifying the issues of the child that need addressing, for example psychosocial well-being concern, and then the referral points accordingly, as shown in picture: referral services mind map 2.



Picture: referral services mind map 1



Picture: referral services mind map 2

Discuss which kind of services are most suitable to which kind of issues and problems. Remind the participants to consider informal referral points as well, e.g. community centres, voluntary associations, women's groups, faith-based groups etc.

❗ Encourage creativity, and don't just accept thinking that there are no services.

Facilitator: Can any of you provide examples of how you have been working e.g. with a clinic or NGO providing MHPSS? How did you build that relationship?

Point out that a good relationship with the service providers makes it much easier to support the child together.

Ask the participants about record keeping? How can one make sure that the information about an individual child remains confidential, but on the other hand is also available when needed? Ask the participants for any existing systems with the referral points.

Facilitator: If there are really no possibilities for referral, try to identify people who are respected for their wisdom, or supportive peer groups), who might be able to help. Or would it be possible to contact a psychologist or psychiatrist in the city by telephone or online, to ask for advice? Are there any hotline numbers?

In the case of traditional healers, discuss with the participants if they trust them and would recommend them. Respect for the child is key – Do No Harm!

Note that only competent psychiatrists can prescribe medicines, and only competent psychotherapists can provide psychotherapy. There can be many kinds of “therapies”, some of which can be even harmful.

Share the prepared handout with contact names and numbers and point out if there are any actors that were not yet mentioned in the discussion.

A teacher should find out the existing mechanisms in advance and discuss them with the guardians highlighting the support as an opportunity and not stigmatisation of the child. If the guardians initially refuse, the teacher could discuss with MHPSS specialists, to find ways of either supporting the child directly or convincing the guardians. The basic principle is that the more symptoms the child has, the more specialised care would be needed.

Activity 2. Role-play (30')

Facilitator: Now we shall do another role-play. Remember the three distressed children in the previous session? Now we need 3 volunteers to play the role of a teacher and 4 volunteers to play the roles of a guardian. The teacher of each child from the previous role play will meet the guardians for a discussion on how they best could help the child.

Distressed, fearful child who does not want to be touched. The teacher and the grandmother are discussing the situation; they have not seen the parents of the child since the family fled their home.

1. Sad and abused child. The teacher, the timid mother and the aggressive father, who denies any problems, discuss.
2. Attention-seeking, angry, hyperactive child. The teacher and the mother are discussing. The father has been killed in a rebel attack.

The teacher should try to help the child's family to understand that the child needs more support. After each discussion, ask the participants if they have other ideas on how the teacher could convince the guardians.

Facilitator: Teachers are important leaders in the community, and their views are respected; hence they should help community members understand how children and adolescents need support to get over difficult phases in life.

Ask the participants their views on out-of-school children, who can be even more vulnerable than those at school. What is the role of teachers here?

Teachers' primary role is trying to get those children to access education, and perhaps advise the communities on how to support children out of school with emotional distress and support them enrolling back to school.

Wrap-up (15')

Facilitator: This is the end of the module on identification and support of children with emotional distress. What kind of thoughts do you have at this point of your role as a teacher who supports learners' psychosocial well-being?

Make a linkage to the importance of teacher well-being: teachers are only able to support and encourage their learners if they are looking after their own well-being first. You can make linkages to the module on teacher well-being, if you are going through that module in your training as well.

Thank everyone for their participation and remind them to take care of themselves and others.

Appendices for module 3

Appendix 1 for activity 3 in session 3.1 Identifying learners with emotional distress

Children are all mentally affected by crises, but they can express their emotions and problems in many different ways. If we can better identify and understand those problems, we can support the child better.

Some possible signs of distress:

- **regression** (peeing in bed, not able to use the toilet, feed or dress him/herself any longer, thumb sucking, babyish behaviour, sticking to parents)
- **fearful**, edgy, extreme reactions to small events, annoyed by or afraid of sudden sounds, complains of headache or stomach-ache
- **restless**, noisy, difficult to stay in one place, short attention span, cannot concentrate
- **passive**, apathy, withdrawal, doesn't come near (no touching), refusal to eat, not seeming to react to the environment, not speaking
- **provoking behaviour**, swearing, aggression, breaking things. Particularly adolescents: stealing, lying, running away, bullying other children, skipping school, disturbing class and defying authorities
- **insecure**, does not want to move from one activity to another, stuck to routines and repetition (seeking safety), overly attached to one toy/thing/activity, seems unsure in new situations, keeps asking the same questions to be sure, reacts strongly to changes in routines
- **change in playing**: the child does not play or plays in "abnormal" ways (death, destruction, sex; sequences of events never have a happy end)



Children can express feeling bad or stressed in very different ways. They are normal reactions to an abnormal situation!

It can be difficult to identify which children are most at risk, so teachers need to be very sensitive and observant. The teacher should observe particularly longer-term changes in behaviour.

Signs of distress to observe: sad, sleepy, withdrawn, passive, angry, defensive, neglected (cleanliness or clothing), with injuries, bruises, exceptional body weight or height, dental issues etc.

Note that some children may try to hide how they are feeling, e.g. for these reasons:

- the children think others won't understand, believe or take them seriously,
- they have had negative experiences talking about their thoughts and feelings in the past
- they don't know who to talk to or how to explain
- they feel that others cannot help them,
- they fear that others think they are strange or crazy
- they fear possible negative consequences

Possible signs of sexual abuse: exaggerated or non-age-appropriate sexual behaviour, obsessive masturbation, afraid of guardians or strange people, withdrawal, flirty, tries to attract or lets new people too near too easily, fearful, difficulties to go to toilet, soreness of private parts.

Also, note that some children might seem resilient and unaffected at first but will exhibit psychosocial problems later – once it feels safe to do so.

REMEMBER RESPECT & CONFIDENTIALITY!

Appendix 2. Role-play instructions for activity 1 in session 3.2 Supporting learners with emotional distress

1. You are a distressed child who is scared and does not want to be touched. You are anxious and can have extreme reactions to small events.

Don't show this instruction to any other participant.

2. You are a distressed, sad and abused child (who can be crying and trying to hide his/her bruises). You don't want to join the group activities (withdrawal, apathy, passivity).

Don't show this instruction to any other participant.

3. You are an attention-seeking, angry child, who wants to challenge and defy the adults. You can be hyperactive and aggressive, breaking the rules.

Don't show this instruction to any other participant.

Appendix 3. Psychological First Aid (PFA) for activity 4 in session 3.2 Supporting learners with emotional distress

In emergencies/crises we should provide quick, humane support to the child who is suffering – we can call it Psychological First Aid. If something terrible has just happened, the teacher should:

- Care, comfort and listen to the child, but without pressuring him/her to talk about it.
- Make yourself available, and once the child approaches you, be gentle and encouraging. A few sympathetic words, such as “that was really awful; or how do you feel now?”, can make a big difference.
- Answer the child’s questions in a simple way, without scary details, such as “The rebels attacked the village/An earthquake destroyed the village, but you are safe now.”
- It is fine to say, “I don’t know what to say, but it is really good that you told me”. Be kind, look for opportunities to praise the child – but allow him/her to be sad.
- It is important to assure the child that what happened is not her/his fault.
- Respectful approach and active listening.

LISTEN to the distressed child with your heart:

- giving the child your undivided attention
- truly hearing his/her fears and concerns
- showing caring and respect

PFA:

Honesty
Respect
No pressure
Dignity
Code of Conduct
Confidentiality
Be calm
No judgment

With children you can do:

- breathing games (blowing a feather or a piece of paper),
- slow relaxation exercises (let your hands relax, your arms relax, your belly relax...),
- visualisation techniques (think about a safe place that you love),
- yoga, dancing, smiling...

PFA training and handouts:

<https://cpaor-videofiles.com/psychological-first-aid-for-children-anne-sophie-dybdal/>
<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/how-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war>

Appendix 4. The role of a teachers for MHPSS pyramid activity in session 3.3 Referral pathways and other support mechanisms

Every child needs safe adults, predictable routines and enough time and opportunities to be heard. Such factors benefit every child and can help along the way.

However, some children need more support than we can provide e.g. children who are losing their sense of reality or are hurting themselves or others. As education actors, we do not have expertise on mental health and cannot offer professional therapy or other health services. That is the top layer of the MHPSS pyramid, “Specialised Services” are meant for children whose worrying behaviour is extreme or lasts long after the crisis.

Recreational activities are good for all children; and they would mainly fall under “Community and Family Supports” layer of the pyramid. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 discussed children who we should support more than others. This is the “Focused, Non-Specialized Supports” layer of the pyramid. Referral systems are at the tip of the pyramid; for those children who need Specialized Services.

You need to know the possible referral points: places or people to whom the child could be sent to for more support. Consider specialists on psychosocial support in the hospitals, health clinics, child protection actors, Police, NGOs, education institutions or religious institutions. You can first ask them for advice, and then recommend the place to the child’s guardians. Note that the services are confidential. They are an opportunity for the children to receive support and should never stigmatize a child.



Appendix 4. The role of a teacher continues

Key points considering referral:

- Confidentiality
- Internal information flow
- Documentation and follow-up (by whom?)
- Do No Harm (respect for the child)
- Have the child's consent or assent
- Explain what referral means

Record keeping is important, although only a few people should be able to access the records. The school should keep a record of every referral made, and the reasons for referral. Every school should have a MHPSS focal point, in whose selection the learners should be involved.

If there are really no possibilities for referral, try to identify people who are respected for their wisdom (or supportive peer groups), and might be able to help. Or would it be possible to contact a psychologist or psychiatrist in the city by telephone or online, to ask for advice? Is there any hotline number? Where are the other schools referring children to? It is important to minimize causing more harm and to activate the available support and safe social networks. Advocate the government for better mental health services.

Guardians need to understand that a distressed child needs love, stability and support. Sometimes it is better to have external support to get over difficult phases in life.

Remember: most people have some kind of mental health problems at some point in their lives – asking for help is a good thing to do and should not stigmatize the child.

PART 2. EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNERS



A traditional Burundian dance by the students at Nationokar Primary school in Kalobeyei refugee settlement, Kenya in 2024.

PHOTO: BJÖRN UDD / FINN CHURCH AID



Peter (16) and Giram (16) hold art-work that they created in classes at Primary School in Kalobeyei, Kenya in 2021.

PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN / FINN CHURCH AID

Module 4. Recreational activities for mental health and psychosocial support

“Imagination is more important than knowledge, because knowledge is limited.” – Albert Einstein

Children learn by playing. Playing is a way of practising emotions, problem-solving and negotiating in safe circumstances. It provides outlets that offer emotional support, foster resilience and promote a sense of normalcy. When doing recreational activities in the classroom, a teacher’s role is to guide the natural play tenderly towards the selected themes. We don’t always need to have a goal: the play is important itself.

According to UNRWA, “the recreation or play activities can play a valuable role in promoting the well-being and resilience of children, their participation can help them develop skills to deal with crises, solve problems, regulate their emotions, and form and maintain relationships.”

This module highlights the importance of creating a caring, supportive school environment by integrating recreational activities into teaching. The guide will focus on strengthening personal skills, cognitive skills, peer support skills, and awareness of students as active participants in their community.

Well-designed recreational activities can bring joy to each learner and bring many benefits to their lives. The teacher should be mindful that the value of the activities, when implemented, will enhance the learners at different psychological levels and aspects of their lives. Joy is a value itself – other benefits come on the side. On the other hand, applying a particular activity might have adverse consequences. It is possible that a particular activity is too much for a learner who ends up in tears or anger. If this happens, it is important for the teacher to keep calm and empathetic. If possible, the learner should be addressed individually. Nothing dangerous has happened, this is just an activity. In many cases, this could be enough to calm the feelings that are running high. However, a teacher should be aware of more severe problems and have a back-up plan for those. These should include a list of referral pathways: the instances, providing more professional help for children. We have covered this theme in Module 3. Remember to Look, Listen and Link: Look and truly see the learners, listen to them carefully and, if the need arises, link them with the help they need.

It’s important to adapt activities to suit the specific needs and cultural context of the children in the crisis area. Additionally, involving local community members, volunteers, and mental health professionals can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of these recreational programs.

Recreational activities come in many forms. Here are some examples:

1. **Art Workshops:** Organise art sessions where children can express themselves through painting, drawing, or crafting. Art can be a powerful tool for processing emotions and promoting healing.
2. **Sports and Games:** Set up sports activities like soccer, basketball, or relay races. Team sports can help children build social skills, teamwork, and resilience while providing a healthy outlet for energy. Consider including the parents and other caregivers to foster a sense of community.
3. **Storytelling Circles:** Create storytelling circles where children can share their experiences through narratives, poems, or role-playing. This fosters communication and empathy.

4. **Music and Dance Workshops:** Arrange music and dance workshops where children can learn to play instruments, sing songs, or dance together. Music and movement are universal languages that can uplift spirits and provide joy.
5. **Nature Exploration:** Plan nature walks, hikes, or camping trips in safe areas nearby. Connecting with nature can reduce stress, boost mood, and encourage a sense of wonder and curiosity.
6. **Gardening Projects:** Start community gardening projects where children can learn about planting, nurturing plants, and harvesting vegetables or flowers. Gardening promotes a sense of responsibility, patience, and connection to the environment.
7. **Cultural Workshops:** Organise cultural workshops where children can learn about traditional arts, crafts, dances, or cuisine from their own culture or other cultures. This fosters pride in identity and appreciation for diversity.
8. **Puppet Shows and Theatre:** Stage puppet shows or theatre performances where children can create and act out stories. This encourages creativity, imagination, and self-expression.
9. **Outdoor Play Areas:** Set up safe and supervised outdoor play areas with swings, slides, and climbing structures. Play is essential for children's development and can provide a temporary escape from stressors.
10. **Creative Writing Workshops:** Facilitate creative writing workshops where children can write stories, poems, or journal entries. Writing allows them to explore their thoughts and feelings in a safe and empowering way.

❗ At the end of module 4 you will find **Appendix 2**, with a list of other recreational and expressive activities for children which can be used in child-friendly spaces and at school.



Crafts from a school in Northern Uganda, in 2024.
PHOTO: KATI KARJALAINEN-RIMPPÄ /
FINN CHURCH AID

4.1 Creative art activity, making a puppet

Suggested duration: 60 min

Note 1: If you are making paper dolls, one hour is enough, but if making felt puppets, allow more time to finish the project. In session 4.2 you need your puppets/creations, so you can have that session when your puppets are ready.

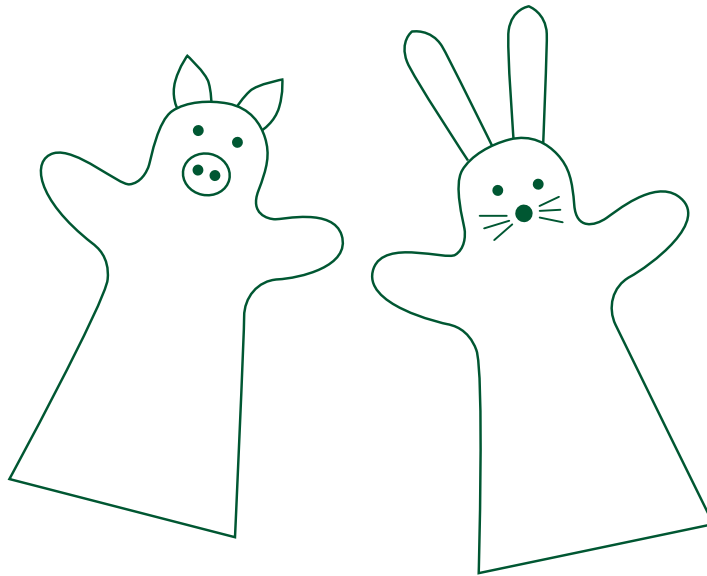
Note 2: Feel free to change the story about the boy and his pet dog, if you wish. The names should be something the learners can relate to. If you are teaching 12-year-olds, it is better to have the character their age or a bit older, as to avoid it feeling too childish.

Objectives for the specific training session	At the end of the training, the participants will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft a felt puppet or a paper doll • Feel contentment and express themselves by having created something beautiful • Practise eye-hand-coordination • Use creative art to improve memory, reasoning, and resilience • Enable learners enhance their self-expression, beauty and emotional skills using arts and crafts
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling a story about Alex • Starting to make a puppet • Starting to make the environment
Materials	<p>When making a puppet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt, fabric OR an odd sock for each. If using felt or fabric, you need enough material, approximately 25x30cm (10x12inches) per learner, (pearl) cotton thread, scraps for details, scissors, needles, glue <p>When making a paper doll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick paper, scissors, sticks, glue, pens, tape • Big paper and paint for the background image (optional) • A table and a tablecloth for a theatre • Simple sock and finger puppets (optional) <p>If possible, the facilitator can make some puppets in advance to show the learners and to be used in the play, if need arises.</p>

Welcome (10')

Facilitator: Welcome everyone to this session! Today we are going to make a puppet! It will be a lot of fun – you will get to know new handicraft techniques and learn to make your own design. When we are all ready with the puppets, we will create little plays.

Tell the participants that dolls and puppets are an image of real people. Sometimes it is easier to practise new skills like negotiating or saying one's opinion, with dolls first. Explain that we will try and see if that's your opinion, too.



Activity 1. Telling a Story (10')

Facilitator: Now I am going to tell you a little story. It is to help you to get to the right atmosphere.

You can just read the story below, or if you feel comfortable, you can act this out with puppets, a boy and a dog and a group of friends – make sure some of them are female.

! Facilitator reads out the story:

Once upon a time in the bustling town of Willowbrook, there lived a ten-year-old boy named Alex. He was a curious and adventurous soul, always eager to explore the world around him. But like any great adventure, Alex's journey was not without its challenges.

One sunny afternoon, as Alex roamed the streets of Willowbrook with his faithful companion, a scruffy stray dog named Max, he stumbled upon a mysterious old map hidden beneath a pile of fallen leaves in the town square. The map depicted a forgotten treasure buried deep within the nearby Whispering Woods.

Excitement surged through Alex's veins as he realised he had stumbled upon the opportunity of a lifetime. But as he examined the map more closely, he noticed a series of cryptic symbols and riddles that seemed to guard the treasure's location.

Undeterred by the daunting task ahead, Alex clenched his fists and declared to Max, "We're going to find this treasure, buddy. I may be small, but I've got a heart as big as the ocean, and nothing can stand in our way!"

With Max by his side, Alex embarked on his quest, solving each riddle and deciphering every symbol with the determination of a true adventurer. Alex needed all his friends along the way. They encountered thickets of thorns, treacherous ravines, and even a band of mischievous forest sprites intent on testing their courage.

But with each obstacle they overcame, Alex's confidence grew stronger, fuelled by the belief that he was destined for greatness. He refused to back down, even when the odds seemed stacked against him.

Finally, after days of relentless pursuit, Alex and Max with their friends reached the heart of the Whispering Woods, where they unearthed the long-lost treasure hidden beneath a gnarled old oak tree. As they gazed upon the gleaming riches before them, Alex couldn't help but smile with pride.

"You see, Max," he said, his eyes shining with triumph, "anything is possible when you believe in yourself and never give up."

And so, with the treasure in hand and a newfound sense of confidence in his heart, Alex and his friends returned home to Willowbrook. They had a party and invited everyone to join it. Alex felt ready to take on whatever adventures the future may hold. For he knew that no matter what challenges he may face, he would always have the courage to conquer them, one step at a time, with help of his friends.

Activity 2. Making a puppet (60'+)

Facilitator: Did you like the story? You will now start to make your own puppet. It can be Alex, Max, some of their friends or any other character you feel like.

! Note: if you are using a pairless sock, you can skip 1-4 and go straight to decorating the puppet.

Making the puppet:

1. Cut the pattern out of the paper.
2. Draw two identical pieces with the pattern to the felt or fabric. Cut them out.
3. Pin them together with right sides out.
4. With a needle and (pearl) cotton thread (or similar), sew the pieces together.
5. Put a piece of paper inside the puppet, so you won't accidentally glue it closed at the stage 6.
6. Design and cut out the details from the scraps and glue them to the puppet.
7. As the puppets will face trials as well as have reasons to celebrate, you may want to leave your puppets expression open. Another option is to make the face on the other side happy and the other face angry or sad.

If making the paper doll instead:

1. Cut out the pattern.
2. Draw your character.
3. Glue in the details.
4. If your paper is flimsy, you will need to glue another, stronger material to make it sturdier.
5. Avoid too fixed expressions on the dolls face. One possibility is to make two faces, to both sides of the doll.
6. Glue the stick to the doll, so you will be able to move it behind the table without being seen.

Optional: Making the environment

Puppet making will take more time than paper doll making. In every case, some of the dolls take more time to be finished than the others. If someone is really quick, you may let them make another puppet. One good way to occupy them is to let them make the environment for the puppets. There can be a background for happy scenes and another for problems and scarier times. This is easy to do with a flipchart or similar, but of course pieces of paper will do as well.

If the learners are relatively new to handicrafts, it is a good idea to let them practise sewing often but just a little at the time. When doing so and having your puppet project going every day for a little while in your classroom, the dolls should be ready in about a week.

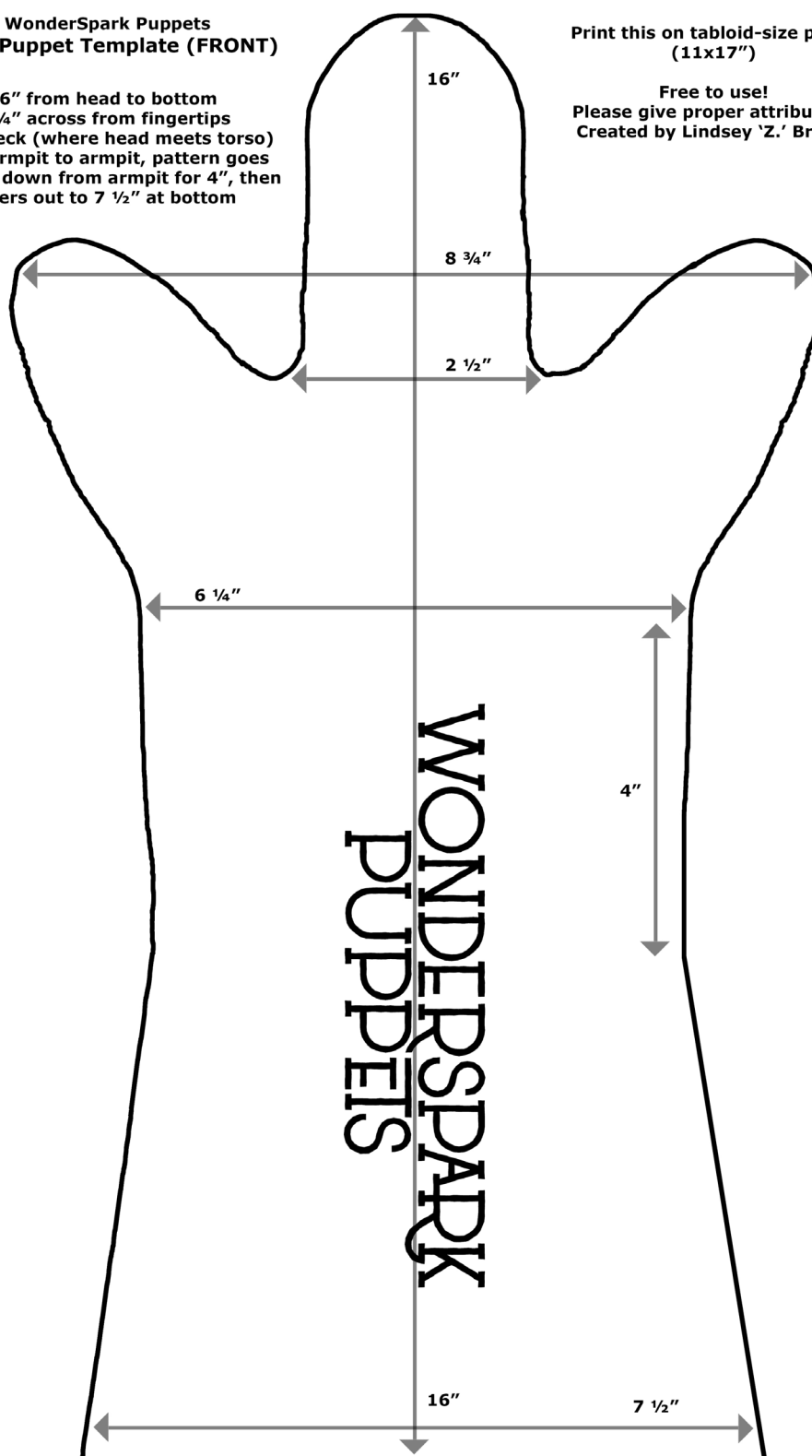
At school, the teacher can read the story to the students a day before and as homework, ask the students to bring in felt/fabric scraps, paper, cardboard, a pairless sock etc. materials which can be used to make the puppets. The learners could bring in more than only for their own puppet, to make sure all learners in the class have some material to work with.

WonderSpark Puppets Hand Puppet Template (FRONT)

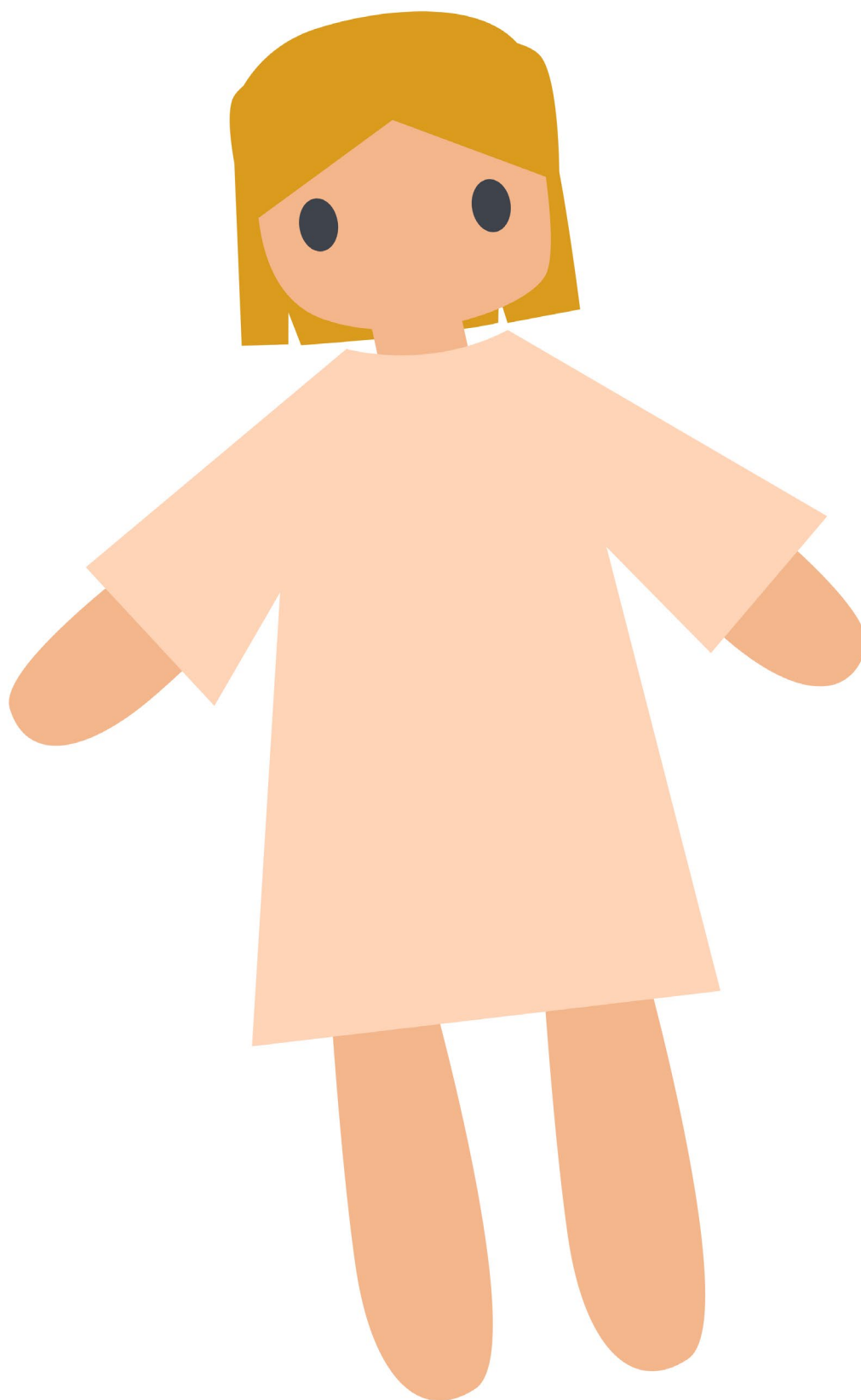
16" from head to bottom
8 3/4" across from fingertips
2 1/2" neck (where head meets torso)
6 1/4" armpit to armpit, pattern goes straight down from armpit for 4", then tapers out to 7 1/2" at bottom

Print this on tabloid-size paper
(11x17")

Free to use!
Please give proper attribution:
Created by Lindsey 'Z.' Briggs



Picture: Pattern for the puppet



Picture: Pattern for the paper doll

4.2 Using the puppets to tell stories

Suggested duration: 1 h 30 min

Objectives for the specific training session	<p>At the end of the training, the participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take on roles and act them out to explore themselves and their surroundings. By pretending to be someone—or something—else, children can learn new ways to express themselves, share thoughts and ideas, and even get in touch with their feelings. Dramatic play is a significant part of childhood development. • Puppetry can be undertaken as a unit of work in drama class from Kindergarten to Year 12, or end of secondary education. Younger children enjoy the excitement of being involved in puppet shows. At the same time, senior drama students are equally attracted to the more sophisticated use of certain types of puppetry, sometimes linked to particular theatrical performance styles. • To develop and extend the participants ability to remember and sequence events. • To create participants' awareness and understanding of the differentiation of characters within a story. • To foster the collaboration and connections between the students. • To enable participants to develop the way to think and provide orders. • To set and enhance the participants' imagination.
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and introducing the puppets • Little scenes • Conclusion
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puppets or paper dolls from the previous session • Simple sock and finger puppets or other puppets (optional) • Background pictures (optional) • Pens and papers or notebooks for planning the play, • Paper slips of the provided incidents (with the hero Alex) to the groups, • A table and a tablecloth for the theatre

Activity 1. Introducing the puppets (30')

Facilitator: Welcome to our next puppetry session! How fine your dolls turned out! I would like to get to know them all better. Could some of you please come forward to the stage and introduce themselves?

The learner and the puppet get to the puppet theatre and state (for an example):

- name and age
- their hobbies and interests
- their favourite food
- is there something they fear
- what they can do
- what they would like to learn

The facilitator can help and ask questions. After a short interview, the puppet bows himself/herself out and everyone claps.

If it is possible to introduce all puppets, do so. If there are too many, let the learners form small groups (max 7 persons) and introduce the puppets to a group.

Activity 2. Little scenes (50')

Facilitator: Form groups of 2-3. I will give you instructions for a little play.

i The groups should be kept quite small, as the puppets and the theatre are so small. In smaller groups it also makes it easier for everyone to have a say.

Hand out one of the scenes to each of the groups. The scenes can be cut out from Appendix 1. Little Scenes, which can be found in the end of module 4.

The scenes the puppets will attend:

1. The Bridge of Peril: Alex and his friends stumble upon a crumbling bridge in Whispering Woods. With no other way to cross, they must work together to repair the bridge before it collapses, testing their teamwork and problem-solving skills. They will need courage and teamwork to do so. Make a play where the puppets are courageous despite their fears.
2. The Enchanted Maze: Alex and a friend are lost in a maze of twisting hedges. They feel almost desperate but comfort each other that the others are not going to leave them behind. One of your puppets is trapped, probably injured, and the others have a rescue mission in the Enchanted maze.
3. The Riddle of Friendship: On one beautiful day, Alex and a friend have a falling out with one of their closest friends over a misunderstanding. Hurt and angry, Alex must learn the true meaning of forgiveness and reconciliation as he seeks to mend their friendship, realising that sometimes the greatest challenges are the ones we face within ourselves. One of your puppets is with Alex and the others are the other part of the quarrel. Please design a scene where there is first the row and then the reconciliation.
4. The Guardian of the Treasure: As they approach the final stage of their journey, Alex and his friends encounter a fierce guardian protecting the treasure. To defeat the guardian and claim the treasure, they must demonstrate courage, loyalty, and unity, proving that together, they are stronger than any obstacle. Please write the scene, where one of your puppets is the feared Guardian of the treasure and the others are trying to get past him.

5. **The Stormy Seas:** In order to reach the treasure's island hideaway, Alex and his friends must brave the stormy seas aboard a rickety old boat. Battling towering waves and fierce winds, they must work together to navigate safely to the shore, relying on each other's strengths and support to make it to their destination. In your scene, your puppets are in a difficult situation where risks and emotions are running high. Angry and scared, the puppets take out their frustration on each other before uniting in a common task.
6. **The Victory celebrations:** After all the hard work and nearly impossible tasks, Alex, Mike and the friends are planning a party. Somehow, one of the invitations gets lost in the way and then one of the puppets gets the impression he/she wasn't invited at all. How do the puppets solve the situation? One of them is hurt and angry, feeling left alone.

❗ The groups prepare little scenes. Allow some 15-20 minutes for them to plan them and practise them. Go around the groups and help them to make little plays. After preparations and rehearsals, present them to the others. A round of applause is always in order.

A teacher guides the conversation after each play like this:

1. First, tell us what you like about the play.
2. Do you have any questions for the group?

This time, as this is a new and possibly frightening exercise, there is no need for critical feedback, only praise and questions.

After the plays the teacher tells the group:

Throughout these trials and challenges, Alex and his friends learn valuable lessons about the power of teamwork, forgiveness, and friendship. Although their journey may be fraught with obstacles, they emerge stronger and closer than ever before, ready to face whatever adventures lie ahead.

Conclusion (10')

Ask the participants, how did it feel! Was it difficult? Did you like it? Thank everyone for their contribution in today's work.'

4.3 Play and games

Suggested overall duration: 1 h

“ Play is the work of a child.”

This well-known phrase emphasises the importance of play in a child’s development and learning process. A playing child can test theories about life safely. They can explore different roles and hence activate their imagination. Trying to be someone else develops their empathy towards others. And all this is fun and motivating for children. This session is designated for games and play. You don’t need special materials for these little exercises.

Objectives for the specific training session	<p>At the end of the training, the participants will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have fun• Bond as a group• Learn new games• Create a little hut for a little, imaginative creature• Stimulate imagination• Extend concentration span when following orders• To listen and follow complex orders• Notice that mistakes are just a way to learn things
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and a signal for attention• Together we grow (role-play) cheering, encouraging• Drawing a message on back (game) concentrating• Nests for Thumbies (creative play) imagination, hand-eye-coordination• Steps (game) concentrating, difficult instructions, laughing at mistakes
Materials	<p>Material: None</p> <p>Place: School yard or field (where you can find some sticks, leaves, stones, cones, hay etc.)</p>

Welcome and a signal for new instructions (5')

Facilitator: Welcome everyone! Today we are going to have fun together by playing games. First, we are to agree on a signal, which tells you it is time to come together and hear what the teacher has to say. Let's try this one: I sing to you "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" and then you sing back to me "How I wonder what you are."

Let's try it! "Twinkle, twinkle little star" (Learners: "How I wonder what you are.") Excellent! So now we have a signal, which tells you to stop what you are doing, stop talking, and come to listen to more instructions. Let's begin!

Activity 1. Together we grow (10')

Facilitator: Please form two lines. The lines should be equally long, so that when the lines are facing each other, everyone has a pair.

If the two queues are too long, you can form 4 queues.

Facilitator: Now, the left-hand side queue crouches. You are little seeds now. You need to hear nice, positive things to grow. The right-hand side queue is trying to help you grow. When we are finished, we switch turns. Talk to the little seed nicely, like this: Hello, little seed! Please come up, I am waiting for you. It is so nice to grow and experience new things! There is a beautiful world out here! The weather is fine, and I will give you water and protect you! Oh, you are beautiful and strong!

When all the seeds have grown, instruct the learners that it is time to switch turns. The right-hand side crouches and the other queue talks to them nicely to help them grow.

When the exercise is done, start to sing "Twinkle twinkle..." to test out the signal and to tell everyone it is time to listen now.

Activity 2. Drawing a message on the back (15')

Facilitator: Great! Now we are going to pass on a message down the line. I will draw a number or a letter on the child's back who is standing at the back of the line. Then the child draws what he or she feels to the next one on the line. The first one on the line draws it on sand and we will see whether the message changed.

Afterwards, switch places in the line.

Play this for some time. It is nice to end the game before it gets boring, then everyone will be delighted to play it again soon.

Try out the signal again, if needed, to get the attention to give new instructions.

Activity 3. Nests for Thumbies (20')

Facilitator: Okay, that was a lot of fun! You were good at concentrating to get those messages correct!

Facilitator: Now, we imagine a little man the size of my thumb. He has a little wife, who is perhaps slightly smaller than he is. And then, they have children, who are even smaller. If you wish, the little family can have animals to tend to as well. Those animals are, of course, small too.

Instruct the children to form groups of 4-5 persons.

! If the learners are still in lines, it may be easiest to take the groups from the lines. Sometimes you can group learners for fun, random reasons to mix the class and get everyone to know each other. You can form groups according to the day of birth, which colour clothes the learners are wearing, how many siblings they have, what their favourite colour or favourite food is etc. If you need just pairs, one way is to give everyone a card from a memory game and let them find their pair.

Facilitator: In group, you can select a place where to build a nest for the Thumbies family and their pets and animals. You can use things you find from the ground, like leaves, stones and hay. Don't rip living leaves or branches from the trees, use the ones from the ground.

Let everyone make the nests and circle around to give positive feedback and help the learners if needed.

If you wish, you can take a tour together and get to know all the Thumbies and their marvellous nests.

! Tip: You can make drawings of the nests or take photographs of them. Maybe you can write stories about Thumbies or make little plays about their lives later.

When the time is up, use the Twinkle, twinkle-signal to get everyone together again.

Activity 4. Steps (10')

Facilitator: Thank you, everyone! You were good at imaging and creating the nests. Now we have time for our final game today. It is called "Steps", and it requires you all to listen very carefully.

All the players stand in a circle. The game leader, which is me in this first round, is in the middle of the circle. The game leader says, "When I say left, you say left and move one step left".

The players act according to what the leader said. Repeat with right. Then the game leader says: "When I say left, you say left, but move one step right." Continue according to the variations below. The game is a good exercise for the brain as the players must concentrate well. It is a fun game and also good for learning that it is okay to make mistakes.

Examples for the game leader to say:

- “When I say left, you say left and move one step left”
- “When I say left, you say left and move one step right”
- “When I say left, you say right and move one step left”
- “When I say right, you say right and move one step right”
- “When I say right, you say right and move one step left”
- “When I say right, you say left and move one step right”

You play the game for 10 minutes. Then use the signal for the last time today. Thank everyone for the session and contributing so well.

Appendices for module 4

Appendix 1. Little Scenes for activity 2 in session 4.2 Using the puppets to tell stories

The Bridge of Peril: Alex and his friends stumble upon a crumbling bridge in Whispering Woods. With no other way to cross, they must work together to repair the bridge before it collapses, testing their teamwork and problem-solving skills. They will need courage and team work to do so. Make a play where the puppets are courageous despite their fears.

The Enchanted Maze: Alex and a friend are lost in a maze of twisting hedges. They feel almost desperate, but comfort each other that the others are not going to leave them behind. One of your puppets is trapped, probably injured, and the others have a rescue mission in the Enchanted maze.

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The Victory celebrations: After all the hard work and nearly impossible tasks, Alex, Mike and the friends are planning a party. Somehow, one of the invitations gets lost in the way and then one of the puppets gets the impression he/she wasn't invited at all. How do the puppets solve the situation? One of them is hurt and angry, feeling left alone.

Appendix 2. Recreational and Expressive Activities for children in Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) and at school

All activities taken with children provide an opportunity to engage in discussion with the learners and identify the individuals who need support provided by other actors than FCA. Thus, it is important all adults at the school, the learners as well community members know how the local referral mechanism works and how to access it.

All these activities are relevant and applicable in CFS and school settings, for formal, non-formal and informal learning purposes.

Creative Activities

Engage children in dancing, drama, music, singing, interactive and puppet theatre, painting, colouring, and various crafts to develop creative and social skills, improve self-esteem, and assist in processing experiences.

- Goal: Foster creativity, teamwork, social skills, self-esteem, relaxation, and emotional expression. Play and creative activities may also help children understand what is happening in their lives where they represent their experiences, processing difficult experiences, fun, relaxation, stimulating team spirit, and active participation.

Physical Activities

Organize sports like football, volleyball, and handball, along with traditional local games and inclusive competitions to cater to children with physical or sensory disabilities.

- Goal: Build self-confidence, enhance motor skills, and promote teamwork and social interaction.

Social Activities

Implement storytelling sessions, book readings, discussion groups, and conversation times to help children articulate their feelings and foster empathy.

- Goal: Enhance verbal expression, develop empathy, and stimulate intellectual engagement.

Mental Activities

Introduce puzzles, building blocks, board games, and friendly debates to cultivate problem-solving abilities and collaborative skills.

- Goal: Strengthen cognitive development such as problem-solving skills, self-esteem and cooperative behaviour.

Distribution of Psychological Support Materials

- Provide children and youth with toys, games, and play-based learning materials designed to offer psychological relief and support.
- Provide psychoeducational materials and sessions for the children, parents and community members.

- Psychosocial information material distribution for parents and teachers. Note that it is important to provide the information in all the spoken languages and in different formats for inclusion (visual, auditory and braille if possible).

Extra-curricular activities for teachers

Encourage teachers to socialize and have fun together, outside of work hours. Teachers interact, bond, and are better able to help each other when they know each other better. Include these in budgets!

- Yoga, Zumba, aerobics classes, hikes
- Mindfulness and breathing exercises
- Field trips for teachers: for example, take all teachers off-site for a visit or a training activity
- Regular staff lunches
- Team building events (sports, dance etc.)
- School garden tended by teachers and learners
- Providing recreational materials such as footballs, board games, pool table (at the teachers' accommodation)



Young students from Nepal remain steadfast in their commitment to education and pursuing their dreams.

PHOTO: KIRSTI KOIVISTO / FINN CHURCH AID 2023

Module 5. Social and emotional learning

“Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions.” – Dalai Lama

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) defines Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as: The process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively.

SEL is an important component that sits under the MHPSS umbrella. INEE views SEL as an important component of MHPSS that educators can and should address. It is a practice that can be readily and easily employed in educational settings and one that contributes to children's and youth's improved psychosocial well-being. It is a pedagogical practice and process that is fitting in both formal and non-formal educational environments, since it helps children, young people, and adults alike to acquire and promote the skills and abilities that help them learn more effectively.

This module focuses on five core SEL Competencies through Character Strengths. The first session, 5.1 Character Strengths and Social Emotional Learning, is addressed to teachers and educators. The session goes deep into the theory of Character Strengths and SEL. The second session, 5.2 SEL in Action, provides activities which enhance SEL competencies in learners.



Picture: Word cloud on social and emotional learning.

5.1 Character strengths and social-emotional learning

Suggested duration: 2 h 15 min

Objectives for the specific training session	<p>At the end of the training, the participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify their personal strengths • Understand the importance of teaching personal strengths at school • Get to know the relationship between personal strengths and Social-Emotional Learning • Get to know the importance of SEL • Understand the difference between Fixed and Growth Mindset
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: Introduction • From Positive Psychology to Positive Education • Character strengths • Energizer: Lemons! • SEL • Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset • Closure
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipcharts • Projector • Loudspeaker • Internet-connection • Handouts • Notebooks/paper • Pens • Sticky notes • Readymade flipcharts (virtues, strength categories, negative sentences) and attachment.

Welcome and expectations (10')

Everyone should have sticky notes and pens at the beginning of the session.

Facilitator: Welcome all to this session about Character strengths and Social-Emotional Learning. Let's write down some expectations you have for Social-Emotional Learning.

Collect the notes on an empty flip chart in the classroom.

Activity 1: Personal Strengths (20')

The objective of this activity is to familiarise everyone's personal strengths.

Take everyone out and make a circle. Then make pairs with participants who already know each other, for example teachers from the same school. One in turn introduces his/her pair to others by telling the pair's name, occupation and pedagogical strength he/she uses at school. You can give an example to the participants, for instance: This is Mary, she is a class teacher, and her pedagogical strength is teamwork.

No clapping before everyone has done the introduction. Once all are done, clap for everyone at once.

Facilitator: How did it feel to hear your strengths? Discuss!

Usually, we don't hear positive feedback from our colleagues.

Activity 2. From Positive Psychology to Positive Pedagogy (15')


The objective of the activity is to get to know the background to Character Strengths and Strength based education.

Facilitator: What do you know about **positive pedagogy**? Talk to your pair and then share to all.

You can then explain the following points to the participants:

- Positive psychology explores what is good for the human mind
- Positive pedagogy focuses on what actions increase student's well-being and learning outcomes.
- Positive pedagogy is based on research in the field of positive psychology and its science.
- In practice, positive pedagogy focuses on encouraging the child or young person to perceive and identify their own life experience, emotions and strengths.

Facilitator: Researchers Seligman and Peterson (2004) asked different religious-, spiritual- and opinion leaders to identify virtues that can be accepted all around the world. They agreed on the following: Wisdom and Knowledge, Humanity, Justice, Courage, Temperance and Transcendence.

Give a copy of  **Appendix 1. Character Strengths to the participants**. The handout can be found in the end of Module 5.

Facilitator: Then Seligman and Peterson identified character strengths that are related to virtues. Here they are:

- Wisdom and Knowledge: Perspective, Love of Learning, Curiosity, Creativity, Judgement
- Humanity: Love, Kindness, Social Intelligence
- Justice: Teamwork, Fairness, Leadership
- Courage: Bravery, Perseverance, Grit, Honesty
- Temperance: Forgiveness, Humility, Prudence, Self-regulation
- Transcendence: Humour, Gratitude, Love of Beauty, Hope and Spirituality

Facilitator: Now take your handout and read the definitions of all character strengths. What are those strengths that are more like you? You can ask yourself about every strength: Just like me? A bit like me? Not me at all?

You can also advise the participants to put a tick (x) by all strengths which are “Just like me”. Give some minutes to choose the strengths.

Facilitator: There are three types of strengths: (Seligman 2004).

- Power Strengths include perseverance and self-regulation. These are strengths that we can learn, teach and use every day.
- Signature Strengths are an essential part of everyone’s personality, a unique way to think and act. Using your strengths at work, free time and relationships brings well-being and happiness in your life.
- Growth Strengths are often those we admire in other people. Using them may not be easy, but focusing on the Growth strength is our new possibility.

You can also discuss the following examples of signature strengths (Wagner 2020):

Teachers: love of learning, love of beauty, leadership, love, fairness

Head teachers: leadership, grit/zest, hope, perseverance, creativity

Activity 3. Teaching Character Strengths (20’)

The objective of the activity is to get know the importance of Character Strengths at school.

Facilitator: Now, make a small group of 5-6 persons and take a look at your strength you picked earlier. Who picked a power strength? What is your signature strength? What is your growth strength? Discuss in your small group and write your strengths in your notebook / paper.

After the discussion, ask the participants to brainstorm in their respective groups why it is important to teach character strengths at school.

Ask each group to give an answer and collect all the answers on a flipchart.

Facilitator: According to Seligman & Peterson:


- Focusing on character strengths at school would not only make young people happier, healthier, and more socially connected but also help them do better at school and to be more productive at their eventual work.
- Teaching that focuses on character strengths aims at improving resilience in children and young people.
- We nourish what we put our attention on.
- Focusing on character strengths instead of focusing only on academic skills gives learners an opportunity to show their non-academic talents.

Discuss the following statements together, one point at a time:

- Well-being at school is related to kindness, fairness, leadership and hope.
- School achievement is related to creativity, perseverance and kindness.
- Strength-related behaviour is related to current well-being at school the next morning, meaning: if learners had displayed e.g. curiosity, bravery or kindness, they enjoyed being in school more the next morning.

Facilitator: And how do you teach character strengths? Any ideas?

Write the answers on the flipchart/blackboard.

Give a copy of  **Appendix 2. Tips to teach character strengths at school to the participants**, and let them study the tips for a short moment. The handout can be found in the end of Module 5. Discuss!

Activity 4 Energizer: Lemons! (5')

The objective of the activity is to relax and refresh the brain.

Facilitator: Stand up and reach your hands up, like picking lemons from the tree. Stretch your hand for every lemon: I pick one lemon, I pick two lemons, I pick three, four, five lemons! I squeeze the lemons and drink the juice. Please, sit down.

Now we will continue with Social and Emotional Learning. Any idea what it is all about?

Write the answers on the second flipchart.

Activity 5. What is Social and Emotional Learning? (10')

The objective of the activity is to understand and recognise the core Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies.

Facilitator: SEL can be described as learning that allows all learners to identify and navigate emotions, practise mindful engagement and exhibit prosocial behaviour for human flourishing towards a peaceful and sustainable planet. Research suggests that SEL is key to building emotional resilience in individuals.

A recent UNESCO publication 'Rethinking Learning' agrees that social-emotional learning is essential as "students' social and emotional competence not only predicts school success, but also predicts a range of important outcomes in late adolescence and adulthood, including high school graduation, postsecondary completion, employment, financial stability, physical health, and overall mental health and well-being."

Ask the participants to recap what SEL is and why it is important.


Activity 6. SEL core competencies (45')

Write the five SEL core competencies on a flip chart:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

Ask the participants how character strengths relate to these core competences.

Tell the participants that we will now take a deeper look into each of the SEL core competencies.

You can find a one-page summary of the core competencies in  [Appendix 3. Core SEL competencies in the end of Module 5.](#)

Self-Awareness

Facilitator: Let’s first look into Self-Awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behaviour across contexts.

Let’s do an activity together. Make a face! Make another face! And one more! Which face feels the most comfortable?

Smile; yes, if you are worried, a smile helps you feel better and a smile spreads around. You can show or hide your emotions with a smile.

You can also go through examples of self-awareness, for example categorising them as follows:

Self-Awareness may look like	And sound like
Identifying emotions	How am I feeling and why?
Having an accurate self-perception	When am I at my best?
Recognizing strengths	What stresses me out?
Self-confidence	What kind of person do I want to be today?
Self-efficacy	Where do I fit into my family/community?

Ask the participants which character strengths they think are related to Self-Awareness?

Discuss together!

You can give the following example to the participants about the importance of self-awareness in the classroom:

When teaching mathematics, you can encourage students to reflect on their emotions and attitudes towards maths. Provide opportunities for them to express their thoughts and feelings about maths and help them identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Fostering self-awareness, students can develop a positive mindset and overcome any maths-related challenges they may face.

Self-Management

Facilitator: The second core competence is self-management. What is Self-Management?

You can give the following explanation to the participants: self-management is the ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations. Discuss the following examples with the participants:

Self-management may look like	And sounds like
Impulse control	I need a break right now
Stress management	May I please have space? I am not ready to share.
Self-discipline	I think I need help with _____.
Self-motivation	I don't understand yet, but I will do _____ to reach my goal.
Goal-setting	Next week, I will _____.
Organisational skills	First things first!

Which character strengths are related to Self-Management? Discuss!

You may give the following example on self-management when teaching mathematics:

- Teach learners how to set goals and create action plans.
- Teach them strategies for managing their time and resources effectively, by using maths tools.

Facilitator: Remember that in self-management it is important to use positive self-talk.

Explain to the participants the act and practice of talking to oneself, either aloud or silently and mentally.

Generally, negative self-talk makes us feel worse, but positive self-talk can make us feel better because it triggers problem-solving and helps remind ourselves that making mistakes is part of life.

Tell the participants that a simple rule is: Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to anyone else.

Activity 7: From negative talk to positive

Facilitator: In pairs, let's change negative talk to positive talk.

Write down the following sentences on a blackboard or flipchart:

- This is never going to work.
- I'm not tech-savvy.
- I can't figure this out by myself.
- I'm not good enough.
- I'm always messing up.

Instruct the participants to take turns, one says the negative sentence, while the other comes up with a positive version of the same sentence. You can take the first example with the entire group, and then let the participants practice in pairs.

Social-Awareness

Facilitator: The third core competence is social awareness. Does anyone know what it means?

Social awareness is the ability to understand the perspectives of and empathise with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.

You may use the following examples on social awareness:

Social-awareness may look like	And sounds like
Perspective taking	How would I feel if I were in that situation?
Empathy	I wonder how that made _____ feel?
Appreciating diversity	Thanks for sharing! My family does it this way.
Respect for others	They seem sad right now. Maybe I should _____.

Facilitator: Which character strengths are related to Social-Awareness? Discuss!

You can give the following example how social awareness can be adapted when teaching mathematics: Encourage learners to collaborate and share their approaches to problem-solving and learn from their peers’ strategies.

Relationship skills

Facilitator: The fourth core competency is relationship skills. What are Relationship skills?

Explain that relationship skills are the ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.

Relationship skills may look like	And sounds like
Communication	When you said it, I thought _____. Can you explain what you mean by that?
Social engagement	Joining a team or asking someone else to join.
Relationship building	Showing empathy and respect to others.
Teamwork	Everyone is engaged in the task.

Facilitator: Which character strengths are related to Relationship Skills?

Discuss all together!

You may give the following example how relationship skills are important when teaching mathematics:

Foster positive relationships between students and teachers by showing empathy, respect, and understanding. Create a supportive and inclusive environment so learners feel safe and supported.

Activity 8: Rose-Bud-Thorn

Facilitator: Next we have an activity called Rose, Bud, Thorn.

Rose: Think of something positive that happened last week – something that is work or learning related. Bud: Then think of something you are looking forward to knowing more. Thorn: Think of something work related you need help with next week. Think, who could help you. Write your answers down.

You can ask the participants to share their rose, bud, or thorn with others, or simply reflect on the activity itself with participants.

Facilitator: Sometimes we struggle with tasks we could have gotten help from others. And that way these Thorns turn to Buds.

Responsible Decision Making

Facilitator: The fifth and last one of the core competencies is Responsible Decision Making. What could this mean?

Explain to the participants that responsible decision-making is the ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions across diverse situations.

Responsible decision making may look like	And sounds like
Identifying problems	How will this impact others?
Analyzing situations	Is it worth it?
Solving problems	Why do I want to make this choice?
Evaluating	Was this a strong choice?
Reflecting	Will this help me?
Ethical responsibility	Will my decision hurt someone else?

Facilitator: Which character strengths are related to Responsible Decision Making?


Discuss!

You can give the following example how to bring responsible decision making into teaching mathematics: Teach learners how to analyse options and consider consequences in problem-solving. Encourage them to think critically and make informed decisions based on evidence and logic.

Activity 9. Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset (10')

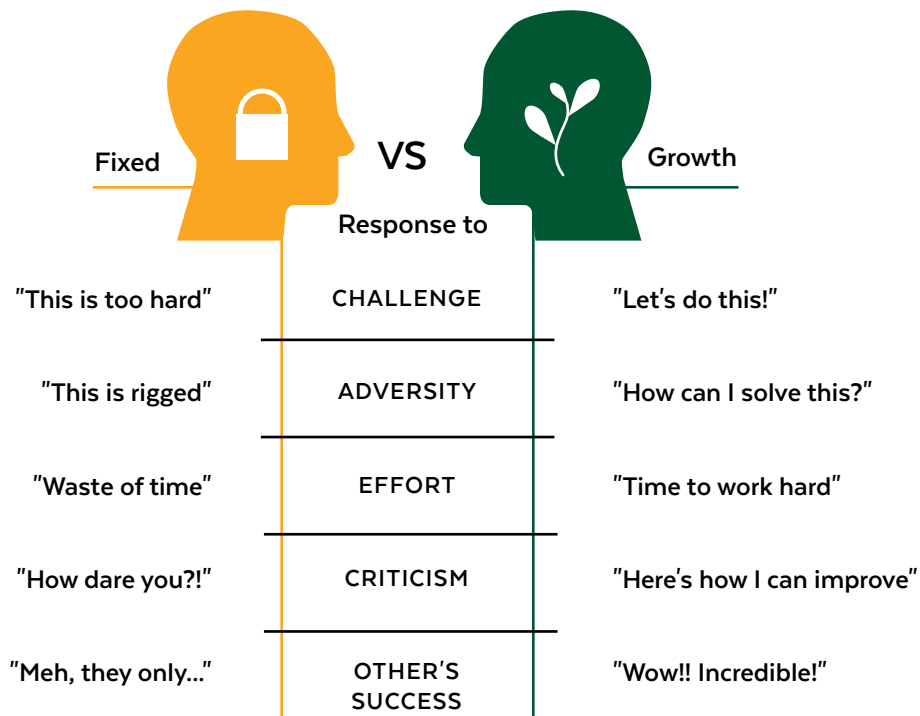
The objective of the activity is to learn the difference between Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset

Watch the video about Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUWn_TJTrnU

If there isn't a possibility to watch the video, then get familiar with Growth and Fixed Mindset by studying  **Appendix 4. Growth mindset vs Fixed mindset**. The handout can be found in the end of Module 5.

After the video/ handout ask the participants what ideas they got about the Growth Mindset? Character strengths? Social-Emotional learning? And overall about this session?

Fixed and Growth Mindsets



Picture: Fixed and growth mindsets from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fixed_and_growth_mindsets.png

Activity 10. Closure and feedback

Read aloud the expectations that were written in the beginning of the session. Discuss with the group whether we have met the expectations.

Thank everyone for participating!

Sources used in this module

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fixed_and_growth_mindsets.png

<https://www.viacharacter.org> if you want to do a character strength -test online

See the Good! Kaisa Vuorinen, Lotta Uusitalo

<https://mgiep.unesco.org/rethinking-learning>

<https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/guide-to-core-sel-competencies>

<https://posproject.org/character-strengths/>

Bridging the Gap: Fostering SEL Competencies for Success in Math:

<https://everydayspeech.com/sel-implementation/bridging-the-gap-fostering-sel-competencies-for-success-in-math/#:~:text=SEL%20Strategies%20for%20Math%20Success&text=To%20cultivate%20self%20awareness%20in,strengths%20and%20areas%20for%20improvement.>

5.2 Social-emotional learning in action using character strengths

Suggested duration: 2 h 10 min

Objectives for the specific training session	At the end of the training, the participants will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know character strengths • Have ideas how to teach or emphasise SEL to learners
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Recap character strengths • Self-esteem and self-confidence • Activity: This is me! • Activity: Me over time • Self-management • Social awareness • Activity: Emotion charades • Activity: Staring contest • Responsible decision making • Activity: Problem solving • Activity: A good friend is • Activity: Trust is a key part of relationships. • Closure
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readymade flip charts • Blindfolds for half the class • Attachment printed out or descriptions written on papers

Activity 1. Choose your side: YES / NO (10')

Facilitator: Welcome to our second SEL-session! Now we are going to find out how to use these core SEL- competencies in school with learners. Are we ready?

Mark two places far from each other, for example on two trees or two chairs, one with a YES and one with NO.

Facilitator: I will read statements, choose your side, or somewhere between Yes and No:

- I am good at collaboration.
- I am very creative, and I have many ideas to share.
- I am positive.
- I am a natural leader.
- I am good at giving feedback.
- I am an impulsive person.

- I am very patient.
- I am a good listener.
- I am a good speaker.
- I am good at helping people.
- I am good at planning.
- I have a sense of humour.
- I am shy.
- I have good self-control.
- I am good at problem solving.

Facilitator: Was it easy to find your place? Why?

Discuss!

Self-esteem + self-confidence = self-awareness (10')

Facilitator: You are the hero of your own story.

- What does this quote mean to you?
- What do you think about it?
- Why is it important?

Explain that self-esteem is an internal experience and self-confidence is an external experience.

Describe to the participants that self-esteem relates to how we feel about ourselves, reflecting our inner sense of value and self-respect. Confidence reflects the way that we experience ourselves in our external world, in our relationships with other people and with situations and circumstances.

Continue by describing that having a healthy self-esteem means you have a strong sense of self-worth and value. You understand and accept your weaknesses, and you appreciate and celebrate your strengths.

Facilitator: As a teenager describes: "For me, low self-esteem is the little voice inside my head that says, 'you are rubbish, you are fat, what's the point, you're not cut out for this' and so on... To strengthen my self-esteem is to get to know myself. What I like, what makes me feel happy; say positive things to myself."

Activity 2. This is me! Self-analyses-flower (10')

The objective of the activity is to get to know oneself and to strengthen one's self-esteem.

All learners should have the means to write and draw.

Instruct the learners to draw a flower with 5 petals and write in the middle: myself. The learners should then write in the petals: Who I am, What I am good at, What I like to do, What I would like to change about myself, What I don't like about myself.

After everyone has written these words, instruct the learners to fill in the answers. You can instruct that no one will need to show their flower to others.

Draw an example on a flipchart:



Activity 3. Me over time (10')

The objective of the activity is to see one's change over time.

Facilitator: Draw a line with lines which mark 10 years ago, 5 years ago, now, in next 5 years, in next 10 years.

You can draw an example on a flipchart:



Ask the participants to write how they see themselves over time, trying to remember, how they were in the past, 10 and 5 years ago, how they are now and, in the future, in 5 and 10 years. The aim is to generate a reflection on their feelings, their qualities, their competencies, goals, and expectations.

Share with others!

! If the participants' lines show more dissatisfaction than success, the learners should be motivated by the educators to act in a different way in the present, and plan for the future to build a more satisfying life.

Self-management (15')

Have the below descriptions written on separate papers or printed out (**Appendix 5. self-management contents** to cut out, in the end of Module 5.). Let the learners find the right description to go with the right title. Descriptions have no titles in the attachment.

Discuss all the topics!

Facilitator: You cannot fast-track your success. You have to work for it.

- What does this quote mean to you?
- What do you think about it?
- Why is it important?

Self-management, which is also referred to as “self-control” or “self-regulation,” is the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviours effectively in different situations. It includes different skills. Here are the definitions for each of them. You should find the right definition for all the skills. Let’s start!

Impulse control – What is it?

! Give time to participants to find the right answer.

Impulse control is the ability of a learner to manage the behaviours that come from their emotions. It gives learners the ability to say “no” to actions and behaviours that are not appropriate. They can also learn to control their emotions and use steps to calm down.

Facilitator: Stress management – What is it?

Mindfulness practices and breathing exercises are a great way to teach students to manage their stress levels. Reflect with students on what made them feel stressed out and how to manage themselves before becoming overwhelmed.

Facilitator: Self-discipline – What is it?

Self-discipline has to do with a learners’ ability to work towards achieving something and keeping themselves on track. It can also apply to being able to regulate themselves in the classroom by raising their hand to talk, or staying focused on assignments for example.

Facilitator: Self-motivation – What is it?

Self-motivation is learners’ ability to keep themselves moving towards a goal or accomplishing a task. It is a critical lifelong skill. Self-motivation is at the core of learners being independent and achieving personal satisfaction.

Facilitator: Goal-setting – What is it?

Goal-setting is critical in the classroom because it creates learner-centred learning and creates awareness in learners for what they are expected to learn, but gives them independence in how they are going to learn it. Learners will need scaffolding on how to set appropriate goals for themselves. Self-motivation and self-discipline will help them work towards the goals that they set. Learners’ self-confidence will grow as they achieve their goals and benchmarks towards meeting their goals.

Facilitator: Organisational skills – What are they?

Teach your learners to be organised step by step! They should be responsible for keeping their backpack, desk, workspace, pencil box, and the classroom organised. Now, learners need in-

struction on how to be organised. Model this for them by having an organised classroom and hold them responsible for keeping it organised.

You may also discuss which of the Character Strengths will focus on these issues.

Social awareness (10')

Facilitator: “Kindness doesn’t cost anything, and yet it means everything”

- What does this quote mean to you?
- What do you think about it?
- Why is it important?

Explain to the participants that social awareness is the ability to take the perspective of and empathise with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. It is the ability to understand social and ethical norms for behaviour and to recognize family, school, and community resources and support.

Activity 4. Emotion Charades (10')

The objective of the activity is to recognise different feelings.

Emotion charades involve writing different emotions on small pieces of paper. Have different emotions written on the separate pieces of paper, for example: Happy, Sad, Angry, Bored, Fearful, Surprised, Disgusted, Tired, Enthusiastic.

Your participants pick one out of a hat or bucket. Then, they must try to act out that emotion without speaking.

Emotion charades can help children learn to recognize emotions using facial and body cues.

Activity 5. Staring contest (5')

The objective of the activity is to encourage learners to keep eye contact. Many children have trouble maintaining eye contact in conversation. A staring contest can help kids make and keep eye contact in a way that allows them to focus on that task, rather than trying to communicate simultaneously.

! This exercise can also be used as an energizer in the middle of the lesson, to bring the learner’s focus back to lesson content.

Instructs the participants to try staring contest, 2 minutes at a time. Ask each person to take a pair and start staring each other eye to eye. No talk, no smiling.

Do you have other ideas to teach emotions to learners? Brainstorm together!

Responsible decision making (10')

Facilitator: You are free to make a choice, but you are not free from the consequences of that choice.

- What does this quote mean to you?
- What do you think about it?
- Why is it important?

Facilitator: Skills of Decision Making include Problem solving, Creative thinking and Critical thinking. There are many types of critical thinking that occur in the classroom, some of them so fundamental to teaching that you might not even recognize them as critical thinking. Can you name some?

Collect the answers on the flipchart/blackboard.

Make sure that the following ones are mentioned on the flipchart/blackboard:

- Asking questions
- Analysing and solving problems
- Brainstorming and assessing ideas
- Discussing the value of rules
- Working together
- Developing logic skills with an assessment of consequences

Mention also that when solving any problems learners also practise creative thinking.

Activity 6. Who lives and where? (10')

The objective of the activity is to use logic and deduction to solve a problem.

Facilitator: Make groups of 4 - 5 persons and try to solve the next problem:

! You can write the below cues on a flipchart or use printouts of **Appendix 6**. Tips for the activity: Who lives and where? as found in the end of Module 5.

Who lives and where? 3 houses and ...

- Colour: blue, green, red
- Nationality: Australian, Brazilian, German
- Animals: cats, dogs, fish
- Sport: football, basketball, soccer

Clues:

- The Brazilian does not live in the house number two
- The person with the dogs plays basketball
- There is one house between the house of the person who plays football and the red house on the right.
- The person with the fish lives directly to the left of the person with the cats.
- The person with the dogs lives directly to the right of the green house.
- The German lives in house number three.

! Draw a grid:

	house 1	house 2	house 3
colour			
nationality			
animal			
sport			

! Give some time to solve the problem.

Facilitator: How was it? Nice?

Did you know that nothing boosts a learner's confidence like working with others to solve problems. And the classroom's the perfect place to do just that. Remember to include plenty of face-to-face and small group activities in your lessons.

Exercises requiring the use of logic and deduction are also skills needed, practised and part of basic mathematics skills. The problem-solving exercise above supports the development of mathematical thinking. Thus, also during the mathematics lesson when you give problems to deduce and solve to your learners, you can tell them that with this exercise we are also practising critical thinking skills.

Activity 7. Relationship skills (15')

Facilitator: "Friendship is a two-way street."

- What does this quote mean to you?
- What do you think about it?
- Why is it important?

Sit in a circle, everyone tells one thing about a good friend or friendship, one round is enough.

Facilitator: Relationship skills look like kindness and empathy, cooperation, cultural competency, leadership, avoiding negative peer pressure, and making positive choices.

Explain to the participants that building relationships serves as the foundation to having a positive and healthy classroom environment. When students know how to build relationships with their classmates everyone benefits.

Next you can practice this together. Discuss all the titles together: how do these relationship skills relate to learning and school environment. You can find tips under each title, yet it is important to hear out the learners first.

Cooperation

Group work is essential in learning. It requires getting along with others. Building relationships makes that process go smoothly.

Sense of Family

Research has shown learning increases when the environment feels safe and nurturing. Building relationships within a classroom tends to lead to forming bonds and a close-knit community.

Reduces Bullying

When kids learn how to form relationships with others, they will stand up to perpetrators and support those that were targeted. This lessens negative interactions and increases care and concern for others.

Increases Appreciation of Differences

With many kids working together in a classroom comes diversity. It can be challenging working through differences, especially for students. Relationship building helps kids get past that because they learn how to understand others, accept differences and find ways to work together.

Creates Compassion

A byproduct of building relationships is compassion for others. With compassion comes things like empathy, care, trust and understanding, which makes interactions meaningful.

Activity 8: Guiding the blindfolded (10')

The objective of this activity is to build trust between learners

Split the class up into pairs. One person in the pair will be blindfolded, the other person will be the guide. Hand out blindfolds and instruct 1 student in the pair to put on the blindfold. Then have partners link arms and walk around the room or open field with the guide leading the blindfolded person. The guide needs to make sure their partner is safe and doesn't bump into things. After a few minutes, switch roles.

❗ If you do not have blindfolds for everyone, the participants can simply close their eyes.

At the end of the activity, bring the participants together to talk about their experiences. Trust is a key part of relationships.

Feedback and Closure (5')

Facilitator: Think of all the activities we did today. Which one did you enjoy the most / are you going to use in your class? Share!

Thank you for your engagement and participation!

Sources:

<https://www.thesocialemotionalteacher.com/relationship-skills-in-the-classroom/>
<https://jodidurgin.com/teaching-self-management-skills/>
<https://www.mind.org.uk/media/13637/self-esteem-2022.pdf>

Appendices for module 5

Appendix 1: Character Strengths for activity 2 in session 5.1

Character strengths and Social-Emotional Learning

Self-regulation You have the ability to control your emotions and behaviours. You think before you act.	Perseverance You complete what you start despite obstacles. You never give up!	Leadership You value each member of your group and inspire people to do their best.	Honesty You are honest and speak the truth. You present yourself genuinely and sincerely.
Love You value close relationships with others and being close to people	Humor You like to laugh and bring smiles to other people	Hope You expect the best from the future and work to achieve it.	Gratitude You are aware of and thankful for good things that happen.
Prudence You plan for the future and achieve your goals by making careful everyday choices.	Humility You do not seek the spotlight. You let your actions speak for themselves	Forgiveness You forgive those who have done wrong. You accept that people make mistakes.	Bravery You act with mental, moral, or physical strength even when you know things are difficult or scary.
Fairness You believe that all people have value. You approach situations with an unbiased mindset and treat everyone with respect	Teamwork You work well as a member of a group or team. You are loyal, reliable, and dedicated to helping your team achieve its goals.	Perspective You appreciate that people see things in different ways. You have the ability to understand the world from multiple points of view.	Curiosity You like exploration and discovery. You ask lots of questions because you want to learn more about anything and everything
Grit / Zest You approach life with excitement and energy. You energise people around you.	Creativity You come up with new and original ways to think about and do things.	Love of Learning You master new skills and topics on your own or in school.	Love of Beauty You notice and value the world's beauty and people's skills. You don't take things for granted.
Spirituality You have beliefs about the meaning of life and your life's purpose. You seek to be part of something greater than yourself.	Kindness You are generous to others and you are never too busy to help out. You enjoy doing good deeds for other people.	Social Intelligence You are aware of other people's thoughts and feelings. You understand why they do things.	Judgement You like to consider new ideas and try new things. You examine things from all sides and don't jump to conclusions.

Appendix 2. Tips to teach character strengths at school for activity 3 in session 5.1 Character strengths and Social-Emotional Learning

At school: Introduce all character strengths to your learners:

- Help learners to find their Signature strengths and use them.
- The best way to find one's signature strengths is asking parents, friends, peers, teachers. What are my strengths? They will tell you! In the same way they will tell you your Growth strengths.
- Or you can ask learners to think about something they like to do in their free time, what is one's passion, interest... The strengths they use then are one's signature strengths. They are strengths we use every day and using them is natural and easy.
- Choose one strength/ week or month to take a closer look. Focus on magnifying this strength when it is used. For example: Humour - whenever some of the learners tells a joke or brings smiles to others face, you notice it: "Mary brings happiness to us by telling jokes"
- Help learners to see others' Signature strengths
- Help learners to learn to use their Growth strengths. Give positive feedback when some is struggling, for example sitting still. Or: "What strengths could have helped you to do your homework?"
- Help learners to use their Power strengths. (perseverance, self-regulation, compassion)
- Words matter. With encouraging feedback, you verbalise each child's strengths
-> developing a language for talking about character strengths."
"What strengths did you use when finishing this task?"
"Use curiosity to find the solution!"
- Instructing learners to display and reflect strength-related behaviour.

Appendix 3. Core SEL competencies for activity 6 in session 5.1 Character strengths and Social-Emotional Learning

Self-Management may look and sound like

- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Goal-setting
- Organizational skills
- I need a break right now
- May I please have space? I am not ready to share.
- I think I need help with _____.
- I don't understand yet, but I will _____ to reach my goal.

Self-Awareness may look and sound like

- Identifying emotions
- Having an accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy
- How am I feeling and why?
- When am I at my best?
- When do I feel angry?
- What kind of person do I want to be today?
- What stresses me out?
- Where do I fit into my family/community?

Relationship skills may look and sound like

- Communication
- Social engagement
- Relationship building
- Teamwork
- When you _____ it made me feel I _____.
- Can you explain what you mean by that?
- I disagree with you because _____.
- What did you mean by _____?

Responsible Decision-Making may look and sound like

- Identifying problems
- Analyzing situations
- Solving problems
- Evaluating
- Reflecting
- Ethical responsibility
- How will this impact others?
- Is it worth it?
- Why do I want to make this choice?
- Was this a strong choice?
- Will this help me?

Social Awareness may look and sound like

- Perspective taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others
- I wonder how that made _____ feel?
- How would I feel if I were in that situation?
- What is _____ thinking?
- They seem sad right now. Maybe I should _____.
- Thanks for sharing! My family does it this way.

Self-Management help:

How to better reduce stress at work

1. Know how you're spending your time
-> make a plan
2. Stick to a daily schedule
3. Prioritize
4. Tackle the most difficult task first
5. Batch-process similar tasks
6. Set reasonable time limits
7. Learn when to say no
8. Avoid multitasking
9. Keep things organized
10. Use time management tools

Appendix 4. Growth mindset vs Fixed mindset for activity 9 in session 5.1 Character strengths and Social-Emotional Learning

Those with a growth mindset seek and thrive on challenges. They want to stretch themselves, because they know that they will grow and learn. “This is hard. This is fun.”

Setbacks

If you have a **fixed mindset**, you will let one setback — one bad test, evaluation, or outcome — define you forever. You are granting one setback the power to measure your basic intelligence and abilities forever. That’s why you need to prove yourself each and every time.

If you have a **growth mindset**, you know that you can’t let one single outcome define your ability or — more importantly — your potential. You look at the setback as a single point in time, and don’t let it forever define

“Believing that your qualities are carved in stone — the **fixed mindset** — creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. If you only have a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, and a certain moral character — well, then you’d better prove that you have a healthy dose of them. It simply wouldn’t look deficient in these most basic characteristics.”

Growth mindset

“In this mindset, the hand you’re dealt is just the starting point for development. This **growth mindset** is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts. Although people may differ in every which way — in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests, or temperaments — everyone can change and grow through application and exercise.”

Challenges

People with a **fixed mindset** avoid challenges, because it makes them feel like they’re not talented or smart. They lose interest when the work gets hard, and they give up easily.

“Mindset” by Carol Dweck, 2007

Appendix 5. Self-management contents to cut out for activity 3 in session 5.2 Social-Emotional Learning in action using character strengths

This is the ability of a learner to manage the behaviours that come from their emotions. It gives learners the ability to say “no” to actions and behaviours that are not appropriate. They also can learn to control their emotions and use steps to calm down.

Mindfulness practices and breathing exercises are a great way to teach students to manage their stress levels. Reflect with students on what made them feel stressed out and how to manage themselves before becoming overwhelmed.

This has to do with a learners’ ability to work towards achieving something and keeping themselves on track. It can also apply to being able to regulate themselves in the classroom by raising their hand to talk, staying focused on assignments, etc.

This is learners’ ability to keep themselves moving towards a goal or accomplishing a task. It is a critical lifelong skill. It is at the core of learners being independent and achieving personal satisfaction.

This is critical in the classroom because it creates learner-centred learning and creates awareness in learners for what they are expected to learn. It also gives them independence in how they are going to learn it. Learners will need scaffolding on how to set appropriate goals for themselves. This and self-discipline will help them work towards the goals that they set. Their self-confidence will grow as they achieve their goals and benchmarks towards meeting their goals.

Teach your learners these skills step by step! They should be responsible for keeping their backpack, desk, workspace, pencil box, and the classroom organised. Now, learners definitely need instruction on how to be organised. Model this for them by having an organised classroom and hold them responsible for keeping it organised.

Appendix 6. Tips for the activity: Who lives and where? for activity 6 in session 5.2 Social-Emotional Learning in action using character strengths

Who lives and where? Make groups of 4 - 5 and try to solve the next problem:

Who lives and where? 3 houses and

- Colour: blue, green, red
- Nationality: Australian, Brazilian, German
- Animals: cats, dogs, fish
- Sport: football, basketball, soccer

Clues:

- The Brazilian does not live in the house number two
- The person with the dogs plays basketball
- There is one house between the house of the person who plays football and the red house on the right.
- The person with the fish lives directly to the left of the person with the cats.
- The person with the dogs lives directly to the right of the green house.
- The German lives in house number three.

	house 1	house 2	house 3
colour			
nationality			
animal			
sport			



FCA provides psychosocial support to children and youth in Palestinian schools in 2021.

PHOTO: AHMAD AL-BAZZ
/ FINN CHURCH AID

Module 6. Life skills

“ A student is not a container you have to fill but a torch you have to light up.” – Albert Einstein

INEE defines Life Skills as skills and abilities for positive behaviour that enable individuals to adapt to and deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. They help people think, feel, act, and interact as individuals and as participating members of society. Life Skills fall into three interrelated categories: cognitive; personal or emotional; and interpersonal or social. The need for life skills often increases in situations of crisis, requiring increased emphasis on building life skills that are relevant and applicable to the emergency and local contexts.

We are often used to thinking of Life Skills to include e.g. hygiene, water and sanitation issues, healthy nutrition and so on. However, since this training package focuses on MHPSS, we will also focus on the soft life skills emphasising relationships, discussion, negotiation skills and problem solving. Life Skills are related to Social and Emotional Learning - in this manual Module 2.

It is beneficial to think about these important social assets as “skills” rather than something we are born with. When we define them as skills, we accept that it is possible to teach them at homes and schools like any other skills. It is indeed possible to learn to negotiate peacefully and express one’s views firmly but kindly. If a learner lacks these skills, it is more useful to think that we as teachers can teach them rather than condemn the learner as a quarrelsome and difficult character.

This Module contains 3 sessions. The first of them is for Positive Communication and Conflict Resolution, the second includes a board game Life Skill Race related to healthy growth, and the third one is about core Children’s Rights.



Baking session in a Ugandan school.
PHOTO: KATI KARJALAIN-
EN-RIMPII / FINN CHURCH AID

6.1 Positive communication and conflict resolutions

Suggested duration: 2 h

Objectives for the specific training session	At the end of the training, the participants will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what life skills are • Know the ways of positive communication • Understand why positive communication is important • Know how to change to positive communication • Understand that conflicts are natural, neutral and normal part of life • Know different ways to solve conflicts
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle of Life skills • Communication and Activity: List of communication types • Activity: Importance of careful listening • Energizer game • Conflicts • Activity: Conflict in school setting • Activity: Language behind conflicts • Feedback
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small ball etc. • Sticky notes • Pens • Flipcharts • Markers

Read the energizer game beforehand, so you will know what to do as a facilitator.

Activity 1. Circle of Life Skills (15')

The objective of the activity is to understand what life skills are.

Facilitator: Welcome all to this first Life Skills session! Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviours that enable individuals to effectively deal with demands and challenges of everyday life.

Explain that life skills are a set of basic skills acquired through learning and direct life experiences that enable individuals and groups to effectively handle issues and problems commonly encountered in daily life.

Facilitator: What Life Skills have you used today?

Make a circle.

Tell the participants you will throw the ball to anyone, who tells his/her name and what life skill they have used today at home/work/coming to training. Then throw the ball to someone else. Go through the whole circle.

If it's hard to find life skills, here are some tips: basic daily life skills include hygiene tasks and health care, nutrition, education, communication, conflict solving etc.

Facilitator: Life Skills are related to Social-Emotional Learning, so we will leave those and focus today on Positive Communication and Conflict Resolutions. These are skills we need when we are dealing with others.

Give sticky notes to all and ask them to write down some expectations about the training.

Collect the notes and leave them on the blackboard/wall.

Communication (20')

The objectives of this exercise are:

- To understand different types of communication
- To communicate positively to get your message through

Tell the participants that the next topic is all about communication. Ask the participants to make groups of 4-5.

Activity 2: Bullet point list

Ask the participants to create a bullet point list on how communication can occur.

After the participants have made the bullet point list, you can explain that the major components of communication are listening, speaking, reading, writing and nonverbal communication. It includes body language, facial expressions, and gestures.

You can also categorise them as follows:

- Verbal (spoken or written words),
- Non-verbal (body language, facial expressions, gestures),
- Visual (images, graphs, charts).

Discuss, why do we communicate? Examples could include communication helps expressing feelings and thoughts, sharing information and explaining behaviour.

Discuss what difficulties in communication can occur with primary school aged learners in different contexts. Examples could include misunderstandings, language barrier, noise.

Ask how we could overcome these difficulties?

Facilitator: To get your message through, communicate positively.

Go through the following points with the participants:

1. Negative words like 'can't,' 'stop,' 'won't,' 'unable,' and 'don't' make the listener feel bad, defensive, or like they've been forced into a corner. Try to reword sentences to put a positive spin on things as much as possible. How should you say in a positive way:
 - "I can't do this in that amount of time."
 - "Don't leave your teacup on the table!"
 - "Stop running!"

Facilitator: Did you know that we tend to hear only the last part of the sentences. So “Don’t run!” is heard easily as “Run!”

2. Avoid forceful words, like “you have to” or “you must”. Also, “we can” sounds more motivating than “we should”.
3. Keep your body language positive. Words make up a surprisingly small part of communication (around 7%). The rest is facial expressions, body language, and tone. Smile when you talk to someone, keep your body relaxed, and stand with an open posture (in other words, not crossed arms).
4. When listening, it’s important to focus all your attention on the other person and demonstrate appropriate nonverbal mannerisms.

Activity 3. A good listener and a bad listener (10’)

Facilitator: In pairs, A is the listener, and B is telling them something about his / her day.

A is not focusing on what B is telling them, A is looking around, writing etc. B is talking about his/her day. 1 minute, go!

Keep the time and then change!

Facilitator: Now B tells the same story, but A is listening carefully, and maybe asking questions. 1 minute time.

Keep the time and then change!

Facilitator: Next A is telling the story; B is not paying attention. 1 minute.

Keep the time and then change!

Facilitator: And finally A is telling the story and B is listening carefully. 1 minute.

Discuss how it felt to be in different roles. How does it feel, if the teacher is not listening to you? Or a colleague is not listening to you, or vice versa? At home, parents are not listening, etc. What consequences can occur?

Activity 4. Energizer game (5’)

The objective of the activity is to realise the importance of careful listening.

Communication involves careful listening. Explain that you are going to give a series of spoken instructions, which the participants must follow as fast as they can while following your lead:

Facilitator: Put your hand to your nose. Clap your hands. Stand up. Touch your shoulder. Sit down. Stamp your foot. Cross your arms. Put your hand over your mouth – while saying this put your hand to your ear.

Observe the number of those who copy what is done rather than what is said and give this feedback to the participants.

Discuss the results in terms of communication with each other.

Conflicts (30')

Objectives of the activity are:

- To recognise different types of conflicts
- How to deal with conflicts?
- How can language affect conflicts?

Ask participants: where do conflicts arise? Write answers on the flipchart. Examples could include for example, different opinions, values, needs, interests, or goals between individuals or groups.

Ask what kind of conflicts have the participants noticed in their schools lately?

Discuss!

Facilitator: Conflict is a normal part of life, experienced by people everywhere, every day. Conflict is neutral; it is not the conflict itself that is negative, it's often how we handle it. Conflict is natural due to different perspectives, priorities and goals that we have.

Conflicts can be

- within an individual (intrapersonal conflict)
- between individuals (interpersonal conflict)
- within a group (intragroup conflict)
- between groups (intergroup conflicts)
- within organisations (intraorganizational conflict)

Ask, how do we deal or cope with conflicts? Discuss?

You may draw from the following:

- Avoid conflicts – simply withdraw from any conflict
- Smooth it over – pretend there's no conflict, everything is OK
- Win at all costs – get what you want, other person loses
- Compromise – give up something you want to get something else you want
- Win/Win – negotiation – use creative problem solving to give both sides what they want or need.

Find this activity and other practical exercises on communication, conflict resolution, peace building and youth participation from the FCA & TWB Peace Education Manual: https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/PeaceEducationManual_Uganda2022-INEE.pdf

Activity 5. Conflicts at school - making solutions (20')

The objective of the activity is to turn the theory into practice.

Think together of conflicts that arise in school. In groups of 4-5 use a conflict situation in school and make a short play of the conflict and how to solve it. There is 10 minutes for the exercise.

When plays are ready every group performs their play, and the others try to find out which solution was used.

Activity 6. Language behind conflicts (20')

The objective of the activity is to understand the power of language.

Keep the same groups from the previous activity.

Facilitator: This time make a play that can happen in school. There is a conflict due to the harsh language used. The play should take max 2 minutes.

Give 10 minutes for the groups to create the play.

When plays are ready, every group performs the play twice: first just the play, and second time when the harsh language starts, the audience gives advice on how to change/ respond in a positive way and the play continues to the end in a different way.

Discuss the plays, how did the situations change when the language/responses changed? How does this relate to everyday life in school?

Feedback

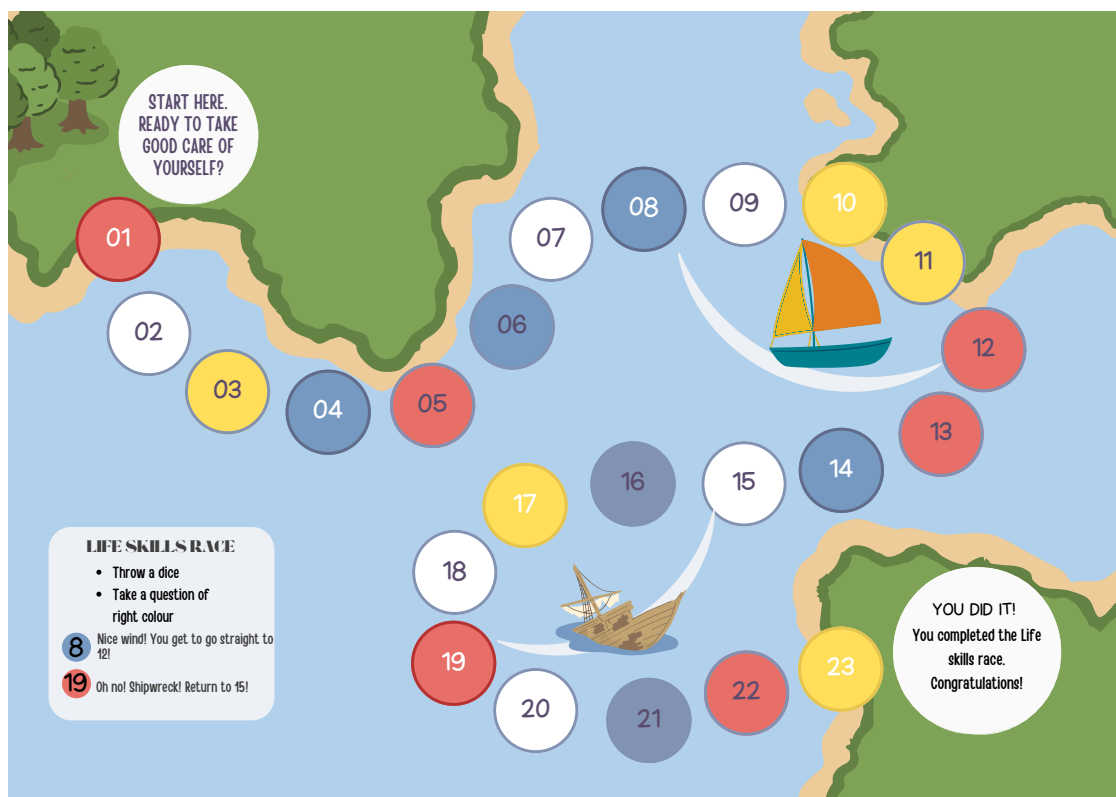
Facilitator: Thank you all for your participation today! Let's find out if we met any of your expectations.

Take the sticky notes from the wall and read aloud one by one. Discuss the expectations.

How did we do?

Have a safe journey!

6.2 Life skills race



Suggested duration: 1 h

Objectives for the specific training session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn about health-related life skills with a game • To play with others teaches and getting to know each other and oneself • To express opinions • To listen to others respectfully
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Life Skills Race • Wrap-up
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dice and the Life Skill Race game for every group of 3-4 people

Welcome Activity 1. Recap (10')

Facilitator: Welcome, everyone! Last session we learned about life skills. Life skills are important everyday knowledge and skills, which include your own physical and emotional health, your relationships with others. Life skills come in handy in many ways every day. Please think of one thing you used a life skill for this morning. Share it with the person next to you. When I clap my hands, it is time to listen again.

Let the learners talk for a moment, then clap your hands.

Facilitator: Now, that was interesting! Anyone want to share the life skills you used this morning to the whole group?

Examples could include making a healthy breakfast, having a good conversation with parents, helping someone, maintaining personal hygiene like brushing teeth and combing hair, having a good night's sleep.

Activity 2. Like Skills Race (40')

! Print out the Life Skills Race game before the session. You can find the game from **Appendix 1: Life Skills Race** in the end of Module 6. The game includes 1 board and 4 pages of questions. Each group of 3-4 persons should have their own board and question pages.

Facilitator: Today we are about to learn about those life skills that have to do with your health. In a moment, you get these board games. There are 4 types of questions: blue for Mental health, red for Healthy habits, white for Growing up and yellow for Tobacco, Snuff, Drugs and alcohol.

Are you all familiar with board games? The youngest of the group may begin, they toss the dice and then go ahead on the game board. They get a colour and have to answer the same-coloured question.

Help the participants to organise groups so that there are approximately 4 people in each group. Every group needs the game and the dice, and then everyone needs something little to mark their place on the gameboard, like a little stone, a button or a rubber.

Facilitator: You probably have time to play more than one round, since there are lots of questions and the gameboard is quite short. You take your time! Please begin.

When the learners play, you can walk among them and answer any additional questions that may arise. If you can't answer them, you can write the question down and find out the answer for the next session. By walking around, you also show that you care about their conversations and are near, if they need your help.

Activity 3. Feedback and lessons learnt (10')

Facilitator: Thank you all for contributing so well! I will collect the dice and the games, so we can play some other time as well.

Playing is more important than winning, of course, but I am a little intrigued: Who won the game this time? Please raise your hand! Congratulations!

hope you all learned a lot. Please tell the person next to you one thing you learned today. When I clap my hands, it is time to listen again.

Let the learners talk for a while, then clap your hands.

Ask if anyone would like to share what they learnt in the game?

Examples could be, I now know how to treat a cut, I learned that snuff can be more addictive than tobacco, I learned what a safety net is.

Thank everyone for their hard work!

6.3. Children's rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children's rights.

The Convention explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children (unicef.org).

In this session we are going to focus on four core rights: Right to Survival, Development, Protection and Participation, from the perspective of the school. How are these rights implemented in our school? What can we do to emphasise these rights at school?

Suggested duration: 1 h 20 min

Objectives for the specific training session	<p>At the end of the training, the participants will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the core pillars of Children's Rights • Be aware of the ways they can support Children's Rights at school • Be aware how the Children's Rights are implemented in their school and settlement/ village/ neighbourhood.
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the topic • Video: Children's Rights • Activity: Small group work and Gallery Walk • Option 1: Making a poster • Option 2: Making a slogan • Option 3: No posters, straight to ending • Feedback and closure
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video • Flipcharts and makers, • Handout • Attachments: Convention on the Rights of the Child, transcription of the video.


Introduction: What are Children's Rights? (20')

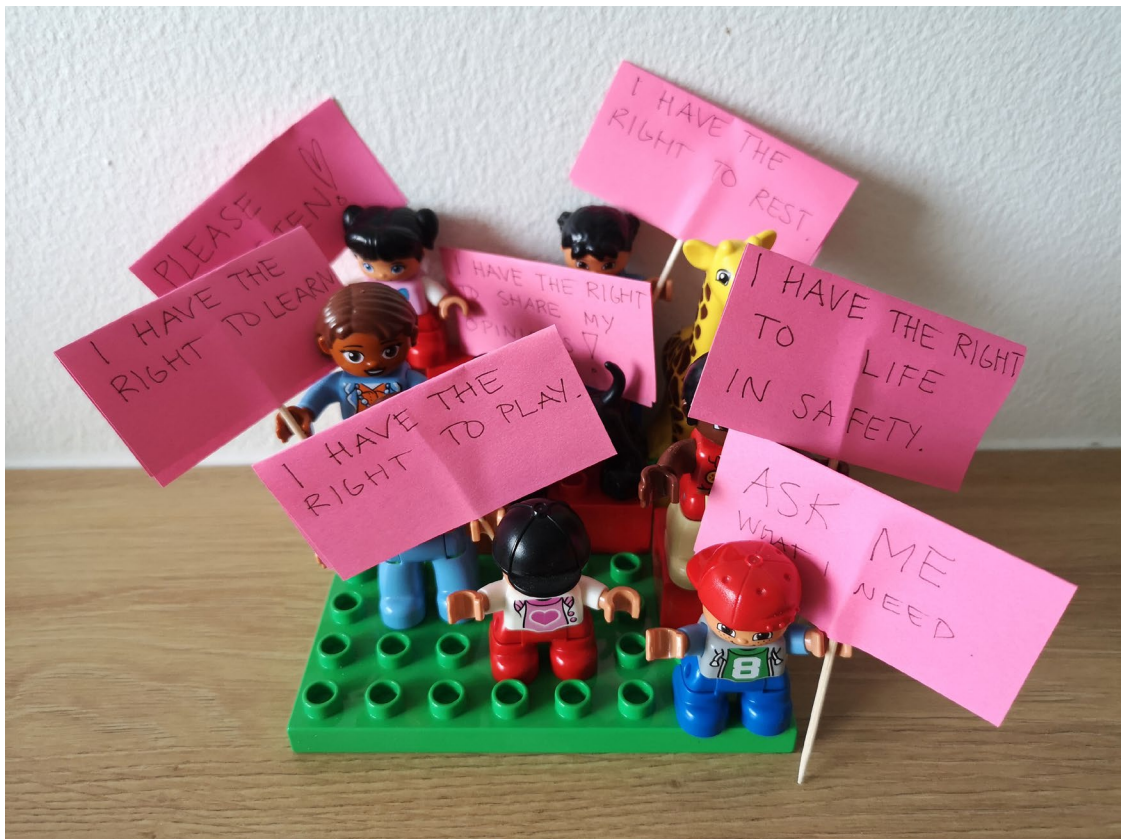
Facilitator: Welcome to our last Life Skills session! Today it's all about Children's Rights. In 1989, the world came together to empower children through the Convention on the Rights of the Child. What Children's Rights do you recall?

Let the participants share just any ideas aloud.

Introduce the participants to the 2-minute video you are going to watch together:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCYLdtug8sk>

Option 2, if video is not available: print out  **Appendix 2. Children's Rights - short version and Appendix 3.** Convention on the Rights of the Children: The children's version by UNICEF. Read aloud the short version first, and then take a look at the longer version.



Lego men holding Children's Rights signs.

PHOTO: MARJA KOKKO / FINN CHURCH AID

You can also find the transcript of the video in [Appendix 4. Transcript from the video](#) in the end of Module 6.

After the video or handouts, ask the participants to explain what are the four core rights in Children's Rights?

Start to make four mind maps: Write those core rights one on each flipchart – they will be needed in the next activity.

The four core rights are:

- Right to Survival
- Right to Development
- Rights to Protection
- Right to Participation

Facilitator:

- What does Right to Survival mean?
- What does Right to Development mean?
- What does Right to Protection mean?
- What does Right to Participation mean?

Activity 1. Small group work & Gallery Walk (20')

The objective if the activity is to understand and share how children's rights are implemented in everyone's school.

Divide the participants into four groups / stations.

Every group will get one mind map with the topic on it, more flipcharts and markers.

Facilitator: Now in your small groups, think of your school. How is this core right implemented in your school / schools? Share your ideas, good practices and fill in the mind maps / posters. You have 10 minutes!

After ten minutes, have the groups rotate to the next station. Participants read and discuss the previous group's response and add content of their own. Repeat until all groups have visited each station.

Have participants go back to their first station to read all that was added to their first response. Bring the participants back together to discuss what was learned and make final conclusions about what they saw and discussed.

Activity 2. Posters/slogans on the core rights (30')

The next activity has three options, choose what is best for your group.

Option 1

Posters. Every participant chooses one core right important to her/him and makes a poster of it.

After the posters are ready, everyone describes something about the poster, why she/he chose that particular right. What can she/he do for this promise in the future?

Option 2

Every participant chooses one core right that is important to her/him and makes a slogan of it. When slogans are ready, everyone shares her/his slogan and explains why this is important for her/him.

Option 3

No posters, go straight to ending session

Feedback and closure (10')

Get the participants together, in big a circle if possible.

Facilitator: Now it's time to end our final Life Skills session, Children's Rights. How are you feeling?

Depending on whom the participants are, ask from:

- **Teachers:** Feedback from this session. Was this session relevant to their work? And if yes, how? If not, what was missing? Ask the teachers to write their ideas on the sticky notes! Collect the notes.
- **Learners:** Did they get any new ideas after this session? Ask the learners to share!

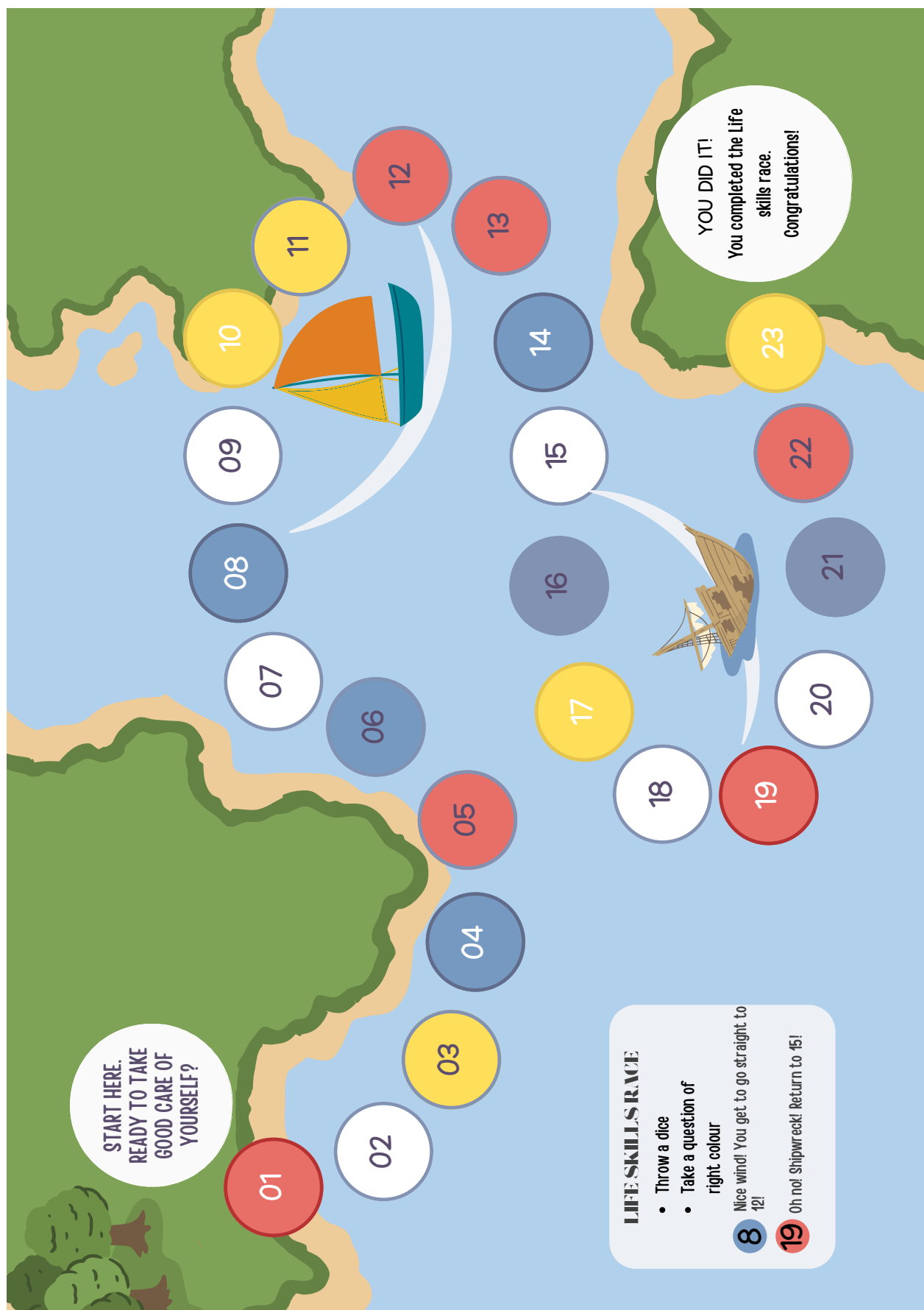
Thank everyone for their participation! Now we can clap for ourselves – well done!

- clap
- clap, clap
- clap, clap, clap!

Appendices for module 6

Appendix 1. Life Skills Race for activity 2 in session 6.2

Life Skills Race



Tip: You can either take the questions in this order or cut them apart and lift one by one.

Blue questions Mental Health

- What are feelings for? (They are messengers that help us to understand, what is good for us and what is potentially dangerous. They come and go. It is helpful to try to understand and name them.)
- Name three positive and three negative feelings. (e.g. positive: joy, happiness, hope, serenity, admiration, relaxation, negative: anger, hatred, sadness, shame, guilt, loathing. Remember, that all feelings have there place!)
- Why it is not okay to comment on someones appearance in a negative way? (It can be very offensive. Many adults say they still can remember being commented offensively as children.)
- How can you build up your mental health? (All healthy habits make your mind stronger. Sleep enough, eat healthy foods, make time for exercise, be with others and look for balance.)
- When talking about humans, what is the safety net? (People around you who care about you. It can consist of adults and your peers alike. They help and listen to you.)
- Can you tell some symptoms of depression? (Being unhappy all the time, feeling exhausted, not being able to sleep, not being able to concentrate, feeling shame and guilty.)

- What kind of problems are related to excessive playing with mobile devices? (Tiredness, difficulties to sleep, soreness of eyes, neck pains. It can also lead to isolation and problems with sleep rhythm.)
- What kind of physical symptoms there are in anxiety? (Head ache, problems to sleep, stomach ache, muscle tension, sweating, heart palpitations)
- What is panic disorder? (It can cause panic attacks, when people feel fear, anxiety, heart palpitations, shallow breathing, sweating and trembling. It can feel very intimidating but is usually harmless. If someone is having a panic attack, you simply be with them and speak calmly. Afterwards seek help from a trustworthy adult.)
- Can you name an eating disorder? Do you know its symptoms? (Anorexia: a person sees themselves as overweight, avoids eating and exercises compulsively. Ortorexia: a person wants to eat as healthy as possible all the time, until they spend almost all their time planning and preparing meals.)
- It is normal to have feelings of depression occasionally, and talking about them makes them easier to carry. However, if you feel sad and depressed for weeks, it is advisable to seek help. Who can a young person turn to? (Their parents and care givers, school nurse, a teacher, school counselor, a trustworthy adult or spiritual counselor. Their is also anonymous, free help online.)

Red questions

Healthy habits

- What is a sleep rhythm? (You go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.)
- How can you help yourself to sleep better? (Try to calm yourself well before bedtime, mind your sleep rhythm, exercise every day, be outside for fresh air, don't eat too late.)
- What to do to maintain good dental hygiene? (Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride tooth paste. Use dental floss. Avoid soft drinks and sugar, especially between meals. Drink water if you feel thirsty.)
- How many meals you should have every day? (5: A breakfast, lunch, an afternoon snack, dinner and a little snack in the evening.)
- How do you treat a cut? (You press it with a clean cloth and keep it above the heart level.)
- What is a fever? (A human has temperature, if body temperature rises over 37,5 degrees of Celsius. It is not an illness itself, it tells that the body is fighting against something, like a bacteria or virus. If you have temperature, drink a plenty of water and rest.)
- Why is it beneficial to exercise? (Your heart and lungs get stronger, you sleep better, you feel better, your digestion and ability to concentrate gets better.)
- Why are fibers important in our nutrition? (They keep hunger away, help the digestion.)

- Give three reasons, why sleep is so important. (You need it to grow, recovery, to improve your mood and memory. A young person needs sleep even more, because all the changes in body and mind take energy.)
- What makes you to gain weight? (If you eat more than you need, choose unhealthy foods, eat between meals, drink sugary drinks, exercise too little, sleep too little)
- How can you manage stress? (Stress is needed to meet goals, but it shouldn't last for too long. Remember healthy habits, sleep and exercise enough. Try to do every day something you enjoy doing and spend some time doing nothing. Be with your friends and family.)
- How do you protect your hearing? (Remember to use earplugs or other protection when there are loud noises. E.g. loud music in concert can damage hearing for good.)
- Why is wearing a helmet when riding a motorbike so important? (A hit to the head can cause brain damage, which can lead e.g. losing the ability to speak or move.)
- How do you know you are not getting enough to drink? (The signs of dehydration: smelly breath, lack of concentration, headache, urine is darker than usually, skin feels dry)
- How and why do you protect yourself from the Sun? (protective clothing and a hat, staying indoors or under the three during the hottest hours, sun lotion. Sunburns are a risk factor for skin cancer and heatstroke can be dangerous, so it is important to protect yourself.)
- How do you treat a sprained ankle? (You can use something cold to reduce pain and compression to avoid swelling. Lift the foot up and let it rest.)

White questions

Growing up

- What happens to girls in puberty? (Puberty is the time when girls become young women. Their menstruation begins and body figure gets fuller. Hair starts to grow in armpits and personal parts. It is normal to have mood swings and acne, perspiration increases.)
- What happens to boys in puberty? (In puberty boys tend to grow a lot in height, their muscles get more visible, hair starts to grow in armpits, face and personal parts, voice changes, sweating increases, occurs mood swings and acne)
- What is acne? (In puberty skin gets greasier due to hormonal changes. If a sebaceous gland gets clogged, it can get infected and forms a pimple.)
- Why good personal hygiene is important during puberty? (Due to hormonal changes, young people sweat more than children and the sweat is more smelly. It is important to wash every day.)
- Why it is important to wash hands often? (Many diseases spread through hands. People touch e.g. door knobs, locks, railings and money. Their hands get dirty, and it is easy to touch ones eyes or eat something and catch the dirt at the same time.)
- Why women menstruate? (If a woman is not pregnant, the endometrium from their uterus changes every 3–4-weeks. The monthlies are sign that everything is in order, they are not a disease.)

- How to treat acne? (It is normal to have excess oil in skin during puberty. Try to keep the skin clean and choose healthy foods. Avoid touching or popping the pimples as you get dirt in them from your hands. Remember to sleep well and get fresh air. Don't think of your pimples too much, usually others don't notice them.)
- If someone is bullying you, what to do? (Often it is a good advice to say aloud, that I don't like to be treated like this, please stop it at once. If it doesn't help, you can tell the adults.)
- Gandhi once said that an eye for the eye leaves the whole world blind. What did he mean by that? (Revenge doesn't lead to peace and everyone suffers from a conflict.)
- In puberty, young people often feel they cannot talk to their parents as they did when children. Name some others they could talk to instead of the parents. (Teachers, school consultants, each other, school nurse, siblings, aunts, uncles...)
- Can you think of reasons why someone bullies others? (They may want to feel stronger and more self confident than they are, they are hurting inside and shout it out, they wish to impress some others.)
- What is the voice change? (In adolescence, the voice changes lower and deeper, especially a male voice. During the change the voice can be difficult to control and get sore more easily.)

Yellow questions

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, snuff

- Why is alcohol more dangerous to young people than adults? (Young people get addicted more easily as their brains are still developing. Alcohol gets broken down in liver and the intestines of young people are still developing.)
- Why nicotine is harmful for the brain of a young person? (It hinders normal development and can lead poorer concentration skills, thinking and memory.)
- Main diseases smoking causes are cancers and diseases of lungs and heart. What other health problems tobacco causes? (Poor circulation, skin getting older quicker, teeth and nails get yellow, cuts heal slower, difficulties to have children)
- Why snuff hinders performance? Mention 2 things. (Muscles get tired easier, oxygen intake gets slow, recovery gets more difficult.)
- It is advisable to read carefully all the labels in prescribed medication. Why? (It is important to use the drug correctly to have full impact of it and avoid side effects or over dose.)
- Where you can seek help to quit smoking? (School nurse can help you e.g. in touch with a support club or support online. Family and friends are happy to help, too.)
- Quitting smoking causes withdrawal effect. Mention 3 of them. (Anxiety, cough, sweating, trembling, headache, difficulties to sleep, increase in appetite.)

- Why is it very dangerous to consume alcohol while in traffic? (Alcohol makes you less perceptive and slower to react, which can easily lead to accidents.)
- What can happen to a drunken, young person? Mention 3 scenarios. (Lose things and valuables, passing out in dangerous place or company, accidents, abuse, memory loss, quarrels, remorse afterwards.)
- A growing number of young people don't use intoxicants at all. Can you imagine why? (There are a lot of information available of all the negative effects and many young people like to mind their health.)
- What is passive smoking? (You don't smoke yourself, but someone near you smokes and you get to inhale the smoke. It is as dangerous as active smoking.)
- How fast can you get addicted to drugs? (Unfortunately, you can get addicted during the first experiments, you don't need to try it many times before getting addicted.)
- How smoking and snuff affect your appearance? (Nails and teeth get yellow, hair gets thinner, skin gets older looking.)
- Why snuff can be more addictive than smoking? (Snuff can contain up to 20 times more of nicotine than a cigarette.)
- Why is smoking very dangerous for pregnant women? (The baby gets nicotine, too, which can e.g. lead it growing slower.)

Appendix 2. Children's Rights - short version for session 6.3 Children's Rights

The Convention on the Rights of the child - by UNICEF

Every person on the planet has rights. And so does every Child. Child rights mean that we have the right to everything that helps us be healthy and happy – nutrition and good health, good schooling, freedom of expression, and protection from anything that can be harmful.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that every child has the right to Survival, Development, Protection and Participation. We deserve to be healthy, happy and full of hope.

Right to survival

Every child has a right to good health care and nutrition. It does not matter if one is a boy or a girl.

Right to development

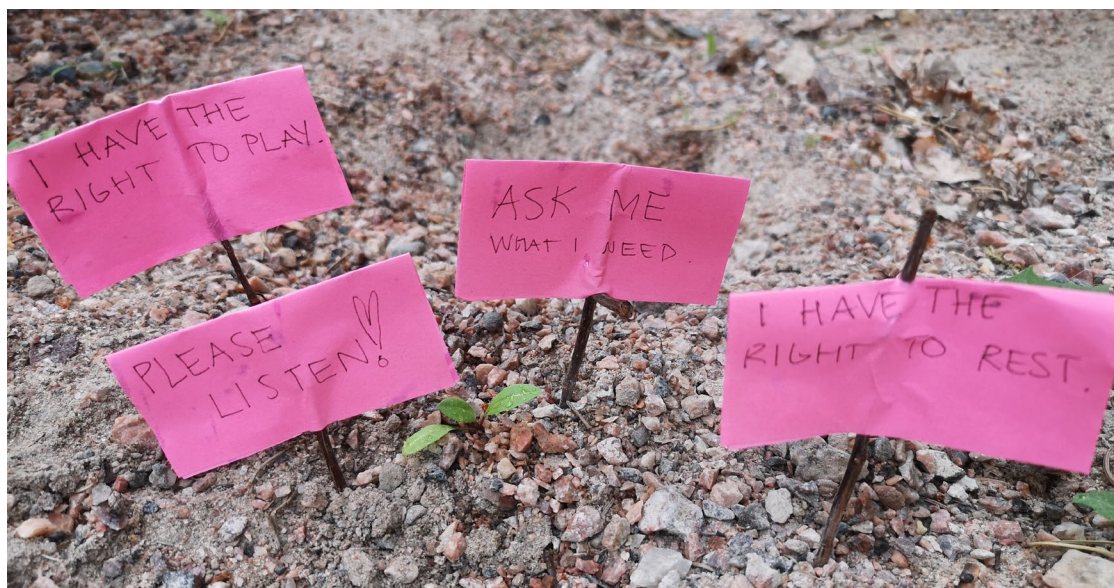
Every child has a right to education. It doesn't matter who we are or where we come from. Each of us should be able to complete school.

Right to Protection

Each one of us has the right to protection. Which means that we need to be safe from all sorts of violence – whether at school or the street or even at home.

Right to Participation

Just because we are children, it does not mean our opinions can be silenced. Only we know what it is to be children.



Little slogans showing different children's rights.
PHOTO: MARJA KOKKO / FINN CHURCH AID

Appendix 3. Convention on the Rights of the Children: The children's version by UNICEF for session 6.3 Children's Rights

1. Definition of a child

A child is any person under the age of 18.

2. No discrimination

All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

3. Best interests of the child

When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

4. Making rights real

Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.

5. Family guidance as children develop

Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.

6. Life survival and development

Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.

7. Name and nationality

Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.

8. Identity

Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.

9. Keeping families together

Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.

10. Contact with parents across countries

If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.

11. Protection from kidnapping

Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent when the other parent does not agree.

12. Respect for children's views

Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.

13. Sharing thoughts freely

Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.

14. Freedom of thought and religion

Children can choose their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to properly use this right.

15. Setting up or joining groups

Children can join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people.

16. Protection of privacy

Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation (or good name) from any attack.

17. Access to information

Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.

18. Responsibility of parents

Parents are the main people responsible for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility, and they are called a “guardian”. Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Governments should help them. Where a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child.

19. Protection from violence

Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.

20. Children without families

Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by people who respect the child’s religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.

21. Children who are adopted

When children are adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be properly looked after in their own country – for example by living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country.

22. Refugee children

Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.

23. Children with disabilities

Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.

24. Health, water, food, environment

Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.

25. Review of a child's placement

Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home – for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be.

26. Social and economic help

Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families.

27. Food, clothing, a safe home

Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.

28. Access to education

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence.

29. Aims of education

Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.

30. Minority culture, language and religion

Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion – even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.

31. Rest, play, culture, arts

Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.

32. Protection from harmful work

Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

33. Protection from harmful drugs

Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.

34. Protection from sexual abuse

The government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.

35. Prevention of sale and trafficking

Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).

36. Protection from exploitation

Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.

37. Children in detention

Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.

38. Protection in war

Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.

39. Recovery and reintegration

Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity.

40. Children who break the law

Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice.

41. Best law for children applies

If the laws of a country protect children's rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.

42. Everyone must know children's rights

Governments should actively tell children and adults about this Convention so that everyone knows about children's rights.

43 to 54. How the Convention works

These articles explain how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF – and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights.

Appendix 4. Transcript from the video for session 6.3 Children's Rights

What are child rights and why are they important?
Have you ever wondered if children have rights?

Every person on the planet has rights. And so does every Child.
Child rights mean that we have the right to everything that helps us be healthy and happy -
Nutrition and good health, good schooling, freedom of expression,
and protection from anything that can be harmful.

Every child has a right to good health care and nutrition.
It does not matter if one is a boy or a girl.

Every child has a right to education.
It doesn't matter who we are or where we come from.
Each of us should be able to complete school.

Each one of us has the right to protection.
Which means that we need to be safe from all sorts of violence -
whether at school or the street or even at home.

Just because we are children, it does not mean our opinions can be silenced.

Only we know what it is to be children.
It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that every child has
the right to Survival, Development, Protection and Participation.

We deserve to be healthy, happy and full of hope.
And we can't do it alone.
You made a promise to ensure
Every Right For Every Child
30 years ago
What are you doing to keep the promise today?



**TEACHERS
WITHOUT
BORDERS**
Finn Church Aid



Finn Church Aid

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

TRAINING IN MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Date: _____

Content of workshops (_____ hours):

Stress and relaxation

Compassion

How to identify and support learners with MHPSS
concerns as a teacher (look, listen, link)

Recreational activities for MHPSS

Social and emotional learning

Life skills

Trainers:

FINN CHURCH AID

THIS TEACHER TRAINING MANUAL on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) is developed by Finn Church Aid (FCA) and Teachers Without Borders (TWB) Finland. The manual contains guidance and practical steps for integrating elements of psychosocial support in the teaching and learning process. It is designed to be facilitated by trainers, local educators and community workers to the benefit of teachers, children and youth.

The training manual consists of six (6) training modules that can be used flexibly. The first three modules are meant for teachers, and the last three modules are meant for the classroom:

1. Stress and relaxation
2. Compassion
3. How to identify and support learners with MHPSS concerns as a teacher
4. Recreational activities for MHPSS
5. Social and emotional learning
6. Life skills

The content design allows you to pick individual modules or sessions and adapt the training content according to the context's needs. We hope you find it useful!

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