



**A Hopeful,  
Healthy & Happy  
Living & Learning**

# TOOLKIT

Guide for Teachers

*A hopeful, healthy, and happy living and learning toolkit* has been developed by REPSSI and the IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support (PS Centre) with support from MHPSS.net and funding from Education Cannot Wait. There are three tools in this toolkit. They are: (1) Guide for Teachers, (2) Parent-Caregiver Guide and (3) Activity Guide for Teachers, Parents and Children. The toolkit is designed to facilitate support for everyone affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but may be useful for anyone, anywhere, and any time.

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# Foreword

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The COVID-19 pandemic has made life very difficult for families and school communities across the globe. Schools have been closed in many countries for short or more extended periods of time and many schools have switched to remote teaching for all their students. Movement restrictions during curfews and lockdowns have also had consequences for children, preventing them from being outdoors enjoying sport and other leisure activities. Apart from frontline workers, everyone has been confined to home and parents and caregivers have found themselves with the added responsibility of supporting their children's learning. For a substantial number of children, the pandemic has had profound effects on their own psychosocial wellbeing and that of their families. They may have had parents, caregivers, siblings or close relatives who have lost their jobs and their homes. Some children will have witnessed family members falling ill with COVID-19 and may even have lost loved ones. It has been a time of great uncertainty.

**A hopeful, healthy, and happy living and learning toolkit** has been developed by REPSSI and the IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support (PS Centre) with support from MHPSS.net in response to the pandemic. We have put together a set of materials directed towards children, parents, caregivers and teachers in various settings, which promote psychosocial wellbeing and link with key life skills to strengthen social and emotional learning.

There are three tools in this toolkit, including the Hopeful, Healthy and Happy **Guide for Teachers**, the Hopeful, Healthy and Happy **Parent-Caregiver Guide** and the Hopeful, Healthy and Happy **Psychosocial Support Activity Guide for Teachers, Parents and Children**.

**The Guide for Teachers** has been designed for teachers in supporting children in their return to school in the wake of the pandemic. It opens with a set of general group-building exercises, followed by themed activities focussing on 16 key life skills supporting the cognitive, social and emotional development of children. The exercises are suitable for a wide range of different age groups from pre-school to secondary school. The exercises could also be combined with sports and leisure activities in clubs or community centres, and in safe spaces for children in humanitarian settings.

**The Parent-Caregiver Guide** features six fictional families from different corners of the world who are facing challenges in their lives in the course of dealing with COVID-19. Positive messages to encourage parents and caregivers in the care of their children at this demanding time are given such as structuring the day, taking time to check in with one another, using positive discipline, talking about loss, dealing with stigma, and protecting children online. At the end of the guide, there is a useful checklist for the whole household to help everyone reflect on how they are doing as a family. There is also a set of prompts for families who wish to make a COVID-19 hero book.

**The Psychosocial Support Activity Guide for Teachers, Parents and Children** features fun activities for children at home, in school or for remote use. In a home learning environment, for example, the activities could be done with a sibling group. Each activity is flagged as best done with a group or whether it may be adapted for use with a single child. The activities have been carefully designed to engage with children in relation to social and emotional learning around self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and decision-making.

We hope the **A hopeful, healthy, and happy living and learning toolkit** provides useful resources for families and school communities for current times in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We feel it has a broader reach too, being equally relevant to any kind of crisis or emergency in seeking to support the health, happiness and hopefulness of communities wherever they may be. We are especially grateful to Education Cannot Wait for funding the development of this toolkit.

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# Introduction

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Across the globe COVID-19 has made things very difficult for parents and caregivers and the children in their care. Many teachers have switched to teaching via the internet, television or radio. With schools closing, the boundaries between school and home as well as between teacher and parent have become blurred. Students have faced many challenges and experiences and their daily lives and their learning have been impacted in unprecedented ways.

Schools have been closed in many countries for short or more extended periods of time and many schools have switched to remote teaching for all their students who have had to study from home. The almost worldwide experiment of being socially isolated from teachers, classmates and friends has undoubtedly had severe consequences for many children, impacting their learning and development. The classroom is one of the most important arenas for developing children's cognitive, personal and interpersonal life skills. In school, children learn to understand themselves better, to handle themselves and their feelings and develop their social skills. These are skills that will last each child a life time.

Movement restrictions during curfews and lockdowns have also had consequences for children, preventing them from being outdoors to enjoy sport and other leisure activities. In many places children have been forced to stay at home for extended periods of time. They have therefore been less physically active, played less with others and this may have negatively impacted their motor skill development. Even daily activities such as going out shopping with parents or caregivers have been restricted in places, another example of how children's learning of how to act in the public arena has been curtailed.

The time at home with the schools being closed will have been very difficult for many, many children. They may have had parents, caregivers, siblings or close relatives who have lost their jobs and their homes. They may have not had access to essential services. They may have experienced difficulties in the family in terms of mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. Some children will have witnessed family members falling ill with COVID-19 and even have lost loved ones. It may not have been possible to say goodbye nor attend funerals or burial ceremonies.

Some students will also have been subjected to violence. Research shows that violence rises in any type of crisis situation, as stress is high and resources of all kinds become scarce. Disturbing reports of a rise in the number of cases of violence and abuse against children have indeed been reported worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each child will have had individual experiences of the pandemic which depending upon many factors. These include their age, maturity, personality, the supports available in their environment, their cognitive, personal and interpersonal skills and how secure they are and feel. Some may have thrived while being out of school. They may have enjoyed remote learning and having to study from home. Others have missed being in an environment that is helpful for their learning. Most of all, children have missed their friends and peers very much. Research shows that the longer the school closures last, the more affected children are.

When schools open again, teachers should therefore anticipate seeing students who have had a wide range of different experiences and reactions to the pandemic. Most children and young people are resilient and can overcome adversity with adequate support in a caring environment. However, there are likely to be some students with mental health difficulties – there has been a concerning rise in the levels of anxiety and depression, for example. It is important that schools and teachers are ready to refer children who need more support to the appropriate services, after consulting with parents and caregivers and the children themselves.

## Using the guide

*A hopeful, healthy, and happy living and learning toolkit. Guide for teachers* has been designed for teachers in supporting children in their return to school in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Often schools have closed, reopened with new safety routines, and then closed again. It has been a very challenging time for teachers, students and parents and caregivers. Now that schools are re-opening again – or even where they are not, and children have to stay at home and do their virtual schoolwork – the guide provides

resources for teachers to help children to reflect on their experiences of the pandemic. The exercises in the guide aim to equip children with key skills to cope with changes they have and will face.

The exercises in the guide are organised into various themes to promote the knowledge and skills children need to build resilience. They strengthen psychosocial wellbeing, communication, cooperation, analytical skills, and goal setting. The exercises are suitable for a wide range of different age groups from pre-school to secondary school. Certain exercises are flagged as being more appropriate to younger or older students.

The exercises can be combined with sports and leisure activities in clubs or community centres, and in safe spaces for children in humanitarian settings. They are suitable for use in any type of crisis situation, emergency, epidemic or pandemic.

## The exercises in the guide

The guide opens with a set of general exercises, followed by the themed activities focussing on 16 key life skills or transferable skills supporting the cognitive, social and emotional development of children. These specific life skills have been selected in enabling children to cope with the challenges and changes they have faced and prepare them for the future course of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

### A. General exercises

These resources include a set of introductory exercises, some energisers and some calming exercises. The introductory exercises are intended to be used before moving into the themed activities. The introductory exercises may not be needed, if students are already familiar with these basic group-building activities. The energisers and calming exercises can be used whenever teachers feel they are needed in the classroom, for example, to help students to focus and concentrate, or to be mentally present and able to regulate their emotional states. These are vital in enabling children to learn and to regulate their feelings.

### B. Themed exercises

The 16 themes are:

- My school after COVID-19
- I know about feelings
- I help others
- I understand others
- I listen to others
- I listen to myself
- I can calm myself

- I can be assertive
- I can solve conflicts
- I can cope with change
- I know about gender
- Yes, I can say no
- I am grateful
- I am hopeful
- I can move
- I can relax

Each theme has some opening exercises to introduce students to the topic. There are then some core exercises that give students insight into and experience of the topic. These can be combined with some of the energisers for when students may be low in energy and some calming exercises to close the session.

Teachers can plan classroom lessons based around the themes in various ways, depending on the needs of their students, the context, and the available time. It is possible to do all the exercises in a theme in one full session, for example. This would take between 60 to 90 minutes. The themes could be run once a week. Alternatively, one exercise can be done on its own. This is all at the teacher's discretion.

There is no specific age range given for each exercise, as students' capabilities and understanding vary a lot. However, as indicated earlier, certain exercises are flagged as being more appropriate to younger or older students. Teachers know their students and are in the best position to judge which exercises and themes will suit their classes. Teaching styles and school systems differ across the world and the expectations of capabilities and skills of students also vary. It is left to the discretion of teachers to decide which to use in their schools.

Theme 11 is about gender and is based on an understanding that in many regions of the world, gender is considered on a spectrum and multiple genders are recognised. When we only acknowledge of the categories of male and female, we can exclude people who don't fit these categories. The exercises include definitions of sex and gender and provide students with an opportunity to reflect on expectations around gender. Depending upon how gender-diverse the context is, more genders or categories for those who don't find they belong to a defined gender can be included in the exercises here where only two genders are referred to.

Most of the exercises have been tested with adults where they also have been well received.

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## A COVID-19 safe environment

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Children need their schools to be a COVID-19 safe environment. Teachers should be aware of the existing regulations for schools and make every effort to observe the recommended advice regarding safe physical distancing, use of face masks, hand washing, etc.

Information on COVID-19 is frequently being updated and it is recommended that teachers provide accurate information on the virus to their students, whenever appropriate.

All exercises can be done safely, as long as care is taken in observing regulations in school and in class. No specific instructions are given regarding COVID-19 safety measures, as they vary from country to country across the globe. The Framework for Reopening Schools by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Food Programme and UNHCR gives guidance for how to ensure safe return to school with the aim of ensuring access to education to students across the globe.<sup>1</sup>

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<https://www.unicef.org/media/68366/file/Framework-for-reopening-schools-2020.pdf>



# Children's reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic and other crisis situations

During and after short or prolonged crisis, children may react with strong feelings. Such feelings are to be expected and are natural reactions to challenging situations and their effects on daily life. It will help the social emotional learning of children of all ages to know that reactions to crisis are normal. A number of the themed exercises enable students to identify and understand their feelings. Students will learn key strategies to help regulate their feelings, drawing on studies that highlight the benefits of knowing how to solve problems, positive self-talk, physical activities, deep breathing, and relaxation.

The cognitive development of children may have also been affected under the long-term stress of living during COVID-19 without access to a suitable learning environment. If children are stressed for longer periods of time, this may impact their ability to concentrate, retain new information or indeed retrieve and recall what they have already learnt.

The classroom should be a safe space for everyone. When doing the activities outlined in this guide, it is important for both teachers and children to listen to each other and for all to be treated with respect. Therefore, should be no tolerance in school for corporal punishment.

The children will learn that others may think, feel, and react differently. The sessions aim to enable children to talk about their experiences and to process their learning. They will have time to reflect on what they have been through and apply the cognitive, social and emotional skills in their everyday lives. The exercises are safe in that they do not demand that a child remembers and speaks about their difficult experiences. Instead they offer information and strategies in dealing with reactions and ways to cope.

How adults and caregivers communicate with children about challenging events varies depending on norms and cultural expectations. These may change as cultures change. Some adults believe it is detrimental to talk with children about difficulties they lived through once past the event. Some believe that children will forget what they lived through. Many do not realise that children think about what happened and that memories are stored in the same way as adults think about and remember adversity. Children will be preoccupied by thoughts, memories, and emotional reactions to what has happened to them. They may require help on how best to handle challenges and crisis events and a safe environment to do so. (Please see the Parent-Caregiver Guide in this toolkit for more on what parents and caregivers can do to help their children deal with difficulties).

Skills acquired in the manual can be divided into cognitive, social and emotional skills.

UNICEF operates with the working definitions of the three in Global Framework on Transferable Skills.<sup>2</sup>

**Cognitive skills** have to do with “thinking” and include the ability to focus; problem-solve, make informed choices, and set plans and goals.

**Social skills** have to do with interaction with others including the ability to communicate, collaborate, resolve conflicts, and negotiate.

**Emotional skills** have to do with skills that relate to understanding and regulating one's own emotion, cope with stress, understanding emotions of others, and the ability to empathize with others.

# Children's learning

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Research on the impact of lockdown indicates that more children than expected have not thrived. They have felt lonely, demotivated, and sad and their formal learning has fallen behind. The effects are long reaching and may impact student outcomes in terms of their capacity to 'learn to learn' as well as undermining the self-image students have of themselves. The researchers stress that the social environment and social learning are of utmost importance for younger students and that social wellbeing in the classroom is a prerequisite for learning.<sup>3</sup> In one study more than 90% of students of all ages interviewed said that they missed their friends and 70% missed school. When schools reopen, it is recommended that teachers focus on how their students have coped and ensure that each student feels seen and heard as they talk about their experiences during school closures. Please see *Back in school after COVID-19*. IFRC PS Centre, 2020 and *Let's talk about it. Welcome Back Check-in Guidance*. The MHPSS Collaborative, 2020 for more resources.

Children truly learn when they combine knowledge, understanding, and reflection of a given topic. This is called deep learning. When a student is able to understand how the topic is related to other topics and can apply it concrete situations in the present and future, they will be able to deal with changes, challenges, and adversity. Changes in attitudes and beliefs are also possible when deep learning takes place. Children are more creative and innovative, as their curiosity is provoked. This is very different from superficial learning or rote learning, when students typically memorise material and reproduce it without necessarily understanding much about the content or its relation to other topics.

This guide for teachers is based on the expectation that students need to experience whatever life skill is the focus of the session. They need time to reflect on their own formal and social learning, and to understand when it is relevant to use the skill in daily life. All this ensures that students will learn the life skills presented here and will be able to apply them in the future whenever they are needed. A teaching style based on dialogue - where the teacher talks with the class about topics relating to their wellbeing - will be helpful for students acquiring skills for life. A supportive

teacher provides students with opportunities to be more self-directed, to learn about themselves and become aware of their own needs. Students come to accept that in experiential learning mistakes are part of learning and growing. Use the *'Yes, I made a mistake'* exercise in the introductory exercises to introduce this idea.

This does not mean that students are left to do whatever they like. The classroom works best where there are clear expectations about behaviour. Using this positive approach to discipline, children learn that there will be consequences for not behaving as agreed. It is recommended that teachers and their students make a list of constructive activities which students can choose from if they break the agreed rules for their classroom. This could be that students fetch teaching materials from a store cupboard, or they help tidy up after class or other tasks. Studies have shown that children who decide the consequences themselves generally do better later on in life.

It may be that some teachers feel that sessions focusing on such skills exercises take away valuable time from other studies. However, studies and research have shown that when students learn to listen, collaborate, and to see things from others' perspective, the class will actually have more time for academic learning, students obtain better results, the class sees less aggression, and fewer students are absent from school.

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3 See the PS Centre website for podcasts and videos on research on mental health and psychosocial support during COVID-19

# A. General exercises

## 1. Introductory exercises

These introductory exercises set the tone for working together as a group. They can be used by teachers with new classes before going onto introducing the themed activities in section B.

### HOUSE RULES

**Aim:** To agree on rules for positive social behaviour

**Materials:** Flipchart and marker pen

Ask students to think of useful rules for their class which will help them work together well as a group. Invite students to give suggestions. Help them to formulate the rules in the positive, not the negative. This means not to start a rule with DO NOT...!

Here are some examples:

- Keep mobiles in your pocket or bag
- Let one voice be heard at a time
- Boys and girls are equals
- Respect the opinion of others
- Be kind to others and to yourself
- Making mistakes helps us learn
- It is ok to express different opinions respectfully
- Fight fair - no violence, bullying or shaming

When the house rules are agreed upon, explain the link between rules and values. A set of rules is essentially an example of the values of a group. Each rule made here is a concrete example of a value the class wishes to uphold. For example, keeping mobiles in your pocket or bag is an example of the value of respecting the right of others by not disturbing, distracting, or being distracted.

Discuss the values behind the other rules with the class.

Now agree some constructive consequences for breaking any of the rules. If conflicts arise in the class, students can be asked how the conflict relates to the values behind the house rules. Sometimes students will have thought about aspects of the values that are not clear to the observer, and this may relate to the conflict.

Note to teachers: Be ready to revise the house rules. Revisit them from time to time with the class to see how things are going and to see if any need to be revised.

#### For older students:

Probe into the behaviours associated with each rule by asking for concrete examples, such as *"What does it mean to ..."*, and *"Tell me more about what it means to ..."*, or *"Can you give me concrete examples of..."*

Introduce the concept of restorative consequences with older students. If someone breaks a rule that violates the rights of others, some kind of restorative consequence can be agreed. One such example could be that a student that disturbed another student in class agrees to fetch lunch the following day.

## CIRCLE TIME

<b>Aim:</b>	To enable each student to have a voice, be listened to, and to promote a sense of belonging with the whole class
<b>Materials:</b>	None

### Note to teachers:

Use circle times regularly to practise social and emotional skills and to increase the psychosocial wellbeing of the group. Circle times give teachers a sense of how students are doing and a place for handling conflicts. Belonging to a group where differences are respected strengthens collaboration in the group and the individual's assertiveness.

Invite the children to sit in a circle either on the floor or on chairs. Everyone should be able to see each other.

Begin by reminding the children of house rules (or adapt them if necessary with the children).

Use the circle time to talk about topics of interest to the class.

## QUIET PLEASE

<b>Aim:</b>	To quiet the class
<b>Materials:</b>	A piece of cardboard with QUIET PLEASE written on it

Agree with the class on a sign to instruct the class to keep quiet. This could be done when discussing general house rules for the class or for the sessions.

There are several options for signs including:

- Raising a hand (as the teacher) without speaking, with your palm facing the students. As soon as students see the sign, they should also raise their hand and keep quiet and this will lead to the class quietly paying attention.
- Show or walk around with a sign that says QUIET PLEASE. As soon as students see the sign, they should stop talking and keep quiet.
- Say a low sibilant sound (sssssssss) and as soon as students hear it, they should also join in and begin to ssssssss too!

## KEEP QUIET AND SMILE

<b>Aim:</b>	To quiet the class and improve the mood
<b>Materials:</b>	A pen or pencil per child

### Note to teachers:

This is a useful way of dealing with one or more students - or the whole class - if they are having difficulty keeping quiet. Not all children are aware that they have the impulse to speak before they actually do speak and so this exercise can help them. It is also an established fact that the mood improves when putting on a smile and keeping it for even a short time.

If anyone has been talking a lot, ask them to put a pencil between their lips and smile and keep it there until instructing them to remove it. Explain that this makes it hard to speak but when they do try to speak they are reminded about having the impulse to speak because their lips begin to move.

## YES! I MADE A MISTAKE

<b>Aim:</b>	To have fun, use cognitive skills and be comfortable making mistakes
<b>Materials:</b>	None

Divide the students into random pairs, with each pair standing facing each other. Each pair will count to three by taking turns in this way: A will say one, B will say two and A says three, continuing without any pause B will say one, A two and B say three.

Whenever a mistake is made, ask the pairs to say "Yes!" while throwing their hands in the air to celebrate having making a mistake.

When the class masters this basic version, add new instructions one by one. Use the example below and invent more with the class:

- The one counting one claps both hands together

- The one counting two bends their knees
- The one counting three jumps.

End by discussing that making mistakes leads to learning. Whenever anyone is afraid of making a mistake, it is hard to give something new a try. Often people miss out on the chance to learn and experience something new because of this fear. For example, anyone learning a new language will invariably make mistakes and as the saying goes: practice makes perfect. Experiments in science often lead to unexpected results where the scientists first thought they had made a mistake. Invite students to give examples of mistakes they have made that eventually led them to becoming more able to do something well.

## 2. Energisers and calming exercises

These energisers and calming exercises can be used with the class whenever appropriate during any of the themed activities. Use a normal, neutral tone of voice for the calming exercises and allow enough time between each instruction.

### WALKING WARM

**Aim:** To energise, warm-up physically if cold, to introduce a topic or a theme

**Materials:** A clearly defined space

Ask the class to stand up and walk in all directions, trying to cover the entire space but keeping the required physical distance from each other. In the beginning, ask them to walk slowly and once they do this well whilst keeping their distance, ask them to increase the pace.

During the exercise, ask the students to:

- notice how their bodies are moving by asking: "How are you moving your feet, lower legs, knees? etc..."
- notice their breathing as the pace increases and decreases
- greet each other in different (COVID-19 safe) ways
- stop at intervals to do a stretch
- form pairs with a classmate standing close to them and discuss a theme related to the topic of the session
- to interview a classmate on a topic (for older students).

### PARACHUTE ENERGISER AND CALM DOWN

**Aim:** To energise, have fun, collaborate, and learn a calming down technique

**Materials:** A real or imaginary lightweight play parachute

**Note to teachers:**

This exercise teaches students to modulate their excitement.

Ask the class to stand in a circle spaced well apart and hold on with both hands to the real or imaginary parachute. Explain that your hand will set the speed and range of movement of the parachute. Whatever speed or range of movement (up and down or sideways) the teacher uses, the students should follow.

Begin the motion slowly first and let the students follow. Change the speed and range of movements but always end with slow and gentle movements. One version of slow and gentle moves is for students to collaborate in sending a slow wave all the way around the parachute.

### SOUND CALMING DOWN

**Aim:** To learn a way to calm oneself

**Materials:** None

Give the following instructions:

- Sit or stand at your tables or sit or stand circle.
- Now make a loud noise using a hard guttural *MMMMMM* sound with your mouths closed.

- Now slowly let the sound transition to making a soft and open *mmm* sound.
- Let the sound die out and enjoy sitting quietly with the class for a moment.

End by asking the students what they notice about the effect of the exercise. Some may report a tingling in the mouth as well as feeling more relaxed.

### CALMING BY AWAKENING THE SENSES

**Aim:** To stimulate the senses of the skin

**Materials:** A pencil or bamboo stick for each child

#### Note to teachers:

This type of touch releases oxytocin, a feel-good brain chemical and hormone. This exercise stimulates the skin – something that the children may not have experienced much during COVID-19. Students can do the same exercise on their arm, face, or neck.

Give the following instructions:

- Hold the pencil or bamboo stick in one hand.
- Very slowly and thoroughly, trace around the outline of the other hand. Let it glide over fingers, palm, back of the hand, all the way around and in and out of the hand and around the wrist.
- After a few minutes, notice how your hand feels now. How does it feel in comparison to your other hand?
- Now swap hands and hold the pencil with the other hand.
- Now trace the outline of the other hand very slowly as before.

End by asking the students what they notice about the effect of the exercise. Students may report having a tingling sensation in their hands, their shoulders may have relaxed and with practice some will let out a sigh of release.

### BREATHING WITH AWARENESS

**Aim:** To be aware of breathing

**Materials:** None

#### Note to teachers:

This basic breathing exercise can be done sitting, standing, or lying down. Give plenty of time between each step in the instructions.

Give the following instructions:

- Turn your attention inwards, keeping your eyes softly closed or open.
- Now pay attention to your breathing .....
- Breathe in and out at your own pace.....
- Breathe evenly, deeply, and calmly.....
- Notice how it feels when you pay close attention to each inbreath and outbreath.....
- Notice how the breath expands your chest, belly, sides of the body and the back.....
- Allow each breath to relax you more and more....
- Now open your eyes.
- Yawn or stretch if you feel like it....
- And bring your awareness back to the classroom.

End by asking the class or have students talk to a classmate about how they feel after this breathing with awareness exercise.

**Note to teachers:** Students may be nervous or anxious for many different reasons and it is helpful for them to know various ways of calming themselves down. The following three exercises are ones that students can learn and then use whenever they feel nervous or anxious. There are more calming exercises in **I can relax** on p. 72.

### CHEWING GUM

**Aim:** To feel calm and collected

**Materials:** An imaginary piece of chewing gum

Give the following instructions:

- Put imaginary piece of chewing gum in your mouth.
- Chew it as if it were real. Notice the saliva in your mouth.
- Imagine the gum growing bigger or getting harder. Work your jaws a bit more to chew the gum. Continue for some time.

End by asking the students to notice how it feels after they have done the exercise.

### HUGGING ONESELF

**Aim:** To feel calm and collected

**Materials:** None

Give the following instructions:

- Sit or stand upright with both feet on the ground.
- Place your right hand, palm turning inwards, on the upper left arm below the shoulder or in the left armpit.
- Place your left hand on the upper arm below the shoulder.
- In a firm grip, press inwards with both hands and hold the grip firmly for five seconds. Release the grip after approximately five seconds and repeat twice more.

End by asking the students to notice how it feels after they have done the exercise.

Students can also do this exercise standing in front of each other as a way of greeting.

### GROUNDING

**Aim:** To feel calm and securely rooted

**Materials:** None

Give the following instructions:

- Without changing position, sit quietly for a moment and notice how you are sitting.
- Place your feet on the floor.
- Sit directly on your sit bones.
- Push into the seat so the body straightens up and the head lifts towards the ceiling or roof.
- Feel your bottom on the seat and sense your feet on the ground.
- Next, in the same way as trees and bushes have roots going into the ground that makes them remain in place when it is storming, imagine having roots growing out of the soles of your feet and bottom.
- Sit for a moment quietly and notice how being rooted makes you feel and how you sit now.
- How would you describe the difference from when you began the exercise a few minutes ago?

Discuss the situations where students could use this brief grounding exercise.







## B. Themed activities

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### Theme 1

## My school after COVID-19

### Introducing the theme

The exercises in this theme give students an opportunity to spend some time talking about how it is to be back in school and how being away from school and study from home has been. There are several exercises that can be adapted to a local context. There are supplementary exercises for different age groups in *Back in school during COVID-19* by the IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and in *Let's talk about it. Welcome Back Check-in Guidance* by Save the Children and The MHPSS Collaborative.

Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

#### HOW TO REMIND YOUR CLASSMATES TO KEEP SAFE FROM COVID-19

**Aim:** To raise awareness about social behavioural rules and that rules can be discussed and adapted

**Materials:** Board or flipchart, marker pens

#### Note to teachers:

This is an exercise for younger students.

Introduce the exercise: In school during corona times we need to learn new ways of being together to learn. To prevent the spread of a virus some basic rules are very useful.

Ask the class what changes in behaviours have been introduced due to the pandemic. Take answers from the class, noting them on the board.

Explain that it fear and anxiety are normal reactions to the pandemic. It is also difficult to remember rules sometimes. We can all forget to cough into our elbow or to use a tissue at times and find ourselves coughing into our hand. This will happen to everyone. Ask if anyone has ever forgotten about a rule about COVID-19. How did it make them feel when they found themselves making a 'keep safe from COVID-19' mistake or someone else pointed it out?

Explain that forgetting a 'keep safe from COVID-19' rule can make everyone feel a bit ashamed and maybe also anxious. But, actually the act of making a mistake and feeling this way often helps people remember the rules. Ask if anyone recognises having felt like this? Did it help them remember that particular rule the next time?

Invite the students to make some suggestions for how to help keep each other safe from COVID-19. As an example, ask them what they would do if one of them saw a classmate had forgotten to wash their hands for 20 seconds after using the bathroom. Ask the class to suggest how they could remind their classmate in a nice way to wash their hands.

Give some other examples for the class to work on (in pairs or in groups) and then get their feedback. Write up their suggestions on the board. Lead a discussion on how to give a kind reminder to a classmate.

### HOW MANY SCHOOLBAGS MAKE UP A COVID-19-SAFE DISTANCE?

**Aim:** To get a realistic idea about COVID-19-safe distances and what they correspond to

**Materials:** A tape measure, schoolbags or textbooks, etc.

Ask the class what the COVID-19-safe distance is for their location. Now choose an object such as a standard sized schoolbag or a textbook and measure it and ask the students to work out how many of these will be needed side by side to measure the recommended safe distance.

Now invite small groups of students to line up their bags or books to the required distance without providing a tape measure to do so. See which group is closest to the correct measurement.

### HOW MANY STUDENTS COULD BE STANDING SAFELY SPACED APART BETWEEN HERE AND XXX?

**Aim:** To increase spatial awareness of what a COVID-19-safe distance looks like

**Materials:** None

Ask students to estimate the size of the key spaces in school such as their classroom, the playground, the assembly hall or gym and areas outside the school. Now ask them to estimate how many children could be present in the space while observing the required COVID-19-safe distance between one another.

This exercise could be done by students at home with members of their family to practise spatial awareness.

#### Note to teachers:

For this exercise, teachers need to be aware of the measurements of the spaces to be able to verify that the students' estimates are broadly correct.

### LEARNING FROM BEING OUT OF SCHOOL

**Aim:** To reflect on aspects of a given situation as being out of school

**Materials:** Board or flipchart with the questions for discussion

Say that COVID-19 has now been a fact of life for a long time and that students have been away from school for xx amount of time (specify how many months the school has been closed to students). Acknowledge that none of the students in class will have had the same experience and that everyone will have learned new things about themselves. Even in the most difficult situations a person may realise they have capacities and skills that may even surprise themselves.

#### For younger students:

Discuss in plenary what has been good about being away from school and studying at home.

#### For older students:

Invite the students to form groups of four to have a spiral conversation with one another. This starts with the first person talking for two minutes about what they have learnt about themselves from their experiences out of school and having to study from home. The next person (going clockwise around the group) then talks for two minutes on the same topic, followed by the third person and then the fourth. At this point, the first spiral has been done. Now each member of the group will have one minute in the second round of the spiral to continue talking, adding other thoughts on the same topic which have possibly been inspired by what the others have said.

Ask the groups about how they found having a spiral conversation. Discuss in plenary possible learning points from living through challenging times.

**TOP THREE TIPS FOR STUDYING AT HOME**

**Aim:** To apply students' learning about studying at home

**Materials:** Post-its for each group and pens (for the exercise with older students)

Divide the class into groups. Ask the groups to imagine that they had to give some advice to a student who was required to study at home for the first time. What would be their top three tips to that person?

Suggest that the students use the following questions as a prompt for ideas:

- What worked well in your experience of studying at home?
- What would you do to make it work better if you had to do it again?
- Who could you ask for help when you needed it?

**For younger students:**

The scenario could be different. Ask them to imagine that a keen student of their own age arrives from a COVID-19 free country to a location where all schools are closed and so all the children have to study at home. Ask the students to help the newcomer to make the best out of this situation. Listen to what the groups have to say and sum up their key tips for study at home. These tips can be shared with parents if this seems useful.

**For older students:**

Ask the groups to write down their tips - one tip per post-it - and then present them to the others in plenary. End by discussing which tip would be most beneficial for each student if they had to study at home again in the future.

**APPRECIATION**

**Aim:** To focus on appreciated traits, qualities, and behaviours in others

**Materials:** Board or flipchart, marker pens

**Note to teachers:**

During the pandemic, the news and social media have reported widely on positive and negative experiences. Learning to focus on what people appreciate about one another is a good life skill in a stressful situation. This exercise also serves as a point of transition to the next theme.

Depending on the grade and maturity of the class, ask students to identify traits, qualities and behaviours in people that they appreciate. These could be associated, for example, with practical, social, physical, creative, academic, or artistic characteristics. There may be other categories too that students could use – let them come up with their own, if they wish.

Divide the class in smaller or larger groups. Ask the groups to brainstorm personal traits, qualities, and behaviours they appreciate and admire in others.

Invite each group in turn to report three traits in plenary. Note them on the board, grouping together different words for the same trait. This shows that there are often many different aspects to the traits, qualities, and behaviours we see in people.

Keep the list stuck on the wall in the classroom. This will help to remind students to focus on what they appreciate about other people. This can reduce levels of irritation when constantly in social situations.

## Ending the theme **My school after COVID-19**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

## Theme 2

# I know about feelings

### Introducing the theme

In this theme, we explore and learn about different feelings and why we have them. The skill of identifying feelings makes it easier for us to accept them and also to understand what is happening to us. The theme introduces the concept of universal and inherent core feelings that humans share across the world independent of their cultural and social background. The exercises in the theme will help us learn the social skills of being able to identify and recognise our own feelings and to understand the feelings of others. They also look at how to cope with difficult feelings and how to support a friend who is struggling with such feelings. It should be noted that some students may find it more challenging to identify feelings, and that they may be used to interpret a given feeling (as being worried or afraid) as for example pain or hunger.

#### Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

#### FEELINGS AND WHY WE HAVE THEM

**Aim:** To assess knowledge about why feelings are useful

**Materials:** Draw two columns on the board or on flipchart paper, one with a smiley face at the top and the other with a sad face at the top

#### Note to teachers:

Feelings could include the following (depending on the age and maturity of the class): Happy, sad, glad, bad, surprised, worried, angry, afraid, confused, in love, comfortable, confident, jealous, lonely, proud, relaxed, uneasy, scared, ashamed, guilty, envious, upset, contemptuous, excited, stressed. Mention that feelings can be mixed so it is possible to have for example two feelings at the same time.

#### For younger students:

- Ask the class to mingle by walking around in the allocated space. Instruct the class that when the teacher says: *"Mingle, mingle"* and then a number from one to the number of children in the class, they form groups consisting of that number.
- Keep the mingling and forming of groups going till calling out: *"Mingle, mingle three!"* When groups of three are formed, ask them to discuss the question: *"Why do we have feelings?"*
- Ask the class to mingle again and call out: *"Mingle, mingle, five!"* When groups of five are formed, ask them to discuss the question: *"Which feelings do you know or have heard about?"*
- End the mingling exercise and ask the class to sit down or stand.
- Now invite the groups to name three of the feelings they mentioned in the group talk. Ask them to say whether the feeling should be in the positive list with the smiley face or in the negative list with the sad face. Go round all the groups in turn to make sure everyone has participated.
- End by discussing why some feelings are considered negative and others positive. Could there be something important from noticing the feelings that are considered negative?

#### For older students:

Ask the class to mingle by walking around in the allocated space. Explain that as the teacher you will say a word and that will be the sign for students to form small groups. The groups should have as many children as are in the word. For example, if the word is 'what' then the groups should all be of four students. This means that sometimes someone will not be in a group, but one of the groups should immediately invite the person left alone into their group. Explain that after each special word and when everyone is in their small groups, there will be a question given to discuss in the groups.

Here are the words for teachers to use:

- **Why (three letters)**  
Students should form groups of three and discuss: Why do we have feelings?
- **Which (five letters)**  
Students should form groups of five and discuss: Which feelings do you know?
- **What (four letters)**  
Students should form groups of four and discuss: What are feelings?
- **Manage (six letters)**  
Students should form groups of six and discuss: Are some feelings easier than others to manage?
- **Everyone (eight letters)**  
Students should form groups of eight and discuss: Does everyone have the same feelings?

End the mingle exercise and conduct a plenary discussion on feelings with the class. Then ask the students to form five groups. Assign each group a question to answer from the list above. Give the groups time to discuss their question and then invite each group to present their answers. Summarise the feelings mentioned by each group after their presentation and invite the other groups to add other feelings that may not have been mentioned. Ensure the following are mentioned: Happy, sad, glad, bad, surprised, worried, angry, afraid, confused, in love, comfortable, confident, jealous, lonely, proud, relaxed, uneasy, scared, ashamed, guilty, envious, upset, contemptuous, excited, stressed.

If time allows it, discuss with the class:

- Which feelings do you consider positive and which negative?
- Are the lists of positive and negative the same for girls and boys?
- Discuss why or why not that is so.

### IDENTIFYING CORE FEELINGS

**Aim:** To enable students to identify core feelings

**Materials:** A series of post-its with one feeling written on each, based on the feelings the class identified in the previous exercise or use the following list: Happy, sad, glad, feeling bad, surprised, worried, angry, afraid, confused, confident, lonely, proud, relaxed, ashamed, and guilty. Depending upon the number of students in the class, teachers can also add two more posts-its with their choice of feelings written on them

#### For younger students:

Fold the post-its and ask the class to come up one by one to take one. Alternatively put the post-its in a hat and pass it around so that everyone can get one. Invite each student in turn to silently show a posture and facial expression of their feeling to their classmates who then all imitate the posture and facial expression. Now ask someone to say what they think the feeling is and if it was easy to recognise it. Discuss with the class which feelings are easier to recognise than others.

#### For older students:

Suggest a couple of brief scenarios which are relevant to the age and context of students in the class as the starting point for a role play exercise. For example, one scenario could be a young person coming home too late. Another scenario could be a young person asking their parents for permission to go out, etc.

Ask the class to form groups of three and give a post-it to each student so that each group has three feelings to work with. Ask the group to discuss the feelings they have been given. They should then prepare a short role play showing these feelings in relation to one of the scenarios.

To give the exercise a gender twist, the groups can be asked to do the role plays once more where each plays the role of the opposite gender. Or a gender sign can be added to the post-its with the name of a feeling to enact.

### WALL OF FEELINGS

**Aim:** To be able to identify feelings

**Materials:** Paper, coloured crayons or pens

For this exercise, students can do all three steps or go directly to step three.

**Step one:** Ask the class about which core feelings they recall from the exercise *Identifying core feelings*. Whenever a feeling is mentioned, ask the class for other names and for colours that characterizes the feeling.

**Step two:** Divide the class in as many groups as the number of core feelings. Give each group a core feeling and ask them to design or create a poster for it. The poster should feature other names for the feeling and colours associated with that feeling.

**Step three:** Hang the posters on the wall. Ask the students to go and stand in front of the poster that corresponds to how they are feeling. If time allows, ask a few students to say a few words about why they feel the way they do. At other times – when the students first come into the classroom or after breaks during the day - invite students to use the posters to report on how they are feeling.

### PLAYING WITH BODY LANGUAGE

**Aim:** To energise and play around with body language

**Materials:** None or the core feelings to be written on the board

Ask for two volunteers to stand in front of the class:

- One is the speaker and is invited to talk about something they like to do or something they feel passionate about. They must keep their hands folded or in their pockets when speaking.
- The other volunteer does not speak. They have to be the hands or body of the speaker (choose what is appropriate in the setting). BUT they use their hands to say the opposite of what the speaker is actually saying with words.

Ask for another couple of volunteers to repeat the exercise.

Next, divide the class into groups and ask them to discuss and practise hand gestures that are used to express different feelings. Be sure that they cover the following key feelings - joy, anger, sadness, shame, disgust, afraid.

Invite one of the groups to show a hand gesture without speaking and ask the other groups to guess which corresponding feeling is being shown. The group that gets it right is next to show another hand gesture.

### X AND Y GETS ANGRY, SAD, NERVOUS, AND AFRAID

**Aim:** To become aware of the reasons for certain feelings

**Materials:** Board or a flipchart, marker pens

#### Note to teachers:

This exercise presents a range of situations to the students which result in someone having a feeling about what happened. To prepare for this, choose a common female and male name for 'X' and 'Y' and explain they are approximately the same age as the students. Choose a couple of relevant situations to the students in your class. Here are some examples:

- X/Y was walking along the street after school and on the way something happened that made X/Y angry.
- Y was on the phone with a good friend and something happened that made Y sad.
- X was talking to a friend after school and something happened that made X sad.
- X/Y is going to a family gathering/festival/school outing/cinema and is feeling rather nervous.
- X/Y is meeting a friend for the first time in a long time and is a bit afraid.

Take care that the situations are not too distressing or too close to a real situation faced by your students. Depending on time available, the class can work on one or more of the identified feelings. You may choose particular feelings that you want your students to explore.

Divide the class into pairs, groups or stay as one whole class. Explain that the students will be given a number of different situations to discuss in turn about X and/or Y.

Begin the exercise by reading out one of the scenarios. Then ask the students to think what could have been the different reasons for X or Y in having the feeling that is described in the scenario. Write down the feeling on the board or a flipchart and then note down all the reasons given for that feeling. Discuss with the class why understanding the reasons behind a feeling is important in their lives. Now go onto another scenario and repeat the exercise several times.

Discuss with the students how and when it is useful to understand that there can be many reasons for people having different feelings.

### CHANGING MY MOOD

**Aim:** To be aware of what can be done to change feelings the students identified as negative in *Feelings and why we have them*

**Materials:** Flipchart paper and pens

#### For younger students:

Divide the class into as many groups as feelings they will work with. Give each group a feeling to work with. Ask the groups to think about



what they would advise a friend to do if they experienced one of these feelings and wanted to change their mood. The advice could include things their friend could think; things their friend could say to themselves; and things their friend could do.

Invite each group in turn to tell the class their top three ideas for changing a feeling. Then have a discussion on what people can do to change their feelings if they want to or if this is needed for some reason.

**For older students:**

Divide the class into as many groups as feelings they will work with. Give each group a feeling to work with. Ask the groups to identify as many options as possible to change their feeling. They should note these on a flipchart in columns under the headings doing, thinking and saying. Hang the flipcharts on the wall and ask a representative from each group to present their suggestions to the rest of the class.

COPING WITH DIFFICULT FEELINGS (FOR OLDER STUDENTS)	
<b>Aim:</b>	To introduce the concept of coping with difficult feelings
<b>Materials:</b>	Paper and pens

Check if the students know what coping means. Coping is about how to solve problems, managing changes and handling a difficult situation, life situation or adversity as COVID-19. Coping depends on individual factors and is influenced by the setting a person is living in. Explain that coping strategies can be healthy or unhealthy.

Ask the students to work on their own for this exercise. Ask them to think about the feeling they find most challenging.

Now ask them to divide a piece of paper into two and write positive coping on one side and negative coping on the other. Ask them to write down the coping strategies they currently use in relation to the feeling they have. Next ask them to think about other healthier and maybe better strategies they can use for coping with the challenging feeling in the future.

Ask for some examples from the class after they are done the exercise. Based on concrete examples of healthy coping, highlight that coping strategies help people to manage difficulties by, for example:

- admitting that something distressing happened
- finding a good balance between feelings and thoughts/knowledge about the incident
- expressing feelings and thoughts
- seeking support and connecting to (significant) others
- finding appropriate words to think or talk about the events
- taking time to process or reflect about what has happened
- integrating the experiences into one's life story
- active problem-solving
- eventually coming to terms with what has happened and looking to the future.<sup>4</sup>

## Ending the theme I know about feelings

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

## Theme 3

# I help others

### Introducing the theme

Offering help to someone who needs it is natural and part of what makes us human. Some students may not know what to do when a friend is having a hard time and so there are exercises about giving and receiving help in this theme. During the pandemic, there have been many initiatives to help others. When times are difficult or we find ourselves in difficulties, we need help from others and classmates, siblings, good friends, or trusted adults are those you can turn to. Ask the class to identify any way - small or big - when they offered help to someone or when they received help during the day or the day before.

#### Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

#### TODAY, I WILL HELP BY .....

**Aim:** To reflect on how to help others

**Materials:** Paper, pens, board or flipchart and marker pens

Ask the class to think about their day (or the day before) and to identify any way - small or big - when they offered help to someone or when they received help. Take answers and highlight that being helpful can mean many things - from making way for someone to spending a lot of time to make a nice surprise gift for someone.

Continue by asking the class to think for a couple of minutes about the small or big ways they can help others in class, at home or in the local community today. Suggest the students take notes while thinking about the answers to this question.

Invite students to raise their hands if they came up with ideas to help others today. Let one student answer and then ask the class if anyone else could imagine doing the same helpful thing. Ask for a show of hands and count the number of students that could do the same.

Now invite other students to share their ideas of how to help others in or out of class and repeat the exercise as explained above. Write down all the ideas on the board or on a piece of flipchart.

At the end there should be lots of ideas for ways of helping that can be posted in class. If time allows, students could decorate the lists and make them into posters to be put on the wall as inspiration for the coming days.

Conclude the discussion by telling the class the benefits of helping and showing kindness:

- It makes us feel good.
- It can even make us feel happy.
- It is healthy for the body.
- It helps us feel better and be calmer if we are upset.
- It can improve our mood if we feel in a bad mood<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The effects of helping and showing kindness are related to the release of oxytocin – a brain chemical and hormone. Oxytocin is also released by touch as in the *Calming by awakening the senses* on p. 14. Oxytocin is often called the feel-good hormone.

**HELPING OTHERS IS .....****Aim:** To reflect on offering and receiving help**Materials:** An imaginary ball or a real soft ball

Ask the students to stand in a circle.

Explain that one person starts by throwing a ball (real or imaginary) to someone else in the circle and calls their name at the same time.

The student catching the ball then has to complete a statement which the teacher calls out. They should say the first thing that comes into their minds when completing the sentence.

Statements could start: Helping others is ....., or I can help others by ..., or When someone helps me, I am ..... Here are some other sentences to use:

- I ask for help when I ...
- I like to be helped with ...
- I don't like it when someone helps me because....
- When someone helps me, I am ...

Make sure everyone has had a turn before ending the exercise. Then sum up what the students said, including any unexpected points which seemed relevant for everyone.

**COMPLETE THE SENTENCE EXERCISES...**

"Helping others" is an exercise where students complete a sentence. When completing the sentence, they will be asked to say the first thing that comes to their mind.

The sentences or phrases to complete are initially chosen by the teacher to illustrate some aspects of the theme the class is working on. Students can be asked to come up with additional sentences that they find they'd like to hear thoughts about.

This type of exercise can be done verbally or, in writing. The answers can be shared in pairs, groups or plenary.

**HOW TO HELP A FRIEND****Aim:** To reflect on how to help a friend**Materials:** A board or a flipchart, marker pens

Ask the class to sit quietly turning their attention inwards.

*Say: Think about a friend or someone you know who is of the same age as you. Raise your hand when you have someone in mind, so I can see when you are all thinking about a friend. Now imagine that this friend is not feeling good one day. Your friend seems upset in some way and you don't know what the matter is or what has happened. Think about some of the ways you can help your friend and show that you care. You are approaching your friend with the intention to be kind and supportive. What can you say and do to show the friend that you care and want to help? Open your eyes and sit for a moment. Then tell me what you can say and do to show you want to help.*

Invite some students in turn to give an example of what they would say to show they want to help. Ask the class if what they said would be helpful. Ask them why it would be helpful or why not.

Write some of the most useful sentences on the board or flipchart.

Next, ask a couple of volunteers to show how they would approach a friend who is not feeling well one day in terms of their body language. Ask the class to comment on the body language used. Would it be helpful (and why or why not)?

End the exercise by taking suggestions for how to show care for others in class. When someone makes a suggestion, check if others would prefer to be cared for in a different way. It is important that students know that different people want to be helped in different ways.

**WHO CAN HELP?**

**Aim:** To identify who can help if students have problems

**Materials:** Flipchart with drawings of an adult, a peer, and a child, board or flipchart, marker pens

**Note to teachers:**

Everyone needs help if they have a problem. It is important for students to know where to find a trusted helper if they have a problem and need help. A trusted helper could be a classmate, friend, family member, teacher, neighbour, social worker, school nurse or doctor.

**For younger students:**

Post the drawings on the wall of the classroom. Tell the students that the drawings represent trusted helpers of various kinds. This exercise is about working out who a young person under 18 could turn to for advice and help if they were struggling with some kind of difficulty.

Explain that the class will be given different situations featuring some kind of difficulty that a child could face. They will then have to decide who the child would go to for help in relation to this particular problem. Here are examples:

- A friend is sad as another friend is moving far away.
- A friend is being bullied.
- A friend is being teased.
- A friend is involved with online chatting with people much older than themselves.
- A friend is upset because their parents are fighting as one of them has lost their job.
- A friend lost a much-loved uncle to COVID-19.
- A friend is becoming so scared about COVID-19 they are finding it difficult to concentrate and sleep well anymore.
- A friend is being called bad names (sexually harassed) by a group of people on their way to school.

For this exercise, the children can sit at their desks or stand in a circle, depending on what works best. Begin by reading one of the situations. As a response, the children can point to the drawing (of the adult, peer or child) that best represents the person they imagine as the trusted helper for that situation. Ask the children to explain why they chose that drawing. If restrictions permit, children can run to the drawing instead and stand next to it to explain why they chose it.

**For older students:****Part A**

Ask students to think about the people in their village/town/community they could go to if they had a problem that they needed help with. Write down the most important categories of helpers the students name. Identify around five to six categories of helpers such as teachers, social workers, school nurses, caregivers, the police, social services etc.

Now ask students to work in small groups in response to one or more of the scenarios below – adapt them if necessary to be relevant to lives of the students in the class:

- A friend is being cyber-bullied by someone from another class.
- A friend is being teased because of their gender, class or ethnic background.
- A friend is involved with online chatting with people much older than themselves.
- A friend is upset because their parents are fighting as one of them has lost their job.
- A friend lost a much-loved uncle to COVID-19.
- A friend is becoming so scared about COVID-19 they are finding it difficult to concentrate and sleep well anymore.
- A friend is being called bad names (sexually harassed) by a group of people on their way to school.
- A friend is hitting a younger sibling. You need help to find out how to talk to your friend about changing their behaviour towards the younger sibling.

Read out each scenario one at a time and give students time to discuss each one. Ask them to work out who the young person could turn to for help in this particular situation. Ask them to think of two trusted helpers for each scenario - a first and a second choice.

Invite the groups to share their responses in turn. After each group has given their answers, ask other groups for comments in case they have another preferred choice.

If there is no helper in the village/town/community who is able to respond to a particular scenario, the teacher may need to do some research and get back to the class later with information about what other help may be available.

**Part B**

Give one of the scenarios to each group and ask them to discuss how the helper and child could work together to solve the problem. Ask groups to report in plenary.

## Ending the theme **I help others**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

### Theme 4

## **I understand others**

### Introducing the theme

Having friends and being a good friend mean a lot to most of us. One of the key things that characterizes friendship is that we have something in common, feel understood and understand our friends. Understanding how others think, feel and behave is important to learn, live and play together. When we understand others, we are more likely to accept them, and be less prone to point fingers, turn away or even talk behind their back and make fun of them. Sometimes it may take some effort to understand why someone did or said things in a certain way. One of the things we can do is to try and see things from the perspective of someone else. If we know more about someone's background and listen carefully to what they have to say, we are more likely to remain on good terms and act in a respectful way towards others.

#### Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

#### BEING A GOOD FRIEND

**Aim:** To reflect on the qualities of being a good friend and how to form new friendships

**Materials:** Board or flipchart, marker pens

Ask each student to complete the sentence *A good friend is someone who...* Note their answers on the board or a flipchart. The students can do this in a random order where they 'pop like popcorn', or they can wait for their turn by raising their hand, as suits the context.

Students will probably mention key characteristics of a good friend such as someone who likes to play with me; someone who helps me; someone who listens to me; someone who tries to understand me; someone who makes me happy; someone who sends encouraging texts; someone who likes to go shopping with me; someone who likes reading etc. Probe what is meant by some of these statements.

Sum up the main points from the class and emphasise the key characteristics. A good friend tries to understand will most probably be mentioned and if not, ask the class:

- How many of you agree that understanding is a key characteristic of a good friend?
- Does everyone have a good friend?
- Why is your friend a good friend?

- What can sometimes make it difficult to be a good friend?

Ask students how to make new friends. This will make them to be aware of what it takes to start a friendship. Ask the following questions:

- What would you do to make a new friend?
- What are good ways of starting a friendship?

### THE MAGIC HAND

**Aim:** To practise non-verbal reading of others

**Materials:** None

#### Note to teachers:

This exercise develops students' skills of understanding others.

Divide the class into pairs – one person will be the magic hand and the other their partner. The magic hand will begin by holding a hand at the level of the face of the partner - maintaining a safe distance. By moving the hand slowly or quickly up, down, to the sides, and backwards, the magic hand gives non-verbal instructions to the partner about how to move. First, the magic hand should make it easy for the partner, and after some time ask the magic hand to challenge the partner by making the moves more demanding. End by asking the magic hand to, based on observations so far – instruct the partner move in a way that would feel good.

Change roles so the magic hand is now being moved by the other.

#### Variation:

Using both hands, the magic hand can orchestrate the same or different moves of two partners at the same time.

After the exercise, ask the class to talk about how the different ways the magic hand made you move. When being the magic hand how well did you guess what would feel good for the partner? How well did the magic hand read their partner?

### MY INTERVIEWEE THINKS

**Aim:** To prepare for and do an interview

**Materials:** Board or flipchart, marker pens

#### Note to teachers:

This is a homework assignment for the students.

Tell the students to imagine that they are an interviewer. Ask them to choose someone to interview to get another person's perspective on their situation, work, leisure, interests, etc. The interviewee should be someone out of school, for example, their granny, a shopkeeper, an adult family friend, a public employee, or a health professional.

Before they actually do the interview, take time in class to prepare a list of questions an interviewer would ask to learn about someone, their life, and their outlook on things. Older students may enjoy having a controversial question to include in their interview questions.

Once the students have done their interviews, there are various options as to how they report on it to the class. Depending on the age and maturity of the students, they could do a presentation about the interview in class or write an essay about their interviewee with the aim of trying to understand him or her, or they could be presenting the interviewee in class as if they were this person coming to class to talk about their lives and views.

### ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ON THINGS

**Aim:** To practise reflective thinking and listening when making up one's mind

**Materials:** Signs for YES and NO

#### Note to teachers:

Be sure to encourage students to accept all opinions and beliefs in this exercise. No child should suffer from what they think or believe by being bullied by their classmates.

Divide the room in two parts – one marked YES and the other marked NO. Explain that there will be a series of questions and that the students should answer the questions by going to the YES or the NO side of the room, depending on how they feel about the questions.

Now ask the class a closed question (i.e. one that can only be answered by a yes or a no), making sure that the questions are age, gender and culturally appropriate. With older and more mature students, the questions could be controversial issues for the age group. Some examples of questions could be:







- Is it right for parents and older siblings to slap children to make them behave?
- Can children in xx grade decide for themselves what to eat?
- Is it alright to pretend to have a headache in order to not do homework or chores?
- Should you always inform the teacher if a classmate is cheating on a task in class?
- Should parents decide a student's choice of education or profession?

Students should go to the YES or NO side of the room to answer the questions. Give them a few minutes to discuss why they have chosen this standpoint with the others on that side of the room. Interview one to three from each side about their point of view.

Next ask students to change their minds by changing sides. Give them a few minutes to discuss their new point of view and why it is reasonable and how they could argue their case. Invite each group to present their new point of view to the other group.

Ask if any student has changed their mind or they are still holding on to their initial point of view. Ask these questions:

- How was it when you had to change your mind?
- Did it help you understand why others have other point of views than yours?
- Did this challenge your beliefs or values?

## Ending the theme I understand others

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

### Theme 5

## I listen to others

### Introducing the theme

In this theme students explore listening to others. Listening is not always easy, as many things can get in the way of listening closely to another person and it is therefore helpful to do exercises on this. When we talk to each other there are many verbal and non-verbal factors that come into play: the words themselves, the tone of voice, melody of the voice, pauses, speed of talking, eye contact, facial expression, and body language. The listener will also be thinking about what is being said at the same time as listening!

Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

**LISTEN CAREFULLY**

**Aim:** To listen carefully and respond quickly

**Materials:** None

This exercise can be done in pairs where students take turns, or it can be done with the entire class as described below:

Ask the students to stand in a circle or if seated go by rows. Explain that one person begins by saying one word. The next person then responds by saying another word beginning with the same letter as the end of the first word. For example, if the first word is corona, the next word could be always. The next student could then say summer, for example. The words do not need to have anything to do with the previous word. The most important thing is for students to listen carefully to the word that is said so that they are able to carry on in the game.

Begin the game and let it go on until everyone has had a chance to say a word. If it is challenging for students, they can ask for support from a classmate - and get praise for asking for support!

**GIVE PRECISE INSTRUCTIONS**

**Aim:** To practise being very precise when giving instructions

**Materials:** None

**Note to teachers:**

The exercise can be used giving instructions for various movements or series of movements.

Divide the class into pairs and ask them to stand in front of each other. Each pair decides who will begin as the instructor for the other. The task for the first instructor is to give precise verbal instructions to their partner for each of the movements involved in sitting down on a chair or on the floor from the standing position. The instructor can only use verbal language and must not use any body language such as moving their hands. The instructor must remain standing - only the partner moves based on the instructions given.

The pairs then change roles and the new instructor does exactly the same exercise, giving precise verbal instructions for each movement for the standing partner to sit down.

After the exercise, discuss with the class how each person in the pairs felt when they were instructing and being instructed using words only.

**WAYS OF NOT LISTENING (BODY LANGUAGE)**

**Aim:** To be able to read the body language of someone who is not listening

**Materials:** Ball (real or imaginary)

Ask the students to stand in a circle and explain that they are going to throw the ball to one another. Each time a person catches the ball, their task is to demonstrate body language for not listening. As they throw the ball to one another, ask the students to call out the name of the person they are throwing the ball to and say: *Show us what you do when you are not listening to someone who is talking to you!*

Here are some examples of body language for not listening: folding your arms, looking away, rolling your eyes, looking down, sighing, fidgeting, tapping your fingers or feet, interrupting, or making distracting movements.

With older students continue the game and add another task for the participants: Show us what it looks like when you are pretending to look as if you are listening, but you are not. For example, sometimes when you are talking to somebody, you can see that their mind is a thousand miles away as they have a vacant look in their eyes.

End by summing up the typical body language signs of not listening. With older students, also discuss how they would see if someone were genuinely listening and using body language such as looking at you and nodding their head, or if someone were not truly present with you and not really in listening mode.

**MORE WAYS OF NOT LISTENING (VERBAL CUES)**

**Aim:** To recognise when someone is not listening in terms of what they are saying

**Materials:** None

Divide the class into groups of four. Invite the groups to prepare a short, two-minute role play based on a conversation. The topic of the conversation can be something that one of the groups is passionate about, such as sport, music, outdoor activities, TV series, radio programmes, books, or hobbies.

When the student starts talking about their favourite topic, the other members of the group should role play different ways of ignoring the speaker.

Here are some examples of verbal ways for not listening: listeners start talking about something else; they ask the speaker an unrelated question; they talk about themselves; they say something negative about the speaker or the topic.

End by discussing these questions with the class.

- Do you recognise these different strategies from other situations?
- Do you use these strategies yourselves?
- Does anyone have a favourite strategy for ignoring someone who is speaking to you?
- When are these strategies helpful in everyday life?

### ATTITUDES OF A GOOD LISTENER

**Aim:** To understand how to be a good listener

**Materials:** Board, flipchart paper with the heading I am a good listener, marker pens

Divide the class into small groups. Instruct the groups to discuss what makes a good listener. Give the class some time to do this and then ask them to make a list of good listening attitudes.

Ask the groups to report in plenary. If a group formulates an attitude in a negative way, ask them to make it positive. For example, instead of saying: *Don't tease the person who is speaking*, help the group find a positive version such as: *Be kind to the person who is speaking*. Write down all the listening attitudes generated by the class.

Here is an example of a list of being a good listener:

- I listen to make sure I understand what the person is saying.
- I ask if I don't understand what the person is saying.
- I look at the person who is speaking in a natural way.
- I am kind to the person who is speaking.
- I am not only thinking about what to say.
- I am aware of the physical distance between us.

Now, make a poster called '*I am a good listener*' featuring the top five tips for good listening from the long list made by the class. Decide on the top five tips by setting up a voting system with the students. For example, each student could be given three stars and asked to give a star to each of their three favourite listening attitudes. Hang up the poster on the wall in the classroom. (They can draw their voting stars on the list of all the listening attitudes named by the class).

Follow up with the class at a later point in time to see how the class is doing on good listening attitudes.

### YES, THAT'S WHAT I SAID! OR NO, I DIDN'T SAY THAT!

**Aim:** To practise active listening

**Materials:** None

Mix students in random pairs and ask them to stand well apart from others so they can concentrate on what they are saying to one another. Ask the pairs to decide who will be A and who will be B. A will talk first and B will listen and next time it will be the other way around. A will talk for a couple of minutes and B will listen and repeat what A has said. Instruct the pairs to use good body language during the exercise.

**A has two tasks:**

1. Talk about one of the following:
  - something A likes and looks forward to or a favourite activity out of school
  - a challenge or difficulty A is having with another person (for younger children)
  - something bothering A and A would like to talk through (for older students).
2. Explain clearly and correct B whenever they say something that is not quite what A said.

**B has the following tasks:**

- use good verbal and non-verbal listening skills when listening to A
- repeat what A said to ensure they have understood A correctly. This may take a few rounds of repeating what A said until B almost uses the same words as A.

For example, A might say: *I am so happy, as my birthday is in two weeks, and my mother has promised I can bring treats to the class, and that we will make a nice dinner, and my aunt and uncle have promised to bring me some gifts. They usually give us great presents.*

B might say: *You are looking forward to your birthday coming up in some weeks, and your mother has promised to make dinner and your aunt and uncle are also coming.*

A can then correct B saying: *Yes, almost right – my birthday is in two weeks, my mother also said I can bring treats to the class and my aunt and uncle usually bring great gifts.* After the exercise:

- Ask the students to think how it was to talk in this way.
- Ask A how it was to be listened to in a way where the listener made sure they completely understood what you were saying.
- Ask B how was it to have to listen this attentively and to repeat exactly what was said.
- Ask the students if they think they will change the way they listen after doing this exercise.

### IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

**Aim:** For mature, older students to practise active listening skills

**Materials:** None

Divide the class into pairs. Explain that the student whose first name begins with a letter that comes first in the alphabet is A and the other is B. A will talk and B will listen in the first round of the exercise. Give A three to five minutes to tell B about a current experience, challenge, dilemma, or dream. B listens actively without saying anything at all. B uses good non-verbal listening skills and attitudes.

Next, give the same amount of time to B who will talk about a current experience, challenge, dilemma, or dream. A listens actively without saying anything, using good listening non-verbal skills and attitudes.

Now, invite each pair to join another pair. Give each B two to three minutes to tell the group what their A told them. The Bs should be as accurate as possible. The As will approve or correct the version the Bs have given. Next, give each A two to three minutes to tell the group what their B told them as accurately as possible. The Bs will approve or correct the version that the As have given.

Discuss with the class why it is difficult to practise active listening and to give an accurate version of what someone else has said. Some of the reasons the students might give for why it is difficult to listen include:

- they are distracted by something
- they might be disturbed by what is being said
- they are thinking about what the speaker will say next
- they have thoughts about what is said
- they have been reminded of personal stories relating to the topic
- they have emotional reactions to what is being said
- they are making judgements about the speaker or about the content of what is being said
- they want to solve the problem being described by the person speaking.

## Ending the theme I listen to others

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

## Theme 6

# I listen to myself

### Introducing the theme

Listening to yourself means paying attention to how you are doing physically, emotionally and mentally. By listening to the signals from your body, you can notice what it is telling you it needs. By listening to your feelings, you can learn to react in helpful ways. By paying attention or listening to thoughts, you can become aware of what thoughts you are thinking. Sometimes thoughts can give you good ideas on what to do. For example, if you are thinking about doing something other than schoolwork, it is possible to decide to focus on schoolwork!

**Note to teachers:** At the start of this new theme, it is helpful to explain to students that if they have thoughts that are worrying them, they can talk to you after class and you can work out what to do together.

### Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

#### LISTEN TO YOURSELF

**Aim:** To raise awareness of what listening to yourself means

**Materials:** Paper and pens

#### Note to teachers:

Make sure that the children use age-appropriate examples in this exercise in how they describe the sensations in their bodies, what they are feeling and what they are thinking. In some cultures, inner voices are understood as intuition, and students may ask about this.

To introduce the exercise to the class, ask students to give examples of what *listening to yourself* could be. Make sure students understand the three domains in *listening to yourself* - (1) bodily sensations, (2) feelings and (3) thoughts. Explain that for each of these, they can take some action as a result of listening to and being aware of their body. For example:

- Bodily sensation of being tired: *When I feel tired, I can take a rest*
- Having the feeling of being angry: *When I am angry, I can wait until I calm down before I speak to my friend*
- Having thoughts about a situation: *When I think the group I am working with is helping me, I can thank them*

#### For younger students:

Write up some of the sentences listed below and use them to distinguish between the three domains of bodily sensations, feelings, and thoughts.

#### For older students:

Ask the students to work in pairs and give them the first half of some of the sentences from each of the three domains below. Ask them to complete the sentences together. In plenary invite pairs to say how they completed the sentences and then share tips for what to do when.

#### Sentences about bodily sensations

When I notice sensations in my body:

- When I feel tired, I can go to bed.
- When I feel muscle tension, I can change my position.
- When I have a muscle pain, I can do a relaxation exercise.
- When I feel like my legs are restless, I can go out and play.
- When my eyes feel like they are full of sand, I can take a break from the screen.

- When I feel hungry an hour before dinner, I can ask for a snack.

#### Sentences about feelings

When I notice feeling feelings:

- When I am feeling upset, I can count to ten.
- When I am feeling sad, I can talk to a friend.
- When I am feeling annoyed, I can wait till it passes.
- When I am feeling I am missing my friend, I can phone them.
- When I am feeling tired and still have to do my maths homework, I can take a walk before I begin my work.

#### Sentences about thoughts

When I notice thoughts:

- When I think the homework is too difficult, I can talk to an adult who can help me do it.
- When I am thinking about a break at school and I really want to go outside, I can decide to wait for ten more minutes.
- If I think my friend is upset, I can ask them how they are doing.
- When I think the others always know the answers, I can choose to think that sometimes I know the answers too.
- If I think it's hard to concentrate because there is too much noise in the class, I can ask my classmates to be quiet.

End the exercise with a discussion on when it would be most useful for students to listen to themselves.

### THIS IS ME OR NOT

**Aim:** To define likes and dislikes

**Materials:** None

#### Note to teachers:

The following exercise can be used to identify themes that the class is interested in learning more about and discussing more in depth. Take a note of the topics that come up and plan other activities accordingly.

Introduce the exercise by explaining that during challenging times lots of people change and learn new things about themselves. Say: *Let's do a game and make an inventory of how we are, what we like to do and what we don't like to do.*

Ask the class to sit or stand in a circle. Explain that whenever a statement is said, students can stand up or step forward if the statement applies to them. If a statement doesn't apply or a student does not wish to answer, the student can remain standing or lean forward. Older students can be invited to make up their own statements, and if so, the option of not answering must be stressed.

Use statements that are appropriate to the age and maturity of the class, as well as the way they live their lives. Only use sentences that students would feel comfortable responding to. The following statements can be adapted accordingly:

- I jump out of bed every morning.
- I like pizza/name of loved local food.
- I eat whatever I am given even though I don't like it.
- I like sports/football/cricket/swimming etc.
- I love watching TV/being on the internet/PM games/my mobile.
- I spend too much time watching TV/being on the net/pc games/mobile.
- I sometimes argue with my parents.
- I am sometimes afraid of trying new things.
- I know who to turn to if someone harasses me sexually.
- I like to go for a walk with my friends.
- I like to gossip/shop/go to the mall.
- I don't tell my friends if I am sad.
- Sometimes I feel envious/jealous of others.
- I can confide in my friends.
- I can keep secrets.
- I sometimes feel lonely.
- I often scold myself.

- I have someone I can look up to.
- I know someone I trust.
- I know what I want most of the time.
- I know what feels wrong even if I don't express it/and I express it.

End by saying something like: *Knowing who you are, what you like, and what your values are is important as it makes it easier to accept one's boundaries and needs. Knowing who others are, what they like, and their values is equally important as it makes it easier to accept and know their boundaries and needs.*

### WHAT I AM GOOD AT

**Aim:** To enable students to recognise their own capacities and skills and to receive compliments from others

**Materials:** Paper and pens

Introduce the exercise by explaining that the students will write a list about what they are good at. Ask them to write clearly as they will show the list to a classmate who will then add things to the list from what they know about the skills, capacities, knowledge, and actions of their friend.

Now ask the students to begin writing their list. They should note down everything that comes to mind, whether big or small, for example: I am good at waiting, helping others, reading, going for a walk, being a good friend, football, maths.

Explain that giving compliments is very important. It means recognising and acknowledging the skills and talents of someone else. A compliment is a form of honest feedback that can help someone grow and realise what others see and appreciate in them. It can also be difficult to see one's own strengths. Now ask students to exchange their list with another student who knows them quite well. Ask them to add other things they know their classmate is good at. They should add their notes on the back of the paper and hand it back. Now invite everyone to take a look at what has been added.

End the exercise by asking how it feels to read what has been added. Take a few answers from the class.

### WHAT I WANT TO BE BETTER AT

**Aim:** To set realistic aims and know what it takes to achieve them

**Materials:** Paper and pens

Invite students to think quietly for a moment about what they would like to be better at. Maybe they want to improve marks in school in a certain subject; do better at sport, leisure activities, hobbies, games; improve personal skills such as concentrating in class or managing time; or communicate more with others about their interests.

Younger students can be asked to make a drawing of one thing they want to be better at and older students can be asked to write a list of their top three aims.

Form pairs. Give the same amount of time to each student to discuss their motivation for wanting to do better at something. Why do they want to do better at X? Is it realistic to want to do better at that? And what they should do step by step to be better at X?.

As an additional step for this exercise, older students can be asked to discuss how they could sabotage their own plans. Ask them to think about times when they have not managed to do something they had planned. What did they do that made it very difficult to achieve their aim? For example, they may have made unrealistic plans or preferred doing easier activities instead of doing what they had hoped to do.

End by discussing with the class what they can do to keep themselves on the track when it comes to putting a plan into action.

### THINKING STRONG THOUGHTS

**Aim:** To learn about self-talk and thinking strong thoughts

**Materials:** Board or flipchart, marker pens

Introduce the concept of self-talk. Say: *Almost everyone talks to themselves. Often people talk to themselves when they are learning something new. You may remember noticing that you talked to yourself when you first learned to tie a shoelace, or to ride a bike, or when you were first learning to add numbers together or do other subjects at school, or when you were learning some moves in a choreographed dance or in a physical exercise class.*

Take examples from the class of this kind of self-talk.



Give another example of using self-talk concerned with making decisions. Say: *You may have already noticed that you do this such as: If I do my homework now, it is done, but if I go out to play or go for a walk, I can do it later – or maybe I won't get it done then!*

Take examples from the class of this kind of self-talk.

Explain there is a third type of self-talk which is about talking positively or negatively to yourself. The next exercise is going to be about negative self-talk. Say: *You may have done this when you failed in something or you made a mistake and said to yourself: It was my fault, or I am never good enough or Oh, no I did it again.*

Ask the students if they recognise this kind of self-talk.

Divide the class into pairs or small groups and ask them to think of some examples of typical negative self-talk and to discuss them. Ask for examples in plenary and gather six to ten typical examples of negative self-talk. Note these on the board or a flipchart, making space for positive versions that can replace the negative sentences. Take each example of negative self-talk in turn and ask the students to suggest a way of changing it to positive self-talk. This helps to encourage the students to have strong thoughts when they are upset, worried, anxious, or do not know what to do in a situation.

Here are some examples:

### Negative self-talk

I will never learn to do X  
I can't do it  
I don't know how to do it  
I always lose  
I am so angry

### Positive self-talk

Maybe I can learn to X if I practise more  
I can try to do it  
I will ask for help to do it  
I can handle losing - it's only a game  
I know how to calm myself down

End by suggesting the students try the technique of thinking strong thoughts and notice if it works for them.

## A LETTER FROM MYSELF TO ME (FOR OLDER STUDENTS)

**Aim:** To learn to reflect by writing

**Materials:** Paper and pens, a board or flipchart with the questions listed (see the questions in the bullet points below)

### Note to teachers:

In some cultures the oral is preferred to the written tradition. If this is the case, adapt the exercise as best fit the culture and tradition.

Introduce the exercise by explaining that writing is one way of listening to yourselves. Many people like to keep a diary or to make notes when they have a decision to make or they have a challenge or dilemma to resolve.

Writing about experiences and thoughts can help get perspective and clarity on the situation and can also help get ideas about what to do. Writing is a way to process what is happening. Keeping a diary is an excellent way of keeping track of how you are doing, what you have done to handle and overcome challenges and to celebrate successes.

Ask the students to think about a recent experience that they find they are still thinking about. Next, ask them to spend some time individually looking at the questions on the board or flipchart and then write down their responses.

- What happened?
- How do I feel about what happened?
- What did I think about what happened?
- What were my reactions to what happened?
- What did I learn from what happened?
- If something similar happened to a friend, what would I advise my friend to do?

Discuss with the class if writing about the experience has changed how they are thinking and feeling about what happened. Has anything changed for them by doing the writing exercise?

If some of the students found this way of writing useful, suggest that they do it two to three times during the next week to find out if it works for them. If so, they can use the same questions or find another way that is better for them.







**ENERGY AND ZEST IN LIFE (FOR OLDER STUDENTS)****Aim:** To be aware of sources of energy and how to use them**Materials:** None**Note to teachers:**

This exercise is for older students to enable them to reflect on the skills and abilities that they have that give them energy and zest in life.

Ask the students to form pairs, A and B. Let the pairs decide who will be A and B. Explain that there are three questions to answer and they can choose to write down their responses or to discuss their responses together.

Ask A to put each question in turn to B. B answers by saying "When I ..." and completes the sentence based on their own experience. They can give up to three answers to each question.

When do you feel most alive and creative?

When I ...,                  When I ...,                  When I ...

What values are you putting into practice when you feel alive and creative?

When I did ...,                  When I did ...,                  When I did

How can you use these principles or values in other areas in your life?

When I ...,                  When I ...,                  When I ...

Ask the pairs to discuss how it was to do the exercise and have a brief feedback in plenary.

## Ending the theme **I listen to myself**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

### Theme 7

## **I can calm myself**

### Introducing the theme

Knowing how to calm yourself is a vital life skill for any age group. This theme focuses on how to manage stress and calm down. There are benefits for students who are able to be calm in challenging situations. They find that they are more able to analyse a situation and decide on the best course of action. If they remain in a state of stress or high arousal, their capacity to think straight is affected. An easy explanation for students is that when their stress level is high, thinking gets clouded. At the same time they may not realise that they are not thinking clearly. The worry technique featured in the activities here has been shown to be helpful for older students, enabling them to benefit from the educational system.

### Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.

- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

### SOMETHING NICE THAT HAPPENED

**Aim:** To learn to focus on good memories

**Materials:** None or a ball (real or imaginary)

Begin by asking the class to think about a good thing they experienced recently. This could be something that happened last week, the day before or the same day, depending on how often this exercise is used.

Ask the students to stand up in a circle and one person throws a real or imaginary ball to another student. When this student catches the ball, they tell everyone about their recent positive experience. Alternatively, go round the class and invite each student to tell everyone about their experience briefly in two sentences.

Ask students how it makes them feel to be reminded about something good they have experienced.

End by summing up what has been said. Suggest that students can use this technique of thinking about good memories when they are upset, for example, or indeed at any time of day.

### I HAVE TO .... I GET TO

**Aim:** To frame things in a calming way

**Materials:** Paper and pens, if needed

Introduce the exercise by explaining that when people have a lot to do, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and stressed. Say: *There is a way of calming yourself by changing some of the words that you use. Changing how you say something can help to change the way you are feeling about something that you might be dreading.* Use some examples to show how this could work for the students:

- Instead of thinking and saying: *I have to do my maths homework*, say: *I get to do my maths homework*.
- Instead of thinking and saying: *I have to sweep the floor*, say: *I get to sweep the floor*.

**For younger students:**

Ask the class to stand in a circle. Now, ask students to take turns to say one thing out loud they have to do this week. *I have to ....* The student and the rest of the class say: *You get to ...* and so on.

**For older students:**

Ask the class to write *I have to* and note three to five things, chores, or tasks they have to do. Ask them to look at their lists and notice how it makes them feel seeing the tasks or chores listed. Next, ask them to change what they have written so that it says: *I get to* and note three to five things they think they get to do. Now ask them to look again at their lists and notice how it makes them feel seeing the tasks or chores they get to do.

### ASKING A FRIEND WHEN YOU NEED HELP TO CALM DOWN

**Aim:** To enable students to know how to ask for help to calm down

**Materials:** None

Ask the students to form pairs. Ask the pairs to think of a common situation in their life that could upset them somewhat – but be sure to choose one that is not very serious. The exercise is about thinking what helped them calm down in this situation.

Once everyone in class is ready, invite them to share what had upset them with one another and what had helped them to calm down. Now, ask them to take turns to imagine being upset and ask their partner to help them calm down.

End the exercise by talking with the class about how a person can ask someone for help when they are upset.

**DEALING WITH WORRIES (FOR OLDER STUDENTS)****Aim:** To learn to deal constructively with worries**Materials:** Paper and pens

Explain to students that during and after the pandemic, there has been a lot to worry about. It is only natural to be worried in situations like the pandemic where there have and may still be many unknowns. Focusing on problems that might or might not happen in the future seems to increase our worry or anxiousness too. This makes it hard to learn because when we are constantly mulling over a worry, our mind is occupied.

Explain that one way of handling worries is to work out when to worry using “scheduled worry time”. Explain that students can schedule 15 minutes a day for themselves, for example, where they focus on their worries. If worries appear at other times during the day, they can remind themselves that they will take care of the worry later.

Next explain the technique. Say: *In this exercise we are going to identify some of the worries you have and decide what to do about them. This means we have to work out which worries it is possible to control. We will also think when you might best have a scheduled worry time.*

Ask the students to take a piece of paper and divide it into three columns (see the example below). In the first column ask them to write down two to three minor worries that are within their zone of control. Then, in the second column ask them to write down what they would do about each worry and when to do it. In the third column, if they feel they need more time to think about the worry they have described, ask them to note when would be the best time to schedule a worry time about this.

An example of a worry	An example of what to do and when	An example of when I could schedule and use a worry time
I cannot possibly get good marks in my exams as I have missed so much time in school  I don't have enough time to study for exam next week  Which studies to pursue after my exam	Ask the teacher to take some time to tell the class exactly what the pages we need to study for the exam and which reductions we will be given  Don't watch TV or YouTube and use the time to study for the next three days	I could take ten minutes after dinner for worry time

After the exercise ask a couple of students to share their worries and what and when they will address the worry. Ask how it feels to have decided on what to do about the worry and when. Is this a realistic plan?

Ask if anybody has to postpone doing something about the worry to a scheduled worry time.

Suggest that when students notice they are thinking about a worry, it is good to write it down and think through what to do about it and when to handle it. If needed, it is good too to schedule a time to think more about it.

**CALMING DOWN ...****Aim:** To develop a range of ways to calm down**Materials:** Board, flipchart, or paper and pens**Note to teachers:**

This exercise encourages students to find ways to calm themselves when they are upset. Be sure that they include physical, social and cognitive techniques.

Begin by explaining to the students that this a quiet calming exercise that will be done in silence.

Invite the students to start by noticing how they are doing now. Then ask them to look around the classroom and really look at everything there, for example, the desks, walls, the board or the colours of the clothes they or others are wearing. Ask them to notice three different things in class.

Next, ask them to listen for sounds, taking time to identify exactly what sounds they are hearing. Ask them to notice three different sounds in their surroundings.

Finally, ask them to notice three concrete things they can feel with their bodies where they are in contact with the outside world. This could be where their arms are resting on the desk, or if they are holding a pen, or touching a piece of paper or a keyboard, or noticing that their feet are on the ground or their hair is touching their face. Take a minute or two to bring the quiet time to an end and say they will now reflect on what they have just done.

Ask what this short exercise made them feel like. Did they notice any change in themselves from before they began the exercise?

Ask if anyone has ever been upset about being told to calm down. Invite a couple of students to share stories of being told to calm down. Did it help? Did they know what they could do to calm down? Explain that everyone will experience being upset from time to time and knowing what to do to calm down is very important.

Invite students to suggest good ways of calming down. Ask students to create their own personal list of ideas or create a list with the class of what can be done to calm down. Be sure that students include the following techniques:

- Think about something else
- Use the STOP technique
- Count to ten
- Count down backwards from 1000 by subtracting seven or 17 and carry on counting down
- Write about what happened that got you upset and what can be done
- Take a couple of deep breaths
- Move away from the upsetting situation
- Take time out
- Go for a walk with a friend
- Listen to music and dance
- Ask a friend to help you calm down by holding your hand

Mention these ideas too, if the class does not refer to them:

- Note things in the environment and name concrete things you can see, hear or touch
- Put an ice cube in your mouth – if available
- Bite on a chilli – but this is not advisable for younger students
- Use techniques as described in the introductory chapter:
  - Chewing gum exercise
  - Hold yourself exercise
  - Grounding

### THE STOP TECHNIQUE

The STOP technique can help send worrying thoughts away for a time and give a much-needed break from constant thinking about a worry. When someone is distressed, they often experience disturbing thoughts that won't leave the person in peace. The STOP technique gives the person a break, so the thoughts are quietened and sent away for a period of time. This helps the student to change their focus from negative thoughts or negative self-talk to positive self-talk.

#### Instructions:

1. When you become aware of a disturbing thought, say STOP either aloud or in silence.
2. If you are still thinking the same way, say STOP again. You will probably have to repeat this quite a few times at first, with increasing intervals.
3. Imagine a traffic STOP sign when you say STOP to the thought, if this is helpful.



## THE WORRY BOX

**Aim:** To learn a technique for parking worries

**Materials:** A nice box (made of any material that the class would like), post-its and pencils

Show the box and say it is a worry box. Explain that having a box like this is a good way for putting worries away and parking them for a while whenever someone needs to do this.

Ask the class to start this exercise by writing down a typical small worry on a post-it and then fold it up. This worry should be one that either they themselves or a friend of approximately the same age as themselves could have. Ask the class for examples of worries that could be a bit disturbing. Next, allow some time for each student to think of a small worry they themselves have at the moment. Ask them to write it down on a post-it. When all the post-its have been folded up, go round the class and ask the students to put them in the worry box.

Form pairs, small groups or stay in the plenary, depending upon the class.

Take out one post-it and read it to the class. Make sure that the handwriting is not visible to anyone and do not read out any identifying details so the worry cannot be attributed to a specific student in class. Ask the pairs, groups, or the plenary to discuss:

- How might it feel to have this worry?
- What could help a friend who has this worry?
- Who could help?
- If anyone in class has had the same worry, what helped them overcome or handle the worry?

Close the worry box and explain that the worries can stay here till another time the class wants to discuss worries and how to deal with them. Tell the students that they can use the worry box for any worries they may have. When they get to class in the morning, they can mentally or literally place a note of their worries in the box and then pick it up at the end of the day before when they leave. At home at bedtime, if they find themselves mulling over something when they are trying to go to sleep, they can mentally place the worry in an imaginary worry box outside the room where they sleep.

## CHANGE THE CHANNEL

**Aim:** To learn how to calm down mentally

**Materials:** None

Give the following instructions:

- Imagine looking at a screen such as on a mobile phone, laptop or TV screen.
- Imagine seeing your favourite animal on the screen.
- Can you make the mental image of the animal bigger?
- Can you make the mental image of the animal smaller?
- Can you make the colours more vivid?
- Can you dim the colours?
- Can you change the image to another channel and switch to seeing your favourite TV programme?

If it seems the class is enjoying this short exercise, give other examples for the class to practise. Students can be asked to think about a worry they have like this:

- Imagine an image of the worry on a screen.
- Can you make the mental image of the worry bigger?
- Can you make the mental image of the worry smaller?
- Can you make the colours more vivid?
- Can you dim the colours?
- Can you change the image and go to another channel and switch to seeing something else?

Explain that students can use this technique when a disturbing thought comes to mind. They can simply imagine that the thought is on a screen or a radio channel. They can go to another channel of their choosing. They can practise doing this over and over until the disturbing thought stays away.



**COUNTING BREATHS FROM FIVE TO ZERO****Aim:** To learn a calming, breathing technique**Materials:** None

Give the class the following instructions:

- *Sit in a relaxed, upright position. Close your eyes softly or keep them unfocused. Place your feet on the ground. Notice the support from the floor and from the seat your bottom rests on.*
- *Turn your attention to the breathing. Notice each time you breathe in and out. Let your mouth be slightly open and let go of tension in your tongue and jaw.*
- *Count down on every out breath. Breathe in and on the first out breath count five. On the next out breath, count four and go on down to zero. Everyone will lose track of the counting when using this countdown, and when it happens just return to five and begin again.*
- *I will give you two minutes to breathe with awareness while counting down from five to zero without talking to you.*
- *Now it is time to end the exercise and turn your attention back to the class.*
- *Stretch and yawn if you feel like it.*

Ask the class how it was to do a short relaxation exercise. Explain that they may feel very relaxed due to the activation of their rest, restore and relaxation system. The exercise is a good exercise for falling asleep for even young students.

## Ending the theme **I can calm myself**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.



## Theme 8

**I can be assertive****Introducing the theme**

Learning to be assertive helps students find out what they want, how to ask for it in a way that respects others, and ways of negotiating peacefully. Behaving assertively helps students to avoid being aggressive towards others or behaving in a passive or submissive way. Assertion also means standing up for one's rights whilst at the same time respecting the rights of others.

**Note to teachers:** In some cultures, being assertive is not recognised as being positive for all gender and age groups. The exercises in this theme should be adapted to fit the local culture and traditions. Teachers should take account of any ongoing restrictions on safe physical distances required between students due to COVID-19 in facilitating any exercises in this section.

**Please bear in mind:**

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

**BEING ASSERTIVE, PASSIVE OR AGGRESSIVE****ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR**

A way of communicating feelings, thoughts, and beliefs in an open, honest manner that respects others and does not violate their rights. Assertive behaviour signals that the person respects his or her rights as well as the rights of others.

**SUBMISSIVE/PASSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

A way of communicating thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a hidden, apologetic or self-effacing way so that others easily disregard these. Submissive behaviour signals that the person disrespects his or her rights but respects the rights of others.

**AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

A way of communicating thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a way that is aggressive, belittling, often inappropriate and violates the rights of others. Aggressive behaviour signals that the person respects his or her rights but not the rights of others.

**WHAT IS ASSERTION?**

**Aim:** To introduce the concept of assertion

**Materials:** Board or flipchart, marker pens

**Note to teachers:**

Teachers can introduce the concept of assertion in different ways, depending on the age and maturity of students in their class.

Introduce the topic by using examples from daily life, for example, by asking the class: *I have forgotten my pen today, so how could I ask for this pen in an assertive way?* or *I need help carrying books to the library. What would be a good and assertive way to ask for help with this?* or *What could be an assertive way for a student to tell a teacher they have not been able to do their homework, as there was illness in the family?*

Check whether the students understand what it means to be assertive and behave assertively. Brainstorm ideas together and write the suggestions on the board or flipchart.

Summarise what has been said and check if there is anything else to add, saying that the class has mentioned many important aspects of behaving assertively and give some examples from the flipchart.

**WALKING ASSERTIVELY, AGGRESSIVELY, AND PASSIVELY**

**Aim:** To experience different physical ways of behaving assertively, aggressively, and submissively

**Materials:** None

Ask the class to stand up and walk around freely in the allocated space. Next, ask the class to walk in a way where their only concern is to make space for others. They should be most aware of other people and try to keep out of their way. Continue to walk like this and ask them to notice how this affects the way they feel in making space for others rather than for themselves.

Now ask the class to walk in a bold and aggressive way. They should walk around the space just thinking about themselves and not consider the needs of others. Notice how this feels.

Next, instruct the class to move in a way that takes care of keeping an appropriate distance and not bumping into others and at the same time allows others their space and right of way. Notice how it feels to walk this way.

End the exercise asking students to stop and form pairs with a nearby classmate. Ask them to talk about the different types of behaviours they tried out. Ask for a few comments about the exercise for the whole class to hear.

**PERSONAL SPACE**

**Aim:** To define personal space and learn where the limits are

**Materials:** Prepared papers with the instructions as mentioned below

Introduce the concept of personal space by asking the class about what they have noticed about the distance different people stand and sit from each other.

Ask questions relevant to the context on personal space, for example:

- If talking to a classmate, how close would the two of you stand to each other?
- If talking to a teacher, how close would the two of you stand to each other?
- If going to the school nurse, how close would the two of you stand to each other?
- If talking to a sibling, how close would the two of you stand to each other?
- If talking to a close family member, how close would the two of you stand to each other?

Ask the students to stand up and hold their arms out in front of them at shoulder level making a fist or showing the palms to others as appropriate in the context. Tell students that in many countries this is the personal distance that others respect if approaching someone they don't know well. Ask them what the personal distance is in their region.

Close friends and family members can usually enter someone's personal space. Boys and girls, men and women usually keep a bigger distance from each other.

Invite the class to experiment with personal boundaries. Form pairs and instruct the pairs to decide who will be A and who will be B. A and B stand up and A takes up a position facing B six to ten metres away. B will walk towards A and A will say stop when B comes to A's personal space.

B moves back to the starting point and will walk towards A, representing the following categories, for example:

- A friend from school of the same gender
- Someone five years older of the opposite gender
- The head teacher
- A parent
- A sibling

In each case, ask A to put up their hands as a stop signal or they could say stop to indicate to the approaching person when the personal boundary is reached

Change over so that B is able to test various distances associated with personal space.

End the exercise by discussing how students can maintain their personal space and what to do if someone invades it. What ways are there to maintain personal space? What are some helpful things to say to someone intruding on personal space?

This exercise can also be done combining personal space and core feelings. Thus, when approaching someone, students can experiment with expressing different core feelings and see how they impact personal space.

### INTRUDING ON SOMEONE'S PERSONAL SPACE

**Aim:** To know who can help if someone intrudes on another person's personal space

**Materials:** None

Some intrusions of personal space will be experienced as very grave and disturbing. Discuss with the class which types of intrusions would be felt as invasive. Be aware that this could include digital intrusions on a phone or computer, such as receiving unwanted texts or emails of an explicit nature.

Name as many different types of ways that students could experience someone intruding on their personal space and identify people who they could go to for help.

Explain that it is difficult when a student under 18 has experienced an intrusion like this. It can make the students themselves feel ashamed even though it was not their fault. Discuss how to support a friend who experiences an intrusion to enable them to respond assertively.

### SAYING NO TO A FRIEND

**Aim:** To practise assertive ways of saying no

**Materials:** Board or flipchart, marker pens

Ask the class to come up with suggestions for situations where it would be difficult to say no to a request from a friend. Rank the suggestions with the class from the easiest to the most difficult on the board or flipchart.

Ask for two volunteers to do a short role play in front of the class of the easiest situation. Before they begin, take the requesting person aside and instruct him or her to insist on the request and act more aggressively. The other party will say no to the request and can be instructed to do so either in an aggressive, assertive, or passive/submissive way. After they have done the role play, ask students to give a thumbs up for the most assertive responses and a thumbs down for the most submissive or passive responses. Thank the role players and briefly discuss good ways of responding to the request in the role play.

If time allows, do a few more role plays in the same way or in pairs. If the class has not mentioned the gender and age aspect of the situations, it is an option after each role play to ask: If the friend had been a male who was five years older, how would this affect the way the other person responded? Lead a discussion on what the group did well in asking or negotiating for a need or right. If possible, link this to the main concerns in the daily lives of the students in class.

## Ending the theme I can be assertive

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.



## Theme 9

## I can solve conflicts

## Introducing the theme

Conflict can mean different things to us. It can be a minor disagreement between two friends that one thinks nothing of and the other finds is an unpleasant conflict. Conflicts are part of everyone's everyday life. Conflicts are common and cannot be avoided. It is therefore very useful for all of us to learn about conflicts and how to handle them. Sometimes the best choice is to avoid a conflict, at other times it may be better to wait till later to solve the conflict and in some cases a conflict cannot be avoided.

## Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

## SIMON SAYS PLEASE

<b>Aim:</b>	To promote concentration and understand the importance of being polite
<b>Materials:</b>	None

Have the teacher or another designated person as the instructor who stands in front of the class. The instructor leads the exercise giving one instruction at a time at a pace that is convenient for the class.

Explain that students should copy the instructor's movements if they hear: Simon says, please, but they should not move if they hear: Simon says, ..... For example, *Simon says **please** wave your hand*, rather than *Simon says wave your hand*.

The next step is that the instructor now does the movement at the same time as instructing the class. The students should listen carefully and move only if they hear the instructor saying a please...

After the exercise, discuss with the class:

- how to be polite when asking for help from others or wanting to get favours at home
- how it makes a person feel and react if asked nicely or not
- if they have any examples of when being polite has smoothed social interactions
- if they think it is possible to be polite when others are impolite.

Sum up and include the following points if the class does not mention them:

- polite behaviours impact wellbeing in class and everyday life
- being treated politely makes a person feel respected
- politeness makes it easier for people to follow instructions
- using polite manners and language can calm situations and improve the mood of others.

## ASKING AND SAYING NO

**Aim:** To recognise different ways of asking for something and of saying no to a request

**Materials:** Board or flipchart, marker pens, a pen, a book, or any other item

Introduce the exercise by saying: *Asking for help from a friend or for a favour can be difficult and so is saying no to requests for help or for a favour. This is an exercise to try out different ways of asking and of saying no to find out what works well.*

Ask the class to form pairs. Instruct pairs to decide who will be A and who will be B. A chooses a small item such as a pen or a book that represents something they want to keep but is something that B really wants very much. Explain that A must hold onto the item, saying no to almost every request from B, unless B is able to persuade them to give it to them. B will use all the ways they can think of to get the item.

The aim of the exercise for A is to explore the ways of saying no to a request and to also possibly experience B being successful in making A hand over the item. The aim for B is to explore ways of persuading A to hand over the item and possibly to find a successful way of doing so.

Before the students begin the exercise, give them time to think for a moment - how is A going to say no to the many requests B will make and how will B make those requests? What could persuade A to give the item away? Now ask the pairs to do the exercise.

End by discussing the exercise in the plenary or ask the pairs to discuss their experience together, using the questions here:

- What ways did B use to ask for the item?
- Are these the same ways B uses in daily life when they want to get something from another person?
- How was it for A to say no each time B made their request?
- If A gave the item to B, what made A decide to give the item away?

End the exercise by asking the class to think about useful strategies for asking and negotiating. Which strategies are best to obtain something you need in a way that respects the rights of others? Note the strategies on the board or flipchart and make sure that the following are included:

- remain calm
- ask in a respectful way
- explain the reasons for wanting the item
- understand the reasons that the other person may want to keep the item.

## BODY LANGUAGE AND WORDS WHEN CONFLICTS BEGIN

**Aim:** To recognise the role of body language and verbal language when conflicts begin

**Materials:** Board or flipchart divided with two columns, one side headed *Staircase of unfriendship* for younger students and *How to escalate a conflict* for older students

Divide the class into groups of three. Ask the groups to imagine they are getting into a situation that could be escalating into a conflict. Give the groups situations that are relevant to their lives or use and adapt the following situations:

- The three of you are on the playground playing with a ball and someone you really dislike takes the ball and begins to play with it with another student.
- A classmate calls the three of you stupid and idiots during break time. When you go back into class you meet the culprit at the door.
- You find out that a friend has called you and your friends a lot of bad names in front of others when you were not there. You all meet at a leisure activity after school.
- You have told a secret to a friend and have found out that the friend has told several other people who are now making fun of you. The friend comes to visit and you are going to tell them what you think about what they have done.
- Your group has worked after class to save money for a school trip. You bought the money to class to pay for the trip later in the day. You come into class after break time and see two classmates who stayed in. You find the money is missing from the bag and you turn to the two classmates.

Ask the groups to quickly position themselves as if they were in the situation described. They should not speak but be aware of their facial expressions and how they position their bodies in relation to one another. Now ask the groups to notice their body language to see what it looks like when a conflict begins. Ask the groups to share their thoughts and note these on the board or flipchart under the heading *Staircase of unfriendship* or *How to escalate a conflict* for older students.

Next ask the groups to stay in the same situation, but this time discuss what words would be used that would escalate the conflict. Ask the groups to share their thoughts and note these at the bottom of the board or flipchart under the heading *How to escalate a conflict*.

Ask the groups to imagine that the situation is escalating even further. Ask them to discuss the type of body language and the range of

words that would contribute to making the conflict worse. Invite each group in turn to report on their discussion and note these at the top of the board or flipchart.

### BODY LANGUAGE AND WORDS TO DEFUSE CONFLICTS

**Aim:** To recognise the role of body language and language to defuse conflicts

**Materials:** Board or flipchart with two columns, one side headed *Stairs of friendship* for younger students and *How to defuse a conflict* for older students

Divide the class into groups of three, giving groups a situation to work with as in the previous exercise. Give students a few minutes to imagine the situation they are in and then to imagine that the situation has now got even worse. What could be happening now that the tension is rising and those on opposing sides are getting more worked up?

**Next ask them to imagine the situation calming down and the conflict de-escalating.**

Ask the groups to quickly position themselves as if they were at this point in the situation, as the conflict is being defused. They should not speak, but be aware of their facial expressions and how they position their bodies in relation to one another. Now ask the groups to notice their body language to see what it looks like when a conflict is being defused. Ask the groups to share their thoughts and note these on the board or flipchart under the heading *Stairs of friendship* or *How to defuse a conflict*.

Next ask the groups to stay in the same situation, but this time discuss what words would be used that would defuse the conflict. Discuss with the class what typical words and sentences would be used and note these on the board.

### ADVICE TO STAY CALM AND RESOLVE A CONFLICT SITUATION

**Aim:** To summarise useful ways of resolving a conflict

**Materials:** A flipchart with the heading *What to do to resolve a conflict*

Discuss with the class what advice they would give to a friend who lived in an area where there were lots of conflicts in school, at home and in the community. What would it be useful for the friend to do, say and know in such situations? Write their ideas and advice on the flipchart.

Depending on the class and the context, useful advice may include such as:

- Use open body language
- Have open palms towards an adversary
- If someone is being aggressive, do not look directly at them in the eye. But look more at the side of their head
- When speaking, do not make assumptions or accuse someone of something
- Ask a question about something completely different
- Take time out.

### WIN-WIN SOLUTIONS

**Aim:** To distinguish between different outcomes of a conflict

**Materials:** Paper and pens

Give the class an example of a conflict situation relevant to their daily lives, but make sure it is an example of a minor conflict such as two students disagreeing over something in class. Explain the conflict and the position by the two students. One student took a book from a classmate's bag without asking permission and this classmate got very upset. The first student thought nothing of it, as this student wouldn't mind at all that classmates help themselves to his books in his bag. Another option is to invite volunteers to create a sculpture by taking up the bodily positions of the parties to the conflict situation. Next ask the class to explain in words the position of each party.

Divide the class into three or six groups, depending on the size of the class. Give each group one of these three types of drawing:

- **Drawing 1** with two smiling smiley faces and the heading, "both parties win"
- **Drawing 2** with one smiling smiley face and one non-smiley face and the heading, "one party wins, another party loses"
- **Drawing 3** with two non-smiley faces and the heading, "both parties lose".

Have groups present their work and discuss how parties in a conflict reach a win-win solution.

## CHANGING PERSPECTIVE IN A DEBATE

**Aim:** To practise seeing conflicts from someone else's perspective

**Materials:** None

### Note to teachers:

This form of debate can be done with children from the age of 10 years, depending on their maturity and context. It has three phases - *lining up the points of view, reflection and joint solutions*. This format leads to interesting results, as all the parties gain more insight and respect for the views of their opponent. The listeners play an active role in this form of debate, asking personal questions as well as suggesting solutions to the issue in question.

Examples of hot topics for debates with younger students:

- Is it ok to change your mind about a play date?
- Should you push a classmate who pushed you first?
- If you think someone stole toys from the class should you tell the teacher?
- If your best friend is not allowed to go on a class outing, should you not go either?

Examples of hot topics for debates with older students:

- Should the choice of education be solely up to the student?
- Are boys and girls given the same opportunities in our society?
- Are different things expected from boys and girls?
- Can children make their own decisions with regards to xx or xx?

Begin by deciding on a topic for the debate with the class. This could be, for example, an actual debate going on now for some students, where there are two opposing and different points of view. Alternatively, it could be common topics of debate in the context that often lead to opponents pointing to the misconceptions of the other point of view. Once the topic has been decided, invite two students to come forward to the front of the class, one on either side of the room representing each side in the debate.

Phase one – lining up the points of view: Each student now gives their view on the matter. It should be clear where their points of views differ.

Phase two - reflection: The two parties change sides physically in the classroom. Now each student speaks on the good arguments presented by the other party. Each student should address the aspects of the argument that make sense. At this point, the class can ask both students personal questions about why they have their respective points of view.

Phase three – joint solutions: The students representing each side of the debate and the rest of the class now have to agree on one or more suggestions for joint solutions to the issue debated.

End by discussing how this form of debate was for the students. Ask them if they feel it could be used either in class or outside class in a discussion where people are taking up an argument opposing sides.

## HELPING OTHERS SOLVING CONFLICTS

**Aim:** To develop skills to solve conflicts amicably

**Materials:** None

Ask the class for typical minor situations that lead to conflicts amongst them. With older students, ask what leads to conflicts in their everyday life. Agree on a couple of situations they could experiment with that are relevant to the age, maturity, and context that the students live in. Another option could be to develop scenarios before the class begins, based on incidents seen in class.

Ask the class to form pairs and ask them to use the situations they have identified (or use the scenarios) to do the exercise. The exercise is about helping others solve conflicts.

Explain the three phases of the exercise:

- explain what happened
- explain what would be great to happen
- explain what they can do to make it happen.

First, one student explains what happened and what the situation is as they see it whilst their other listens without interrupting. Next, the second student repeats what the first student said to ensure correct understanding. Change roles.

Next, students take turns to say what they would like to happen.

Finally, each student says what they can do individually and together to make the great thing happen in the situation.

**CONFLICTS: STEPPING UP THE LADDER AND STEPPING DOWN**

**Aim:** To be aware of the steps usually taken in escalating and de-escalating conflicts

**Materials:** None

Ask the class to identify situations in the lives of someone their age that could cause conflicts with others. On the board or a flipchart draw a ladder and on one side note stepping up the ladder and on the other side stepping down the ladder.

Ask the class to brainstorm a typical conflict they could experience, thinking first about:

What are the very first steps in the sequence of events that begins with an argument between two friends that could lead to a major conflict? Define what the steps could be, for example:

**Spreading untrue stories about the other**

**Gossiping or talking nastily behind the other's back**

**Stop talking or looking at the other**

**Stopping being friends with the other**

**Being hurt and angry about the others way of reacting**

Having an argument

Now ask the class to identify the steps that could bring the parties down the ladder and back to how things were before the conflict, for example:

**Calming down and taking a time out**

**Seeing things from the other person's perspective**

**Talking to an adult or a friend to get some help**

**Getting help in listening to each other and find out what actually happened**

**Identifying solutions together**

**Begin talking again**

## Ending the theme **I can solve conflicts**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

### Theme 10

## **I can cope with change**

### Introducing the theme<sup>6</sup>

This theme allows students to reflect on change, learn about natural reactions to change and what to do to be better at coping with change. Students will also experience when others influence or change what they have created. Introduce the theme by saying that during the pandemic, everyone has had to cope with many changes. Changes that are unexpected and sudden are always much more difficult to handle as there is no time to prepare for the changes and the effects they are having on our lives.

<sup>6</sup> Please consult the IFRC PS Centre guide *Loss and Grief During COVID-19* before conducting exercises from this theme

**Please bear in mind:**

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

**WHAT HAS CHANGED?**

**Aim:** To practise observing change

**Materials:** None

Explain to the class that this is a non-verbal exercise using observation skills.

Ask the class to form pairs and stand facing one another. Ask older students to use non-verbal language to decide who will be A first.

A and B both turn their backs to one another. A changes one small thing in their appearance. For example, they could take off their glasses, or change the way a collar sits on one side, remove a badge or undo a shoelace. Tell A and B to turn and face each other again and for B to look at A without saying a word. B has ten seconds to make their observations and spot what A changed about their appearance. Now ask A and B to turn their backs to one another, but this time it is for B to change something in their appearance. Repeat a couple more times.

End the exercise by asking:

- Was it easy or difficult to notice the changes that their partner made?
- What are the key skills needed to be able to see changes in others?

**FEELINGS CHANGE**

**Aim:** To understand the changing nature of feelings

**Materials:** A board or flipchart with three columns drawn on it, marker pens

Remind the class about the core feelings exercises on p. 21. Ask the students to reflect on how they are feeling at the moment. Ask them to say it aloud, note it on paper, or silently think about it.

Now ask the students to identify four core feelings they have felt in the last couple of days. Invite them to form pairs and ask one in each pair to show their partner the four feelings without talking. They could be made into a short dance, for example, if the class is familiar with the expressive arts. The other member of the pair identifies the four feelings and if they have difficulties, they can ask for help. Next, it is their turn to show their sequence of feelings.

- Next, ask the pairs to talk about how each of the feelings changed:
- How long time did it take for the feelings to change?
- Did it take longer for some feelings to change than for others?
- What made them change?
- Would it be helpful sometimes to remind yourself that feelings do not last forever, they change?



## REACTIONS TO CHANGE

**Aim:** To notice reactions to change

**Materials:** A sheet of paper for each student or a long roll of paper laid out on a row of tables or on the floor, coloured pens or crayons for each student

Explain to the class that this is a non-verbal exercise where they sit or stand in front of their desks with a piece of paper in front of them. If using a roll of paper, students can stand around this. Each student brings pens and colours when moving place in the exercise.

Ask the students to do a drawing - they can draw anything they want. They have two minutes to do the drawing. When time is up, ask them to move two seats to the right. (If they are sitting in rows at their desks, give more precise instructions on how they are to move two seats).

Now each student should be standing or sitting in front of a drawing made by someone else. Give them a few moments to look at the drawing and think about what to add to it. They have two minutes to do so.

Repeat the instructions so that the students move places twice more.

Tell the class that time is up and ask students to go back to their seat and to their original drawing. Ask them to look at the changes made to their drawing and notice the changes.

Lead a plenary discussion on one or more of the following points:

- How does it feel that someone else changed your original plan or design?
- What makes these kinds of changes easy and what makes them difficult?
- How do you feel about changes in your life in general?
- How do you react to changes?
- How do you cope with changes?
- What is the best strategy to cope with changes?

Divide the students into pairs or groups of four. Ask them to discuss what recommendations they would have for others in coping with changes in their lives similar to what you have experienced, for example during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## I CAN COPE WITH LOSS

**Aim:** To understand reactions to loss and how to cope with loss

**Materials:** A board or flipchart with three columns drawn on it, marker pens

Explain that with every major change in life there are both gains and losses. The COVID-19 pandemic has created considerable changes in the lives of many children, adolescents, and adults.

Ask the class for examples of losses caused by the pandemic in students' lives. Write down the examples in the first column in terms of the type of loss they are referring to. For example, if someone's cat has died, it would be *Loss of pets*. Ensure the students are aware that they do not all have to agree on a loss mentioned.

Now ask the students to say what kind of natural reactions they would expect to see in the person who has experienced the loss. Note the examples of reactions to the losses in the second column on the board. Continue the exercise giving students an opportunity to come up with a list of different types of losses and the reactions they might expect in relation to the losses.

Next, ask the class for examples of what would help them overcome, accept, or come to terms with each type of loss. Note the coping strategies in the third column.

If it hasn't been made clear from the examples given, explain to the class that some losses are harder to cope with than others, and that everyone will react differently to a loss. In general, losses will have a greater impact on a person and require more time to heal when:

- they are sudden or unexpected,
- the person is close to what has been lost
- the person experiences multiple losses.

End the exercise by summing up different types of losses, the range of natural reactions that might follow, and the strategies to cope with these changes. Coping strategies could be:

- Asking for help
- Talking to a friend
- Going for a walk

**BRIDGE FROM LOSS**

**Aim:** To understand reactions to loss and how to cope

**Materials:** Paper and pens

Instruct the class to take a piece of paper and fold it in half. Ask them to do a drawing on one side. This should be a drawing of some kind of minor loss they have experienced and they are still a bit sad about. On the other side of the paper, ask them to do a drawing of something they are thankful for and are happy about in their current life.

Next, ask the class to open the paper so that they can see both drawings. Ask them to think of something they could draw to link or build a bridge from the loss to the thing they are happy about. For example, they could draw a vehicle, a bridge, a ship, a ladder, a clock, or something else that could help them overcome the loss. They can share the stories of the ways that help them to transition from a loss into their current or future lives.

Lead a plenary discussion of ways of transitioning from a loss into the future.

## Ending the theme **I can cope with change**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

### Theme 11

## **I know about gender**

### Introducing the theme

The theme is about gender based on an understanding that in many regions of the world, gender is considered on a spectrum and multiple genders are recognised. When we only acknowledge of the categories of male and female, we can exclude people who don't fit these categories. In other regions some of the exercises in the theme may have to be omitted due to being considered culturally inappropriate. The exercises include definitions of sex and gender and provide students with an opportunity to reflect on expectations around gender. Depending upon how gender-diverse the context is, more genders or categories for those who don't find they belong to a defined gender can be included in the exercises here where only two genders are referred to.

Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER

### SEX

Sex describes the physical and biological differences between males and females. It is determined biologically and thus cannot be changed without interventions.

### GENDER

Gender refers to the learned social differences between different genders such as the differences between females and males throughout life. Although these differences are deeply rooted in cultures, they are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. These differences are reflected in roles, responsibilities, opportunities, access to and control over resources, expectations, privileges, and limitations held by women and men. This means that gender is socially and culturally constructed and can be changed.

### SEX AND GENDER

**Aim:** To introduce the concepts of sex and gender and clarify gender expectations

**Materials:** None

#### Note to teachers:

If in a context where more genders are the norm, please include these in the exercise.

Ask the class what the differences are between the concept of sex and gender. If it is more appropriate to the context, ask if the class has heard about the differences between the two concepts.

Form six groups and allocate a different age group for discussion to each of them i.e. girls, boys, men, women, older men, and older women. Ask them to discuss the expectations held of that specific age group. Why are there different expectations?

Ask each group to make a statement to another group about behaviours to find out whether the statement is about sex or gender. For example, statements could be:

- Women give birth (sex),
- Men don't cry (gender)

### MY NAME AND MY PRONOUN

**Aim:** To raise awareness of gender identity

**Materials:** None

Ask the class to imagine they are travelling to a place where there are many gender identities. Ask them to consider how they would introduce themselves, starting with their first name and then the pronoun they would like others to use.

Give the students a few minutes to practise this in pairs.

**MOVING CHAIRS****Aim:** To discuss gender norms**Materials:** One chair for each person**Note to teachers:**

Before beginning, make a list of the statements to be used in the exercise – see some examples below. Please note that not all the statements should be about gender roles and those that are should be relevant to the age and maturity of the class.

- The sun is out/it is raining today.
- Students think it is good to be back in school.
- Students have learned useful skills from living through the pandemic.
- Boys and girls learned the same skills from living through the pandemic.
- Boys had more freedom than girls during the pandemic.
- Girls and boys are treated equally in school.
- We have the same expectations for the academic achievements of girls and boys.
- It is ok to tease girls.
- Students think it is ok to make fun of boys that cry.

Ask the class to sit in a circle, also making space for a chair for the teacher.

Introduce the exercise by explaining the rules: The teacher will read out a statement remaining seated. All the students agreeing with the statement have to change places with one another. Those students who disagree with the statement stay seated on their chair.

In the next round, students change places if they agree that the statement applies to their age group in general. This means it does not necessarily mean that by agreeing to this that it is their own personal opinion.

After the game, ask the students open questions about whether there are differences between how different genders view these matters.

Discuss why some may have had different answers to the same question.

**SITTING, STANDING, AND WALKING AS ....****Aim:** To raise awareness of body language associated with gender and age groups**Materials:** Lots of post-its with one role written on each post-it - girl, boy, woman, man, older woman and older man

Fold the post-its and give one to each student. Ask the students to read their post-it silently and put it away so that no one else can see it. Explain that the word on it is the role they should play for this exercise.

When everyone has their role, instruct the students to sit somewhere in the classroom in the way that the person in their role would sit in a public space. Ask the students - without speaking – to look around and see if they can identify those in the same role as themselves and also to guess which roles the others are playing.

Now ask the class to stand somewhere in the classroom in the way that the person in their role would stand in a public space. Ask the students again – without speaking – to look around and see if they can identify those in the same roles as themselves and also to guess which roles the others are playing.

Next, ask the class to walk somewhere in the classroom in the way that the person would walk in a public space. Ask them – still without speaking – to form groups with those playing the same role. Help students who may be having difficulties in finding their group.

Ask the groups to discuss the body language they may have noticed in this exercise and the meaning or consequences of this body language.

If time allows, lead a group discussion on the whether the body language associated with gender and age is learnt or innate. Ask if anyone knows of cultures that have different gender norms or give a few examples.

### SOMETHING ABOUT ME AND GENDER

**Aim:** To reflect on gender expectations

**Materials:** Pre-prepared flipchart with questions if doing group work for this exercise

Ask the class to stand in a circle or to work in small groups. If standing in the circle go round the group and ask the students the questions. If working in small groups, ask the students to answer the questions in their groups.

Use the following questions:

- Name a thing you like to do that is considered typical of your gender.
- Name a thing you like to do or would like to do that is considered typical of the other gender.
- Name a thing you like doing that is considered non-traditional for your gender.

Discuss with the class how to include and accept someone who does not wish to conform with current gender norms.

### INTERVIEW ON GENDER ROLES

**Aim:** To raise awareness on how gender roles change over time

**Materials:** None

#### Note to teachers:

This exercise includes a homework assignment followed by reporting back in class or writing an essay. The homework assignment involves interviewing someone from an older generation on gender roles. The person they interview could be a grandmother or grandfather or older aunt or uncle, for example. Give older students time to practise interview skills in the classroom beforehand, so that they learn how to guide the conversation to get their questions answered.

Explain the homework assignment to the students. Spend some time in class to work out what they want to know from their interviewees about gender roles and how they have changed over time. These questions can be used, if needed:

- How old are you and where did you grow up?
- Please describe how gender roles worked when you were young.
- Have gender roles changed in your lifetime? If so, how?
- Did you challenge gender roles when you were young? If so, why?
- Have you changed your ideas about gender roles since you were young? Why or why not?

Explain that the students may report back in class or write an essay about their interview. Arrange for students to present their interviews in class.

Afterwards, use the following questions to have a discussion on gender roles:

- What general changes in gender roles have taken place over recent generations?
- What changes do students expect to witness in their lifetime?
- Do men, women and someone of other genders have the same views on gender roles and the changes that have taken place?

### A DAY IN A GENDERED LIFE

**Aim:** To raise awareness on roles and responsibilities of different genders

**Materials:** None

Explain that the students will be doing an imaginary journey and that they will talk about what they experienced in the journey afterwards.

*Say: Sit in a good upright position. Place your feet on the ground and close your eyes as if you are wanting to go to sleep. Let your hands rest in your lap or on the table whatever seems the best way to relax your hands, arms, and shoulders. Feel your bottom resting on your chair and the weight of your feet on the floor. Now breathe in deeply and then breathe out slowly.*

*Imagine that you are lying in bed, ready to get up in the morning. Only you notice that you are now a different gender. You are going on an imaginary journey taking you through the day in the role of a different gender. Begin to imagine what is happening - it is in the morning and now you have woken up and are getting ready for school.*

*Imagine what is happening as you make your way to school.*

*Imagine what is happening once you are in school. How does it feel in class and at break time at school in the body of a different gender?*

*Imagine what is happening now you are leaving school and spending the afternoon at home.*

*Imagine what is happening now it is dinner time and for the rest of the evening if you were in the body of a different gender.*

*Imagine what is happening now it is time to get ready to go to bed.*

*Imagine lying in bed and thinking about how this day has been different from other days.*

*The imaginary journey is ending, and you can take some time to turn your attention to the classroom. Open your eyes and yawn and stretch if you feel like it. Take a moment to reflect.*

*Now, let me hear how the day was for you. Did anything surprise you or was it just like usual?*

## Ending the theme I know about gender

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

### Theme 12

## Yes, I can say no

### Introducing the theme

During the course of a normal day, we say yes and no many times. People may say, Are you thirsty or do you want a glass of water? Have you done your homework? Are you ready for dinner? Have you washed your hands? Do you want to play a game? A few times during the day, something is requested of us that it can be difficult to say no to. In this theme we will find out what things could be appropriate to say no to, such as when peers are trying to put on pressure and of ways to say no in a respectful way.

The theme of being able to say no is related to the concept of personal boundaries and to the general theme of protection. It may be relevant to let students know that violence against children is common in emergencies, depending on the context. It is vital for children to know when to say no to others and to learn different ways of saying no.

Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.



**YES - NO ENERGISER**

**Aim:** To be aware of the many ways of saying yes and no

**Materials:** None

Introduce the exercise by explaining: We have to say yes and no many times in the course of the day. Often we find ourselves replying automatically and we don't really take time to think if we truly want to say yes or no. Let's play with saying yes and no in as many ways possible. Doing this will help us to reflect more about what we accept and want and say yes to and what we don't accept and don't want and say no to.

Ask the students to form two lines so that pairs of students stand facing each other, well spaced apart.

Ask one of the lines to begin by saying *Yes* in as many different ways as possible. The other line has to try to change their partner's minds by saying *No* as convincingly as possible. When the time feels right, ask the lines to switch roles, repeating the instruction. Both lines should have an equal amount of time say *Yes* and *No*.

Now discuss the following questions:

- What did you notice when saying yes and when saying no?
- Which was easier, saying yes or no?
- How has it felt to say yes and no so many times? Did you get tired out and gave up?
- Did you have a favourite yes and a favourite no that you often use with accompanying tone of voice and body language?
- Are there general differences between genders when it comes to being able to say no?

**VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN PANDEMICS AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF**

**Aim:** To raise awareness about different types of violence perpetrated against children in a pandemic and how children may protect themselves

**Materials:** Paper and pens, board, or flipchart

**Note to teachers:**

Consider if it seems appropriate for the small groups in this exercise to be separated into boys and girls groups.

Divide the class into small groups. Ask the groups to list different types of violence that may occur during a pandemic that could be perpetrated against children. Explain that this could be something they have heard of actually happening or something that might be possible.

Invite each group to report back in plenary and note the key points on the board or flipchart. Discuss with the class if boys and girls are affected in the same or different ways by violence during a pandemic.

Next, ask the students to go back into their groups. Ask each group to discuss one of the types of violence so that the class covers the range of violence listed. This time, ask the groups to consider how children would protect themselves from this particular type of violence.

Again, invite each group to report back in plenary and note the key points on the board or flipchart. Discuss the most important things boys and girls respectively can do to protect themselves when there may be a risk of being exposed to violence.

End by asking students to suggest who would be able to help children subject to violence. Note contact information for such casesw on the board or flipchart and hang in the class.

**WHAT TO SAY NO TO**

**Aim:** To list examples of situations where children should say no

**Materials:** Paper and pens, board, or flipchart

Divide the class into groups of four to five. Ask the groups to list examples of something happening when it would be appropriate for someone of their own age to say no. They can list anything that comes to mind from minor events to serious incidents. For example, it could be a situation where an adult they have just met asked for their phone number.

Invite each group in turn to share their list. As they do, it is likely that groups will begin repeating what has already been said. If this is the case, ask the later groups to only mention examples that have not been highlighted before.

End by summarising the key things someone of their age should say no to. List them on the board or flipchart.

**SAYING NO TO PRESSURE**

**Aim:** To practise dealing with pressure when faced with a dilemma

**Materials:** Three posters, one with YES written on it, one with DON'T KNOW written on it and one with NO written on it

**Note to teachers:**

This exercise features different types of dilemmas. It is important to think of examples which ring true for the students in your class and that are suitable for their age and stage. Here are some examples:

- A friend asks you to play even though it is after the time where you have to be home. Do you say yes or no?
- A friend and you are playing outside at school when another classmate come and asks to join in the game. Your friend says no. Can your classmate join the game?
- You and your friend go to the shop. You see your friend stealing some sweets. Do you tell your friend to put them back?
- A friend asks you to buy some snacks while you are shopping for your family. You hand over the snacks but your friend does not pay you for them. Do you tell your friend to pay?
- A friend wants to borrow your maths homework to copy it, because you are good at maths. Do you say yes or no?
- An older student asks you to buy cigarettes at the shop and bring them to school later. Do you say yes or no?

Introduce the exercise by explaining what a dilemma is. Say: *Dilemmas are situations that put us in an awkward position of having to make a choice between various options. Often being in a dilemma is unpleasant as it is not easy to know and do what is right. This exercise is about different types of dilemmas where you can practise dealing with pressure.* Ask the students to stand up and show them the three posters, YES, DON'T KNOW or NO, which are on the walls in different parts of the classroom. Explain that when you read out a dilemma, they should go and stand next to the poster that represents what they would say in response to the situation.

Read out the first dilemma and give the students a moment to think what they would do. Now ask them to move to their chosen response. Ask a few students from each group (YES, DON'T KNOW and NO) why they are there and what the pros and cons are of this choice. Continue the exercise, presenting more dilemmas and asking the class to respond.

**SAYING NO WITHOUT SAYING NO - FOGGING**

**Aim:** To practise the technique of fogging to help students deal with criticism

**Materials:** Pens and paper

Introduce the students to the technique of fogging. Say: *Fogging is a simple technique that can be used to avoid getting into a disagreement. It works by finding some way of seemingly agreeing with what another person is saying, even though what they are saying may be very critical or hurtful. Fogging is therefore a way of saying no without saying so explicitly. It is useful when someone is criticising you and you need time to find out what you think about what the other person is saying. The name 'fogging' comes from the idea of losing your way in a dense fog, meaning the person trying to criticise will lose their bearings because they will not expect you to respond in this way.*

Ask each student to think of three to five things that they do which they could justly be criticised for. For example, it could be that a student is often late for class, or nearly always forgets to bring their exercise books and pens to school, or is usually the person sitting at the back speaking to their friends when the class has been asked to be quiet. Give students a few minutes to write their lists.

When everyone has completed their lists, ask the class to form pairs, and decide who is A and who is B. Explain that in a moment the As will hand their paper to the Bs. Then the Bs will begin criticising the As, based on their lists. In response, the As should find ways of agreeing with the criticisms. Give examples of how the As could respond. They could say: *Yes, you could be right, Maybe you have a point, or Let me think more about it or Oh, well indeed, I have heard that before. Or That's a very good point.* Be sure that everyone understands that the As should not engage in the criticism, only say they agree in a way that doesn't give away what the As really think.

Now invite the pairs to start, beginning with the Bs criticising the As, who then respond, and then switching so the As criticising the Bs. Let the exercise run for a few minutes for both combinations.

Ask the class if it was easy to come up with ideas for how to fog when criticised.

With older students move on to discussing examples of when it could be useful to use fogging as an indirect way of saying no to an unpleasant request.

## Ending the theme **Yes, I can say no**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?

- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

## Theme 13

# I am grateful

### Introducing the theme

The exercises in theme 13 help students focus on good aspects of their lives. Gratefulness, giving and receiving appreciation can help create a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Introduce the theme by explaining that gratitude is a very powerful emotion that influences how we react to others and helps us deal with hard times. When we feel grateful, we actually are able to feel more compassion for other people. It helps us to cope with challenges and difficulties, giving us a glimmer of hope for our lives. Being grateful has been shown to have a positive impact on physical and mental health. By focusing on what we are grateful for in our lives, we can change our outlook, gain perspective, and find new possibilities. Even when we are going through a painful time, if we are able to find some small thing to be grateful for that came out of that painful time, it can help us to focus on something positive too in our life.

### Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

APPRECIATION	
Aim:	To practise giving and receiving appreciation
Materials:	None

Divide the class into groups of four to five. The tallest or youngest in each group can begin the exercise. Ask this student to go round the group clockwise and say something about why they appreciate each person in turn. They can say, *I appreciate you, because.....* and then add something, for example, about the classmate's personality, skills or behaviour and what this means to the student.

For example, they may say: *I appreciate you because you always greet me when we meet and this makes me feel welcome* or *I appreciate you because you often ask me to play with you and I like to play* or *I appreciate you because of your lovely smile that brightens up my day and makes me feel happy inside*.

The one receiving the appreciative comment just says, *Thank you*.

Make sure each student in the small groups has a turn at appreciating their classmates.

Ask groups to discuss:

- How was it to appreciate someone else?
- Is it something you do on a regular basis?
- How was it to receive the appreciation?
- How does it make a person feel to be appreciated?
- Why is it important to express our appreciation of others?

## AN IMAGINARY GIFT

**Aim:** To think of a gift that a classmate would appreciate

**Materials:** None

Divide the class into groups of four to five. If they have already done the previous exercise Appreciation, groups can stay together.

Ask everyone to stand in a circle in silence. Explain that the first part of the exercise should be done without any words. Ask them all to take a moment to think of a gift they could give to the person standing next to them. It can be as expensive or funny as they want because the gift will be an imaginary one. But it should be one that they think the person would like.

One person in the group begins the exercise by turning to their right and hands their imaginary gift to that student. The giver does not speak – they hand their gift to their classmate, clearly miming what it is. The receiver mimes a thank you and ‘gives’ a gift to the next in line.

After everyone has given and received a gift, invite them to talk about their gifts and whether others could guess what each gift was!

End the exercise by talking with the class about giving and receiving gifts.

- How do you know what another person will appreciate?
- Do you know of someone who always gives gifts that are just right for the receiver? Why could this be?
- How is it to receive a gift you don't really want?
- Have you ever given a gift to someone else because you really wanted to have this gift yourself?

## HAPPY AND GRATEFUL

**Aim:** To recall a happy memory

**Materials:** Paper, pencils, and coloured pens or crayons

Ask the class to have their paper, pens, and coloured pens in front of them on their desks.

Invite the class to sit in a comfortable position and to quieten themselves, ready to listen. Say: *I'd like you to think of a memory, it is a happy memory, it is something that makes you feel good inside. Take some time to recall one very special moment that made you feel warm and glad inside. Really dwell on the memory. Make it so intense in your mind that you can almost see and feel it. Think about where you are. Look to see who is with you and what happened that made you feel so good and made you happy. Notice that you can make the image more vivid by making the colours more intense..*

*Now quietly open your eyes and make a drawing of your memory.*

Ask students to talk about their happy memories in pairs or in plenary. Depending on the age and maturity of the class, they can also be asked to share their memory with the whole class. Suggest that they take their drawings home and tell their families about their happy memory.

Next, comment on observations when the class worked on the assignment. Say for example: *I noticed a lot of you were very engaged in making drawings and most of you were smiling. I wonder how you were feeling when you were remembering. Now, if you feel upset and unhappy for some reason, you can remind yourself of the good memory you had today or look at the drawing you did to help you to feel better.*

Thinking about happy memories very often make us grateful for what we experienced. Ask the class: *Does anybody recognise this feeling of being grateful? How does it make you feel in your body? Where do you notice grateful feelings in your body?*

## ONE-LINE MEMORY DRAWING

**Aim:** To store good memories

**Materials:** Paper and pencils or pens

**Note to teachers:**

This exercise can be done in many different ways just by changing the instructions. If you wish to focus on the period students spent out of school due to the pandemic, ask students to do a drawing about good memory from that time.

Ask the class to place a pen or pencil and paper in front of them on their desks.

Say: *I am going to ask you to think of a memory. Quieten yourselves, ready to listen, keep your eyes unfocused or closed. Think about a really nice place - a place, you have been where something good happened that you appreciate. Think about this place. Recall where it was, who you were with and what happened that made it a good situation. Take some time to remember it in as many details as possible. I will give you some time to remember as much as you can.*

*Now I'm going to ask you to do a drawing, gathering all the best things you experienced in that special moment. Pick up your pencil and do a*

*drawing using one long line without lifting the pen or pencil from the paper. You can turn the paper around so you can capture all the good sensations you had in your nice place. Your pencil is going on a trip on the paper, getting to all the experiences you enjoyed in as many details as you need.*

End the exercise by having students share their one-line drawing and invite them to talk about their memory. If the exercise is related to the COVID-19 pandemic in any way, use this opportunity to discuss the things students appreciated during that time.

### MY REASONS FOR FEELING GRATITUDE

**Aim:** To enable students to recognise the reasons they have for being grateful

**Materials:** Paper and pens

Ask the class to take a piece of paper, divide it paper down the middle, forming two columns. Ask them to head the first, *I am grateful to* and the second column, *The reason I am grateful*. Now ask the students to write the names of all those they are grateful to in the first column and all the reasons for their gratitude in the second column.

When they have completed their lists, ask them to read what they have written and to notice how it makes them feel.

Now invite anyone to say something that they have learnt during the pandemic that they are grateful for, even though the pandemic was never something anybody wished for in any way.

End by referring to the old saying '*count your blessings*' or a similar local saying. There is some truth in it, as those who regularly count their blessings are in a better mood than others. Say it is sometimes helpful to do this before falling asleep.

### GRATITUDE ROLL CALL (FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS)

**Aim:** To practise being grateful

**Materials:** None

Once a week over a period of two or three weeks, invite each student in the class to name three things they are grateful for. This is a way of practising gratitude. It can also be inspiring to hear what classmates are grateful for.

Discuss with the class why people are grateful for different things.

### GRATITUDE DIARY (FOR OLDER STUDENTS)

**Aim:** To practise keeping a gratitude diary

**Materials:** Copies of the gratitude diary

#### Note to teachers:

Make multiple copies of the gratitude diary from the template below. Make enough to give one or more copies to each student.

Invite older students to keep a gratitude diary for a couple of weeks. They can write it as many times as they wish – suggest at least twice a week. Ask them to notice how it makes them feel and if their mood changes during the period of keeping the diary.



## TEMPLATE FOR A GRATITUDE DIARY

Today's date is.....

What are you grateful for today? Note what makes you grateful. It could be anything - the weather, your body, the friends you have, your strengths or ones that someone you know has. Think about three things that fill your heart with gratitude and write them down here.

Today I feel grateful for:

1. ....and the reason is.....
2. ....and the reason is.....
3. ....and the reason is.....

How are you feeling today? Note your mood and colour in the hearts ...one heart means you are feeling very low, ten hearts means you are feeling very good

My mood is.....

If you have decided to share your gratitude list with family members or friends, think about how it affects you to hear stories from others about their feelings of gratitude. Are you grateful for the same or for different things? Can their stories inspire you to be even more grateful? Write your thoughts here:

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Ending the theme **I am grateful**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

## Theme 14

## I am hopeful

## Introducing the theme

This theme looks at hope for the future for each of us and for other students as well. Hope can be something we are looking forward to in the near future or something we wish to happen in years to come. Hope is essential in our lives as it inspires us, gives us a vision for what we want to create and do. Being hopeful helps us set goals and act upon these goals. Keeping a hopeful goal in mind will also help in aspiring to become the best version of ourselves. Hope gives inspiration for the future and is a strong motivational factor to be healthy and happy.

## Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

## HOPE IS ....

**Aim:** To inspire students for what hope means

**Materials:** A ball (real or imaginary)

Ask the class to form a circle. Beginning with a student, ask them to throw the ball, saying the name of a classmate as they do so and when that person catches the ball, ask them to say the first word that comes into their head when they hear the word hope. Continue until everyone has had a turn.

Sum up or ask a student to sum up what they have heard. Ensure the following is covered:

- Hope is the opposite of feeling hopeless where nothing feels right, and the situation is seen as negative.
- Hope is a feeling that makes us act and do something.
- Hope makes us do things together.
- Hope makes us feel good and optimistic about the situation.
- Being hopeful gives people energy and direction.
- It is much easier to be hopeful when you know that other people care about you or that someone believes in you.

## A HOPE AND WISH FOR CHILDREN

**Aim:** To have hopes for others

**Materials:** Paper, colour crayons or pens, post-its and a hat

## Note to teachers:

The exercise can be done in several different ways depending upon the age and capabilities of the class. There are instructions for younger and older students.

Begin by asking everyone to do a drawing or to write a hope and wish. They can choose to focus on something from this list:

- every child in their community
- every child in the world
- three to ten things they hope for in the immediate future

- three to ten things they hope for in the long-term future

**For younger students:**

Ask the students to say something they are looking forward to and hope for in their life. They may mention things like birthday parties, seeing friends or something they do in their spare time.

Now ask them to say a hope for the children they know in their community. Next, ask them to do a drawing of this hope. When they are doing it, ask them to write down the title of the drawing on it, if possible. Hang the drawings on the walls or on a string across the classroom as a reminder of hopes for others.

Acknowledge the drawings and comment on the hopes the class has for others in their local community and what it says about the students in the class in terms of how kind and thoughtful they are.

**For older students:**

Give each student a post-it and ask them to write down one or more hopes and wishes for any of the following:

- all children in their community
- all children in the world
- three to ten things they hope for in the immediate future
- three to ten things they hope for in the long-term future

Ask them to fold the post-it and put it in the hat. Once everyone has put in their post-it, go round the class again and invite each student to pick one out and read it aloud - and it may or may not be their own!

Acknowledge the hopes the class has expressed for others and what these wishes and hopes say about the values of the students in class. Discuss how these hopes could be achieved in the community or the world. Ask how the students themselves could contribute to achieving the hopes and who could help.

### THREE THINGS I HOPE I CAN MAKE HAPPEN

**Aim:** To inspire students for what hope means

**Materials:** Paper and pen and chalk or masking tapes

Ask the class to sit quietly, turning their attention inwards, to close their eyes for some moments and breathe deeply. When everyone is sitting quietly, ask them to think about three things they hope for or want to be able to do by the end of the term or by their next birthday (or use another relevant time frame). Ask them to raise their hand, open their eyes, and lower the hand, when they have thought of something.

**For younger students:**

Next, ask the class to arrange their hopes in the order from the one that needs the least effort to the one that needs the most effort to happen. Now invite each student in turn to stand up and to do a hopscotch one at a time. Ask them to jump from square to square and with each jump say their hopes quietly or as loud as they wish.

End by commenting on the hopes the students have.

**For older students:**

Next, ask the class to write down their hopes in the order from the one that needs the least effort to the one that needs the most effort to happen. Now ask them to make a timeline for when they hope to make their hope happen.

End by asking each student to sit for a moment and think how their body would feel when they achieved their hope.

End the exercise by asking how it would feel, without asking anyone to reveal what their hopes are.

### I HAVE A DREAM

**Aim:** To become aware of dreams as a source for aspirations

**Materials:** Paper, pens, and colours

Ask students to close their eyes and breathe easily for a few moments. Say: *Continue to breathe softly while you think about a dream you have for the future or for a new adventure. Create an image in your head or find words to describe the dream to yourself. Allow the dream to become as clear you can in images or words. I will ask you to open your eyes in a little while, so get ready. Now open your eyes and look around in the classroom. Move your body if you notice a need for this. Now, you're your paper and pen and do a drawing or write a poem about your dream.*

At this point, teachers may suggest letting pairs share their dreams for the future.

Next, ask the class how they can fulfil their dreams, using these questions:

- Do you need help to fulfil a dream?
- Do you need to learn new skills to make the dream come true?

- What strengths do you have that you can use to make your dream become a reality?

End the exercise by summing up what has been said by students about dreams and fulfilling dreams.

## Ending the theme **I am hopeful**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

### Theme 15

## **I can move**

### Introducing the theme

Moving, stretching, and relaxing in class is a way to keep everyone functioning well mentally and physically. The exercises here can be used to help students to warm-up, increase focus, improve concentration, let off steam, or calm down. Research has shown that students who do physical exercises during the day in school will do better academically.

Adapt these exercises for students who are physically challenged so that they are included in the activities in the classroom. If a student is unable to walk, some of the exercises can be done whilst seated, such as, for example, Animal parade.

### Please bear in mind:

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

#### WARM-UP

**Aim:** To move major muscles and joints of the body

**Materials:** None

#### Note to teachers:

This warm-up can be used on a daily basis in the class to mobilise muscles and joints. This exercise improves body awareness and gets students ready for learning and being focused in the classroom.

Invite the class to stand next to their desks or in a circle as space allows it. Give the following instructions:

- Rotate the wrists five times in each direction.
- Draw circles with the elbows making them as big as possible. Five times in each direction.
- Roll the shoulders – let the hands hang loose by the side when rolling the shoulders. Five times in each direction.

- Imagine being a statue from the waist down and rotate the upper body in circles, five times in each direction without moving the pelvis.
- Make circles with the pelvis five times in each direction.
- Lift one leg. Rotate the hip joint so the leg circles five times in each direction. Do the other leg.
- Bend at the hip joint and place the hands on the knees. Draw circles with the knees five times in each direction.
- Lift the heel keeping the big toe fixed on the ground. Rotate the heel five times in each direction. Do the other leg.
- Stand up and imagine the top of the head being lifted towards the ceiling.
- Look straight ahead and slowly with full attention turn the head slowly to each side. Five times to each side.
- Look up and look down so you move the neck. Five times each direction.
- End with taking a few deep breaths.
- Notice how the body feels now.

### LAZY CAT

**Aim:** To mobilize and stretch the major muscles along the spine and front

**Materials:** None

Invite the students to stretch like a lazy cat that has woken up after a nap. Ask if anyone has seen a cat stretching. Cats and other mammals maintain their flexible muscles by stretching many times a day.

Give the following instructions:

- *Sit with palms on the table and fingers spread. (If space and clothing allow, they can be on all fours on the ground.)*
- *Stretch your back like a cat stretches its back, thoroughly and lazily. Push the back out so it forms a C shape. Feel the stretch in the muscles along the spine. Look at the area of the belly button.*
- *Now stretch all the way back - all the way from the tailbone to the base of the skull. Look up.*
- *Repeat a few more time.*
- *If appropriate, ask the cats to meow and purr pleasantly while stretching.*

### TOES TO FINGERTIPS – STRETCH, STRETCH, STRETCH

**Aim:** To stretch the body from feet to fingertips

**Materials:** None

Explain to students that this is another stretching exercise. Give the following instructions:

- *Let's begin to stretch. Use your breathing and allow yourself to sigh when you are releasing a stretch if you feel like it.*
- *Raise your right arm towards the ceiling.*
- *Stretch your arm, hand and now fingers. Release the stretch keeping the arm in the air.*
- *Raise your left arm towards the ceiling.*
- *Stretch arms, hands and now fingers. Release the stretch keeping the arm in the air.*
- *Keep arms up in the air. Imagine there is a string from the ceiling tied to the fingertips holding them up.*
- *Now CUT that string and drop your arms.*

### ANIMAL PARADE

**Aim:** To practise moving at different speeds and learning to change states of arousal

**Materials:** Board or flipchart, marker pens

Ask the class to name slow-moving animals such as a snail or turtle and fast-moving animals such as a racehorse or a leopard. Then agree on a couple of animals in between the two such as a chicken, a sheep, goat, cat, monkey, camel etc. Note the animals in the order from



the slowest to the fastest on the board or flipchart.

Now ask the class to move around the classroom - making sure they don't bump into one another - but moving at the pace of the animal that will be called out.

- Begin by instructing the class to move progressively from the slowest to the fastest animal and then back to the slowest again.
- Next, form an animal parade where slower and faster animals are called for randomly.
- Change between the absolute slowest animal to the fastest animals. Let the class practise changing bodily gears several times.
- Add a FREEZE command to the exercise where the class must freeze movements they are doing when the FREEZE command is given.

Discuss with the class when it is useful to be able to know how to change one's inner tempo. Are there other ways to learn this skill?

Adapted from *The Children's Resilience Programme*. IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support.

JUMPING JACKS AND MORE	
<b>Aim:</b>	To give students opportunity to be physical, share ideas for exercise, and practise giving concise instructions.
<b>Materials:</b>	None

Ask for a volunteer to be the time taker – they keep track of time and say *Time is up!* when 30 seconds are up.

Ask the class to form pairs or stand in a circle. In pairs, the students take turns to teach one another an exercise for 30 seconds. Explain to students that when they are choosing an exercise to show to their classmates, they should be sure that it is one that they will be able to do.

Go on for up to ten minutes, then ask the class to stretch their muscles or shake the entire body from head to toe.

Exercises could include: jumping jacks, running on the spot, jumping up and down, imagining you are picking fruit from a tall tree, or picking up clothes off the floor, climbing up steps, sitting down on a chair and getting up again, jumping from side to side, walking on the spot, clapping your hands on one knee and then the other opposite.

Adapted from Child Friendly Space at home cards. World Vision and IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support.

TREE IN THE WIND	
<b>Aim:</b>	To enable students to ground themselves
<b>Materials:</b>	None

Invite the class to do an exercise using movement and their imagination. Give the following instructions:

- Please stand up and move your feet so that you are standing with them parallel to one another, a comfortable distance apart.
- Notice how your feet are resting on the ground. Feel how the ground is supporting them.
- Turn your attention inwards with softly closed or unfocused eyes.
- Now imagine being a tree with roots growing out of the soles of your feet and into the earth.
- Imagine that your legs and trunk of the body are the trunk of the tree.
- Slowly lift your arms that are now the branches of the tree.
- Notice a gentle breeze. Keep your feet firmly rooted to the ground. Imagine the breeze swaying the tree slightly from side to side and front to back. The breeze is also moving the branches from side to side and front to back.
- Continue the gentle movements of the body as if you are a tree that is firmly rooted to the ground.
- Imagine the wind getting a little stronger, making the tree move a bit more.
- Now let the wind quieten and come back to a standing position without swaying.
- Lower your arms slowly
- Notice how your body feels.
- Slowly turn your attention back to the class.
- Open your eyes and look around.

Ask the students how it was to be a firmly rooted tree in the wind. Can they imagine using this grounding exercise to steady or calm themselves?

**SENSORY WALK**

**Aim:** To enable students to ground themselves

**Materials:** Blindfolds, things to touch, smell and taste such as balls, kitchen utensils, cologne, spices, biscuits, sugar, crisps, and pieces of fruit

**Note to teachers:**

The sensory walk can be used where students do not need to keep a physical distance or after the pandemic. Arrange the items for the sensory walk around the classroom.

Divide the class into pairs. Explain that they will each take turns in guiding the other on a sensory walk. Ask them to decide who will be A (the person to be guided) and B (the guide). Give the guides clear instructions: not to let A bump into anything, 2) to walk slowly, and 3) not to make any sudden moves.

A puts on the blindfold or, if no blindfolds available, closes their eyes. B begins to carefully guide A on a tour that focuses on the senses: touch, smell, hearing, taste, and sight. B takes A by the hand and leads A on a walk.

- The guide leads A to the different items that A will touch. The guide can place items in A's hand to touch.
- Next B guides A on a walk asking to focus on smells. The guide can wave spices or eau de cologne and other nice smelling things under the nose of A.
- B continues to guide A while A focuses on all the sounds A can hear.
- Next, the guide walks A to where the different things to taste are placed. B will give A different things to taste.
- Now the guide takes the blindfold off A. A is now asked to look around and without saying anything point out to B the things they can see that are red, green, blue, brown, black etc.

Now the pairs change places and do a sensory walk.

After the sensory walk ask:

- What could you feel with your fingers? (shape, surface, temperature, resistance to use of force)
- What smells did you notice?
- How many different sounds could you hear?
- What could you taste?
- Which colours did you notice?

## Ending the theme I can move

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme and ask the following questions:

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did you discuss any of the topics or exercises with other people? Please tell us about this, if you wish.

### Theme 16

## I can relax

### Introducing the theme

Awareness and concentration exercises have a relaxing impact on children and adults of all ages. Relaxation slows the heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and improves digestion, mood, and quality of sleep. Students benefit from lowering levels of arousal and with practice, they can learn to use the exercises to promote inner peace. Teachers should use a normal tone of voice for the relaxation exercises and give instructions slowly, allowing time for students to connect to and sense the areas for relaxation.

**Please bear in mind:**

- The exercises in each theme can be done as a full session or as single exercises, depending on the context, available time and learning aims.
- Teachers should use their discretion in adapting the exercises to different age groups. They are most aware of the needs and capacities of their students.
- Teachers may adapt exercises to enable students with disabilities to promote inclusion.
- Many of the exercises can be done outdoors or adapted to distance education.
- If there are limited resources available (no board, flipchart, markers or post-its, etc.), use paper and pencils to make notes in the exercises.

**LISTEN TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS**

**Aim:** To concentrate and be mentally present

**Materials:** None

**Note to teachers:**

This exercise which heightens students' awareness of their surroundings will improve their ability to concentrate and be mentally present. Invite the class to sit quietly for a few moments and make themselves comfortable. Explain that they will be doing a concentration exercise.

Say: *Close your eyes softly and turn your attention inwards.*

When everyone seems settled, say: *Listen to the sounds that you can hear.*

- *Can you hear the sounds of your breath in and out of your nose or the mouth?*
- *Can you hear other sounds in the room?*
- *Maybe there are noises from someone moving about the classroom. Are there other types of sounds in the room?*
- *Now turn your attention to sounds outside the room. How many different sounds can you hear?*

Suggest to older students that they only listen to the sounds without focusing on what the source of the sound is. Let your attention wander between the different sounds they can hear.

After a few minutes ask students to slowly open their eyes and do a gentle stretch if they feel like it. Ask them the following questions:

- What was it like to concentrate on sounds?
- When would this kind of technique be useful for you?
- When do you want to try it out?

**CONCENTRATING ON AN OBJECT**

**Aim:** To practise concentration

**Materials:** A small object such as a shard of glass, a flower, a stone or a leaf

**Note to teachers:**

Ask the students to bring an object to class from home or look for something outside. It could be a man-made or natural object.

Introduce the exercise by saying it is an experiment in seeing and remembering. Ask the students to put their object on the desk in front of them. Invite them to look at it by saying:

- *Look at the object you have on the desk in front of you.*
- *Imagine you are seeing it for the first time.*
- *Move your head to look at it from different angles.*
- *Take time to see every detail and notice the colours, shapes, form, surface and density.*
- *Now, close your eyes and take a deep breath.*
- *In your mind, try to recall the object in your mind's eye in as much detail and with as much clarity as you can.*
- *What does it look like, what details do you remember? Do you recall the colours, shapes and its form, surface, and density?*

- *Now open your eyes again and look at the object again.*
- *Were you able to remember all the details or were there things you could not recall?*
- *It is time to end the exercise.*

Ask the students what they thought about the exercise.

## SHOULDER RELEASE

**Aim:** To release shoulder tension

**Materials:** None

### Note to teachers:

When stressed or anxious, shoulders and neck are the areas that will tense. Releasing tensions in the shoulder and neck can be combined with a sigh and a smile to increase the flow of endorphins which are often called the 'feel good' hormones.

Invite the class to do a short exercise to release tension in their shoulders:

- *Sit in an upright position with your hands resting in the lap. If standing, let your arms hang loose by the sides of your body.*
- *Slowly lift your shoulders upwards with a deep in-breath.*
- *Blow the air out slowly and release the shoulders gently, letting your shoulders go all the way down until they feel completely relaxed. Repeat once more.*
- *Lift your shoulders and fully release them with a loud sigh. (Ask the class to repeat this, if the sigh is not audible enough!)*
- *Lift your shoulders and release with a smile. Repeat and make your smile even broader.*

Ask the students:

- How did it feel to relax your shoulders?
- Was anyone aware of tension in your shoulders that you hadn't notice before?

Remind the students that this exercise can be used anytime – without the loud breathing – when they notice tension in their shoulders or are feeling stressed.

## MY ACHING HEAD

**Aim:** To release tension in the head

**Materials:** None

### Note to teachers:

Many students experience headaches that can be caused by tension in the muscles in the head. Concentration and thinking demand muscle tension. Tensions related to this can be located in the front, scalp, tongue, or jaw or in the shoulders, neck, eyes.

Instruct students and say:

- Sit straight in a comfortable position and close your eyes softly.
- Take a few deep, calming breaths at your own pace.
- Begin by turning your attention to the scalp and imagine that there is now more space between each strand of hair.
- Imagine the front is smooth and wide and completely wrinkle free.
- Relax the muscles around and behind your eyes.
- Allow the distance between the brows to increase.
- Let your jaw drop so that your mouth softly opens.
- Slowly release the muscles of the jaw more, causing the lower jaw to drop even further.
- Let your tongue lie in the bottom of your mouth as if it were a small boat, touching the tip of your tongue against your teeth.
- End by taking big, invigorating breaths, imagining that your throat is broad and wide allowing you to breathe easily.....

**TAKE A BREATHER...**

**Aim:** To practise calm and calming breathing

**Materials:** None

**Note to teachers:**

The amount of breath taken during a minute will vary a lot and depends on physique, patterns of muscle tension and the emotional state of an individual. It is therefore recommended not to ask students to breathe in the same rhythm and pace (for example, by counting to four on the in and out breaths). Otherwise the students will all try to control their breathing instead of allowing their breath to flow naturally.

Explain to the students that this exercise is the easiest way to calm down and look out for oneself by taking a couple of deep breaths.

Ask the students to sit in a comfortable upright position with feet placed on the floor. Say:

- *Let the hands rest in your lap.*
- *Breathe into the bottom of the lungs making sure not to lift the shoulders.*
- *Blow the air out slowly through pursed lips.*
- *After a couple of breaths, move the hands to the belly and chest.*
- *Take some deep in-breaths, noticing how the front of the body expands.*
- *After a couple of breaths, move the hands and arms to the back of the body at the level of the waist.*
- *Take some deep in-breaths, noticing how also the sides and back of the body expand.*

Ask the students:

- How does it feel to breathe deeply?

**BREATHING AND DRAWING**

**Aim:** To practise deep, restorative breathing

**Materials:** Paper and pen or pencils

**Note to teachers:**

It may be an idea to demonstrate this exercise on the board before taking the class through it. Depending on the age, motor skills and maturity of the children, they can draw a flower with four, five, six, seven or eight petals.

Introduce the exercise by explaining that often people need to slow down to find out how their body is, how they are feeling and what they are thinking.

Give the following instructions:

*Place a piece of paper and a pencil or pen on the table in front of you. Adjust your position, so you are sitting comfortably and take a moment to notice how you are right now. How do you feel and what is going on in the body? Notice it so you can see if it changes after you have done the breathing exercise.*

*In a minute I will ask you to pick up your pencil and draw a point in the middle of the paper. From this point you will draw a flower with eight petals (adjust the number of petals to fit the student's skills), breathing in, when you draw one side of the petal from the centre and outwards, pause at the tip of the petal and breathe in when you draw the other side of the petal back to the middle. Some of us will breathe faster and some slower than others so you will not finish at the same time. So I will leave you to go at your own pace.*

*Begin drawing now and when you are finished, please sit quietly, and wait till the rest of the class is done.*

When everyone is finished:

- Again, take a moment to notice how you are right now.
- How do you feel and what is going on in the body?
- Does your body feel the same or different?



**MY AMAZING BODY <sup>7</sup>****Aim:** To experience a full body relaxation**Materials:** Space for students to lie down**For younger students:**

Ask the students to lie down on their backs on the floor. Give the following instructions, allowing a few moments between each part of the instruction:

- *Gently close your eyes.*
- *Isn't it amazing that we have only one body and yet we have two of many parts of our bodies?*
- *You have one body, but two ears, two hands, one nose but two nostrils, one mouth but two lips – upper and lower lip.*
- *You have two arms..... two elbows..... two hands..... two thumbs..... two long fingers..... two index fingers..... two ring fingers and two little fingers.*
- *You have one chest – and yet you have two lungs, filling with air with each breath, so the chest inflates. Can you feel it expand when you breathe in? And when you exhale the chest gets smaller again. Can you feel this too?*
- *You have only one back, but there are two sides to your back. You have one pelvis with two legs attached. Two thighs..... two knees..... two lower legs..... two feet..... two heels..... and two of each toe.....*
- *Isn't it amazing you have one body?*

**For older students:**

Ask the students to lie down on their backs on the floor.

- *Close your eyes and notice where your body touches the floor.*
- *How far is the distance from your big toes to the top of your head?*
- *Wriggle your big toes to feel them..... notice the distance to the top of the head.*
- *How far is the distance from your feet to the hip?*
- *Move the ankles to feel them.*
- *How far is the distance from your fingertips to the top of your head?*
- *Wriggle your fingers to feel them..... notice the distance from the fingertips to the top of the head.*
- *How far is the distance from fingertips to the shoulders?*
- *Wriggle your fingers to feel them..... notice the distance from the fingertips to the shoulders?*
- *Can you feel the distance from the belly button to the back lying on the floor?*
- *How far is the distance from your back to your chest bone when you breathe in..... and when you breathe out?*
- *How far is the distance from ear to ear?*
- *And from mouth to nose?*
- *Can you feel the distance from the tip of the nose to the back of the head resting on the ground/floor?*
- *The relaxation exercise is coming to an end and I will ask you to roll on to your sides.*
- *Make yourself as small as you possible can. Now stretch so you become as big as possible. Repeat twice more.*

Ask the class:

- How was the relaxation exercise?
- What did you experience?

**BREATHE IN A COLOUR YOU LIKE****Aim:** To practise deep, restorative breathing**Materials:** Paper and pen or pencils**Note to teachers:**

If children are worried, this is an easy way for them to calm themselves. Children over six can do it, but the younger the child is, only do a few breaths at a time.

Give the following instructions:

- *Find a comfortable position. Allow the chair or floor to support the body. Close the eyes softly.*
- *Begin by taking a deep in-breath and exhale.*
- *Let the bottom of the lungs fill and empty with each in-and out-breath.*
- *Next imagine breathing in a favourite colour.*
- *Fill your lungs with a beautiful colour.*
- *Now imagine breathing out your least favourite colour.*
- *Continue breathing in a beautiful colour and expelling the air imagining your least favourite colour leaving the body.*
- *Allow your breath to return to normal and open your eyes.*

After the exercise ask the students:

- Were you able to imagine breathing in your favourite colour?
- Did breathing in your favourite colour make you feel good or feel different in any way?

## Ending the theme **I can relax**

Discuss with the class what was the most important thing for them in the theme.

- What did you think about the theme?
- What was useful about the theme?
- Did they discuss any of the topics or exercises with others?

## Resources

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### IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support

COVID-19 and MHPSS related resources can be found on the IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support website in different languages. An adaptable online PFA training for COVID-19 and a recorded version are available on the site.

**Back in School after COVID-19.** 2020.

**Psychological First Aid for children during COVID-19.** 2020.

**A Guide to Psychological First Aid for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.** 2018.

**Psychological First Aid for Children – Training module 3.** 2018.

**Different just like you. A psychosocial approach promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities.** 2015.

**Moving together. Promoting psychosocial well-being through sport and physical activity.** 2014.

**Life Skills – Skills for Life: A handbook.** 2013.

**The Resilience Programme for Young Men.** 2015

**Loss and Grief During COVID-19.** 2020

### With Save the Children, Denmark

**The Children's Resilience Programme. Psychosocial support in and out of schools.** 2012.

### With World Vision International

**Child Friendly Space at Home Activity Cards.** 2020.

**Operational Guidance for Child Friendly Spaces in Humanitarian Settings.** 2018.

**Activity Catalogue for Child Friendly Spaces in Humanitarian Settings.** 2018.

### Inter-Agency Standing Committee resources

**My hero is you – children's mental health and psychosocial needs during the COVID-19 outbreak.** 2020.

**Briefing note on addressing mental health and psychosocial aspects of COVID-19 outbreak version 1.5.** 2020.

**Basic Psychosocial Skills: A Guide for COVID-19 Responders.**

Communicating with Children about Death and helping Children cope with Grief. Child Protection Cluster and MHPSS Collaborative for Children and Families. 2020.

Let's talk about it. Welcome Back Check-in Guidance. Save the Children and The MHPSS Collaborative, 2020.

## UN resources

Global Framework on Transferable Skills. UNICEF. 2019.

Framework for Reopening Schools. UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Food Programme and UNHCR. 2020.



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## Psychosocial Centre

### **IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support**

c/o Danish Red Cross

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