

The Life Skills Handbook

An active learning handbook for working
with children and young people

Section THREE Download 8 of 8

Activity sessions 50-61



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LIFE SKILLS ACTIVITIES

Introduction

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

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

Adapt, Adapt, Adapt!

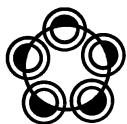
The activities have been written in a general way, so that they can be adapted to your group and your situation. It is important to make sure the activities suit the age and the needs of the children you are working with. The activities present many examples of role-plays and questions and so on. These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

Time

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

Monitoring questions

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



BEFORE YOU START!

Ground rules for life skills sessions

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

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

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

Materials

- Large piece of paper
- Marker pen or crayon

Steps

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

Examples

- *We arrive on time*
 - *Let everyone have a chance to speak*
 - *Stick to the subject*
 - *Listen to each other*
 - *If you disagree with someone, say it in a nice way*
 - *Speak one at a time*
 - *Keep what has been said in the meetings private (do not gossip!)*
 - *If you do not want to join a discussion, you can just listen*
3. After each suggestion, ask the children why they think each rule is important. If some children disagree with suggestions, encourage them to explain why and to suggest a better rule.
 4. If the children are having problems thinking of rules, prompt them by using scenarios such as the example below: Read them out than ask the children why the situation is not acceptable and then ask them for a rule which could help to avoid it.

Activity 50

Coping with Emotions: emotional pressure

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

Life skills: Coping with stress and emotion

Important points

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

Materials

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

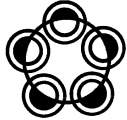
Steps

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

If appropriate, give the winning pair a point and at the end see which team has won.

Final discussion:

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



Activity 51

Coping with Emotions: attack and avoid

Purpose of activity

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

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

Important points

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

Materials

- Large sheet of paper
- A marker pen or crayon

Steps

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

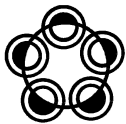
ATTACK!	AVOID
Nagging	Going away
Shouting	Sulking in silence
Interrupting	Taking it out on someone else
Exploding (becoming very angry)	Saying you are being unfairly treated
Warning (if you don't do this...)	Talking behind someone's back
Correcting (Look at the facts...)	Trying to forget about the problem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

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

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

Final discussion:

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



Activity 52

Coping with Emotions: stress

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

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

Important points

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

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

Materials

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

Steps

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

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

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



Final discussion:

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

What signs are there that stress is building up?

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

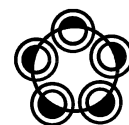
How can stress be reduced?

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

How can you tell a if someone is stressed

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

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



Activity 53

Coping with Emotions: fear and courage

Purpose of activity

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

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

Materials

- None

Steps

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

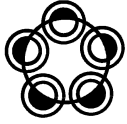
Situation

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

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

Final discussion

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



Follow up activities

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

Activity 54

Coping with Emotions: breaking the cycle of hurt

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

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

Important Points

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

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

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

Materials

- None

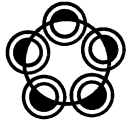
Steps

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

7. *Now you join the film as yourself. Follow the advice that you have just given yourself. What do you see now, what do you hear, and what are you feeling. Now put yourself in the other person's place and look at yourself. Take on the other person's posture, how would they stand, hold themselves and experience the situation from their position. What do they see, hear and feel?*
8. After 5 minutes or so, ask them to open their eyes, step to the side and shake that picture out of your body.

Final discussion

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



Follow-up activity

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

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

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

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

Important points

The 6 qualities discussed in this session are as follows:

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

Materials

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

Steps

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

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

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

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

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

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

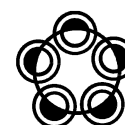
5. Each group discusses its case study and identifies two things the characters could do (from the list of six qualities) that will improve the relationships. They then develop these into a mini drama

You can have a break here

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

Final discussion:

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



Activity 60

Preparation for Relationships: the job of being a parent

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

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

Important points

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

Materials

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

Preparation

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

Role play

Marianna

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

Romano

You are 17 years old and you live with your father in the room he has rented. He is a long distance lorry driver so he is often away from home and you have learnt how to look after yourself. After primary

school, you started a small business selling food and sweets on the street. Sometimes you make a little extra money and you have managed to save enough to buy a dress for Marianna. You love Marianna very much and think she would be a perfect mother and wife. Since you have met the person you love, you see no reason why you should wait and you feel being a husband and father will make you more mature. You are willing to work hard to earn more money. Marianna's mother likes you a lot and you try and help her with small things in her business.

Steps

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

You can have a break here

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

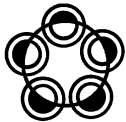
You can have a break here

9. Ask three volunteers to act as the Child Development experts who are interviewing. They should be polite and kind but also ask tough probing questions. Each expert can ask two of the questions selected.

10. Ask the two children acting as Romano and Marianne to come forward. Give the experts 10 minutes to ask their question. Then give other children in the group a chance to ask any follow up questions.
11. At the end of the interview, ask Romano and Marianna to leave and the experts discuss whether they are qualified to become parents at this time. Hopefully, the children will reach the answer, 'no' but if they give the answer 'yes', help the experts look at difficult situation of Romano and Marianna.
 - They have a good relationship now but they are young and inexperienced and in love. If their relationship ended, their child will not live with both parents
 - Neither has much money. It takes money to support a child
 - Neither has finished secondary school or has a reliable job. Becoming a parent makes it more difficult to improve their chances later.
 - Their families cannot give them extra money.
 - Marianna is young to have a baby. There are many health risks for her and the baby.

Final discussion:

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



Activity 57

Endings and Beginnings: making a stronger me

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

Lifeskills activity: Self-awareness, creative thinking

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

Materials

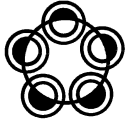
- none

Steps

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

5. Ask children to strongly imagine a situation where they were in danger. *Be aware of what is happening and how you feel. Then do your special action and say your special words.*

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



Activity 58

Endings and Beginnings: where am I now?

Purpose of this activity

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

Lifeskills: Self-awareness, creative thinking

Important points

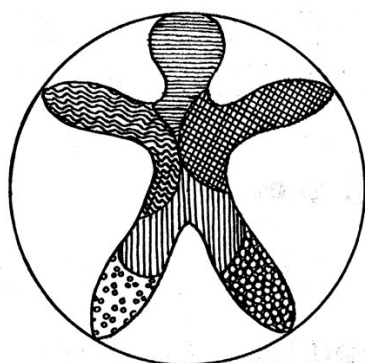
This activity begins with a visualisation activity as described in Activity 47: Resisting pressure using 'SWISH'. It may be useful to do Activity 47 first.







Materials

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

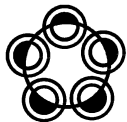
Steps

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



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

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



Activity 59

Endings and Beginnings: my timeline

Purpose of activity

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

Life skills: Self-awareness, critical thinking

Important points

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

Materials

- Example of a timeline.

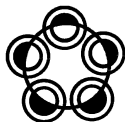
Steps

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

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

Final discussion

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



Activity 60

Endings and Beginnings: my new network

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

Lifeskills: Self-awareness, inter-personal relationships

Important points

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

Materials

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

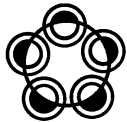
Steps

1. Explain what a relationship is (refer back to Activity 6).
2. Ask children to identify the figures as people with whom they have relationships, for example:
 - That is my Uncle
 - There is my mum holding my sister
 - There is Samson (the manager of the programme!)
 - There is Clara (the group's lifeskills educator!)
3. Give each child an outline of a ship and ask them to draw in the figures that are 'on their own 'relation-SHIPS'
4. Explain that relationships help to support us. Ask children to draw a ring of colour around the head of the people on the ship who love, support and help them. They can add more figures if they need to.
5. Ask children to draw on the ship people who they may not know now but who might be important to them in the future, for example:
 - an employer
 - a neighbour
 - a wife/husband
6. Ask children how they will make sure that these people will support and help them in the future, for example:
 - By being friendly
 - by showing respect
 - by being helpful
 - by doing things that you say you will do (reliable)

7. What might stop people giving you support and help? Examples are:
- a problem they have which is nothing to do with you
 - a problem they have which has something to do with you.

You can have a break here

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



Follow up activity

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

Activity 61

Endings and Beginnings: moving on

Purpose of the session

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

Lifeskills: Self-awareness, critical thinking

Important points

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

Materials

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

Steps

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

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

2. Make sure the children that an ending very often goes with a beginning for example, one educator leaving and another arriving. Ask the children to describe their feelings at endings and beginnings. To start them off mention some emotions and ask the children to shout out 'ending', 'beginning' or 'both'
 - Sadness
 - Excitement
 - Worried
 - Happy
 - Relieved
3. Explain that it is often helpful to mark an ending or a beginning as it helps us to cope better. Ask the children to say how they might mark an ending such as...
 - A death
 - The end of a relationship
 - The end of the year.Or a beginning such as:
 - a marriage
 - a new year
 - the first day of a new job.(Use any events that are significant and appropriate for your group)
Here are some ideas...
 - a party or gathering of people
 - a speech
 - a meeting
 - a show or display of work
 - a meal or a drink
 - a visit
 - a chance to share thoughts with a person/people involved
 - a gift/card
 - a special 'closing' game/activity
4. Read out this short story (or use another which is more relevant to your group)

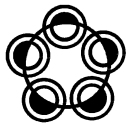
Story

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

5. In pairs discuss the following questions
 - *Why do you think Mary felt sad?*
 - *What do you think Mary needed?*
 - *What would you have done that day if you had been Rose? Why?*Discuss the questions with the whole group.

6. Using the example from the group, ask how an 'ending' could be marked for this event. For example...
 - The end of the lifeskills programme for this group
 - A lifeskills educator leaving
 - One of the children leaving the group

7. Finish the session with one of the closing games suggested in the last part of this section:
 - *The **Suitcase game***
 - *The **Chair game***
 - *The **Web game***



FINALLY!

A reminder that you can download the complete **Lifeskills Handbook** at www.lifeskillshandbooks.com. Contact us if you are unable to download this file or want a hard copy or multiple copies or a licence to use the book across a programme.

To find out what the author is up to, visit her blog at www.clarehanbury.com.

Please share your ideas and experiences of using these activities.