



Save the Children



UNDERSTANDING AND COPING WITH STRESS

Caregivers' Journey of Hope

Facilitator's Guide



Save the Children

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About Save the Children:

Save the Children is the leading independent organization for children in need, with programs in 120 countries, including the United States. We aim to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives by improving their health, education and economic opportunities. In times of acute crisis, we mobilize rapid assistance to help children recover from the effects of war, conflict and natural disasters.

Learn more at:

www.savethechildren.org

Learn more about our emergency work in the U.S.:

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CONTENTS

A Note to the Facilitator	3
The <i>Journey of Hope</i> Program.....	5
The <i>Caregivers' Journey of Hope</i> Workshop	11
Part 1: Types and Sources of Stress	12
Part 2: How Do We Experience Stress?	16
Part 3: Resources and Coping Mechanisms.....	21
Part 4: Conclusion. The Journey Continues: Future Vision, Goals and Plans.....	23
Appendices	
Appendix A: One- and Three-Day Workshop Schedules	25
Appendix B: Handout on Ground Rules	29
Appendix C: Cooperative Games and Relaxation Exercises	31
Appendix D: Selected Poems.....	43



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A NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR

As a facilitator for *Journey of Hope* workshops for children, you will also have the opportunity to support caregivers who are experiencing stress. This guide is intended to provide you with the tools for your journey in working with caregivers.

The workshop outlined on the following pages is designed to provide the time and space needed for psycho-education, reflection and processing, sharing and community-building, amplifying strengths and discovering solutions. Your knowledge, compassion and attention to those who give care can contribute to individual healing, the creation of a more tightly knit community, and safer, healthier and more supportive environments for children.



The Journey of Hope Program

Children’s well-being depends in large part on the stability and well-being of their caregivers. Children understand and process events based on messages they receive from those responsible for them. Helping child caregivers to process their experiences and develop inner and collective resources for coping is the first step in increasing their capacity to support children. By attending first to their own emotional needs, caregivers can be more fully present and attentive to the needs of children.

The *Journey of Hope* program aims to build supportive and effective learning environments for children by promoting the emotional well-being of school teachers, staff, administrators and parents. Central to the process is establishing stable and cohesive communities of child caregivers. Supporting caregivers in processing recent events, coping with current challenges and realizing healthier futures strengthens their ability to care for children in their school and living environments.

Program Description

The *Journey of Hope* is a structured emotional support program for children. It grew out of the experiences and ideas of local school and mental health personnel recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the southern United States. *Journey of Hope* is an experiential group process ideally carried out as a one-day workshop; it can also be implemented over time in stages. The workshop aims to provide a safe space for individual and group reflection on life's journey while building trust and community, identifying and amplifying individual and community strengths and assets, and planning collaboratively for future community-led action and support.

Program Goals

- Building trust and community
- Understanding reactions to stress and enhancing coping skills
- Identifying and amplifying community strengths and assets
- Planning collaboratively for future community-led action and support.

Methodology

Group Work and Community-Building

It is through building community and trust among school staff that ongoing support and community action can develop. A focus on strengthening the community places importance on collective assets and capabilities as well as shared vision, purpose, respect, caring, trust and communication. The workshop gathers participants in a circle to build this trust and sense of community. Opportunities for sharing individual experiences and reflections with the group are offered throughout the workshop. As they share their experiences and pose questions to the group, participants are encouraged to use one another as resources, rather than relying heavily on facilitators for reflections and answers. Activities are structured so that participants work in pairs or groups, and the final activities bring the whole group together to envision and strategize for the future. This group experiential process also gives caregivers an opportunity to share stressors and hardships or concerns in a safe and supportive environment, increasing understanding and empathy among the group members. It strengthens relationships among team members, builds team cohesion and also raises internal awareness of stress reactions and coping so that participants can better respond to and support children in their care.

Psychoeducation

The psychoeducation component of the workshop is intended to normalize common reactions to a traumatic event, major life changes and ongoing stress. The workshop covers types of stress, sources of stress, ways in which we feel stress in our minds, bodies and lives, and the biological basis for stress reactions. Covering information on stress and stress reactions gives participants a language to help them label and discuss their experiences. In addition to normal reactions to stress, signs and symptoms indicating the need for professional mental health services are reviewed. Additionally, participants experience and are given practical strategies for stress management and relaxation through breath work and meditation.

In addition to stress and trauma reactions, practical knowledge and tools are provided to expand the capacities of school staff and local community members to support and instruct children and to practice self-care.

Solution-Focused techniques

Solution-focused therapy is an approach that collaboratively identifies and amplifies participants' strengths and resources to reach defined goals. Solution-focused therapy takes a forward-looking orientation, using techniques that help participants to envision a better future and set goals to achieve it. Participants revisit the strategies they successfully employed in the past to gain insight into their resources for coping with the challenges of the present. In the *Journey of Hope* workshop, facilitators and participants work together to identify and amplify strengths, resources and successes and focus on current and future visions, plans and goals. Collective vision and planning facilitates pro-social action toward improving community and school conditions; conflict-resolution and integration; and creating enabling environments for children's protection and care.

Implementation

Implementation can take the form of an experiential one-day workshop or three separate sessions over time (see sample schedules in Appendix A). The workshop is designed for up to 25 participants, but no fewer than 10. Following the final session, each school and community can create a plan for ongoing support and community action through regular gatherings, including support groups, town hall meetings, community action groups and so forth. The trust built through the workshop helps to bring the community together in facing new challenges on their continuing journey. With help from social workers, counselors, local mental health professionals and community leaders, these gatherings can provide ongoing support for coping with emerging challenges and will continue to foster awareness of community strengths and insights. The process strengthens the resilience of teachers, school administrators and parents in order to provide more effective and supportive learning environments for children.

Facilitation

Each *Journey of Hope* workshop requires at least two facilitators. At least one facilitator should have clinical training (psychology, psychiatry or social work). A mental health background is necessary due to the content and process of these workshops. Key components to effective facilitation include the following:

- Facilitators must create a safe, comfortable and respectful environment in which participants can support and respond to one another rather than interacting only with workshop facilitators. The workshop should be a group process rather than a didactic presentation.
- Facilitators must be able to present material, normalize participants' experiences and respond to questions. Facilitators with knowledge and understanding of stress and trauma reactions in children, adults and communities will be able to best handle questions and support participants.
- Facilitators must be capable of supporting participants who may have experienced traumatic events or become distressed during sessions. If a participant should leave the room overwhelmed, the co-facilitator should attend to the participant, provide psychological first aid and support the participant in returning to the group. Facilitators must also be capable of assessing participants and providing local referral to those in need of higher-level psychological services.
- Facilitators should attend to quiet participants or those appearing to need extra support during breaks and at lunch, if this is possible and appropriate. It is important to make shy or quiet participants feel included and to attend to those needing additional support.

The facilitators can divide the workshop sessions and take turns leading and co-leading. Careful planning and coordination is necessary. Facilitators should discuss their plans for leading specific sessions. The leader of each

session should communicate to the co-leader what is required of them in terms of logistical, process and/or content support during the session (such as queuing up music for relaxation, offering reflections to the group, introducing a particular activity, etc.).

During the workshop, facilitators should sit opposite one another. This seating arrangement enables them to maintain eye contact with one another as well as with all participants, which is important for the sharing of nonverbal cues. It will also create an atmosphere of collaborative sharing and reflection. If facilitators were to sit together and/or if the circle is shaped more like a “U,” with facilitators at the top, the atmosphere would take on a more didactic feel, shifting participant expectations, limiting sharing, and creating a power dynamic that is less interactive and engaging of participants in finding their own solutions. In a more didactic setting, participants look to facilitators for answers, ideas and direction rather than to one another. Another barrier to an atmosphere of collaborative sharing and reflection can be the use of a flip chart. Flip charts are useful for group brainstorming or presenting educational material. However, they should not inhibit group processes.

Preparation

As noted above, facilitators should plan their sessions together to ensure a smooth coordinated delivery and to create a calm, supportive and predictable environment for participants. Beyond coordinating with one another, facilitators must attend to the following:

Relationship with the School Community

The key to the success of any program in schools or communities is a strong relationship with local leaders and administrators. The cooperation of school principals and superintendents will help to create an environment of support for implementing psychosocial programs in schools. In addition, engaging community and school leaders in their own self-care is a powerful way to encourage good stress management practices. It is helpful for facilitators to engage local mental health professionals, school counselors and health staff. Maintaining good and clear communication throughout the planning, implementation and follow-up stages will help the workshop run smoothly.

Logistics Planning with School Administrators

Timing. Administrators will need to schedule the workshop so that teachers are able to attend for approximately 3–5 hours. If necessary, that time can be split up into consecutive days. If more than one workshop is necessary to cover all staff members, facilitators will schedule workshops accordingly.

Number of participants. How many participants will attend the workshops each day? (Reminder: registration should reflect no fewer than 10 and no more than 25 participants).

Location. Can the school provide an open, comfortable and private room where the workshop can take place during the day uninterrupted? Are there other community sites (such as a public library or cafeteria) where the workshop might be held? In regards to space, it is important to explain that participants will be seated in a circle.

Seating. If the school provides a room, can it provide chairs, preferably not connected to desks, so that nothing hinders communication and sharing among participants?

Refreshments. If the workshop will be held during the lunch hour, will a meal be provided? If so, who will cater it? If the workshop is held in the early morning or after school, will refreshments be served?

Materials

- Name tags (optional)
- Music (something relaxing and calming for breathing and drawing exercises; upbeat music for group work)
- Butchers paper for large drawings (optional)
- Paper for drawing and writing
- Pens.

On the Day of the Workshop

On the day of the workshop, facilitators should check in with the administration upon arriving at the school. Set up the room by placing chairs in a closed circle; prepare the music and any other materials necessary for the chosen activities; prepare name tags (optional). Refreshments are an important contribution facilitators can bring to the group. Consider juice, coffee, tea and a light snack, if possible. Remember to leave the space given to you by the school as you found it, cleaning up all trash and placing furniture back in its original place.



Caregivers' Journey of Hope Workshop



Part I

TYPES AND SOURCES OF STRESS

Icebreaker

Materials

Choose an “icebreaker” from Appendix C. Materials are listed for each activity.

Purpose

To energize participants, begin working cooperatively and ease tensions or anxiety about the day with a quick and fun game.

Process

Facilitators and participants briefly introduce themselves and proceed with the icebreaker. In selecting an icebreaker, choose one that is inclusive and energizing.

Content

Facilitators can select an icebreaker they feel comfortable with. Appendix C lists a few cooperative games that can be selected for an opening icebreaker. Group Juggle, Famous Duos and the Greeting Game are a few that may be appropriate to start the day. Facilitators should feel free to explore other options or use other energizing icebreakers.

Opening Circle

Materials

None.

Purpose

The purpose of the opening circle is to set a safe, comfortable and respectful atmosphere for the day. This is the time to get to know one another, **explore group expectations** and **review the workshop schedule**, roles and parameters. It is important that participants are given the opportunity to share their expectations for the workshop and to voice any concerns.

In order to give participants some knowledge and control of the process, review the schedule for the day. Facilitators should let participants know that the workshop schedule is flexible and content can be modified to meet the needs and expectations of the group. Taking the time to adequately **review ground rules** is important in establishing an environment that is conducive to sharing and reflection. Facilitators should also reassure participants that anything shared in the group is confidential.

Process

1. Participants are gathered together sitting in a circle.
2. Facilitators introduce themselves and Save the Children (see overview below).
3. Let participants introduce themselves by sharing their name, how long they've been working with children, and why they are childcare providers.
4. The facilitator speaks generally about the day ahead.

Content: *Journey of Hope* Overview

Overview of the Psychosocial Program for Children

Combining its international and U.S. expertise, Save the Children is providing schools and communities across the country with structured programs aimed at supporting resilience and emotional learning. Save the Children's psychosocial program for children is designed to help children cope, build their natural resiliency and strengthen their network of care and social support. The program provides a safe space for children to understand their feelings and, ideally, to restore their sense of safety and hope. Age-appropriate activities using music, art, games and rhythmic movement not only help children to process their feelings and experiences, but also reestablish a sense of trust, security and self-esteem. The structure and consistency of the program helps to provide a safe space for children to process their fears and losses, receive support and to play and relax. Save the Children provides training for teachers, counselors and other child caregivers to implement each program.

Origins of the *Journey of Hope* Workshop

The *Journey of Hope* workshop grew out of training provided to school counselors, teachers and other caregivers implementing Save the Children's psychosocial programs for children. The sessions were three days long. During that time, participants directly experienced the activities they would be carrying out with children. Subsequently, Save the Children staff found out that the training sessions proved helpful to adult trainees in their own recovery. The training provided an opportunity for child caregivers to process stressful events, to share and to better understand where they've been and where they are in order to plan for the future. Save the Children began to receive requests for psychosocial programming specifically for school staff and child caregivers, so that they, too, could share in that experience.

Workshop Ground Rules

Workshop schedules and ground rules can be found in Appendices A and B. As facilitators explain ground rules and expectations, participants should be encouraged to use one another as resources, as they do in their daily work together. When experiences are shared or questions posed to the group, participants can respond to one another, using each other as resources, rather than relying solely on the facilitators for answers and guidance.

Identifying Types and Sources of Stress

Materials

- Paper and pens for participants.

Purpose

The purpose of this session is for participants to identify and share common types and sources of stress in their lives. Types of stress are presented to help participants identify sources of stress. Sharing sources of stress with the group provides participants an opportunity to vent and understand that other group members are coping with similar stresses (such as financial difficulties). This activity also enables participants to support one another emotionally and to share practical ideas and knowledge (for example, how to find available resources in the community).

Process

1. The facilitator speaks about different types of stress.
2. Participants are asked to write down three sources of stress in their lives.

3. The facilitator asks the group to share their sources of stress. Participants can share with the person sitting next to them and/or with the larger group. The facilitator reviews and reflects on the sources of stress participants have named, highlighting the common sources of stress mentioned by the group.
4. The facilitator then discusses categories of common stressors, incorporating what has been mentioned.

Content: Types and Sources of Stress

Types of Stress

We always have some stress in our lives, and stress can be positive. It mobilizes the energy that enables the body and mind to react to any given situation. However, if stress lasts too long, it can exhaust the body's resources.

Stress can be broken down into the following types:

- **Day-to-day stress.** A certain amount of stress is healthy: it keeps us meeting challenges and moving forward. Every day we face a wide range of stressful events. These are normal and include day-to-day situations such as dealing with traffic, finishing tasks at work or trying to get children to school on time. Every person deals with such stressors and finds different ways to manage them. An extreme event can make day-to-day stress more difficult than before; the environment suddenly changes and the little things we need to get done on a daily and weekly basis take more time and effort than they once did. Day-to-day stressors can pile up and become compounded by stress in our relationships, an uncertain future, new challenges at work, financial uncertainties and so on.
- **Cumulative stress.** This occurs when small day-to-day stresses pile up and weigh us down, or when chronic stress is prolonged with no end in sight. It's hard to see your way forward when experiencing this kind of stress. Over the long term, cumulative stress can lead to burnout at work and in life (professional or personal exhaustion).
- **Traumatic stress.** This is the stress that occurs around an extreme event that is "out of the realm of usual everyday human experience, and causes extreme fear." It can come about when you experience or witness threats to life or major destruction. It can also occur if someone close to you is involved in an extreme event. The stress that comes from a traumatic event may not end when the event is over. For weeks and even months afterwards, some people may continue to re-experience the event through flashbacks or nightmares. They may avoid things that remind them of the event, such as places, people or activities, and can become easily startled and on guard.
- **Secondary traumatization.** This can occur when you hear stories of other people's encounters with dangerous events or extreme loss. As a teacher you may hear stories from your students that may be difficult and traumatic for you to process. Secondary traumatization can produce some of the same symptoms as a traumatic event itself, such as re-experiencing the event, avoidance behavior and being easily startled.

Sources of Stress

Sources of stress are found in various contexts, which can be broken down into the following categories:

- **Environment.** This type of stress is marked by a lack of normalcy in an environment, such as changes in traffic, constant exposure to destruction, or the loss of leisure or customary activities, such as spending time with friends and family or going to movies or restaurants.
- **Work.** Workplace stressors include new schedules, demands at work, a new school environment, new information to learn, a heavy workload, and being at work with many demands and things to attend to in one's personal life.
- **Home.** Changes in the home environment that cause stress may include crowded conditions, a lack of privacy, missing previous routines, coping with the stress reactions of children or the elderly, and financial worries. All of these situations can be stressful for those trying to hold it together for everyone else—for the children, the elderly and partners. Keeping a stiff upper lip requires a great deal of energy.

- **Interpersonal.** This type of stress involves changes in relationships, including the family. It may also involve relationship conflict (for example, squabbling over little things or having trouble agreeing on the big decisions), separation from loved ones, changed relationships with friends, such as feeling more withdrawn or having friends that are more withdrawn, and feeling as though you have no one to turn to.
- **The unknown.** The “Great Unknown” can be very stressful. This includes the many questions regarding one’s own future, insurance, if the community will return and recover, and whether to rebuild.
- **Ourselves.** The expectations we place on ourselves can also be a source of stress. Such expectations may be related to being a perfectionist, detail- or action-oriented, or highly dedicated and unable to say “no.” They may also be associated with needing to be in control of ourselves and our environment, or needing to be needed by others, regardless of our own situation. As we move forward on our journey, it is important to look for ways to go a bit easier on ourselves.

Part 2

HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE STRESS?

Materials

- One piece of butcher block paper per group (3–5 groups), approximately the length of a person, or one piece of regular-sized paper per person.
- Markers.

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to discuss and normalize common physical, emotional, relational and behavioral reactions to trauma and stressful events. Information presented on the biology behind common stress reactions is meant to increase participant understanding of physical and cognitive changes in the body. This activity aims to give participants the language to describe their reactions to recent events. The session also helps participants distinguish between normal reactions and symptoms of distress that indicate a need for professional help.

Process

1. The facilitator transitions from sources of stress to the impact of stress on our minds and bodies.
2. The facilitator speaks about the biology behind stress reactions in the body and mind.
3. The facilitator explains the “Draw a stressed-out person” activity. The co-facilitator distributes paper and markers to the group. In small groups, participants are given time (about 10 minutes) to draw a stressed-out individual.
4. Each group (or individual) presents their drawing. The facilitator reflects and takes note of commonalities among the drawings. Touching on reactions mentioned in the drawings, and adding in new information not present in the drawings, the facilitator covers normal reactions to stress.
** Optional activity for smaller groups of participants: The facilitator compiles the group’s “stress reactions in the body and mind” onto a large piece of butcher paper with an outline of a body on it.*

Content

Cognitive Adaptations to Stress

When one encounters a crisis in life, it challenges the mind to find a way to describe it and give it meaning. Normally, we use language as a way to label, process and store information. However, the effects of a major crisis cannot be adequately described in words. This gives the mind a new challenge for understanding and filing the experience.

People who go through a major crisis often become distracted by memories or thoughts surrounding the event. It is as if the brain needs to keep going over the information many times in order to try and understand it. This is why individuals may experience the feeling of not being able to shut off their minds, which keeps going over and over details of the event. Sleep may be disrupted as well. People may find they can’t shut their mind off at night and wake up feeling like they’ve worked all night instead of resting. Without adequate sleep, it can be hard to concentrate and to remember things. A person may also have a tendency to become more irritable.

In addition to sleeping problems, one may also be struggling to cope with many daily stressors and challenging situations. These require a tremendous amount of creativity and adaptation. As the mind works at responding to new challenges, it may sacrifice commonplace tasks. As a result, individuals under stress may experience problems with memory, concentration, problem-solving, decision-making, focus and fatigue.

Cognitive Process and Adaptation in Children

Like adults, children who have experienced a crisis often have to replay information. They may ask the same question over and over, or they may play out events or experiences repeatedly. The minds of these children are working to process recent events, and to gain mastery and control over them. This is common, and it is important to be patient with them until they feel more secure. However, you may want to redirect a child whose play is distressing to him or her or to other children.

Physical Adaptations to Stress

The body is trying to cope as well, and we feel the effects of the ways in which the body is trying to adapt. The body under stress prepares itself to react to or flee threatening events (“fight or flight”) through the release of various chemicals. Some of the physiological changes that occur to prepare us to respond to a threat include:

1. Increased heart rate and breathing rate to increase oxygen supply and circulation to some parts of the body
2. Enlarged pupils to be able to better see
3. Increased breakdown of glycogen by the muscles to glucose for immediate energy
4. Increased breakdown of stored fat for energy
5. Increased release of immune cells (T-cells and natural killer cells)
6. Increased blood flow to the brain
7. Slowed digestion
8. Decreased saliva flow.

Although these physiological changes help us to react immediately to a threat, they place a strain on the body when stress is continuous. The human body generally works to maintain a natural balance, or homeostasis. Ongoing stress disrupts that balance and may increase susceptibility to health problems (infections; skin problems such as blemishes, hives, psoriasis and eczema; heart disease and high blood pressure; stomach problems such as ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome; and headaches, neck and back pain).

After a stressful event, the body and mind are fighting a battle and will prioritize what is most important for survival. You may find you tire more easily, have lowered energy or motivation, or that you forget some things. This is the body-mind working to conserve energy and protect and heal itself.

Feeling Stress in the Mind, Body and in Relationships

Under stressful conditions, it is unrealistic to expect the mind and body to go on with “business as usual.” Physical changes, intense and unpredictable feelings, not feeling oneself, strained relationships and behavioral changes are all normal reactions. It is important to be compassionate with yourself—your body and your mind. These reactions are common and may occur weeks and even months after a traumatic event:

1. Physical changes. Muscle tension, headaches, chest pain, fatigue, nausea, constipation, diarrhea, being easily startled, difficulty falling asleep, staying sleep or waking early in the morning, increases or decreases in appetite.
2. Intense and unpredictable feelings. Irritability, mood swings, increased anxiety, numbness or a feeling of disconnection from the world, hopelessness or helplessness. Other feelings may include:
 - Crying. Many people may be struggling not to cry in front of their children. Although you may want to appear brave, children often sense when adults are upset. It is all right if you happen to cry in front of your children. Take it as an opportunity to model normal emotions and how to handle them. Honesty is best. Explain that you feel sad sometimes too about what happened, that it’s okay to cry and that you do it to feel better. This can be an opportunity to help children to understand and manage their own sad feelings.
 - Anger. Many people feel very angry after a crisis or stressful event—the situation feels unfair and unjust and can be fraught with problems. Although anger is a natural and healthy emotion, one needs to be careful of

intense anger and aggression that can hurt others and cause problems at home or on the job. It is important to find healthy and safe ways to express frustration and anger—take a walk, do some physical activity, scream into a pillow.

- Shame and blame. After a crisis, many people think about the things they wished they had done, or had done differently. In a time of crisis, you make the best decision you can with the information you have at the moment. There is no way to know how things will turn out. It is important to forgive oneself, to let go and move forward.
 - Survivor guilt. Many people who survive crises feel guilty that they are okay when others are not. These feelings of guilt may reflect our capacity to feel someone else's pain—that well of human compassion that sustains us and brings us together.
3. Lack of concentration. Difficulty making decisions, experiencing a shortened attention span, forgetfulness, reduced creativity or motivation, and difficulty seeing past the problems of today to a better future.
 4. Strained relationships. Conflict with family, friends and colleagues, feeling a loss of intimacy with others, wanting to withdraw or isolate, changes in libido and/or a reduced desire for intimacy with one's partner. Or, tension from living in overcrowded and temporary housing or with relatives and friends, missing family and friends who are displaced or relocated. Parents may be physically or emotionally unavailable to children because they are busy, distracted or distressed. Conversely, parents may be overprotective of children and overly fearful for their safety.
 5. Behavioral changes. Increased drug, alcohol or tobacco use, changes in eating habits or sexual behavior, increased risk-taking (driving recklessly, engaging in unsafe sex, etc.), avoiding people or places.

When to Seek Help

A variety of reactions to crises may be expected. In particular, the following symptoms may indicate the need to seek professional help, such as a social worker, psychologist or counselor:

1. Feeling constantly on edge or in danger
2. Rage, extreme irritability or intense agitation
3. Severe anxiety, worry or panic
4. Severe depression, including hopelessness, worthlessness, lack of pleasure, energy or motivation
5. Abuse of alcohol, prescription drugs and/or illegal drugs
6. Repeated and intrusive “flashbacks” of trauma-related events
7. Emotional numbing—feeling “empty”
8. Feeling extremely helpless
9. Thoughts of hurting oneself or others.

It is especially important to seek professional help if these symptoms affect your ability to function at work or home or if they persist for more than three months. Even if you are not feeling extreme symptoms, seeing a counselor may be helpful to you. Talking to a professional can help you to organize your thoughts and feelings about the event, to recover from grief and loss, and to cope and feel better as you rebuild your life.

Conscious Relaxation: “Let’s Breathe!”

Materials

- Relaxation music.

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to give participants knowledge and tools for implementing conscious relaxation in their daily lives.

Process

1. Discuss the importance of proper and deep breathing for relaxation of the mind and body. Note how proper breathing can alleviate some of the ways in which we feel stress in our minds and bodies.
2. Have participants move to a comfortable position, sitting or lying down as appropriate. Co-leader turns off the lights and starts the music.
3. Instruct participants to place their hands on their bellies and chests while taking deep breaths. Have them focus on the rise and fall of their stomachs.
4. Lead the group in progressive muscle relaxation (total time: approximately 10 minutes).
* *Optional activity: Read Robert Bly poem, if appropriate (see Appendix D).*

Content

Conscious Relaxation and the Importance of Breath

Conscious relaxation is a tool one can use to center and calm oneself in order to keep the mind and body focused and functioning well. Breath is the key to relaxation. Through a physiological reaction—the release of carbon dioxide when exhaling—the muscles naturally release tension and relax.

When we are stressed, we carry our tension. We keep our shoulders stiff and our stomachs sucked in and held tight. When we have tense upper and middle bodies, our ribcage and diaphragm have no room to expand for good deep breaths. Instead, we take short, shallow breaths and our bodies don’t get the oxygen they need. Hyperventilation and lack of oxygen can lead to physical symptoms of stress, including tingly numb fingers, cold or sweaty hands, heart palpitations and a feeling of light-headedness. People with panic disorder at first feel as if the panic attack comes suddenly, out of the blue. However, in getting to know their bodies better, they discover that they have been tensing and breathing shallowly before the actual panic attack begins. As they learn to breathe better, they can avert feelings of panic from ever starting. With proper breathing, our bodies get enough oxygen, our muscles and bodies relax and our mind becomes calm and focused.

Put one hand on your belly and one on your chest. Take a deep breath, noticing which hand rises. If the hand on your chest rises, then focus on your belly—that hand should rise as you take a deep breath down into your belly.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

There are several guided relaxation techniques. As you prepare to implement the workshop, you can draw upon the techniques you know and feel comfortable with. The following script is one that can be used to guide the group. You may want to put on meditative, calming music. Read the script slowly in a calm voice. Note that this script can be modified in any way to make it more comfortable for the facilitator and group.

- Sit up in your chair, with your feet on the floor and your back resting against the back of the chair.
- Place your hands in your lap, closing your eyes. This is a time to open your body and center your mind.
- Breathe slowly and deeply. Bring one hand to your belly. Notice the rise and fall of your belly as you breathe. Now take your other hand and place it over your heart. One hand on the belly and one hand on the heart.

Feel the wave of breath that runs through these two areas.

Lower your hands back down to your lap and sit in simple relaxation. As you breathe, we will do some progressive muscle relaxation so that you can feel the difference between tension in your muscles and relaxation. We are often not aware that we hold tension in parts of our body. Take a deep breath in, hold it and curl your toes tight, feel the tension... one, two, three... now release the toes, breathe out and feel the difference between tension and relaxation... feel the blood coming down into the feet and toes. Now move to your leg muscles... take a deep breath in, hold it and flex your leg muscles as tight as you can... one, two, three... now exhale and release your legs, feel them relax. Now with your arms at your sides, bend your elbows and bring your arms tight alongside your upper body. Take a deep breath in, hold it and clench your hands into fists... one, two, three... and release. Let your arms drop, feel the relaxation in your arms and hands as you open them completely. Now take in a breath and shrug your shoulders up toward your ears, as tight as you can. Hold it... one, two, three... and release. Feel the weight lifting from your shoulders. Now scrunch up the muscles in your face, take another deep breath and hold it tight... one, two, three... and relax.

Feel the calmness in your face. Notice the calm in your mind and body. Make a commitment this day to be good to yourself.

Variation of Progressive Muscle Relaxation: “30-Second Relaxation Technique”

This technique can be done either standing or sitting in a circle with both feet firmly planted on the ground. The facilitator should ask the participants to:

1. Close your eyes.
2. Think of something that makes you smile.
3. Take a deep breath.
4. Tense all muscles from head to toe.
5. Exhale while relaxing muscles.
6. Ask group members to notice body changes, such as tingling muscles.
7. Repeat all steps several times.

Check in with the group to see how everybody feels, and ask if anyone is experiencing any discomfort. Ask if there is a short relaxation method they can add to their daily routines.

Part 3

RESOURCES AND COPING MECHANISMS

Materials

Paper and pens for participants.

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to facilitate self-discovery of strengths, skills, resources, knowledge and social support. Information is provided on stress management and self-care techniques. Individual resiliency is bolstered by engaging in goal-setting and planning for self-care. Group resiliency and support for one another is strengthened through identification of ways in which group members have and can continue to support one another.

Process

1. Ask participants what they think of when they hear “self-care” or “stress management” (spend 1–2 minutes on responses). Describe the metaphor for self-care as the flight attendant on the airplane giving instructions: “Before putting the oxygen mask on the child sitting beside you, you must secure your own first.” We must take care of ourselves to continue taking care of others.
2. Ask participants to get into pairs and interview one another. They should find out what their partner is doing to take care of him or herself right now, as well as a few goals for self-care and for continuing to manage stress. For those participants having a hard time identifying goals, partners should encourage and help with brainstorming. Partners may want to take notes on what they learn since they will be asked to share about their partner, not about themselves.
3. Participants are brought back to the group and asked to share what they learned about their partner.
4. Reflect on the group responses and incorporate what was shared into covering the various ways we can manage stress and take care of ourselves.
5. Encourage the group to continue this activity in the future—checking in with others to see what they are doing to take care of themselves and making plans for self-care.
6. Discuss pitfalls to be aware of in managing stress (see content section below).
7. The facilitator turns the discussion to the group and what the participants are doing to take care of one another as a community. In groups of 4 to 5 people, participants are asked to discuss the things they’re doing to take care of one another and to record them on paper. Then groups are asked to come up with at least one goal to continue supporting each other as a community.
8. Groups share their work and the facilitator reflects and encourages the entire group to put these possibilities for increased support into place through specific planning.

Content

Strategies for Self-Care

Taking care of oneself requires creativity and adaptation. It is important for participants to think about things that have helped in the past and, where possible, to try to put these things in place today. Small things that help to get through each day are important. Often it is the piling up of small stresses that make us feel overwhelmed. Similarly, it can be the small ways you learn to relax and stay healthy that will keep you resilient during difficult times.

Following this introduction, participants can do the interview exercise. After group sharing, the following self-care suggestions are reviewed:

We all should be more deliberate about taking care of ourselves. The following are some options for self-care:

- **Taking care of the body.** Eat regular and healthy meals; allow time to rest and recover when sick; get enough rest; exercise; take breaks to release and recharge.
- **Keeping in touch with friends and family.** Identify the people who are a comfort to you and who build you up—seek them out on a regular basis; stay in touch with the important people in your life; talk with others who face similar challenges to remind you that you are not alone and to share lessons learned for new challenges in daily life; talk with clergy, counselors and others who can provide comfort and help.
- **Creating a welcoming work and home environment.** Bring things into your work and home environment that remind you of the beauty in life—photos, fresh flowers or meaningful objects; keep reasonable expectations for what you are able to do right now and don't overwork—keep regular hours.
- **Relaxing.** Allowing time for relaxation is important, even if it's only for 15 minutes a day. Ways to relax the mind and body include: breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, stretching, yoga, prayer, listening to music, spending time in nature, or doing repetitive things that let your mind take a break, such as baking, sewing or gardening.
- **Exploring and expressing oneself.** Allowing time for reflection is important to gain a better understanding of the meaning of events, experiences, changes, losses and gains. Journaling, painting, sculpting, singing and playing music are creative outlets for exploring and expressing oneself as part of stress management and self-care.
- **Cultivating your spirituality.** A religious community can provide social support; in addition, faith and/or spiritual principles can be a great source of guidance, strength and encouragement during difficult times.
- **Reaching out to others.** Reaching out to and helping others can help counter feelings of helplessness. Small things—an encouraging word, running an errand or watching a child for someone, being there to listen—are ways to make a difference. That said, it is important to be aware of one's own limitations and to know when to say "no."

Pitfalls to be Aware of in Stress Management

There are many ways of coping with pain, sadness and stress that are helpful; however, two things that are not helpful are avoidance and blame. Some of the ways that we avoid pain are by overworking, using alcohol or drugs or other risk behaviors. These are normal reactions, but they are not helpful in relieving stress in the long term. Alcohol, for example, can lower one's mood, cause mood swings, interrupt the sleep cycle and add strain to relationships. We can use blame to avoid pain by putting too high of expectations on ourselves and others. When we blame ourselves and others, our relationships can be negatively affected and our stress level can increase.

Part 4 CONCLUSION

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES: FUTURE VISIONS, GOALS AND PLANS

Materials

- Large sheet of paper
- Markers

Purpose

The purpose of the future planning session is to facilitate recognition of the fact that the group possesses strengths and solutions. The session also engages the group in solution-building by envisioning a future and strategizing ways to realize that vision. This session aims to awaken collaborative action toward specific and achievable goals.

As participants envision the future, they often will hope for things to change that are out of their control. When this situation arises, facilitators can remind participants that in having visions, hopes and dreams for the future, the way we go about living our daily lives can change. When we have visions of a better future, we think and act differently in the present. In addition, even those changes that seem out of our control may contain elements or stepping stones to change that individuals can work toward in their own thoughts, behaviors and/or interactions with others. Encourage participants to focus on the “manageable” rather than the “unmanageable”—in other words, those areas of their lives over which they exert some measure of control.

Process

1. Introduce the future planning session. Ask participants to visualize, “What does my ideal community look like?”
** Note: The facilitator can present this as the community in which they live or work dependent on the group.*
2. The facilitator asks the group what is different in this community than the current community.
 - How are participants themselves different—their behavior, thoughts and feelings?
 - How are the children in their care different?
 - How are the staff and the community different?
3. Have participants get into small groups (3–5 people). Provide each group with a large sheet of paper and markers to brainstorm what their ideal community would look like. Brainstorming can take the form of a drawing, lists, etc.
** Note: Advise the group to strategize actions or steps they can take that is within their control versus out of their control to create their ideal community.*
4. The facilitator then asks the group what steps are already occurring to move the community toward this vision of a healthy community.
5. The group is asked what else needs to happen. What goals can be set to achieve the group’s vision?
6. The facilitator helps the group formulate goals and encourages participants to continue envisioning their hopes for the future and making their own personal goals for realizing those visions.

Closing Circle

Materials

None.

Purpose

To reflect on the day as a group and close the circle.

Process

1. Participants are asked to offer reflections on the day's activities.
2. Facilitators offer reflections on the day.
3. Poetry can be used to end the day (suggestion: poem by A.J. Cronin in Appendix D).
4. Facilitators should thank participants and ask that they complete a brief workshop evaluation and return it to a designated folder/spot. Upbeat music can be played while they work.
5. Facilitators should close with a fun activity such as Circle of Joy in order to reinforce the social connections that have been made throughout the workshop.



Appendix A

ONE AND THREE-DAY WORKSHOP SCHEDULES



THE CAREGIVER'S JOURNEY OF HOPE WORKSHOP

One-Day Schedule

8:30 am – 8:45 am	Icebreaker. Recommended icebreakers—Group Juggle, Famous Duos, Greeting Game, Teach Me.
8:45 am – 9:00 am	Opening Circle and Introductions. Gather together in a circle to review expectations and plans for the day and to gain a better understanding of who is in the group.
9:00 am – 9:45 am	Part 1. Types and Sources of Stress. In this session we'll explore the different types of stress we cope with in our lives—day-to-day stress, cumulative stress, traumatic stress and secondary traumatization—and the differences among them. What are current sources of stress in our lives?
9:45 am – 10:00 am	Game. Recommended—Changing Motions, Cross the Hula Hoop, Peacock Feathers.
10:00 am – 10:45 am	Part 2. How Do We Experience Stress. In this session we'll discuss common physical, emotional, relational and behavioral reactions to stressful events and explore the biology behind common stress reactions.
10:45 am – 11:00 am	Let's Breathe! Breath is the key to relaxation. Become aware of the state of your body and mind, accept whatever state you find yourself in, and learn to relax despite uncertainty, frustration and too much to do.
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Lunch
12:00 pm – 12:15 pm	Game. Recommended—The Sun Shines On, Do You Know Me?, How, When and Where, Six.
12:15 pm – 12:45 pm	Part 3. Resources and Coping Mechanisms. This session focuses on stress management and self-care techniques. We'll also take a look at how you have assisted students and colleagues through this time and discuss further options for supporting others.
12:45 pm – 1:00 pm	Game. Recommended—Ha, Build a Sentence, Cross the Hula Hoop.
1:00 pm – 1:45 pm	Conclusion. The Journey Continues: Future Visions, Goals and Plans. What does “better” look and feel like? How far have we already come toward “better?” What visions do we have for the future? And what plans and goals can we set out for achieving those visions? Let's set some short- and long-term goals to achieve our vision for ourselves and our school community and how we can work together.
1:45 pm – 1:55 pm	Closing Circle and Activity. Today we've explored and shared our knowledge, strengths, resources, passions, capabilities and experiences. Our collective visions, goals and plans will carry us forward into a future of working together as a strong community, providing an effective and supporting learning environment for our children. Recommended closing activities (choose one)—Expressions of Joy, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Yoga Stretches.
1:55 pm – 2:00 pm	Evaluations

THE CAREGIVER'S JOURNEY OF HOPE WORKSHOP

Three-Day Schedule

DAY 1

8:00 am – 8:15 am	Icebreaker. Recommended icebreakers—Group Juggle, Famous Duos, Greeting Game, Teach Me.
8:15 am – 8:30 am	Opening Circle and Introductions. Gather together in a circle to review expectations and plans for the day and to gain a better understanding of who is in the group.
8:30 am – 8:50 am	Part 1. Types and Sources of Stress. In this session we'll explore the different types of stress we cope with in our lives—day-to-day stress, cumulative stress and traumatic stress—and the differences among them. What are current sources of stress in our lives?
8:50 am – 9:00 am	Closing Activity. Recommended—Conscious Relaxation and Breathing, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Yoga Stretches.

DAY 2

8:00 am. – 8:15 am	Opening Activity. Recommended—Do You Know Me?, Candy Mixer, Famous Duos, Human Scavenger Hunt.
8:15 am – 8:30 am	Part 2. How Do We Experience Stress? In this session we'll discuss common physical, emotional, relational and behavioral reactions to stressful events and explore the biology behind common stress reactions.
8:30 am – 8:50 am	Part 3. Resources and Coping Mechanisms. This session focuses on stress management and self-care techniques. We'll also take a look at how you have assisted students and colleagues through this time, and discuss further options for supporting others.
8:50 am – 9:00 am	Closing Activity. Recommended—Peacock Feathers, Conscious Relaxation and Breathing, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Gestures.

DAY 3

8:00 am – 8:20 am	Opening Activity. Recommended—The Sun Shines On, Do You Know Me?, Teach Me, Changing Motions.
8:20 am – 8:45 am	Part 4. Conclusion: The Journey Continues: Future Visions, Goals and Plans. What does “better” look and feel like? How far have we already come toward “better?” What visions do we have for the future? And what plans and goals can we set out for achieving those visions? Let's set some short- and long-term goals to achieve our vision for ourselves and for our school community and how we can work together.
8:45 am – 8:55 am	Closing Circle and Activity. Today we've explored and shared our knowledge, strengths, resources, passions, capabilities and experiences. Our collective visions, goals and plans will carry us forward into a future of working together as a strong community, providing an effective and supporting learning environment for our children. Recommended closing activities (choose one)—Expressions of Joy, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Yoga Stretches.
8:55 am – 9:00 am	Evaluations



Appendix B

HANDOUT ON GROUND RULES

Our Journey: Personal, Professional, and as a School and Living Community

This is a workshop to examine together where we've been, how we made it through, new insights and knowledge we carry with us, and how to bring our resources together for the journey ahead. Understanding changes, stresses and newfound strengths enables teachers to teach and children to learn more successfully, and other child caregivers to provide nurturing environments for children's healthy development.

Please Keep in Mind

- Confidentiality. Everyone in the room has the right to confidentiality. What is shared during this workshop should not be shared beyond it.
- Participation. We ask that you stay with the group as you are able, barring any emergencies or overwhelming reactions that would take you away. This is a community-building workshop and your presence together with your co-workers is an important time together to build community with one another and to achieve a shared vision for the future. Many activities have a component of sharing with the larger group. You are invited to share, but do not feel that you must. However your participation and your story may be very important for other group members to see and hear.
- “Eyes, Ears, Heart, Undivided Attention.” The Chinese word for “listen” incorporates the characters for eyes, ears, heart and undivided attention. We can use our eyes, ears, heart and undivided attention as we share with one another. Attend to one another as you share ideas and experiences. Remember to discuss only your own reactions and thoughts and not to speak for other group members. Because each person’s ideas are important, be careful not to minimize or criticize what others have to say. Please turn cell phones to vibrate or silent; if you need to take a call, please leave the room to do so.



- Our Work Together. You will be asked to reflect and share only as you feel comfortable. What you would like to keep private, please do. Share when you feel called to share. We are not here to “fix” what’s wrong, to “fix” each other or even to offer advice. We are here to listen to each other, recognize and acknowledge where we are in this moment on our journey, and where we are heading together.

Appendix C

COOPERATIVE GAMES AND RELAXATION EXERCISES

Cooperative games and relaxation exercises can be used as needed to transition between activities, or to bring the group back together after a break or lunch. Some of the games are appropriate to use as icebreakers, or opening or closing activities.

Key



Seated activity



Requires movement



Works well as an icebreaker



Interpersonal learning game



Can be used as an opening or closing activity

Cooperative Games

BUILD A SENTENCE



Materials

None.

Purpose

This game is about working as a group to create an idea together. It is an exercise in relinquishing control and allowing each person to contribute to the sentence, without guiding or directing the outcome. The sentence may turn into something funny, profound, or silly and nonsensical.

How to Play

- The group sits in a circle.
- The facilitator instructs the group that they are going to build a sentence with each member adding only one word or punctuation element to complete it.
- The group is informed that more than one sentence can be made and that it is not necessary to build a story with each sentence.
- After completing the activity, the facilitator discusses the difficulties of the game (how difficult it is not to give one's opinion on what word/punctuation should go next) and how in life, one is not always in control and must let things happen on their own accord.

CANDY MIXER



Materials

Large bag of multicolored candies (M&M's, Starburst, Skittles).

Purpose

This activity allows group members to share something about themselves and learn about one another.

How to Play

- Pass the bag of candy around the circle and instruct everyone to take three pieces.
- Participants will then tell the group about themselves depending on which color candy they have selected.
For example:
green = favorite movie
blue = favorite book
red = one hope for the future
yellow = career goals, etc.

CHANGING MOTIONS



Materials

None.

Purpose

To build observation skills as a group.

How to Play

- One member leaves the room while the rest of the group stands or sits in a circle.
- The group chooses one person to start a motion and everyone else mimics it. The motion could be anything from clapping hands, dancing, tapping feet, waving hello, etc.
- The other group member is called back into the room and stands in the middle of the circle.
- While the person is in the middle, the person who started the first motion will discretely change the motion and everyone else mimics the motion.
- The object of the game is for the person in the middle to determine who is changing the motion.

CROSS THE HULA HOOP



Materials

Two different colored hula hoops.

Purpose

Work as a team to complete a task, allowing the group to get up off their chairs and become active.

How to Play

- The facilitator places one hula hoop over one shoulder and another hula hoop over the other shoulder, making sure the hula hoops are different colors. The facilitator then instructs the group to hold hands.
- The facilitator instructs the group that, without letting go of their neighbors' hands, they must move the hula hoops around the circle, with each group member moving his or her body through the hula hoop. The hula hoops will go in opposite directions around the circle, and must cross at some point before returning to the facilitator.

** Note: This activity will take teamwork and some flexibility, and group members may have to help the people next to them in the circle in order to be successful.*

“DO YOU KNOW ME?”



Materials

None.

Purpose

This game utilizes communication and problem-solving. It helps people get to know one another. It also allows group members to evaluate the assumptions they make about each other on a regular basis and realize that there are thousands of truths in every one of us.

How to Play

- The facilitator instructs group members to think of three things they would like to share about themselves.
- Two of these things must be true and one must be false. Allow them a few moments to think before beginning.
- A volunteer stands in the circle and shares his or her three statements.
- Each group member must decide which statement is false.
- A different area of the room is designated for each statement. Group members are asked to get up and go to the area that is designated for the statement that they think is false.
- Working your way around the room, each of the three groups is given the opportunity to share their rationale as to why they believe that particular statement is false.
- The volunteer then reveals one true statement. Those who chose that particular statement are given the opportunity to stand with one of the two remaining groups.
- At this point, the volunteer reveals the second true statement.
- One of the two remaining groups will have guessed which of the three statements was actually false.
- Another volunteer is called to share his or her three statements.

EXPRESSIONS OF JOY



Materials

None.

Purpose

This activity explores how movement can affect mood. The goal of the activity is to practice the experience of joy. The idea of the game is summed up by this quote: “Does your joy bring you a smile or does your smile bring you joy?”

How to Play

- The facilitator asks the entire group to stand in a circle.
- They ask the group to think of an action that embodies happiness or calmness. Allow the group a moment to think.
- The facilitator then explains that they are going to go around the circle acting out these different motions, but there is a catch.

- Each person must repeat the motions of all the people that went before them and then add a motion. For example, Person One jumps; Person Two jumps and does a little dance; Person Three jumps, does a little dance and kicks like a Rockette, and so on.

Variation of Expressions of Joy: The first person acts out a motion, and then everyone in the group copies that motion together. Play continues around the circle until each person has had a chance to demonstrate a motion.

Variation of Expressions of Joy—“When I go to California”: The first group member says, “When I go to California I am going to take...” and names an item that he or she is going to take with him or her. The next person then says, “When I go to California I am going to take” and names what was said before and then names something also. The conversation continues around the room with everyone repeating everything that was said before them.

FAMOUS DUOS

Materials

Notecard for each participant.

Purpose

This activity utilizes communication skills and encourages interaction among players.

How to Play

- Create one note card for each participant with the name of a famous person or character that forms a commonly known pair (politician, actor/actress, cartoon character). These famous people/characters represent a famous duo. Examples include: Batman and Robin, Will and Grace, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, etc.
- Distribute the cards randomly and ask players not to reveal the name on their card.
- Participants are asked to walk around the room and find the person who has the other half of their famous duo.
- They will do this by either describing who they are or by quoting who they are. For example: Mickey might say, “I am a famous mouse” and Minnie might say, “I am a female mouse who wears a bow.” Both Sonny and Cher might each decide to recite the song, “I Got you, Babe” out loud in order to find one another.

THE GREETINGS GAME

Materials

None.

Purpose

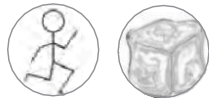
A multisensory communication activity that encourages interaction among players.

How to Play

- We’re going to start the day greeting one another, shaking hands and saying “hello.” However, we’re going to do that with our eyes closed.

- Once all the group members close their eyes, the facilitator chooses one person to be the “base” by tapping him or her on the shoulder; the base should keep his or her eyes open.
- Everyone then moves toward the middle of the room. Participants will need to find each other with their eyes closed, shake hands and say “hello,” and then drop hands and move on to the next person.
- If you find the base person and shake his or her hand, that person will not say hello and will not release your hand.
- You can then open your eyes and join hands with the base person, forming a chain. You can’t open your eyes until you’re holding hands, and the person you’re holding hands with doesn’t say hello. Anyone who has joined hands and has his or her eyes open will remain silent when someone shakes his or her hand.
- You can only join the chain at its ends. So if you feel hands that are clasped, you must find your way to the end of the chain, shake hands with that person and then join the chain and open your eyes.
- The game ends when everyone is holding hands with their eyes open.
- Two ground rules: no coaching people where to go if you have your eyes open, and try not to grope each other.
** Note: Due to the nature of the game—feeling blindly for other participants’ hands—the game is best played when participants are all of the same sex. Members of mixed groups may feel uncomfortable playing the game as they may inadvertently grope each other. Facilitators should stand around the perimeter of the room to make sure that no one wanders into any walls or other hazards.*

GROUP JUGGLE



Materials

Four or more soft balls (such as yarn balls, preferably in different colors).

Purpose

This game utilizes teamwork, communication and movement to address an incremental challenge. It is about being present, both physically and mentally, and being attuned to the group. This game can be a metaphor for life—when things get hectic, you tune out extraneous stimuli and focus on what is necessary to get the job done (in this case, the person who is throwing you the ball). This game also demonstrates that a task that may be impossible or overwhelming for one person (juggling four or more balls) becomes do-able when divided among several people.

How to Play

- The facilitator asks the group to join him/her in a circle and explains that they are going to learn to juggle as a team.
- The facilitator explains that the group will start off passing one ball around the circle. The ball is passed to every member of the circle once; no one receives the ball a second time. Ideally, the ball is tossed to someone standing across the circle from you (rather than next to you). It is helpful, for the first round, if each person keeps his or her hand raised until receiving the ball, so that those who have not yet had a turn can be easily identified.
- As each person throws the ball, he or she calls out the name of the person who is supposed to catch the ball, waiting until that person is ready before throwing.
- Let participants know that if the ball is dropped, it is okay; just pick it up and continue play.
- The group is instructed to remember the pattern in which the ball is passed since they will need to repeat the pattern.

- Once the order is established, the facilitator asks if the group is ready for another ball; the facilitator will then add extra balls to the circle one at a time.
- The additional balls will be passed in the same pattern as the first ball.
- The facilitators may choose to pull some balls out if it gets too crazy.



Materials

None.

Purpose

Laughter lightens up a group and builds trust and friendship.

How to Play

- Form a circle.
- One person says “ha,” the next person to her/him says “ha ha,” the next person says “ha ha ha,” and so forth.
- If someone actually laughs, the group must start over at the beginning.
- The goal of the game is to make it around the circle without anyone actually laughing. This is harder than it sounds!



Materials

None.

Purpose

This game utilizes communication and problem-solving skills and has the potential to inspire a lot of laughter.

How to Play

- One member of the group is asked to leave the room.
- After that member leaves the room the group chooses among themselves an action, place or thing for the other group member to guess.
- The group member who has been waiting outside is called back in and allowed to ask any member of the group one of the following questions:
 - How do you like it?
 - When do you like it?
 - Where do you like it?
- Group members answer each question about the chosen thing. The guessing group member keeps asking only the above questions until the object is identified.

HUMAN SCAVENGER HUNT



Materials

A prepared list of at least 10 characteristics or traits that may be found within the group—such as, someone who is left handed, someone who loves ice cream, someone who has been to Mexico, etc.

Purpose

To give participants the opportunity to get to know one another while sharing traits about themselves.

How to Play

- The facilitator should give each person the prepared list and set the group free to mingle.
- Each individual should try to get as many signatures of individuals who fit the characteristics on the list. Only one signature is necessary per characteristic.

Here is a short example of a prepared list:

Find someone in the group who. . .

- 1) Is left-handed _____
- 2) Wears contact lenses _____
- 3) Plays guitar _____
- 4) Likes spicy food _____
- 5) Has been out of the country _____.

Variation of Human Scavenger Hunt: The game can be played like bingo, with characteristics listed in a grid with five squares across and five squares down. The goal is to get “bingo”—signatures completing a row horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

OBSERVATION GAME



Materials

Fifteen to 20 different items of the facilitator’s choosing, a tray or table to put items on, a large enough cloth to cover up items, pens/pencils and paper.

Purpose

To test individual memory and observation skills.

How to Play

- The facilitator puts 15 to 20 different items on a tray and covers the items with a piece of cloth.
- The facilitator then removes the cloth for 30 to 45 seconds in order for the group members to get a good look at what is on the tray.
- After time is up, the facilitator quickly covers up the items once again.
- Next, the group is asked to write down as many of the items as they can remember.
- Then, as a team, the group is asked to figure out all of the items on the tray without having to look again.

Variation of the Observation Game: Single File: Five or more people in a line come into the room, single file, and leave quickly, coming back in different formation. The group has to figure out what formation the line was in the first time.



Materials

Ball or similar object to pass around the circle.

Purpose

Thinking under pressure, answering on the spot, exploring how stress affects your ability to think clearly.

How to Play

- All the group members sit in a circle, with one person standing or sitting in the middle of the circle.
- The facilitator comes up with a theme for this round of the game. Themes include, but are not limited to, food, items in the room, items in a school, people, movies, fruit, names, drinks, toys, etc.
- The person in the middle closes his or her eyes, and the ball is passed around the circle, with each person passing the ball to the person next to him or her (similar to “hot potato”). The person in the middle, with eyes still closed, then calls out, “Stop!”
- The person in the middle now opens his or her eyes and chooses a letter of the alphabet. The individual with the ball must name six things within the theme that start with the chosen letter.
- As soon as the letter is called, the person with the ball must resume passing the ball around the circle.
- The object of the game is for the person to finish naming the six things before the ball travels all the way around the circle.
- If the person is unable to name six things before the ball comes back to him or her, he or she must switch places with the person in the middle. If he or she is able to name six things, the person that was already in the middle must once again close his or her eyes while the ball is being passed around.



Material

None.

Purpose

Demonstrates the group learning process, shows that each of us has knowledge to share with the group and reveals that we can all learn new things from one another.

How to Play

- The facilitator instructs the group that they will pair up and teach their partner something new that they do not know.
- The group is instructed to teach their partners anything they desire.
- After a few minutes, the group will get back together and share what new things they learned.

THE SUN SHINES ON



Materials

Chairs set up in a circle.

Purpose

This game allows participants to share information about themselves, while at the same time connecting with others in the group. Establishing that people in the group have certain things in common with each other promotes empathy and understanding. An important part of this game is establishing safety, both physical and personal. Rules include no running, no pushing and the freedom to choose the level at which you participate (that is, let participants know that they don't have to reveal anything about themselves that they don't want to, and that they always have the option to remain seated).

How to play

- Participants make statements that are true about themselves and learn how many others share the same characteristics.
- The game rules are simple: the dynamic resembles “Musical Chairs,” where there is one less chair than players. To set up the game, get all participants sitting in a circle with no extra chairs. The facilitator, who is standing and has no chair, is the first to “play.”
- The person standing makes a statement that begins with the phrase, “The sun shines on...,” followed by a statement that is true about him or herself. The statement can be something that you have experienced, something you like to do, something embarrassing that has happened to you, etc. For example: A guitarist might say, “The sun shines on anyone who plays guitar.” A parent might say, “The sun shines on anyone with children.” A sports fan might say “The sun shines on anyone who loves to watch basketball.”
- As soon as the statement has been made, every person for whom the statement is true must jump out of his or her seat and find a new available seat. The person who made the statement is almost always able to grab a seat, which leaves a new person standing once all seats are filled. That person must then make a “Sun shines on” statement to continue the game.

Relaxation Exercises

CONSCIOUS RELAXATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BREATH



Conscious relaxation is a tool to use to center and calm oneself in order to keep the mind and body focused and functioning well. Conscious breathing is the key to relaxation. Through a physiological reaction—the release of carbon dioxide when exhaling—the muscles naturally release and relax. Taking good, deep breaths helps the muscles to relax naturally.

The problem is that when we are stressed we tend to carry our tension in our bodies. We keep our shoulders stiff and our stomachs sucked in and held tight. When we have tense upper and middle bodies, our ribcage and diaphragm have no room to expand for good deep breaths. So we take short, shallow breaths and our bodies don't get the oxygen they need.

Put one hand on your belly and one on your chest. Take a deep breath and notice which hand rises. If you notice the hand on your chest rising, then focus on your belly—that hand should rise as you take a deep breath down into your belly. Take a few moments to practice breathing deeply and consciously.

PEACOCK FEATHERS



Materials

One large peacock feather per person (or per pair).

Purpose

This activity allows participants to focus on being present. It is a task that requires concentration.

How to Play

- Allow participants to select a feather of their choice, but explain that they will have to return the feathers at the end of the activity.
- The facilitator demonstrates how to balance the feather on the palm or finger, by being mobile and focusing on the top of the feather.
- Allow the group to practice balancing the feathers independently.
- After a few minutes ask group members to find a partner and practice transferring the feather between one another.
- Explain that it is easiest to catch the feather while looking at the base of it, but to regain balance they should refocus their attention to the top of the feather.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



The following script is one that can be used to guide the group. You may want to put on meditative, calming music. Read the script slowly in a calm voice. This script can be modified in any way to make it more comfortable for the facilitator and group.

Sit up in your chair, with your feet on the floor and your back resting against the back of the chair. Place your hands in your lap. Close your eyes. This is a time to open your body and center your mind.

Breathe slowly and deeply. Bring one hand to your belly. Notice the rise and fall of your belly as you breathe.

Now take your other hand and place it on your heart. With one hand on your belly and one hand on your heart, feel the wave of breath that runs through these two areas.

Lower your hands back down to your lap and sit in simple relaxation. As you breathe, we will do some progressive muscle relaxation so that you can feel the difference between tension in your muscles and relaxation.

We are often not aware when we hold tension in parts of our body.

Take a deep breath in, hold it and curl your toes tight, feel the tension... one, two, three... now release the toes, breathe out and feel the difference between tension and relaxation... feel the blood coming down into the feet and toes. Now move to your leg muscles... take a deep breath in, hold it and flex your leg muscles as tight as you can... one, two, three... now exhale and release your legs, feel them relax.

Now with your arms at your sides, bend your elbows and bring your arms tight alongside your upper body. Take a deep breath in, hold it and clench your hands into fists... one, two, three... and release. Let your arms drop, feel the relaxation in your arms and hands as you open them completely. Now take in a breath and shrug your shoulders up toward your ears, as tight as you can, hold it... one, two, three... and release. Feel the weight lifted from your shoulders. Now scrunch up the muscles in your face, take another deep breath and hold it tight... one, two, three... and relax.

Feel the calmness in your face. Notice the calm in your mind and body. Make a commitment this day to be good to yourself.

Variation of Progressive Muscle Relaxation—“30 Second Relaxation Technique”:



This technique can be done either standing or sitting in a circle with both feet firmly planted on the ground. The facilitator should ask the group to:

1. Close their eyes.
2. Take a deep breath.
3. Tense up all of their muscles from head to toe.
4. Exhale while letting go and loosening up their muscles.
5. Think of something that makes them smile.
6. Ask group members, “Do you feel that instant tingling feeling in your body as you exhale and release the tension in your muscles?”
7. Repeat one to six times.

YOGA STRETCH

Materials

None.

Purpose

This activity allows participants to open up their bodies, clear their minds, get blood flowing and move as a group. Ask participants to join you, standing in a circle. Lead them through the following gestures, flowing from one movement into the next, either silently or with simple instructions:

- “Up to the sky” (extend arms upward, with palms facing up, looking toward the sky)
- “Bring that energy into your heart” (bring hands to rest on your heart)
- “Share it with others” (arms out and wide on either side of the body, palms facing outward, as if preparing for a hug)
- “Bring that energy in” (place hands back on your heart)
- “And down to the ground” (arms drop slowly to your side, palms facing downward).



Appendix D

SELECTED POEMS



Think in ways you've never thought before.
If the phone rings, think of it as carrying a message
Larger than anything you've ever heard,
Vaster than a hundred lines of Yeats.

When someone knocks at your door, think that he's about
to give you something large; tell you you're forgiven,
Or that it's not necessary for you to work all the time, or that
It's been decided that if you lie down, the world will go on.

— Robert Bly

The Way It Is

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.
You don't ever let go of the thread.

— William Stafford

Life is no straight and easy corridor along
which we travel free and unhampered,
but a maze of passages,
through which we must seek our way,
lost and confused, now and again
checked in a blind alley.

But always, if we have faith,
a door will open for us,
not perhaps one that we ourselves
would ever have thought of,
but one that will ultimately prove good for us.

— A.J. Cronin

Until One Is Committed

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the
chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness.
Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there
is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which
kills countless ideas, splendid plans: that the
moment one definitely commits oneself, then
Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur
to help one that would never otherwise have
occurred. A whole stream of events issues from
the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of
unforeseen incidents and meetings and material
assistance, which no man could have dreamed
would ever come his way.

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.

— Goethe



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