

# i SUPPORT MY FRIENDS



## PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK

A training for children and adolescents  
on how to support a friend in distress

Building on the principles of  
Psychological First Aid





The *I Support My Friends* resource kit has been published by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in partnership with Save the Children (SC)/MHPSS Collaborative and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

**First published June 2021**

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*This joint product reflects the activities of individual agencies around an issue of common concern. The principles and policies of each agency are governed by the relevant decisions of its governing body. Each agency implements the interventions described in this document in accordance with these principles and policies and within the scope of its mandate.*

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**Suggested citation:** United Nations Children’s Fund, Save the Children/MHPSS Collaborative and World Health Organization, *I Support My Friends – The Participants’ Workbook*, UNICEF, New York, 2021.

The *I Support my Friends* resource kit comprises:

- The Theory and Implementation Guide
- The Training Manual
- The Participant’s Workbook
- The Manual for Training of Facilitators and Focal Points



The resource kit is available online:

<https://www.unicef.org/protection/mental-health-psychosocial-support-in-emergencies>

**Special thanks to:** We would like to extend a special thanks to the peer reviewers: Dalia Amin, Nicole Bohl, Marcia Brophy (International Medical Corps), Lucia Castelli (AVSI Foundation), Cristian De Luca and Camilla Lodi (Norwegian Refugee Council), Ali Etrati Khosroshahi, Naru Fukuchi (Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Centre), Brighton Gwezera (REPSSI), Bayan Hakki (Istanbul Bilgi University – Trauma and Disaster Mental Health Department), Takashi Izutsu (The University of Tokyo), Lynne Jones (FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University), Alison Joyner (Plan International Norway), Yoshiharu Kim (Japan National Centre of Neurology and Psychiatry), Yuzuru Kawashima (National Hospital Organisation Disaster Medical Centre), Michelle May (Education Cannot Wait), Peter Ventevogel (UNHCR), and Louise Vinther-Larsen (Danish Red Cross), and the Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

**From *Proteknôn*:** Stephanie Delaney, Judi Fairhom, Laurene Graziani, Sara Lim Bertrand, Claire O’Kane, and Melinda Van Zyl.

**From *Save the Children*:** Joy Abi Habib (Lebanon), May Aoun, Aida Bekic and Jennifer Gayles (United States), Anke Dietrich (Germany), Anne Filorizzo Pla (Denmark), Christian Ghislain Popotre (Global), Rana Kharrat (Lebanon), Elyse Leonard (Norway), Angela Mazer Marshall (Syria), Irem Mirzai and Mehmet Sercan Erbecer (Turkey), Rebecca Nakaweesi (South Sudan), Marta Petagna and Natalia Tapies (Middle East and Eastern Europe), Rebecca Smith (United Kingdom), Arz Stephan (Yemen), and Katy Wall (East and Southern Africa).

**From the *World Health Organization*:** Batool Fatima, Jennifer Hall, Daniel Han, Aiysha Malik, and Nigel Rollins.

**Acknowledgements:** We acknowledge all the Save the Children staff and volunteers who helped to pilot the materials. From SC Japan: Maiko Fujii Souta Ichikawa, Seiji Konno, Daiki Sawada, and Tomoko Tsuda, along with Ryoko Ohtaki (Japan National Centre of Neurology and Psychiatry) and Tomoko Uchida (Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Centre). From SC Jordan: Israa Abujamous, Rami Inkheili and Rana Sabha. From SC Mongolia: Byambasuren Batmunkh, Darikhand Bayar, Davaasuren Chuluunbat, Oyunmaa Enkhbat, Dulamsuren Erdenebileg, Hiroshi Okamoto, Tsedendamba Peljee, Narantuya Rentsendorj, Tamir Sandagsuren, Togtokhmaa Zagir. From SC Turkey: Basak Ertem and Mehmet Sercan Erbecer.

We also acknowledge all the children, youth, parents, caregivers and facilitators in Japan, Jordan, Mongolia and Turkey who helped to develop these materials.

**Design & production:**

the Limelight Productions - [www.thelimelight.eu](http://www.thelimelight.eu)

# I SUPPORT MY FRIENDS



**My name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of my Focal Point:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Dear Participant,

We are very happy to introduce you to the *I Support My Friends* training!

When a young person goes through a difficult situation, it often helps to get support from a friend. In other words, **you are an important source of support for your friends, just as they are for you!**

This training in psychological first aid is guided by three simple principles: **LOOK, LISTEN and LINK**. We will use these principles and learn how we can notice when another child, or 'peer', is not feeling well. We will also learn how we can support them through listening and showing empathy and how we can help them connect to further adult support. It is not easy to help another person who is sad or upset. We will therefore also learn about **ways to take care of ourselves as 'peer supporters'**.

This is your personal **workbook**. It contains the agenda and several work sheets and handouts, which will be used during the training. Your facilitator will guide you on when to use your workbook.

The **facilitators** of this training are here to make this a fun and safe learning experience for you. You can always ask them if you have any questions or concerns during the training.

This training could not have been developed without the feedback from other children and adolescents who have participated. You are therefore invited to share any feedback or ideas you may have during the training. This will help us to further improve it for future participants.

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# What does the word mean?

## WHAT DOES THE WORD MEAN?

In this training, we use many new words. Here is an explanation of what they mean. If you are not sure about what a word means, please ask one of the facilitators or your **Focal Point**.



### CONFIDENTIALITY:

Confidentiality means respecting other people's privacy. When a friend confides in you, you should not reveal their personal issues to other people or talk about them behind their back. It is important to let your friend know that you will keep what they tell you confidential, unless there is a risk of harm to them or others. In such situations, it is necessary to break confidentiality and seek support from the Focal Point or another trusted adult.

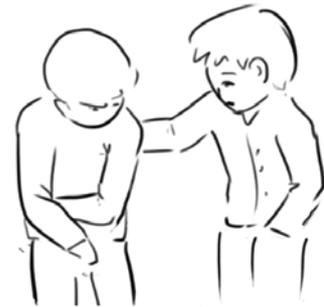


### DISTRESS:

When someone is showing reactions to a difficult experience, such as sadness, anger, worry, or in some other way is upset, we can say that this person is 'in distress'. You will hear this term used many times throughout this training. These reactions are normal and nothing to be ashamed of.

### PEER:

We can call other children or adolescents our 'peers' if they are in a similar age group to us.



### PEER SUPPORTER:

As a participant in this training, you will learn how to support other children and adolescents who are feeling sad or are upset. You and the other participants in this training are therefore known as 'peer supporters'.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID:

Helping people who are going through difficult experiences is something we do naturally and can be called 'psychological first aid' (PFA). The three main principles of PFA are: LOOK, LISTEN and LINK. For more information about what PFA is (and is not), *please see Handout 3 in this booklet.*



# Handout 1

## Session 1

# AGENDA FOR THE TRAINING I SUPPORT MY FRIENDS

**DAY 1**

Session	Title	Duration	Timing	Handouts
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction, team building and trust</b> 1.1. Pass the ball game 1.2. What we have in common 1.3. Why we are here and informed consent 1.4. Ground rules 1.5. Distribution of the Participant's Workbook	75min	09.00–10.15	Handout 1: Agenda
	Break	20min	10.15–10.35	
<b>2</b>	<b>Our community</b> 2.1. Sources of safety and support in our community	50min	10.35–11.25	
	Short break	5min	11.25–11.30	
<b>2</b>	2.2. Risks and difficult experiences of children/adolescents in our community	30min	11.30–12.00	
	Lunch break	45min	12.00–12.45	
<b>3</b>	<b>Our reactions to difficult experiences</b> 3.1. Normal reactions to difficult situations 3.2. Show me how you look when you feel...	45min	12.45–13.30	
	Break	15min	13.30–13.45	
<b>3</b>	<b>Our reactions to difficult experiences</b> 3.3. More about reactions and emotions	25min	13.45–14.10	
<b>4</b>	<b>Different forms of support</b> 4.1 What helps when going through a difficult experience?	20min	14.10–14.30	
	<b>Wrap-up of Day 1</b>	<b>30min</b>	<b>14.30–15.00</b>	
	<b>TOTAL DURATION</b>	<b>6H</b>		

**DAY 2**

Session	Title	Duration	Timing	Handouts
	<b>Welcome back and recap</b>	<b>30min</b>	<b>09:00–09:30</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>How to support my friend: LOOK</b> 5.1 Introduction to the three principles of PFA 5.2. The principle of LOOK	40min	09:30–10:10	Worksheet 1: <i>The Principles of PFA</i>
	Break	20min	10:10–10:30	
<b>6</b>	<b>How to support my friend: LISTEN</b> 6.1. The principle of LISTEN: Initial contact 6.2. Game: What has happened?	50min	10:30–11:20	Worksheet 1: <i>The Principles of PFA</i>
	Break	10min	11:20–11:30	
<b>3</b>	<b>How to support my friend: LISTEN</b> 6.3. The principle of LISTEN: Active listening	30min	11:30–12:00	Worksheet 2: <i>Good listening skills</i>
	Lunch break	45min	12:00–12:45	
<b>6</b>	<b>How to support my friend: LISTEN</b> 6.4. Practice active listening skills	45min	12:45–13:30	
	Break	15min	13:30–13:45	
<b>7</b>	<b>How to support my friend: LINK</b> 7.1. The principle of LINK 7.2. The role of the Focal Point 7.3. Other trusted adults in my network	55min	13:45–14:40	Worksheet 1: <i>The Principles of PFA</i>  Worksheet 3: <i>Details of your Focal Point</i>  Worksheet 4: <i>My flower of support</i>
	<b>Wrap-up of Day 2</b>	<b>20min</b>	<b>14:40–15:00</b>	
	<b>TOTAL DURATION</b>	<b>6H</b>		

**DAY 3**

Session	Title	Duration	Timing	Handouts
	<b>Welcome back and recap</b>	<b>30min</b>	<b>09:00–09:30</b>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Confidentiality</b> 8.1. Game: Passing on the message 8.2. When can we not promise confidentiality?	50min	09:30–10:20	
	Break	20min	10:20–10:40	
<b>8</b>	<b>Confidentiality</b> 8.3. Review and discussion of scenarios	30min	10:40–11:10	
	Break	10min	11:10–11:20	
<b>9</b>	<b>Self-care and setting personal boundaries</b>	40min	11:20–12:00	<i>Handout 2: Strategies to take care of yourself as a peer supporter</i>
	Lunch break	45min	12:00–12:45	
<b>10</b>	<b>Practice PFA: role-plays</b>	75min	12:45–14:00	<i>Handout 3: What is peer support?</i>
	Break	15min	14:00–14:15	
<b>11</b>	<b>Closing activity, evaluation and wrap-up</b>	45min	14:15–15:00	
<b>TOTAL DURATION</b>		<b>6H</b>		

# Handout 2

## Session 9

### **STRATEGIES TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AS A PEER SUPPORTER**

# STRATEGIES TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AS A PEER SUPPORTER

## 1 KNOW AND MAINTAIN YOUR BOUNDARIES

This is very important as a peer supporter. Try to be as honest as you can with your friend from the very beginning about what you can and cannot do. Saying no or protecting your own personal boundaries does not mean you stop being a caring or supportive friend. You can say, for example, *“I can hear this is something really difficult. I am afraid I will not be able to help you (alone) with this. Besides, what you are telling me seems like a problem that only an adult can help you with.”* If the person starts to confide in you more and more and you start to feel overwhelmed, it is never too late to maintain your own well-being. You can say: *“I care about you very much and I would like to help you. But I am starting to feel that this is too much for us to handle alone. I will continue to be your friend, but how about we try to find someone else who you can talk to as well?”*

## 2 THINK POSITIVELY

Accept that some things cannot be changed and focus on the things that can. Try to focus your thoughts on the positive things about yourself and your life, rather than the negative ones. Remember that we always learn something that can help us in the future, even from the most difficult experiences.

## 3 TRY TO HAVE SOME FUN EVERY DAY

Remember your sense of humour and ability to laugh with other people. It is important to allow yourself to laugh without feeling guilty about it if you or a friend is going through a difficult time.

## 4 BRING LEARNING, FUN AND CARING INTO YOUR LIFE

Life is not only about study, work or other serious activities, and it is not just about fun and leisure either. Both elements are important. Strive towards a healthy balance in your life. Bring activities that you enjoy into your life, such as reading books, listening to music, playing games or practising your hobbies.

## STRATEGIES TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AS A PEER SUPPORTER *(cont.)*

### 5 RECOGNIZE YOUR LIMITS

While there are many things that you can do to help someone, there are also many things that are outside your control. Focus on what you can do to make the situation better but remind yourself that you cannot fix everything. Being a good, non-judgemental listener is already helpful.

### 6 BE ACTIVE

Physical exercise is important to help prevent feelings of sadness, worry or anxiety. Find exercises that you enjoy, such as walking, running, dancing, swimming or playing football. All kinds of sports are recommended, but make sure you stay safe when doing them.

### 7 LEARN HOW TO RELAX

Meditation and yoga are techniques that might help you to feel calm and relaxed. Prayer or other spiritual practices may be helpful to some. Another alternative is spending time in nature. This could be bird watching or looking at plants or flowers. Focus on something that keeps you in the present moment.

### 8 GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Sleep is essential for your concentration and for your mental and emotional well-being. Make sure you get a good night's sleep and that it is enough for your body's needs. Turn off all electronic devices at least an hour before you go to bed as the light from these devices can interfere with your ability to sleep.

### 9 EAT AS HEALTHILY AS YOU CAN

Eat as regularly and as healthily as you can. This means eating lots of fruit and vegetables and not too much sugar and caffeine. This is important for your mental and physical health.

## STRATEGIES TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AS A PEER SUPPORTER *(cont.)*

### **10 BE READY TO ASK FOR HELP**

Remember the people you trust in your own network of adults. Tell them about what you have learned from I Support My Friends, ask them if they can be your 'safe adult', and explain that you may need their support. Make sure that you have their contact details safely stored with you and that you know how to access them. Sharing feelings with a trusted person is a healthy way to relieve stress. Sometimes, it is enough just to talk to a person you trust, but in some situations you may need professional help from a social worker or psychologist. If you discuss your situation as a peer supporter, remember to respect the confidentiality of those involved.

### **11 SPEND TIME WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

Keep socially active by engaging in activities with your friends and family. Listen to music with them. Exercise and do hobbies together. Singing and dancing are good ways to ease stress. There may also be other community activities that you enjoy and that provide support for you.

### **12 AVOID NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES**

Avoid taking alcohol or drugs as a means of reducing stress. These might have a temporary effect in terms of lifting your mood or making you feel more relaxed, but the longer-term effects can be damaging to your mind and body.

# Handout 3

# Session 10

## WHAT IS PEER SUPPORT?

## WHAT IS PEER SUPPORT?

### Peer support is...



Identifying a child or adolescent (a peer) in distress. For example, if they are sad, upset or showing signs that they are not ok.

Finding out about the peer's needs and concerns, by asking simple questions and listening actively.

Comforting the peer and helping them feel calm.

Giving practical care and support that does not make the peer feel worse.

Helping the peer to access basic needs, such as food, water, protection and information.

Helping the peer to connect to information, social supports (including family or friends) or services.

Protecting your peer from further harm, which means breaking the principle of confidentiality if necessary.

Prioritising your own safety and well-being as a peer supporter.

Asking for support from the Focal Point or other adult you trust.

### Peer support is not...



Something only adults or professionals can provide.

Asking someone to tell you in detail what has happened to them if it makes them upset to talk about it.

Pressing your peer to tell you their story.

Professional counselling or therapy.

A time when the peer supporter is expected to act alone or have solutions to all the problems.

Being a psychologist or trying to 'fix' your friend.

Keeping the peer's story secret, if they could be in danger or at risk of harm.

Putting yourself at any form of risk or in a situation where you feel overwhelmed.

Something that the peer supporter is doing all alone.

# Worksheet 1

## Session 5, 6, 7

### **THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID**

# THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

Please complete the table below as you learn about the principles of psychological first aid. Your facilitator will let you know when to work on this.

## Principle

## Actions

### LOOK

What are the different actions for this principle?



1:

2:

3:

### LISTEN

Helpful questions to ask:



### LINK

What are some important things to remember?



1. *I am not expected to have all the solutions. I should ask the Focal Point for help with linking the peer to further support as needed.*

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

# Worksheet 2

## Session 6

**GOOD  
LISTENING SKILLS**



# Worksheet 3

## Session 7

### **DETAILS OF YOUR FOCAL POINT**

## DETAILS OF YOUR FOCAL POINT

-----  
Name and number  
of my Focal Point

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When is our first  
follow-up meeting?

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Location:

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How often will we  
meet after that?

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# Worksheet 4

## Session 7

### MY FLOWER OF SUPPORT











