



# THRIVING THROUGH PLAY

A mental health and psychosocial support classroom approach for educators in crisis-affected settings

Published by the MHPSS Collaborative, Copenhagen, March 2024

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### **Suggested citation**

MHPSS Collaborative, *Thriving through Play: A mental health and psychosocial support classroom approach for educators in crisis-affected settings*, Copenhagen, 2024

### **Thank you!**

This training guide would not have been possible without the support and passion of the educators, authorities and organizations in Ukraine that participated in its development, roll-out and evaluation.

Your remarkable courage, strength and commitment to nurturing and educating the children under your care is a genuine source of inspiration. Thank you.

### **About the LEGO Foundation**

The LEGO Foundation is dedicated to building a future where learning through play empowers children to become creative, engaged, lifelong learners. Its work is about re-defining play and re-imagining learning. In collaboration with thought leaders, influencers, educators and parents, the LEGO Foundation aims to equip, inspire and activate champions for learning through play.

Learn more at [www.learningthroughplay.com](http://www.learningthroughplay.com).

### **About the MHPSS Collaborative**

The MHPSS Collaborative is a global hub for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), research, innovation, learning and advocacy. We connect key academic and humanitarian actors with local civil society to give children, youth and families in fragile and humanitarian settings the possibility to thrive.

Our vision is a world that protects and cares for the mental health and wellbeing of children, youth and families.

The MHPSS Collaborative is hosted by Save the Children Denmark.

Learn more at [www.mhpsscollaborative.org](http://www.mhpsscollaborative.org)

The LEGO Foundation



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# FOREWORD

In 2022, 468 million children across the world lived in areas affected by armed conflict. That means that one in every six children in the world is living, growing, playing and learning in the shadow of war and conflict.<sup>1</sup>

The LEGO Foundation has a long-standing partnership with authorities and civil society organizations in Ukraine to bring learning through play to children across the country. This partnership has grown even stronger since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its devastating effects on children's wellbeing and education.

*"Children, first of all, began to need support, warmth, and then education. [...] What will the children of war grow up to be? A teacher must do everything to minimize the trauma of war for children. It is necessary to make a lot of effort to return to this generation the motivation to study [...], despite everything. We are responsible for the future of our children."*

Galyna D., Ukrainian secondary school teacher

Galyna and her fellow teachers in conflict-affected areas across the world have a crucial role to play in supporting the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of their students.

Responding to the urgent need of Ukrainian children, the LEGO Foundation, the MHPSS Collaborative and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education created a programme to better equip teachers to support

their students through play-based approaches to learning and mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.

In 2022 and 2023, teacher trainers and in-service and pre-service teachers across Ukraine participated in the training: "Thriving through Play: A mental health and psychosocial support classroom approach for educators in crisis-affected settings".

The training provides educators with the knowledge, skills and motivation to support their students' mental health and wellbeing using play-based strategies. It is based on four guiding principles: (1) wellbeing at the centre; (2) practical; (3) conflict sensitive; and (4) play-based and provides practical tools and activities for teachers to promote student wellbeing, respond to distress, and nurture their own wellbeing. Play-based strategies guide the entire training, including opportunities to draw, play and co-create.

With this training guide, we hope to provide teachers in conflict settings across the world with the knowledge and skills to support students' mental health and wellbeing in the classroom, using conflict sensitive learning approaches and learning through play.

**Marie Dahl**, Director, MHPSS Collaborative

**Paul St. John Frisoli**, Team Lead, Children on the Move,  
The LEGO Foundation

<sup>1</sup> [www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)



# INTRODUCTION AND HOW TO USE THIS TRAINING GUIDE

Welcome to the training guide for *Thriving through Play: A mental health and psychosocial support classroom approach for educators in crisis-affected settings*.

This guide includes three main sections:

- How to use the training guide
- How to conduct teacher training on play-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)
- About the monitoring and evaluation tools.

Before conducting a training using this guide, please review all modules and additional content.

Collect all necessary resources and make any adaptations to match your training context. This includes adapting the schedule for the training. On pages 9 and 10, we include two sample schedules to adjust for full-day or partial-day schedules. Each training day should include the introductory and conclusion activities described on page 18.

## Glossary

The training provides teachers with activities and strategies they can use with students in their classrooms and also with children in general. This can lead to confusion around terminology. In this guide, we use the following terms:

**Facilitators:** the person or people delivering the training

**Participants:** those participating in the training

**Educator:** participants in their roles as teachers and education professionals

**Students:** children the participants teach.

## Icons

The training consists of modules, each of which is divided into sessions and activities with the following icons.



**Timing**



**Adaptation for online delivery**



**Materials needed**



**Key Point**



**Arrangement**



**Learning**



## Facilitators

Whenever possible, each training should be conducted by two facilitators. Facilitators should have a background in MHPSS and/or social emotional learning (SEL) and experience as a teacher trainer. Facilitators should also be trained in psychological first aid (PFA) or the equivalent, to address any mental health concerns that arise during the training. Ideally, facilitators and participants should speak the same language. If this is not possible, a trained interpreter must co-facilitate with the facilitators.

## Participants

Participants in this training include teachers, school psychologists and other education professionals who work with children affected by conflict and crisis. The training can be adapted for pre-service or in-service training and is designed for a maximum of 20 to 30 participants.

## Adaptation

This training guide aims to be as generic as possible. But since all conflicts, countries, cultures, education systems and contexts differ, we strongly encourage facilitators to adapt the examples and case studies to make them more relevant and appropriate to the context in which it is being delivered.



# ADAPTING THE TRAINING FOR ONLINE DELIVERY

Ideally the training should be delivered face to face. However, in a conflict or natural disaster, or if participants live far from each other, this may not be practical or safe. In such cases, the training – or parts of it – can be delivered online. Each module has tips on how to do this.

There are several platforms that can be used for online training. We recommend using a platform the facilitator and participants are familiar with.

Many of the activities in the training require participants to work together in smaller groups and to interact in different ways.

For the best possible training experience, we recommend that the platform supports the following features:

- Chat function
- Breakout rooms
- Reactions (such as raising a hand to wait for one's turn, sending a "thumbs up" to indicate agreement etc.)
- Video.

Many activities use a virtual board to share text and pictures, draw, and work collaboratively in real time. Not all platforms provide this option, or do so only in premium versions. If your platform doesn't support a virtual board, there are free options available, such as Google Jamboard.

For use when adaptations are not provided, the table below provides some examples of adaptations for in-person vs. online training.

In person	Online
Use a flipchart or board	Share a slide on your screen
Divide participants into groups	Put participants in breakout rooms
Display something in the classroom	Display on the virtual classroom and in the background on your screen
Build something in the classroom	Instruct participants to build something at home, using the materials they have, then send a photo of it (or direct their camera to it)
Play a group game	Find a virtual/online game that achieves the same learning objectives, and get participants to play with one another virtually

## Timing of breaks online

Participating in and facilitating training sessions online requires a different level of focus and concentration than face-to-face trainings. Therefore, when planning online sessions, make sure to allocate time for more frequent breaks. Depending on the flow of the session and the energy of the group, a short break every hour or hour-and-a-half is recommended.





# STRUCTURE AND TIMING OF THE TRAINING

This training consists of five modules and a survey before and after the training:

- Pre-Training Survey (20 minutes)
- **Module 1:** Introduction to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in the Classroom (2 hours, 35 minutes)
- **Module 2:** Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing and Play (2 hours)
- **Module 3:** Effects of Conflict on Children’s Wellbeing and Learning (1 hour, 30 minutes)
- **Module 4.1:** Role of the Teacher in Supporting Wellbeing – an Introduction (30 minutes)
- **Module 4.2:** Creating a Predictable and Playful Learning Environment (2 hours, 15 minutes)
- **Module 4.3:** Positive Behaviour Support (2 hours, 30 minutes)
- **Module 4.4:** Promoting Socially Interactive Learning Environments (2 hours, 30 minutes)
- **Module 4.5:** Building Coping and Social Emotional Skills Through Play (2 hours, 30 minutes)
- **Module 4.6:** Talking about Crisis (2 hours, 30 minutes)
- **Module 4.7:** Getting Additional Support (1 hour, 30 minutes)
- **Module 5:** Teachers’ Wellbeing (2 hours, 30 minutes)
- Post-Training Survey (20 minutes)

The training is modular and can be scheduled to fit the availability and resources of the facilitators and participants.

We recommend following these principles when creating a training schedule:

- A full day of training should not exceed 7 hours, including breaks.
- A half day of training should not exceed 3.5 hours, including breaks.
- Each training day should include the Daily Introduction Routine (20 minutes) and the Daily Conclusion Routine (20 minutes).
- Make sure to schedule regular breaks, noting that online training may require more frequent breaks than face to face trainings.





## Suggested schedule, half day training – 10 days

Day	Topic	Time
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Training Survey</li> <li>Module 1: Introduction to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in the Classroom</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	3 hours, 15 minutes
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>Module 2: Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing and Play</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	2 hours, 40 minutes
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>Module 3: Effects of Conflict on Children’s Wellbeing and Learning</li> <li>Module 4.1: Role of the Teacher in Supporting Wellbeing – an Introduction</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	2 hours, 40 minutes
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>Module 4.2: Creating a Predictable and Playful Learning Environment</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	2 hours, 55 minutes
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>Module 4.3: Positive Behaviour Support</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	3 hours, 10 minutes

Day	Topic	Time
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>Module 4.4: Promoting Socially Interactive Learning Environments</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	3 hours, 10 minutes
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>Module 4.5: Building Coping and Social Emotional Skills Through Play</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	3 hours, 10 minutes
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>Module 4.6: Talking about Crisis</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	3 hours, 10 minutes
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>Module 4.7: Getting Additional Support</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	2 hours, 10 minutes
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>Module 5: Teachers’ Wellbeing</li> <li>Post-Training Survey</li> <li>Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	3 hours, 30 minutes

**Remember** to add time for breaks to the times indicated in the suggested schedule.



## Suggested schedule, full-day training – 5 days

Day	Topic	Time
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-Training Survey</li> <li>● Module 1: Introduction to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in the Classroom</li> <li>● Module 2: Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing and Play</li> <li>● Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	5 hours, 15 minutes
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>● Module 3: Effects of Conflict on Children’s Wellbeing and Learning</li> <li>● Module 4.1: Role of the Teacher in Supporting Wellbeing – an Introduction</li> <li>● Module 4.2: Creating a Predictable and Playful Learning Environment</li> <li>● Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	4 hours, 55 minutes
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>● Module 4.3: Positive Behaviour Support</li> <li>● Module 4.4: Promoting Socially Interactive Learning Environments</li> <li>● Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	5 hours, 40 minutes

Day	Topic	Time
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>● Module 4.5: Building Coping and Social Emotional Skills Through Play</li> <li>● Module 4.6: Talking about Crisis</li> <li>● Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	5 hours, 40 minutes
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Daily Introduction Routine</li> <li>● Module 4.7: Getting Additional Support</li> <li>● Module 5: Teachers’ Wellbeing</li> <li>● Post-Training Survey</li> <li>● Daily Conclusion Routine</li> </ul>	5 hours

**Remember** to add time for breaks to the times indicated in the suggested schedule.



# MATERIALS USED DURING THE TRAINING

Throughout the training you will need different materials, props and handouts.

## Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio

The Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio is a notebook in which each participant can write down notes and reflections during the training. We recommend that participants are provided with a dedicated notebook for this. Online participants are encouraged to create a specific document for their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

## Ball

A ball that can be thrown indoors between participants. If a suitable ball isn't available, a t-shirt can be knotted up to form a ball.

## Stationery

Blank paper, card, markers and pens

## Flip chart

Flip chart or card, a blackboard or whiteboard

## Toy bricks

LEGO bricks or another type of toy brick or block that can be used for building simple models

## Two containers

Two jars, bowls or boxes for throwing small balled up pieces of paper into

## Guided meditations and mindfulness videos

UCLA Health offers a range of free guided meditations in a variety of languages. They are available as sound and text from the website or through an app: [www.uclahealth.org](http://www.uclahealth.org)

International Rescue Committee's Healing Classrooms programme offers a range of guided mindfulness activities on their YouTube channel in English and Arabic: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

## P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank

The Play Opportunities for Wellness and Education Resource (P.O.W.E.R.) is a collection of 100 gender-responsive play-based learning activities. The 100 games are available as animated videos and PDFs. They support life skills such as communication, empathy, creativity and confidence; promote psychosocial wellbeing; teach children how to process difficult emotions; and show them how to be inclusive of peers of all backgrounds, genders and abilities.

The games are designed for children of varying ages, and are meant to be played in classrooms, community settings or at home, with few to no materials required. Each game includes a play-based activity with one key learning, and guidance for how to encourage girls and



boys to reflect on what they've learned, connect it to their own experiences, and apply it in their lives.

The games are available as animated videos and PDFs in English, French and Arabic through the Right to Play website:

[www.righttoplay.com](http://www.righttoplay.com)

If possible, we recommend distributing a copy of the PDF game bank to each participant. Alternatively, participants can access the online versions via the links provided in Handout 9: About the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank.

## Handouts

The training includes handouts to support participants' learning, help them to remember key concepts, and provide guidance on how to conduct activities, etc. Some of the handouts have been created specifically for this training, others were created and made available by other organisations or for use in other contexts.

The handouts can be found at the end of the training manual and on the MHPSS Collaborative's website: [www.mhpsscollaborative.org](http://www.mhpsscollaborative.org)

The handouts can be shared electronically with participants or printed and distributed during the training as and when participants need them.

### Handout 1: Parachute Activity

(Every training day)

Guide for conducting the parachute activity, which is used at the beginning and end of each training session. Adapted from the International Rescue Committee Safe Healing and Learning Space (SHLS) Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Lesson Plan Bank:

[www.rescue.app.box.com](http://www.rescue.app.box.com)

### Handout 2: Guiding Principles for Play-Based MHPSS in the Classroom

(Module 1)

An overview of the four guiding principles for the training

### Handout 3: MHPSS Intervention Pyramid

(Modules 2 and 4.7)

An adapted version of the intervention pyramid from the *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings* (2007)

### Handout 4: Learning to Cope Through Play

(Module 2)

A short introduction to playful learning as an approach to support children's coping during times of heightened stress and adversity developed by the LEGO Foundation

### Handout 5: Characteristics of Playful Experiences

(Modules 2 and 4.5)

An explanation of the five characteristics of playful experiences. Developed by the LEGO Foundation

### Handout 6: Common Signs of Psychosocial Distress in Children

(Modules 3 and 4.7)

A list of common signs of psychosocial distress in children affected by crisis adapted from UNICEF: *Common signs of psychosocial distress in children* (2022)

### Handout 7: Daily Routines for the Classroom

(Module 4.2)

Three activities to create daily routines in the classroom: Morning Circle Time; Do Now Activities; and Reflection: Rose, Thorn and Bud



### **Handout 8: Steps to Apply Positive Discipline**

**(Module 4.3)**

A tool to help educators reflect before taking action in response to undesired behaviour, from International Rescue Committee: *Safe Healing and Learning Spaces Toolkit* (2016)

### **Handout 9: About the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank**

**(Modules 4.4 and 4.5)**

Description of and links to the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank.

### **Handout 10: Let's talk about it: Check-in Guidance**

**(Module 4.6)**

Instructions on how to facilitate a check-in session with children when they arrive back at school or another activity space that was closed due to an ongoing crisis.

### **Handout 11: School Wellbeing Support Map**

**(Module 4.7)**

A template for participants to map out resources that can provide additional support to students and educators in and around their school

### **Handout 12: School Wellbeing Support Map – Example**

**(Module 4.7)**

An example of a filled-in school wellbeing support map

### **Handout 13: Conceptual Framework for Teacher Wellbeing**

**(Module 5)**

From: Falk, D., Varni, E., Johna, J. F., & Frisoli, P. (2019). *Landscape review: Teacher well-being in low resource, crisis, and conflict-affected settings*. Education Equity Research Initiative

### **Handout 14: Mindfulness Script**

**(Module 5)**

A script for a short mindfulness exercise and links to additional online resources for mindfulness in the classroom

### **Handout 15: Four Steps for Teacher Learning Circles**

**(Module 5)**

From: Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies. (2018). *Teachers in Crisis Contexts Peer Coaching*. [www.inee.org](http://www.inee.org)

### **Handout 16: Self-Care Plan Worksheet**

**(Module 5)**

A worksheet for participants to create their own self-care plans.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation Tools**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Tool 1: Pre- and Post-Training Survey**

**(Before and after the training)**

A survey to be filled in by participants twice, once before and once after the training, to assess their knowledge, attitudes and skills.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Tool 2: Training Feedback**

**(Immediately after the training)**

A short survey to be filled in by participants immediately after the training about how they experienced the training.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Tool 3: Follow-up Feedback**

**(Four to six months after the training)**

A survey to be filled in by participants four to six months after the training to learn how they have used the knowledge and skills gained through the training in their classrooms.



# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring the training, *Thriving through Play: A mental health and psychosocial support classroom approach for educators in crisis-affected settings*, is necessary to understand and evaluate the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained by participants, the effects on their students, and any challenges and opportunities. By using the three tools recommended below and the learnings from their findings, the training can continue to be improved.

Tool	Implementation Timing	Purpose
<b>Pre- and post-training survey</b> <a href="https://bit.ly/TtPsurvey">https://bit.ly/TtPsurvey</a>	Immediately before and after training	Assess participants' knowledge, perceived skills and attitudes about MHPSS before and after the training. The aim is to assess the progress of the group of participants, not to evaluate the individual participants.
<b>Training feedback form</b> <a href="https://bit.ly/TtPTrainingFeedback">https://bit.ly/TtPTrainingFeedback</a>	Immediately after training	Participants' experience of and feedback on training
<b>Follow-up feedback form</b> <a href="https://bit.ly/TtPfollow-up">https://bit.ly/TtPfollow-up</a>	4+ months after training	Impact of training on teachers and students, and teachers' experiences of implementation

The **pre- and post-training surveys** should be filled out by participants before and after the training to assess their knowledge, perceived skills and attitudes about MHPSS. The facilitator should score the results to assess what impact the training has had on participants' knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The **training feedback form** provides an opportunity for participants to share their experiences of the training and any challenges it presented. It should be given to participants on the last day of the training or sent for them to complete later. Participant feedback can help inform future training.

The **follow-up feedback form** focuses on three aspects of the training: how participants received the training, how they implemented what they learned, and what they see as the effects. Participants should be interviewed, or asked to respond to the questions in writing, at least four months after completing the training. The interviews may explain the experiences, challenges and impact of the training on educators and students.

## Accessing and implementing monitoring and evaluation tools

The monitoring and evaluation forms are provided as PDF handouts in this guide. They are also available as Microsoft Forms templates (links in the table to the left) and as Word documents on [www.mhpsscollaborative.org](http://www.mhpsscollaborative.org).



## Microsoft Forms templates for the surveys

You can choose to use Microsoft Forms instead of using paper. It makes distribution, collection and analysis easier.

The Microsoft Forms templates can be accessed through the links provided in the table on page 14. Save it to your own account and distribute the link to the participants. It's important that the form is set to "everyone can respond". This way the participants can answer the forms anonymously and don't need a Microsoft account from your organisation.

To distribute the forms, you can share a link, send an email invitation or generate a QR code in the "collect answers" tab.

The forms can also be edited if you want to add additional questions or translate.

## Feedback to the MHPSS Collaborative

As the creators of this training, it is very valuable to the MHPSS Collaborative to learn more about where and how the training guide is being used and how the participants perceive the training. This helps us create better training materials in the future.

We would be grateful if you share the ANONYMISED results of the pre- and post-training surveys and the training feedback forms and any other feedback with us: [info@mhpsscollaborative.org](mailto:info@mhpsscollaborative.org)

Please also fill out a short survey about the training(s) you have conducted using this material: <https://bit.ly/TtPreport>

These steps are optional, but highly appreciated.





# DAILY INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION ROUTINES

## Daily Introduction Routine



20 minutes



Daily Schedule, Handout 1: Parachute Activity

### Introduction



5 minutes



Daily Schedule



Whole group

- ➔ Display the learning objectives and schedule for the day.
- ➔ Invite participants to review the objectives and schedule and ask questions.
- ➔ Summarize the purpose of the day's sessions.

### Parachute Opening



15 minutes



Handout 1: Parachute Activity



Whole group

- ➔ On the first day of training, follow the guidance to introduce daily routines.
- ➔ On subsequent days, invite a different participant each day to lead the group in the Parachute Opening (see Handout 1: Parachute Activity).



# Daily Conclusion Routine



20 minutes



Handout 1: Parachute Activity

## Review



5 minutes



N/A



Whole group

- ➔ Ask participants to recap the day. Remind them of any sessions they didn't recap.
- ➔ Invite participants to share any final reflections or questions from the day.
- ➔ Summarize the key takeaways and learnings from the day's sessions.

## Parachute Closing



15 minutes



Handout 1: Parachute Activity



Whole group

- ➔ On the first day of training, explain that they will now close the parachute, which should always be paired with the Parachute Opening as a way to seal the safe space.
- ➔ Remind participants that these are routines they can do with their students. Ending routines should provide an opportunity to reflect.
- ➔ On subsequent days of training, invite a different participant each day to lead the group in the Parachute Closing (see Handout 1: Parachute Activity).



# 1

## INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM



2 hours 35 minutes



Ball, paper, markers and pens, flipchart, notebooks for all participants to be used as Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, Handout 1: Parachute Activity, Handout 2: Guiding Principles for Play-based MHPSS in the Classroom



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Identify the purpose of the training session on mental health and psychosocial support principles in learning environments
- Define the guiding principles of the training
- Describe the overall training agenda and timetable.



## Introduction




30 minutes




Ball (or papers and pens), notebooks for all participants to be used as Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



Standing in a circle

- ➔ Welcome participants to the training. Introduce yourself, including your name and title, and any relevant experience.
- ➔ Explain that to introduce themselves, participants will play a game of “toss ball”, where they each introduce themselves with their name, where they are (if remote), and one strategy they’ve been using to promote wellbeing in themselves or their students.
- ➔ Invite all participants to stand in a circle. First, introduce yourself, then toss the ball to another participant to introduce themselves. Continue by tossing the ball until everyone has introduced themselves. After everyone has had a turn, invite the group to toss the ball in reverse order and together say each person’s name as the ball is tossed to them.
-  Invite participants to imagine they’re tossing a ball to the next person to introduce themselves.

- ➔ Thank everyone for introducing themselves. Explain that this helps to set the foundation for the training sessions and build trust among participants. This is important with students at all levels to create a safe and trusting space.
- ➔ Display the agenda and training goals, which are:
  - to identify the impacts of the crisis on their students and themselves, and how these may manifest differently
  - to develop strategies to promote wellbeing and deal with distress in their students, their classrooms and themselves.
- ➔ Invite a participant to read the goals aloud.
- ➔ Explain the training agenda.
- ➔ Hand out notebooks to be used as Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios and markers/art supplies to all participants. Explain that the portfolios are for them to write down any strategies or ideas they think are important. At the end of each session, there will be time to reflect and write in the portfolios, but they can also write things down throughout the training sessions.
- ➔ Make sure that there are sufficient markers and art supplies for them to decorate and write inside their portfolios. Invite them to decorate the cover.
-  Ensure that participants have a dedicated notebook for their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio or encourage them to create a dedicated electronic document for this purpose.



## Training Routines



15 minutes



Handout 1: Parachute Activity



Sitting or standing in a circle

➔ Explain that each day of the training they will follow a routine, which is one of the strategies to promote wellbeing in the classroom.

➔ Ask participants to think about the following question, and then discuss:

- Why does following the same introductory activity every day help to promote wellbeing?

Answer: It provides a sense of predictability.

➔ Explain that these activities should be routines they can also do with their students. Starting routines should provide an opportunity to check in and ending routines should provide an opportunity to reflect.

➔ Explain that they will discuss additional routines in Module 2: Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing and Play.

➔ Lead the Parachute Opening Activity (see Handout 1).

**Parachute opening**

15 minutes

Whole group

- ➔ Get all the participants to stand in a circle.
- Use the explanation below. Invite participants to imagine that they're standing in a circle and creating a virtual safe space.
- ➔ Give instructions for the parachute opening activity.  
Say:
  - "In the middle of the circle there's an imaginary folded parachute. Do you know what a parachute is?" (If they don't know what a parachute is, draw one or explain that it's like a big umbrella.)
  - "The parachute is our 'safe space'. Whatever happens or whatever anyone says when the parachute is open is confidential. That means that it stays in our safe space. We don't judge or make fun of anyone here. This is a place where everyone is safe to feel and participate."

- "The parachute's folded, so we need to open it. Come into the centre, stand close together and each grab a corner. Then move back into a wide circle so that we can open up the parachute."
- Stand up and pretend that you're rolling out a parachute from the centre. Invite participants to do the same in their remote locations.
- Say: "Imagine that our parachute is made up of lots of triangles of different colours. Choose a triangle that represents how you're feeling today. Take a moment to think about your triangle and why you've chosen that colour."
- As the facilitator, share your colour first and then ask everyone to take turns to share theirs. Do not share what it represents or why, just the colour.
- Say: "The parachute will always be here in our learning space. Remember, it's a safe space, where everything's confidential and everyone's safe to feel and participate. At the end of each session, we'll close the parachute."



## Guiding Principles



20 minutes



Handout 2: Guiding Principles



Four groups

- ➔ Explain that for the duration of the training, they will adhere to four general principles that can be adapted and used in the classroom. These are:
  - (1) wellbeing at the centre
  - (2) practical
  - (3) conflict-sensitive
  - (4) play-based.
- ➔ Divide, define and discuss:
  - Divide participants into four groups. Assign each group a principle. Provide each group with a written definition of their principle (Handout 2: Guiding Principles).
  - Allow each group five minutes to prepare a 30-second mime (silently, without saying anything) defining their principle and demonstrating its importance.
  - Bring all groups back together and ask each to present their mime, one at a time. Ask other groups to guess which principle that group is acting out.
  - Lead a discussion about each principle based on the following questions:
    - Why is this principle important for this training?
    - (How) does it apply to your classroom?

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PLAY-BASED MHPSS IN THE CLASSROOM

### Wellbeing at the centre

Wellbeing must be at the centre of any learning activity or classroom because, without wellbeing, we're unable to think clearly and learn. Supporting wellbeing has two components: promoting wellbeing and responding to distress.

### Practical

This training is practical. It's based on theory and evidence, but the tools and strategies learned can be applied immediately in your teaching and in your own life. They're intended to relate to what's happening in your classroom.

### Conflict-sensitive

This training, and your teaching needs to be conflict-sensitive. Conflict-sensitivity addresses the two-way interaction between education and conflict. The training is meant to help you minimize the negative and maximize the positive impacts of new, dangerous and traumatic experiences on education. It's also meant to minimize the negative and maximize the positive impacts of education on conflict.

### Play-based

Play has been shown to be an effective way of healing, coping and learning. This training employs the five-characteristics of play-based learning to help you support your own and your students' wellbeing:

- Meaningful
- Joyful
- Socially interactive
- Actively engaging
- Iterative



- ➔ After all groups have presented, review what they just discussed and correct any misunderstandings by saying, for example:
- *“**Wellbeing** must be at the centre of any learning activity or classroom because, without wellbeing, we are unable to think clearly and learn. Supporting wellbeing has two components: promoting wellbeing and responding to distress. Both will be addressed in depth in this training.”*
  - *“This training is **practical**. Although it is grounded in both theory and evidence, the tools and strategies discussed can be applied immediately in your teaching and in your own life.”*
  - *“This training, and your teaching, needs to focus on **conflict-sensitivity**. Conflict-sensitivity addresses the two-way interaction between education and conflict. As you and your students are exposed to new, dangerous and traumatic experiences, the training aims to help you to minimize the negative impacts of conflict and other crises on education and maximize the positive impacts. For example, conflict can cause children to be emotionally unwell, which makes it difficult for them to focus at school. In this training, we provide strategies aimed at improving students’ wellbeing and reducing the negative impacts of conflict. It is also meant to minimize the negative and maximize the positive impacts of education on the conflict. For example, education can be used to radicalize students and encourage them to engage in conflict. This training will provide you and your students with tools that can help them to heal and process the conflict in a way that supports their wellbeing and doesn’t exacerbate the conflict.”*
  - *“This training provides tools that will help you support children’s wellbeing and learning through **play**, which has been shown to be an effective way of healing, coping and learning. Effective play-based learning is meaningful, joyful, socially interactive, actively engaging and iterative. We’ll discuss these five characteristics of play in more depth in the next session. Play-based learning can take place through games, but also through other activities that help you to support your own and your students’ wellbeing.”*





## Ground Rules



50 minutes



Flipchart, markers



Whole group, small group, whole group

➔ Explain that now the group will begin practising strategies, it's time to set some ground rules that aim to create predictability and structure. This is meant to model what they would do in their classroom at the beginning of the school year and which can be referred to throughout the school year.

### Brainstorming rules

➔ Put up a flipchart and write: "CLASSROOM VALUES".



Create a virtual board on which participants can write ideas that all can see simultaneously, or just share your screen as you write down ideas.

➔ Invite participants to share ground rules for this session and the remainder of their time together and write each of them on the flipchart.

➔ Allow participants to share ground rules aloud or by writing them down and handing them to you. If there are ground rules you would like to include that they do not brainstorm, add them.

- While selecting ground rules as a group, ask participants to prioritize those they think are most important. Explain that too many rules can be overwhelming and lead participants (and students) to not believe in or follow any of them.
- Ask how these rules are similar to or different from the rules they would use in a classroom with their students and why.

*Example answer:* The rules may be similar because actions that require trust and respect are similar across age groups. They may be different because adults can understand more nuance and may also have other work obligations compared with students.

### Brainstorming responses

➔ Explain that now they should come up with three responses that get stronger each time a rule is broken (e.g., the first time students get a warning/reminder and have to restate the rule, the second time there is a small consequence, and the third time they have to do something substantial to make up for breaking the rule).


➔ Choose one rule to brainstorm the three responses as a whole group. Write the rule and the three responses on a piece of colourful paper (or however participants may want to display them in their classroom).



➔ If participants are having trouble coming up with ideas, give examples:


Ground Rule	Response 1	Response 2	Response 3
Respect others' ideas	Reminder and give apology to the other participant	Participant writes an apology letter during the next break	Conversation facilitated by the trainer in which participant confronts what they did wrong with the other participant
Do not answer phone calls/text messages/emails in the training room	Reminder to turn phone off	Phone/laptop is put on trainers' table until end of the activity	Phone/laptop is put on trainers' table until end of the day

➔ Divide participants into small groups or pairs and assign each group one or more ground rules. For each ground rule, invite participants to share what they think are appropriate responses (or consequences). Tell them that they should come up with three different responses – for the first, second and third time a rule is broken. It is important that the responses relate directly to the consequences of breaking the rule.

 Divide groups into breakout rooms to do the same activity.

### Signing the rule contract

- ➔ Each group presents their three responses.
- ➔ All participants sign the ground rules.
- ➔ Display the rules in the training room where everyone can see them.









 Allow for virtual signing (adding a virtual signature) on the shared document, and post in a location that all participants can access and which you can refer to throughout the training.

### Reflection

- ➔ Ask participants to reflect on what they did to develop ground rules and three responses.
  - What did you notice about the way in which we developed rules?
  - Why did everyone participate in developing them?
  - Why did we agree responses to the rules – and why three instead of just one?



## Key Points


-  Co-creating rules allows students (and participants) to feel that they are in control of the space and that it is responsive to their needs, which allows them to feel safe.
-  Classroom values can promote social cohesion and serve as a contract that teachers can refer back to.
-  Co-creating a set of ground rules is more likely to prevent students acting in ways that are hurtful or disruptive, since they have agreed to the rules and can feel a sense of ownership.
-  Students may feel more comfortable sharing their ideas in writing or out loud, so provide options for how they can brainstorm.
-  Writing and sharing responses on the ground rules creates predictability – the participants know what to expect if they break a rule.
-  Providing three graduated responses rather than one allows for mistakes and the righting of previous wrongs. Students won't feel scared if they make a mistake, which could cause them additional stress and emotional harm.
-  Consistently enforcing the rules and responses helps students to feel that they are being treated fairly and may help to reinforce the rules.
-  Displaying the rules serves as a constant reminder.




## Adaptation for remote vs. in-person learning

 10 minutes

 N/A

 Whole group seated, with enough space to stand up

➔ Play “sit or stand” to see who is teaching in what circumstances. Explain that you will read statements. Participants should stand if the statement applies to them and look around at who else is facing that situation.

 Participants raise their virtual hand or type in the chat, depending on the platform being used.

➔ Read the following statements. Remind participants to stand if the statement applies to them. After a few seconds, invite them to sit back down.

- I’m teaching students in person.
- I’m teaching students online.
- I’m teaching students who are in a conflict situation.
- I’m teaching students who have fled a conflict situation.
- I’m teaching students who are internally displaced.
- I’m teaching students who may be in a bunker or other safe location.
- I don’t know who I will be teaching.

➔ Thank them for standing when the statement applied to them. Acknowledge that for all of them, their teaching circumstances might change during the school year. Throughout the training, strategies will therefore include tips on how to adapt between in-person and online teaching. If there are any activities that don’t have a clear adaptation, invite participants to brainstorm during the session and/or with their colleagues after the training.

➔ Ask how the in-person activities could be adapted to be virtual. For example, if they would normally use a flipchart or a board, they can show a slide on their screen. Show the following examples, or invite them to come up with others:

In person	Online
Divide students into groups	Put students in online breakout rooms
Display something in the classroom	Display in the virtual classroom and in the background on your screen
Build something in the classroom	Ask students to build something at home, using the materials they have, and send a photo of it (or show it using their camera)
Play a group game	Find a virtual/online game that achieves the same learning objectives, and ask students to play with one another virtually



## Conclusion



15 minutes



Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, markers and art supplies



Seated with writing surface

- ➔ Participants should be seated with a desk or table in front of them.
- ➔ Remind them that the notebook for the Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio they received at the beginning of the training is where they can take notes and write down strategies and tips to use with their students and themselves.
- ➔ Recap what you've discussed (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap):
  - Routines: to start and end each training day
  - Guiding principles: wellbeing at the centre, practical, conflict-sensitive, play-based
  - Ground rules: that create consistency and enable students to feel safe in the classroom
  - Adaptation: creative ways to adapt strategies between in-person, online and hybrid teaching.



Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

- Encourage them to write the guiding principles on the first page, with ideas on how they will continue to address them in their classroom.
- If there's time, invite participants to create posters of the principles and ideas on how they might address them in the classroom. Display these throughout the rest of the training alongside the ground rules.



If there's time, invite participants to create slides on a Google slide deck – which they can refer back to, and which represent the principles and ideas on how they might address them with their students.



# 2

## MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING AND PLAY



2 hours



Flipchart, markers, pens, toy bricks (optional), Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, Handout 3: MHPSS Intervention Pyramid, Handout 4: Learning to Cope Through Play, Handout 5: Characteristics of Playful Experiences



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Define mental health and psychosocial support
- Explain the different levels of support and response
- Describe the relationship between play and mental health and psychosocial wellbeing
- Identify strategies that can be used in the classroom.



## Introduction



15–20 minutes



Flipchart, paper, markers and pens, toy bricks (optional)



Whole group

- ➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.
- ➔ Ask participants to think about a time at school or in a learning environment when they felt supported by a teacher. Ask them how that individual supported them.
  - What action did the teacher take?
  - How was the experience supportive?
  - How did it affect them?
- ➔ Give participants the option to draw the supportive experience or build it using toy bricks.
- ➔ Invite participants to share their supportive experience.

- ➔ Write the key themes (i.e., the qualities and behaviour of the teacher) arising from the participants' examples on a flipchart.
  - *Examples: non-judgmental, empathic, supportive, encouraging, created a safe space, trustworthy, genuine, etc.*
- ➔ Using the key themes that have arisen, reflect on the participants' shared experiences and discuss the important role that teachers play in supporting students' psychosocial wellbeing.

Say, for example:

*"Teachers not only influence students' learning but also their social, emotional and cognitive development. Teachers can play an important role in supporting children (e.g., those with mental health and psychosocial needs, including children with developmental disabilities or with protection vulnerabilities)."*





## Background / Theoretical Explanation



15–20 minutes



Flipchart, paper, markers



Facilitator explanation

- ➔ Guide the participants through the Wellbeing Flower exercise adapted from the IFRC Well-being Guide.<sup>2</sup>
  - Ask participants to map their own wellbeing resources by drawing a flower with seven large petals.
  - Then ask them to colour each petal with a colour(s) of their choice and to label each petal (provide them with definitions):
    - **Material:** satisfaction with a range of economic concerns
    - **Social:** the ability to communicate with others and build meaningful relationships in which one can freely be oneself
    - **Spiritual:** a connection with spirituality and/or religion
    - **Cultural:** the ability to pursue one's own interests and celebrate others' experiences, beliefs, traditions and values
    - **Mental:** how we think and feel about ourselves, and how these thoughts influence our behaviour
    - **Emotional:** the ability to have positive emotions, moods, thoughts and feelings, and adapt when confronted with adversity
    - **Biological:** the physical health of one's body.

- Each petal represents one domain of personal wellbeing. Together they represent the aspects of life where we need to feel healthy and content.
- Ask participants to reflect and write down under each of the seven areas examples of things, people or activities that give them a sense of feeling healthy and good. This is their own wellbeing flower.

- ➔ Explain that in this session they will learn about the term mental health and psychosocial support and the role of teachers in promoting and protecting the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of students. Read the following definitions out loud.



The definitions can be sent as a PDF.

- **Psychosocial wellbeing** describes the positive state of being in which a person thrives. In children and adolescents, it results from the interplay of physical, psychological, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual aspects that influence a child or adolescent's ability to grow, learn, socialize and develop to their full potential.
- **Mental health and psychosocial support** (MHPSS) is a composite term used to describe any type of local or external support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial wellbeing and/or prevent or treat mental disorders.
- **Mental disorders** are characterized by a clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation or behaviour.

<sup>2</sup> The Well-being Guide: Reduce stress, recharge and build inner resilience. 2022. Copenhagen: IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support.



- ➔ Explain that the wellbeing flower represents the “petals” of psychosocial (psychological and social) wellbeing.
- ➔ Explain that teachers play a very important role in promoting and protecting the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of students and highlight the key themes arising from the first exercise (in the introduction) showing the relationship between supportive, encouraging, etc. teachers and how those characteristics promote and protect wellbeing.





Say, for example:

*“How teachers engage with students and the learning environments they create can have an impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of students. When teachers use basic helping skills, such as empathy, encouragement and non-judgmental language, it can support students to feel safe and nurtured at school. Also, when teachers focus not only on academic subjects but also on the development of social, emotional and cognitive skills, students’ wellbeing can be promoted by teaching valuable life skills and supporting them to cope with difficult situations.”*

- ➔ You might need to dispel any misconceptions that mental health and psychosocial support can only be provided by medical or mental health professionals. Explain that teachers can provide psychosocial support by interacting with students in ways that are empathic, creating a safe and supportive environment in which students can express their emotions and experiences, and by including specific structured and playful psychosocial activities in the teaching/learning process. It’s important to note that when mental health and psychosocial wellbeing is integrated into the

learning environment, it doesn’t change the role of mental health professionals (school counsellors/psychologists) but strengthens the link to focused care and specialized services. Teachers should never be expected to take on the role of trained mental health staff.

### Key Points

-  Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) approaches and interventions in education services for children in conflict situations can be imperative to overcome the effects of adversities and loss of learning opportunities that we know are all too common.
-  Learning spaces can provide a protective environment that helps to restore a sense of normality and promotes healing and recovery, especially for children living otherwise disrupted lives.
-  Teachers can provide psychosocial support by interacting with students in ways that are empathic, creating a safe and supportive environment in which students can express their emotions and experiences, and by including specific structured psychosocial activities in the teaching/learning process.
-  Teachers do not replace the role of mental health professionals and are not in a position to provide focused or specialized care. Rather, they can promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing and serve as an entry point when specialized care is needed.



## Practice: promoting and protecting mental health and wellbeing



30–45 minutes



Flipchart, markers, pens and Handout 3: MHPSS Intervention Pyramid



Whole group

- ➔ Explain that in this activity, participants will brainstorm strategies used in a learning environment to promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.
- ➔ Split participants into groups of three or four (depending on the number of people in the training) and assign one of the following six topics to each group. Explain that they are all important to a child's sense of wellbeing and that by taking part in engaging activities in a safe environment, students can internalize and use them in their daily lives. The topics are:
  - a sense of belonging: feeling accepted, valued and included by others
  - social connectedness: feeling close and connected to others

- feeling valued: feeling respected, appreciated and important
- positive coping: having the skills to manage and reduce stress in one's life
- self-confidence: feeling worthwhile, believing in oneself and knowing what you do well
- a sense of agency: belief in one's ability to act independently and exercise choice.



Divide participants into virtual breakout room groups for the brainstorm. If possible, provide each group with a virtual board to co-create their list.

- ➔ Ask each group to come up with one or two strategies used in learning environments to promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. If participants can't think of strategies used currently, they can come up with examples that could be integrated into learning environments (see table on page 33).<sup>3</sup>
- ➔ Ask participants to think about how these strategies might be different or adapted for girls and boys or children from different language or cultural groups, and those with disabilities. Allow five minutes for each group to identify the strategies, write them on a flip chart, and then share the ideas in plenary.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the Save the Children Teacher Professional Development Psychosocial Support and Social and Emotional Learning module.



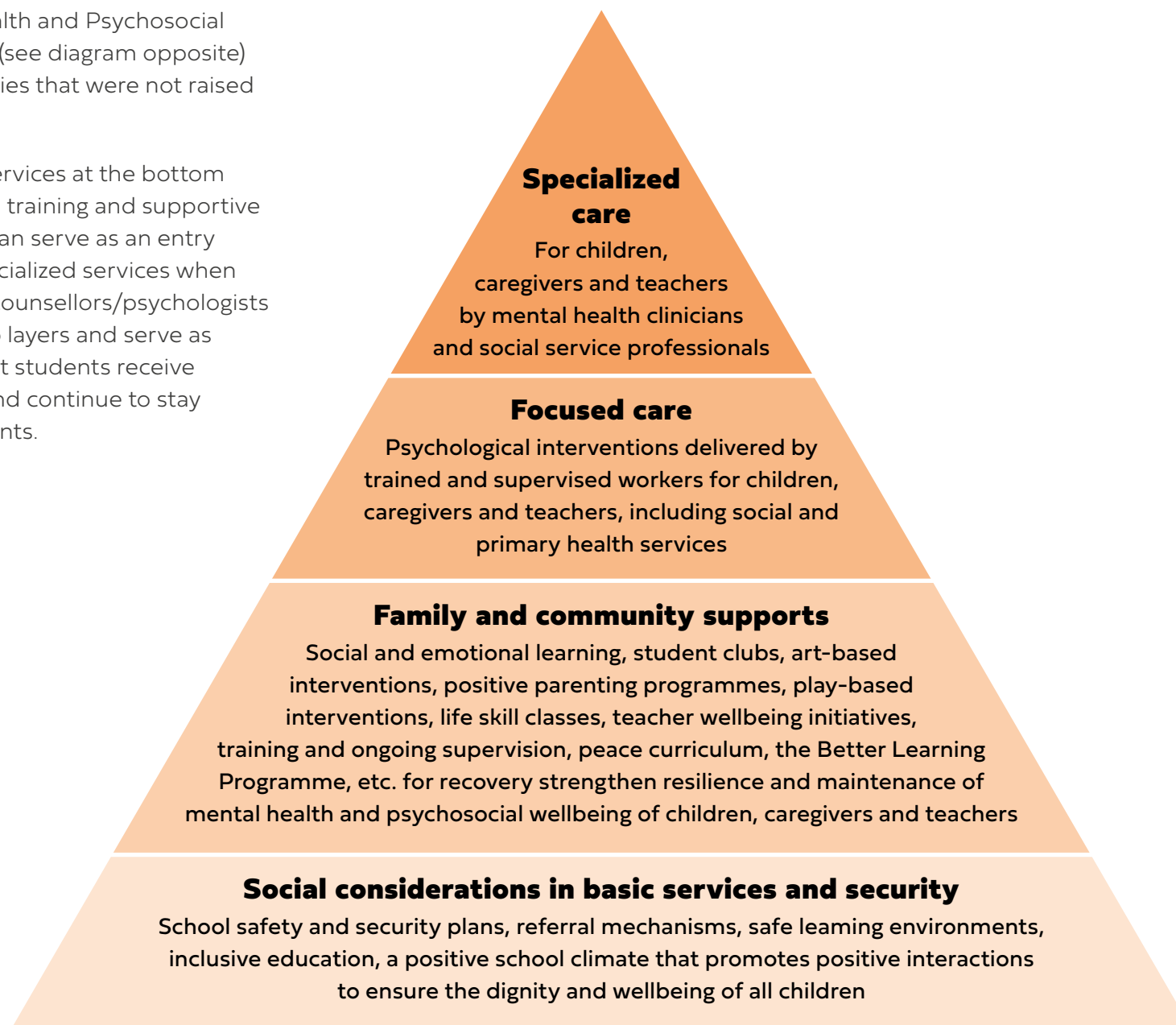
## Examples of strategies used in learning environments to promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing

<b>A sense of belonging</b>	Engaging students in decision making, e.g., decisions about the layout of the classroom or helping to plan a holiday party
	Engaging students in developing safe school plans
<b>Social connectedness</b>	Play-based learning activities focused on social development
	Student clubs or art-based activities
<b>Feeling valued</b>	Making each student head of the class and take on classroom responsibilities for a week
	Providing positive feedback when students go out of their way to support other students, focusing on their unique value when providing feedback (We give grades for academic achievements, but teachers can also give praise for being helpful, kind, etc.)
<b>Positive coping</b>	Social emotional learning activities
	Developing self-care plans with students (e.g., what they do to take care of themselves during difficult times)
<b>Self-confidence</b>	Play-based learning activities focused on building self-confidence
	Teaching life skills focused on building self-confidence
<b>A sense of agency<sup>4</sup></b>	Asking questions that give children the opportunity to initiate and lead their own learning
	Providing flexible and unhurried routines that allow children to make choices about decisions that affect them

<sup>4</sup> Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. Supporting Agency: Involving Children in Decision-making. <https://www.acecqa.gov.au>




- ➔ Review Handout 3: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Intervention Pyramid (see diagram opposite) and highlight any of the strategies that were not raised by the participants.
- ➔ Explain that teachers deliver services at the bottom two layers of the pyramid (with training and supportive supervision) and that schools can serve as an entry point for focused care and specialized services when needed. Highlight that school counsellors/psychologists provide services at the top two layers and serve as an important link to ensure that students receive access to care when needed and continue to stay engaged in learning environments.




Adapted from the IASC MHPSS Intervention Pyramid (2007) and UNICEF Community Based Operational Guidelines on MHPSS in Humanitarian Settings (2018).



## Practice: play and the promotion of mental health

 15–20 minutes

 Paper, markers, pens, Handout 4: Learning to Cope Through Play, Handout 5: Characteristics of Playful Experiences, P.O.W.E.R. game: “Paper Bird”

 Whole group


➔ Provide participants with Handout 4: Learning to Cope Through Play.

➔ Explain that **playful experiences** and interventions can be an effective way of addressing the psychosocial needs of children who have experienced or witnessed war, violence, displacement and/or other forms of adversity. Designing **culturally responsive play approaches in education environments to facilitate children’s learning and development** increases the chances of maintaining their health and psychosocial wellbeing when faced with adversity.

*“Playing helps children to recognize and express their emotions and develop positive relationships with peers and family members. It helps them to deal with anxiety and build their ability to concentrate and focus on what’s important to them. It helps them recover their sense of normality and their hope for a bright future.”*

Right to Play: Children’s Mental Health Matters  
[www.righttoplay.com](http://www.righttoplay.com)


➔ Explain that when children experience war and conflict, they might stop playing with their peers and siblings, or even playing by themselves. Instead, they may start pretending to be in a bomb shelter or coming up to a roadblock, or acting out explosions, incoming rockets or evacuations, or pretending to be soldiers or fighters. Teachers can support children by adding intentional play into the school curriculum and redirecting inappropriate play by providing alternative activities. This helps to refocus children’s energy on play that is more productive and positive.

 The definitions can be sent as a PDF.





➔ Play Paper Bird in the Right to Play P.O.W.E.R. games. This game teaches students to improve their self-care by making an animal that represents their self-care activities and supportive relationship.

- Invite each participant to think of an animal that makes them feel happy or hopeful, and to make it with art supplies or other materials.
- Invite participants to choose one part of the animal on which they can draw or write things they can do to take care of themselves. Then they can choose another part of the animal to draw or name people who support them.
- Participants can decorate their animals however they wish. As they play, encourage them to share any other ideas they have for doing the activity.



- ➔ Invite participants to share what they've done with their neighbour and briefly discuss how this playful activity promotes mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.
  -  Participants raise their virtual hand or type in the chat, depending on the platform being used.
- ➔ Explain that the five characteristics of play – **meaningful, joyful, socially interactive, actively engaging and iterative** – are important for creating a successful and engaging play experience.
- ➔ Give participants Handout 5: Characteristics of Playful Experiences and read the definitions out loud from your own copy of the handout. Discuss with them the importance of reengaging children in appropriate play (i.e., play that is not focused on war or conflict).
- ➔ Explain that the P.O.W.E.R. play-based learning activities will be taught throughout the training, and that they will have a toolbox of playful activities to utilize in the classroom.

### Key Points

-  Play provides a supportive context to help children cope with stress.
-  Play serves as a method to promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing in learning environments.
-  Intentional play builds social and emotional skills and creates social cohesion among peers.
-  The Play Opportunities for Wellness and Education Resource (P.O.W.E.R.) is a collection of 100 gender-responsive play-based learning activities. The games are available as animated videos and PDFs in English, French and Arabic through the Right to Play website: [www.righttoplay.com](http://www.righttoplay.com)



## Conclusion



5–10 minutes



Markers and pens, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

➔ Recap what you've learned (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap):

- The role of the teacher in supporting students' social, emotional and cognitive development
- The link between play and mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.



Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

- How will they promote psychosocial wellbeing in their classroom?
- How will they incorporate play into the learning environment?





# 3

## EFFECTS OF CONFLICT ON CHILDREN'S WELLBEING AND LEARNING



1 hour 30 minutes



Paper, flipchart, pens, markers, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios,  
Handout 6: Common Signs of Psychosocial Distress in Children



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Understand the range of effects that conflict can have on children (and adults)
- Understand indicators of stress/distress over time by age group
- Understand how crisis and stress affect children's wellbeing and learning.



## Introduction



20–30 minutes



Paper, flipchart, markers and pens



Whole group

- ➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.
- ➔ Ask participants to fold a blank piece of paper in half and on one side draw a picture of a child who is experiencing distress (without naming or identifying them).
  - How do they appear?
  - What words might you use to describe their feelings, life and situation?
- ➔ Next, on the other side of the paper, ask participants to draw a picture of what a child looks like when they are not experiencing distress.
  - Does their appearance change?
  - What else changes?
- ➔ Ask a few participants to describe/show their drawing. Notice and reflect on the following points:
  - Any commonalities observed in the drawings

- Any interesting differences between how girls and boys might present
- Any differences between age groups
- Did anyone draw a child who, by looking at them, you might not be able to tell that they were in distress?

- ➔ Explain that children express distress and cope with conflict and adversity in many ways and that each child is unique, with different experiences of the war and conflict, or adversity more broadly. Some may have lost family members, be living in a single-parent household because a parent is serving in the army or internally displaced and uprooted from their homes.
- ➔ Ask participants to think about their drawing of a child experiencing distress and list all the stressors/adverse events they might be experiencing.
  - *Examples:* displacement, loss of a loved one, living in a single parent household, war, fear for their own and others' safety, poverty, loss of/limited access to learning and social interactions, etc.
- ➔ Ask participants to list these stressors out loud and write them on a flipchart. In the middle of the flipchart, draw a backpack and surround the backpack with the stressors that are common to all participants' drawings.



Use a virtual board to create the list.





- ➔ Explain that when children show up in the classroom, they often carry these stressors with them. As teachers, we're often not aware of all the stressors children bring with them to school, which are often shared by their caregivers and teachers, especially in times of conflict and war.
- ➔ Ask participants to think about both their drawings (the child experiencing distress and the child not experiencing distress). List all the things that bring joy to children's lives and the factors that promote resilience in children.
- ➔ Review the definition of psychosocial wellbeing on the flipchart from the previous session and ask participants to think about the wellbeing flower they created.
  - **Psychosocial wellbeing** describes the positive state of being when a person thrives. In children and adolescents, it results from the interplay of physical, psychological, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual aspects that influence their ability to grow, learn, socialize and develop to their full potential.

- ➔ Make the connection between children experiencing distress and the effects it has on their psychosocial wellbeing.

Say, for example:

*"War and conflict can affect every aspect of wellbeing (remind participants of the wellbeing flower), including physical, psychological, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing. Today we're going to discuss ways to identify signs of distress in children."*

#### Key Points

-  Each child is unique and may process and deal with conflict and adversity differently.
-  As teachers, it's important to remember that children can show up to school carrying the weight of the stressors in their lives in their "backpacks". This may show up in their behaviour and unexpected responses in the classroom.



## Background / Theoretical Explanation



15–20 minutes



Handout 6: Common Signs of Psychosocial Distress in Children



Facilitator explanation

➔ Explain that children who have experienced prolonged conflict or war and been out of school and separated from peers and teachers, may experience anxiety, extreme worry and sadness, and a feeling of powerlessness and uncertainty. Some may be worried about continued shelling or air raids. Some may have been isolated at home, or in a bomb shelter or other safe place. Some may have had to flee their homes many times. Under these difficult circumstances, children's wellbeing and development may be affected by the lack of stimulation, routine, safety and security. One very common reaction to conflict and war is a lack of trust in others.

➔ Describe some **common ways** children react when they are stressed using Handout 6: Common Signs of Psychosocial Distress in Children. Link these to the examples that participants gave at the beginning of the module.



The handout can be sent as a PDF.

## COMMON SIGNS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DISTRESS IN CHILDREN

### Physical reactions

People of any age may experience physical reactions to distress. Some may experience several reactions, some none or very few. The physical reactions could also be signs of physical illness. If a child's symptoms persist, become worse or in other ways are a cause for concern, the child should see a doctor.



- Extreme tiredness
- Stomach ache
- Tight chest
- Dry mouth
- Muscle weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Shaking
- Headaches
- General aches

Age	Reaction
<b>0–3 years</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinging to their caregivers more than normal</li> <li>• Regressing to former (younger) behaviours</li> <li>• Changes in sleeping and eating patterns</li> <li>• Higher irritability</li> <li>• Increased hyperactivity</li> <li>• More afraid of things</li> <li>• More demanding</li> <li>• More frequent crying</li> </ul>
<b>4–6 years</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinging to adults</li> <li>• Regressing to former (younger) behaviours</li> <li>• Changes in sleeping and eating patterns</li> <li>• Higher irritability</li> <li>• Poorer concentration</li> <li>• Becoming more inactive or more hyperactive</li> <li>• Stop playing</li> <li>• Take on adult roles</li> <li>• Stop talking</li> <li>• More anxious or worried</li> </ul>
<b>7–12 years</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming withdrawn</li> <li>• Frequent concern about others affected</li> <li>• Changes in sleeping and eating patterns</li> <li>• Increasingly fearful</li> <li>• Higher irritability</li> <li>• Frequent aggression</li> <li>• Restlessness</li> <li>• Poor memory and concentration</li> <li>• Physical symptoms/ psychosomatic</li> <li>• Frequently talks about the event or repetitive play</li> <li>• Feels guilty or blames themselves</li> </ul>
<b>13–17 years (teens)</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intense grief</li> <li>• Shows excessive concern for others</li> <li>• Feelings of guilt and shame</li> <li>• Increasingly defiant of authority</li> <li>• Increased risk taking</li> <li>• Aggression</li> <li>• Self-destructive</li> <li>• Feeling hopeless</li> </ul>

Adapted from: UNICEF. 2022. *Common signs of psychosocial distress in children.*



➔ Explain that each child will cope with conflict and adversity differently. It's important to look for changes in behaviour over time as an indication that a child might be in distress. Many of these reactions last for only a short time and are normal reactions to stressful events. However, if they last for a prolonged period, the child may need further support. Inform participants that further support will be discussed later in the training.

If a child is usually outgoing and talkative and becomes withdrawn, this might indicate that something is wrong. If a young child stops playing and engaging in activities that previously brought them joy, this might indicate that something is wrong.

Say, for example:

*"Difficult experiences can lead to impulsive and aggressive/irritable behaviour and to impaired concentration and memory. Sometimes this can be difficult to notice because some children keep their inner life to themselves. When children grieve, for example, they seem to move in and out of the pain – sometimes playing and interacting as they would usually. Then, maybe because of a memory, word, smell or other trigger, they may react with outbursts of anger or sadness. It's important to tell the children that this is common and perfectly normal, and that there's nothing shameful in reacting in this way."*

Unlike with a broken arm or leg, it's difficult to know when a child is experiencing distress or struggling. As a teacher, you see most

of your students every school day and might be able to notice a change in a child's behaviour or mood. Teachers can serve as an entry point and an important link with school psychologists or counsellors who are trained in supporting children in distress. In addition, teachers can use the skills and techniques taught in this course to support children.

➔ It's important to remember that children are also resilient. Their resilience can be bolstered when they have access to safe (emotional and physical) learning spaces, a range of nurturing and supportive relationships with peers and adults, and play-based social and emotional activities.

### Key Points



Distress can take on many different forms depending on age and other factors. Changes in children's behaviour and mood over time might be an indication that they are experiencing distress.



Children are incredibly resilient and teachers can promote this resiliency by creating safe, predictable learning environments that include play and social and emotional activities.



In some countries, teachers work with and refer to school psychologists when they believe a child might need extra support.



## Practice: the connection between conflict, wellbeing and learning



30 minutes



Flipchart, markers and pens



Small group, whole group

- ➔ Explain that in this activity, participants will brainstorm ways in which students' ability to learn and engage in the classroom may be affected by the ongoing conflict.
- ➔ Remind participants that one of the guiding principles of the course is conflict sensitivity. In education, using a conflict-sensitive approach involves being mindful of how the conflict affects students' wellbeing and designing a learning environment that is sensitive to what children have and continue to experience.
- ➔ Break participants into groups of three or four (depending on the number of people in the training) and ask them to write (on a flip chart) all the ways in which students' ability to learn and engage in the classroom and with their peers may be affected by the ongoing conflict. Explain that as children come back to school

after being out of school for a long time or return to in-person classes after attending school online, it's important to think about some of the challenges they might face and come up with ways to mitigate them.



Divide participants into virtual breakout room groups for the brainstorm. If possible, provide each group with a virtual board to co-create their list.

- *Examples:* difficulty concentrating for long periods of time, fear of loud noises, difficulty separating from their caregivers, poor memory, etc.
- ➔ Ask each group to present their thoughts to the group and notice and reflect on the following points:
  - Were there commonalities across group responses?
  - Did anything surprising come up?
- ➔ Explain that throughout the course, participants will learn a lot of skills and techniques to help mitigate the challenges that students may face when returning to school. Anticipating these challenges will help teachers to feel better prepared to support students and plan for their return.



## Conclusion



5–10 minutes



Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, markers and pens



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

➔ Recap what has been learned (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap).

- Conflict affects each child differently and every child responds differently. But knowing the common signs of distress can help teachers to notice when a child might be struggling and in need of support.
- Children are resilient. Nurturing supportive relationships and access to safe learning environments and social and emotional learning can bolster their resiliency.

➔ Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

- How might children respond to adversity and distress?
- How might they mitigate some of the foreseeable challenges when children return to school?



# 4.1

## ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN SUPPORTING WELLBEING, AN INTRODUCTION



30 minutes



Markers, pens, flipchart, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe how and why adult roles may change in crisis contexts
- List six ways in which teachers and the classroom can support student wellbeing
- Develop a plan to support wellbeing in their own classrooms.





## Introduction




10 minutes



Paper, flipchart, markers



Pairs, whole group, individual, whole group

- ➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.
  - ➔ Explain that over the next few sessions, participants will learn different ways in which adults, and specifically teachers, can support children's wellbeing.
  - ➔ Remind participants what they learned in Module 3 about the effects of conflict on children's wellbeing and learning.
  - ➔ Explain that the roles adults play may change during conflict.
  - ➔ In pairs, invite participants to draw a child and then around the child draw the adults "normally" involved in a child's life (i.e., teacher, parent, aunts and uncles, friends' parents, neighbours, etc.).
-  Participants can do their drawings individually or discuss them in pairs in breakout rooms.

- ➔ Invite groups to share who they see as the adults a child would "normally" have in their life. Draw these on a flipchart around the child.
- ➔ Note that, due to conflict, some of these adults may no longer be in the child's life. Either ask participants to share examples of who might be missing from the child's life or give examples. As they or you mention an example, cover the picture of that adult. For example:
  - The child's aunt and/or uncle left the country/area, but the child had to stay behind.
  - The child left, but their father stayed behind to fight. Now, their mother is working extra hours and trying to find lodgings. She's therefore not around very often and, when she is, is very stressed.
  - A neighbour who the child was close to left or was killed.
  - The child had to move, so they have new teachers who speak a different language and find it difficult to communicate their feelings and needs.

Say, for example:

*"As you can see, conflict can change the adults in a child's life and the roles of those adults who remain. As a teacher, you may be responsible for finding additional mental health support for a child or providing additional support in the absence of services, which we will discuss in a later session."*



- ➔ From the perspective of students, ask participants to describe how the role of teachers and their relationships with their students have changed during the conflict.
- ➔ Invite them to share:
  - As a student, how did you perceive the role of a teacher as having changed? How has that affected the relationship?
  - As teachers, are there other ways in which your roles have changed, which students perhaps aren't aware of?
  - What other roles have you taken on since the conflict began?

### **Key Point**



Due to the conflict, many of the adults in a child's life may no longer be present or available in the ways they used to be. As a result, those adults who are around, especially teachers, may need to provide additional support and serve in different roles than usual.



## Module overview



10 minutes



Flipchart/cardstock, markers



Facilitator "lecture"

- ➔ Display the agenda for all six training sessions in Module 4, explaining that each session will focus on a way in which teachers can support children's wellbeing through a crisis.
- ➔ Explain that before discussing how they can support children's wellbeing, it's important to think about our own wellbeing as teachers, which can have a huge impact on students. We will have difficulty supporting students' wellbeing if we aren't taking care of ourselves. For example, if a teacher is stressed, it will be harder to teach and be patient with students. For the strategies in the next six sessions to be successful, teachers must therefore address their own wellbeing. Teachers are better able to teach effectively and grow professionally when they're well.
- ➔ All the strategies to support student wellbeing can be adapted to support our own wellbeing as teachers.

- ➔ Describe each of the six sessions in Module 4, and briefly explain what they will learn:
  - **4.2 Creating a Predictable and Playful Learning Environment:** how routines can help to create a sense of normality and how to develop a plan for creating predictability and structure
  - **4.3 Positive Behaviour Support:** how positive and negative behavioural support impacts children, how to develop a plan for rewarding positive behaviour, and how to redirect and address negative behaviours in the classroom
  - **4.4 Promoting Socially Interactive Learning Environments:** the importance of peer relationships to children's wellbeing, and strategies for building positive social interactions
  - **4.5 Building Coping and Social Emotional Skills Through Play:** how social and emotional learning (SEL) supports children's wellbeing and how to develop a plan for integrating SEL
  - **4.6 Talking about Crisis:** basic support strategies for talking to children about crisis
  - **4.7 Getting Additional Support:** existing MHPSS resources available in and around the school network and how to develop a referral plan.
- ➔ Explain that these will help them to best support their students.



## Conclusion



10 minutes



Markers and pens, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

➔ Recap what you've discussed (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap).

- Ways in which adult roles change during conflict
- Six ways to support children's wellbeing

➔ Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

- What strategies are they already using to support their students' wellbeing?



# 4.2

## CREATING A PREDICTABLE AND PLAYFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



2 hours 15 minutes



Markers, pens, flipchart, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, Handout 1: Parachute Activity and Handout 7: Daily Routines for the Classroom



By the end of this module, you will be able to:


- Describe how creating a safe learning environment promotes mental health and wellbeing
- Demonstrate strategies for predictability and structure in the classroom
- Develop a plan for creating a safe learning environment.



## Introduction

 30 minutes

 None


 Pairs, whole group

➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.

➔ THINK–PAIR–SHARE (individually think about each question, discuss with a partner, then share what you discussed with the full group).


- What strategies do you already use (or have participated in as a student) to create **predictability** in the classroom?

*Examples:* setting out classroom rules, class timetable, following the same order of classes every day, writing the daily agenda on the board

 Use the “raise hand” function to participate in class discussions

- What strategies do you already use (or have participated in as a student) to create **structure** in the classroom?

*Examples:* Starting every day with a morning circle or using a song or play-based activity to transition between lessons

 Allow participants to think silently for one minute, then divide them into small group breakout rooms for three to five minutes to share and post their ideas. Create a virtual board so that all participants can see them.

- Invite a participant to write all the “shared” strategies they use to create predictability and on a flipchart or whiteboard and structure them.
- Explain how creating a safe learning environment promotes children’s wellbeing and helps to prevent their emotional and psychological responses escalating.

Say, for example:

*“Predictability and structure are always important for children to grow and develop in a healthy manner, and are even more important in a conflict situation. Children may have lost a sense of control over their lives. Their family/home life may have changed. Parents may be away fighting in the war, members of their family may have been killed, they may have had to move. Previously safe spaces such as playgrounds, places of worship and even their own homes may have been destroyed or temporarily shut down. Schools and classrooms can provide a safe space for children to express their feelings and process what is happening around them. Learning spaces can provide a space where they’re physically separated from the violence. Perhaps more importantly, learning spaces and communities can create psychological safety, where children can safely ask*



*questions, make mistakes, learn and grow. Although physical safety may be out of teachers' control, they can help to create and maintain psychological safety for their students. Creating a safe classroom environment – whether physical or virtual – that is predictable and supportive is especially important for children during conflict. It is also important to ensure that the physical or virtual classroom environment brings some joy and playfulness back into children's lives. Daily routines and structures can and should be playful. In this session, we will talk about how to create a predictable, structured, playful and emotionally safe physical or virtual classroom environment for children."*

- Ask participants what we've done to create predictability throughout the training?

*Examples:* setting ground rules, showing the daily timetable and plan, introductory and closing routines (like the Parachute Activity)

- Explain that all the things they've done can be recreated with their students.

### Key Points

- In the face of disruption, creating routine and a sense of normality provides some structure for children to develop healthily.
- Schools and classrooms can provide a physically safe space, especially when other safe spaces have been destroyed or interrupted. Children's family/home life may have changed – parents fighting, deaths, etc., they may have had to move, playgrounds, religious institutions, etc. may have been destroyed or temporarily shut down. Schools and classrooms can also provide a safe space for children to express their feelings and disengage from the frightening reality in what were previously safe spaces.
- Schools and virtual classrooms can provide psychological safety for students by creating a nurturing environment where children can feel secure talking to their teachers about their feelings, asking for help, and engaging in learning – even if they make mistakes.
- Teachers may be the most trusted/safe adults left in children's lives. Parents and caregivers may not be with their children or may be unable to provide their child with physical or psychological security because they are facing their own difficulties.
- Predictability and structure are important for children to grow and develop healthily, and are even more important in crises.



## Practice: Calm Corners



15 minutes



Flipchart/cards, markers



Pairs or whole group

- ➔ Explain that it's important that all students feel safe in the classroom, whether in person or virtually. It's the teacher's responsibility to create this sense of safety, both physical and psychological.
- ➔ Throughout the training, participants will learn many different strategies to create a safe learning environment. However, even in a generally safe environment, students may have a strong reaction to something happening in or outside the class and need to step away from their classmates and the ongoing activities to become calm. During conflict, it's especially important to provide a calm, safe space where students can remove themselves away from the main activities or their peers.

- ➔ Either in person or virtually, classrooms can create a "calm corner". Calm corners are semi-private spaces within the class that allow the student to let their teacher and classmates know that they need some time to themselves.
- ➔ To set up a calm corner, you need to consider:
  - The physical space (e.g., is there a soft cushion for the child to sit on?)
  - Privacy, while still allowing the teacher to see the student (e.g., with bookshelves or other dividers on 2–3 sides)
  - Cues or tools to help in the calming process (e.g., a visual reminder of the calming strategies the class has learned, calming objects like stuffed animals, Play-Doh or a stress ball)
  - How to introduce the students to the calm corner so that using it feels safe (i.e., introduce it early in the year, include it in your class rules).
- ➔ Ask participants to discuss, in pairs or as a whole group, how they can address these four aspects of a calm corner. To continue the conversation, ask:
  - What objects will they need?
  - How can they help students to feel safe in the space?





## 4.2 Creating a Predictable and Playful Learning Environment

- ➔ After the discussion, explain that calm corners can be adapted to the virtual classroom. Ask participants for ideas about how they might do this.
  - If they need help coming up with ideas, you can propose the following. Students can opt to turn their camera off, and maybe send the teacher a specific emoji to communicate that they need some space to calm down. If they have a virtual classroom platform, they can create a “calm corner” that includes resources, such as a reminder of calming strategies they have learned, videos of mindfulness activities, colouring activities, etc.
- ➔ Whether in person or virtually, it’s a good idea for the teacher to check in with students after they’ve used the calm corner. The check-in should be open-ended, and an invitation for the student to share only if they want to. They should never feel pressured to share how they’re feeling or why.



## Practice: Daily Classroom Routines



1 hour



Flipchart/cardstock, markers , Handout 1: Parachute Activity and Handout 7: Daily Routines for the Classroom



Whole group, small group, whole group

➔ Explain that a routine is a set of regular, predictable practices that occur in the same order at the same time. They can and should be playful and meaningful for the students.

- To be **meaningful**, classroom routines and teaching methods should relate to students' lived experiences. By engaging and expanding on something they already know, children are better able to engage with what's going on around them and learning.
- Daily routines also offer emotional check-ins at the beginning and end of each day.
- Additionally, daily routines should be **playful**. Remind participants of the five characteristics of play: meaningful, joyful, socially interactive, actively engaging and iterative. Think about how you can create playful routines that reinforce one or more of these characteristics.
- For example, daily routines can include a time when students know they can stop and play a game, such as the P.O.W.E.R. activities that will be discussed in later sessions.

➔ Discuss "daily classroom routines" as a whole group and write them on a flipchart or whiteboard. What routines have you seen, used or could use in the classroom?



Daily routines in virtual classrooms are also important and can be a fun way to engage students and maintain a sense of community, even from a distance – e.g., having one student per day play a song of their choice during transitions.

Examples of daily classroom routines include:

- Parachute Activity (see Handout 1)
- Song or other creative way to start and end the class/day
- Morning Circle Time (see Handout 7)
- Starting each day with a "do now" activity as students come in (see Handout 7)
- Ending each day with what they liked/didn't like (Rose, Thorn and Bud – see Handout 7).

➔ Divide participants into small groups of three to five. If there are teachers from different grades/age groups, group them by the grade they teach. If they all teach similar grades, they will all create routines for that age group.



Assign groups to breakout rooms on a virtual platform. Encourage participants who will be teaching remotely to develop virtual/remote routines.



## 4.2 Creating a Predictable and Playful Learning Environment

- ➔ Ask each group to decide on their favourite classroom routine for their age group and prepare to present it to the full group.
  - ➔ Bring all groups back together, and get each group to demonstrate their routine. Add any that are missing to the “daily classroom routines” flipchart.
- ➔ Reflect as a group:
    - What did you like or dislike about some of the routines?
    - How can routines incorporate the five characteristics of play (meaningful, joyful, socially interactive, actively engaging and iterative)?
    - How will routines differ depending on who is in the class (grade, age, diversity, displacement, level of and exposure to conflict)?



## Practice: Class Timetable



20 minutes



Flipchart/cards, markers



Whole group, individual

- ➔ Explain that another way to create predictability is to create a class timetable.
- ➔ Ask participants to reflect individually about how differently they feel when they know the training schedule for a day compared with when they don't.
- ➔ Show examples of class timetables. Ask participants to identify what they do and don't like about the different timetables.  
*Examples: colourful and clear is good, lack of pictures is bad for young children, etc.*
- ➔ Discuss as a group:
  - Why is knowing the daily/weekly timetable important?
  - What are the components of a good timetable?
  - How can the timetable reinforce joy and playfulness?

➔ Provide each participant with a flipchart page or, along with markers and other materials.



Provide a template on PowerPoint, Google Slides or something similar for participants to fill in and illustrate/decorate their timetables.

➔ Explain that now participants will be able to create a weekly timetable for their classroom that includes routines.

### Key Points



Students may not know what is going to happen at home or in their communities, so providing a predictable timetable creates a sense of normality and support.



Given their recent experiences, not knowing what is coming next may have negative implications for children.



A good timetable should follow a consistent structure and include enough detail for students to know what to expect each day.



Children will be more engaged with a timetable if it's visually pleasing and/or if they have participated in illustrating it. Creating and decorating/illustrating a timetable can be used as a classroom activity early in the school year.



## Conclusion



10 minutes



Markers and pens, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

➔ Recap what you've discussed (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap).

- Create calm corners – a physical space where students can go to remove themselves from the class when they need to.
- Display the class timetable.
- Develop classroom routines that are done at the same time every day.

➔ Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

- What strategies will they use to create predictability, safety and play in their classroom (physically or virtually)?
- What will they include in their calm corner?
- How will they create and display the timetable?
- What routines will they implement in their classroom?



# 4.3

## POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT



2 hours 30 minutes



Flipchart, markers and pens, Handout 8: Steps to Apply Positive Discipline, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the difference between positive and negative behaviour support
- Demonstrate positive behaviour strategies
- Develop a plan for rewarding positive behaviour and redirecting/addressing negative behaviour in the classroom.



## Introduction



15 minutes



Flipchart, markers and pens



Two groups

➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.

➔ Divide the group into two groups:

**Group 1:** Assign half the group to brainstorm “desired” classroom behaviour.

*Examples:* listening to the teacher, sharing materials, answering questions when asked, being kind to other students

**Group 2:** Assign the other half to brainstorm “undesired” classroom behaviour.

*Examples:* not paying attention, interrupting the teacher or classmates, fighting, bullying/being unkind to other students



Divide participants into breakout rooms. Create a virtual board where groups can write the behaviours for all participants to see.

➔ After a few minutes, ask each group to discuss how they would respond if they saw one or more of these behaviours in the classroom.

➔ Invite both groups to share what they discussed and give feedback to the other group.


- What else would you add?



## Background / Theoretical Explanation

 20 minutes

 None

 Facilitator explanation

➔ Remind participants that children respond differently to crises and that their responses may include how they behave in the classroom. It's important to remember that all children are good and that it is just their behaviour that might be bad. How we respond can encourage or discourage how they behave and can have a great impact on their wellbeing.

Say, for example:

*"It's important for teachers to be aware of changes in children's behaviour. Remember that when children act out or demonstrate 'negative behaviour', it's often a sign that something bigger is going on for them and should be addressed if it continues. Children living through ongoing conflict may be grieving the loss of a loved one or experiencing stress at home. It's easy for teachers to become frustrated as the behaviour is often disruptive but it's important to remember that there is always something behind it. In a later session, we'll discuss options for supporting children who may need additional support."*

- ➔ Explain that there are two types of strategy to support positive behaviour in your students: positive behaviour support and negative discipline.
  - **Positive behaviour support** aims to support desired behaviour and redirect undesired behaviour by helping the student to understand the causes and effects of their behaviour.
  - **Negative discipline** responds to undesired behaviour by stopping it abruptly, usually without explanation and with a harsh punishment.
- ➔ Ask participants what the effects of negative discipline might be on their students, especially during a conflict.
  - Negative discipline can make children feel unsafe and can increase the likelihood that they will misbehave again. It can also reduce their cognitive ability.
  - As discussed in the previous session, predictability is very important to supporting wellbeing. Positive, predictable behaviour supports are one way to ensure that the classroom is a predictable and safe environment.




➔ Display a slide with the four components to support positive behaviour. Explain that in this session, they will have the opportunity to learn about and practise two of the four components.


- **Setting expectations** through co-creating rules with associated consequences (as in the previous session)
- **Creating a positive group environment** through getting to know and trust the group and the teacher (This applies to all the strategies we're discussing but will be focused on in the next session.)
- **Rewarding desired behaviour**, which promotes positive behaviour and deters negative behaviour (This will be practised in the next activity.)
- **Addressing undesired behaviour** in a positive manner, which interrupts the behaviour, builds understanding about why the behaviour is undesired, and redirects towards a desired behaviour (This will be practised later in this session.)


➔ Explain that teachers should support positive behaviour and encourage students to try again if they fail. The teacher's response should be reinforced and the student's behaviour improved through iterative approaches. Negative behaviour should also be addressed through iterative approaches that encourage the student to reflect and revise their behaviour.


### Key Points


 Children respond to conflict or adversity in different ways. For some, the conflict and its effects on their family and home life may change how they behave. They may see their role models and family members acting out, responding with anger or unable to control their emotions. Students may demonstrate

some of this undesirable behaviour in the classroom. Moreover, they may have difficulty controlling some of their emotions and behaviour because they're processing what's happening in their world.

 **Positive behaviour support** aims to support positive behaviour and reduce negative behaviour in the long term. It focuses on rewarding positive behaviour rather than punishment and takes place when children are behaving well. It also addresses undesired behaviour early and directly, through seeking to understand what might be causing the behaviour and remaining calm and supportive.

 **Negative discipline** focuses on punishing undesired behaviour and, while it may interrupt the undesired behaviour through shouting or angry responses, it doesn't help the child to understand why their behaviour is undesirable or learn positive behaviour.

 Harsh and violent punishment has been shown to increase undesired behaviour and lead to mistrust of the teacher. Students may shut down and stop engaging in the classroom if they don't understand the punishment or feel safe.

 Positive behaviour support is one way to create a sense of predictability. Students know what to expect if they make a mistake or demonstrate undesired behaviour. And they are more likely to demonstrate desired behaviour since they know what is expected of them.



## Practice: Rewarding positive behaviour

 15 minutes

 Flipchart, markers and pens

 Whole group

➔ Explain that in this activity, participants will brainstorm and practise ways to playfully reward positive behaviour.

➔ Ask them why it is important to reward positive behaviour.

*Example answers:* students understand the desired behaviour, it incentivizes good behaviour, other students see and imitate good behaviours.

➔ Discuss the potential negative effects of rewarding some, but not all, children.

*Example answers:* those who are not rewarded feel bad about themselves, children may argue among themselves for the reward.

➔ Brainstorm strategies for rewarding positive behaviour and invite a participant to write these on a flipchart. Examples include:

- “Star” chart for good behaviour
- Written “brag tags” or other notes thanking students and saying what they did
- “Rewards” for cumulative good behaviour from the whole class (often measured by one of the other mechanisms) – e.g., more free or play time
- Invite students to give one another “stars” for good behaviour
- Display “positive rewards” somewhere in the classroom.



Create a virtual board and invite participants to write their suggestions on the board.

➔ Whatever you do, make sure that it’s varied and doesn’t get old or boring. It should also be driven by the good behaviour, not the reward. Make sure to always be clear what the reward is for.

➔ Vote as a group which positive behaviour reward to use throughout the rest of the training day.

➔ Select one member of the group to be responsible for tracking and giving the rewards.



## Practice: Addressing undesired behaviour



1 hour 30 minutes

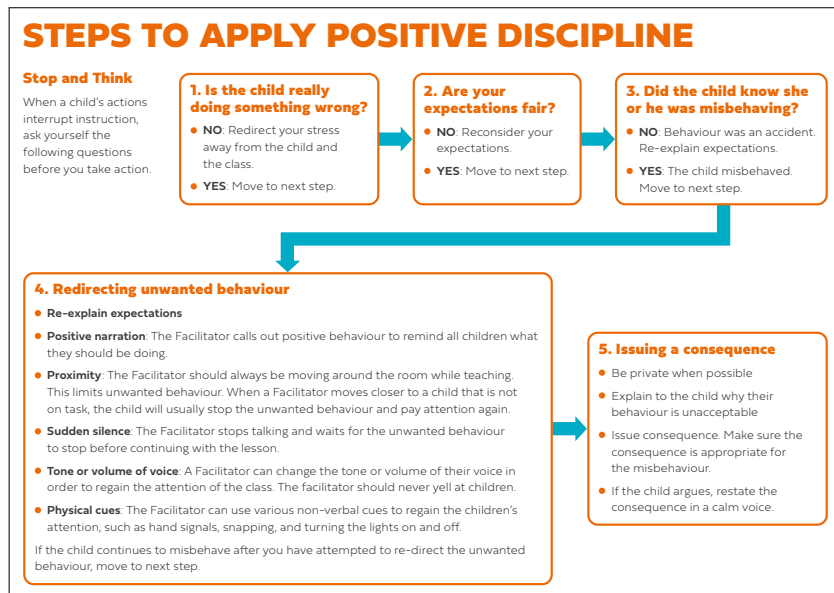


Flipchart, markers and pens, Handout 8: Steps to Apply Positive Discipline



Whole group, small group, whole group


➔ Share the five steps for addressing undesired behaviour.<sup>5</sup> Write these on a flip chart or slide, and give the participants Handout 8: Steps to Apply Positive Discipline.



1. Ask yourself if the student is really doing something wrong (i.e., is the behaviour really undesired/problematic?)
2. Ask yourself if your expectations of the student are fair. Specifically, consider the circumstances.
3. Did the student know the behaviour was undesired/incorrect (is it in the rules, or has it otherwise been made clear to them)? If not, explain that the behaviour was not OK, and explain why in a calm voice in private to the individual student or to the whole class, not mentioning/calling out the wrongdoer.
4. Begin by redirecting the behaviour.
  - Remind all students what they should be doing.
  - Stand near or look at the student who is misbehaving.
  - Suddenly stop speaking until the behaviour stops.
  - Change tone or volume to get the student's attention – usually decrease the volume so you're whispering. Do not yell at the student.
  - Use physical cues that have been discussed/shared with the students, such as turning lights on and off or clapping to get their attention. However, ensure that the physical cues you use do not sound or look like anything they might be frightened of.
5. Issue appropriate and related consequences. Consequences should start with a warning and only escalate if the behaviour does not stop. They should be issued in private and be appropriate for the behaviour.




<sup>5</sup> Adapted from USAID and International Rescue Committee. 2016. *Safe, Healing and Learning Spaces Toolkit*.



- ➔ Explain that now participants will have the opportunity to practise different ways of addressing undesired behaviour by roleplaying scenarios. Divide them into groups of three or four.
- ➔ Invite groups to brainstorm the most common behaviour challenges they face in their classrooms. If they are new or student teachers or are having trouble coming up with scenarios, invite each group to select a scenario from the list below (but ensure that each group is roleplaying a different scenario). Allow groups a few minutes to brainstorm their scenario and how they, as the teacher, would address it.
- ➔ When they present their roleplay to the other groups, one participant will play the teacher and the others the students. Remind the groups to use the five steps they just learned to address each issue.
  - **Scenario 1:** While the teacher is talking during a lesson, two students whisper and giggle loudly.
  - **Scenario 2:** The teacher asks students to get into groups of three to do groupwork, and one student refuses to join a group. That student then says that they hate this class and all their classmates.
  - **Scenario 3:** A student makes fun of another student for what they're wearing (or something else).
  - **Scenario 4:** A student falls asleep during a lesson.
  - **Scenario 5:** Two students get into a verbal argument during free time. The verbal argument continues to escalate and seems as though it will become a physical fight.
-  Divide participants into virtual breakout rooms and do a virtual roleplay, using the same scenarios.

- ➔ When all the groups are ready, invite them to present their roleplays one by one. After each group presents, discuss the teacher's response as a whole group using the following questions:
  - What did the teacher do well in responding to this scenario?
  - How could the teacher have responded even better?
  - What are alternative ways to address this scenario in the classroom?

### Key Points

-  Positive behaviour support starts with setting expectations – e.g., in the class rules.
-  Responses to undesired behaviour should always be calm, consistent and fair. Remember that students may have had negative experiences because of the conflict, the memory of which they bring to class.
-  If the negative behaviour continues, it's important to continue to stay calm and address it with understanding. If it escalates, the teacher may need to arrange to meet with the student individually to understand what is causing the behaviour. If needed, refer to professional support, such as a therapist or counsellor.



## Conclusion



10 minutes



Markers and pens, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

- ➔ Recap what you've learned (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap).
  - Rewarding positive behaviour – create a predictable way to motivate students to demonstrate positive behaviour.
  - Addressing undesired behaviour – be consistent and recognize that the bad behaviour may be a result of negative experiences arising from the conflict.

- ➔ Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.
  - How will they reward positive behaviour in their classroom?
  - How will they address undesired behaviour in their classroom?



# 4.4

## PROMOTING SOCIALLY INTERACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS



2 hours 30 minutes



Markers and pens, flipchart, (optional: toy bricks), Handout 9: About the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank or a printed copy of the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank for each participant, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the importance of peer relationships in children's wellbeing
- Demonstrate strategies for building positive social interactions
- Develop a plan for creating positive and supportive social interactions in the classroom.




## Introduction


 **30 minutes**

 **Optional: toy bricks**


 **Four groups**

- ➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.
- ➔ Explain that to get into the session on promoting positive social interactions, they will play a game called “Build a...”, which can also be played with their students.
- ➔ Give instructions for the game “Build a...”. You’ll name an object, then, in small groups, they’ll re-create that object with their bodies. Note: If toy bricks are available, they can build it with those instead. All members of the group must be involved.
  -  Using a virtual board, the participants can draw the object together. Make sure that this is set up with multiple “slides” so they can continue to use the same link but draw multiple times.
- ➔ Divide the participants into four groups. It’s important that there are four groups, since the groups will be coming together. If you have a very large group, you can divide them into eight groups and play an additional round (see below).

- ➔ Play one or two rounds in the small groups and, for each round, allow the groups at least two minutes to build the object.
  - For example, in the first round you could say “build a tree” (or substitute another object if you prefer). Then all groups should build a tree with their bodies. Remind them that each member of the group must be involved.

 If groups are drawing virtually, invite them to draw a tree on the virtual board. Each member of the group must participate in the drawing.

- ➔ After two rounds, combine two groups so that there are now two larger groups. Play one or two rounds in these larger groups. Allow at least two minutes for each round.

 If groups are drawing virtually, combine two groups or create half the number of groups (doubling the number of participants) and have them draw a new picture. Each member of the group must participate in the drawing.

- For example, in the second round, you can say “build a dog” (or substitute another object) and the two groups should build a dog with their bodies. Remind them that each member of the group must be involved. Once participants understand the game, they can call out things to build.

➔ For the final round, combine the two groups so that all the participants are in one group. Play one or two rounds as a whole group. Allow at least two minutes for each round.

- For example, you can say “build a flower crown” (or substitute another object that represents peace). The full group should build a flower crown with their bodies. Remind them that everyone must be involved.



If groups are drawing virtually, invite them to draw a flower crown on the Miro board (or whatever software is available). Remind them that every member of the group must participate in the drawing.

➔ After the full group has built their object, lead a reflection discussion using the following questions:

- How did everyone get along in your smaller groups?
- How did this change, or not, as you combined with other groups?
- What were some of the challenges you faced working together?
- How did you make sure that everyone was included and worked together well?
- What would the benefits be of doing this activity, or something like it, with your students?





## Background / Theoretical Explanation



10 minutes



None



Facilitator explanation

- ➔ Explain that in this session they will learn more about the importance of promoting positive social interactions and strategies to use in the classroom.

Say, for example:

*"Positive social interactions and strong peer relationships are an important part of student wellbeing. Peers become an increasingly important part of children's support systems as they move into adolescence. Additionally, many students' normal support systems will have been interrupted by the conflict. Positive social interactions with peers and adults can support emotional wellbeing and healing."*

*"Research also shows that peer relationships and peer classroom dynamics are an important part of students' academic achievement and wellbeing, in both the short and long term. Working as a teacher during a conflict, it's important to create a generally positive social environment in the classroom and foster strong relationships with and between students."*

- ➔ Ask participants to say out loud (or write on a flipchart/board) some words or phrases that describe what a positive classroom social environment consists of.
  - Examples include: respect, trust, sharing, joyful, feeling of safety, collaboration, etc.
- ➔ Explain that, "We'll discuss and practise strategies that build a positive social environment in the classroom as well as those that foster deep, supportive relationships between students."

### Key Points



Positive social interactions and relationships are a key component of supporting children's wellbeing, and necessary to support children experiencing conflict or facing another crisis. These relationships can help them cope with the adversity and violence around them. Peer relationships can help children regain a sense of normality and support them to heal.



Teachers can help to create a positive social environment in the classroom through groupwork, setting the tone for a positive and respectful classroom, and relating the classroom content to the students' lived realities. Teachers can also help foster strong relationships between students, which can help them to cope with and heal from the conflict.



## Practice: Building a Positive Social Environment




50 minutes



Flipchart, markers



Small groups, whole group

- ➔ Explain that participants will divide into groups, with each group having a slightly different topic to brainstorm. Each member of the group will have a specific role. This is a model for building a positive social environment through group work that they can bring into their classroom.
- ➔ Ask them what roles they might have in a group and write all the roles on a flipchart or slide.
- ➔ First, as an example with the whole group, assign one participant to be the timekeeper, another to be the scribe and a third to be the presenter. Explain that you will model facilitating the discussion. Explain the roles:
  - **Facilitator:** asks questions, calls on group members
  - **Timekeeper:** provides time checks and reminders and ensures the task is done in the allotted time
  - **Scribe:** writes down notes recording the discussion
  - **Presenter:** shares the group's ideas with the larger group.
- ➔ Allow two to five minutes of discussion once everyone is in their roles.
- ➔ Ask the group: *"What strategies have we used throughout the training to build a positive social environment?"*
- ➔ When time is up (after two to five minutes), have the presenter share what they brainstormed.
- ➔ Divide the participants into equal groups and give each a piece of flipchart paper and marker. Each group should have approximately three to four participants. If there are more than four per group, invite them to come up with creative roles for the remaining participants. Assign each group a topic to brainstorm and ask the group to distribute the roles between them. Allocate five minutes to brainstorming in their small groups.
  - 
    - Divide groups into virtual breakout rooms. Provide them with a virtual board or invite each group to create a shared slide and then share their screen when they present back.
- ➔ Topics for brainstorming (if there are more than four groups, teachers can divide by age or duplicate questions). Ask in-service teachers to use their own experience and expertise in the classroom to answer the questions.
  - What different ways are there of using group work in the classroom?
  - What different ways are there to build a positive social environment through academic instruction?
  - What different ways are there to build a positive social environment through free time or non-academic time in the classroom?
  - What challenges are there to building a positive social environment?



- ➔ After five minutes, bring all groups back together.
- ➔ Allow each group to present what they discussed, one by one. After each group's presentation, invite everyone else to add other ideas to the flip chart.
- ➔ After all groups have presented, lead a plenary discussion and reflection using these questions:
  - First, reflect on how they did the group work:
    - What was effective about how the trainer facilitated the group work?  
*Examples:* everyone had a role, expectations/instructions were clear, facilitator checked in with each group, participants worked with different people
    - What wasn't effective?  
*Examples:* not enough time, not enough instruction, different group sizes
    - How might you adapt this strategy for different age groups?  
*Examples:* Younger children could have different roles like picking up materials, and you may need to assign them roles instead of letting them choose. Allow older children more autonomy and more complex roles.
  - Then reflect on how the strategies they brainstormed could be applied in the classroom:
    - Why is it important to create a positive social environment in the classroom?
    - What strategies might you use in your classroom?
    - How might you address some of the challenges you anticipate in building a positive social environment?

- ➔ Part of a teacher's role in facilitating group work is to model how to work well in groups, both in a specific activity and throughout their teaching. This is particularly important for younger children and older children without much experience of group work. For example, a teacher should demonstrate giving everyone a turn, expressing disagreement respectfully, etc.

- ➔ Link this back to learning through play.

Ask:

*"How does group work help facilitate learning through play? Which of the five characteristics of play (meaningful, joyful, socially interactive, actively engaging and iterative) does group work promote and how?"*

Explain that while group work is socially interactive, it can also support the other characteristics of play. For example, it can make the activity and learning process more joyful or meaningful. Group work can both help to build a positive social environment and support deeper learning.



## Practice: Fostering strong relationships



50 minutes



Handout 9: About the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank or a printed copy of the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank for each participant



Individual, small group, whole group

- ➔ While participants are seated or in a relaxed position, invite them to close their eyes, or relax their gaze. Read the following and pause for 30 seconds after each paragraph.

*“Think about a moment when you were happy and relaxed. Notice what you feel. How does your body feel?”*

*“When you feel happy and relaxed, who is with you? Is this someone you feel close to? What does it feel like to be with the person or people you feel closest to?”*

*“Now that you’ve thought about how they make you feel, think about what that person or those people mean to you. What makes you feel close to them? How are they or what do they do that makes you feel close to them? What do you do that makes you feel close to them?”*

*“Now that you’ve thought about how they make you feel and what they mean to you, think about how you developed your relationship with them. What has made you feel close to this person or these people? What experiences, activities or conversations made you feel close?”*

- ➔ Invite participants to open their eyes and lead a discussion with the following questions:

- How do your close relationships make you feel?
- What makes you feel close to someone?
- How did you build these strong relationships?
- How can you help your students to build strong, positive relationships?

- ➔ Explain that a strong relationship (between children, an adult and a child, or between adults) can make people feel secure and safe, so they are especially important in times of crisis. Going through something big or challenging with someone else can help to bring people closer. These bonds can be strengthened or developed by putting in an effort.

- ➔ Display the four components of strong relationships:

- **Trust** – the knowledge that the other person is there for you and has your best interests in mind
- **Communication** – understanding one another’s needs and wants, and the ability to ask and accept each other’s needs
- **Compromise** – although common goals, interests and experiences help us build strong relationships, when we have different ideas or priorities it’s important to compromise so that the needs and wants of both people are met
- **Respect** – valuing each other’s uniqueness and strengths is important to ensure that both people feel important and worthwhile.



- ➔ Explain that there are many activities teachers can facilitate in the classroom that build these components of strong, positive relationships.
- ➔ Give out Handout 9: About the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank and direct participants to the digital version of the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank or hand out the printed P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank. Explain that there are many games that promote positive social interactions, as well as games that build other social and emotional skills. Each game has many social and emotional (and other) learning outcomes, which are referred to as “key learning” in the manual. Even when only one key learning is identified, children practise and build other social and emotional skills when they play the activities. Explain that in the next session, they will have the opportunity to lead and participate in many games.

Now, in small groups, participants will review a game of their choice from the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank.

- ➔ In groups, they should:
  - Discuss how the game helps to build the four components of positive relationships (trust, communication, compromise and respect).
  - Suggest how the game could be adapted to help build better, stronger, more positive relationships, and how the game could be played virtually.
- ➔ Bring the full group back together and discuss what aspects of the games build trust, communication, compromise and respect. Allow groups to share how they adapted the games.

### Key Points

- 🔑 Strong, healthy relationships are an important part of a healthy response to a crisis. Positive relationships with others can help people to share and cope with their feelings and feel supported.
- 🔑 Trust, communication, compromise and respect are four important components of strong, healthy relationships.
- 🔑 Activities in the classroom can support students to develop strong relationships, especially if they include these four components.
- 🔑 Play Opportunities for Wellness and Education Resource (P.O.W.E.R.) is a collection of 100 gender-responsive play-based learning activities. The games are available as animated videos and PDFs in English, French and Arabic through the Right to Play website: [www.righttoplay.com](http://www.righttoplay.com)



## Conclusion



10 minutes



Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, markers and pens



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

➔ Recap what you've discussed (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap).

- Building a positive social environment: strategies for productive group work include including everyone and giving people roles.
- Fostering strong relationships: activities in the classroom can build healthy relationships based on trust, communication, compromise and respect.

➔ Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

- What will they do to build a positive social environment in their classroom?
- How will they foster strong relationships among classmates?



# 4.5

## BUILDING COPING AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS THROUGH PLAY



2 hours 30 minutes



Paper, markers and pens, Handout 5: Characteristics of Playful Experiences, Handout 9: About the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank or a printed copy of the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank for each participant, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the role of social and emotional skills in supporting children’s wellbeing
- Demonstrate leading activities that build social and emotional skills
- Develop a plan for integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) activities into the classroom.



## Introduction



20 minutes



P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank



Standing in a circle

- ➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.
- ➔ Play “Pantomime” from the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank (page 180).
- ➔ Begin by explaining the key learning. Say, for example:
  - *“This game teaches children how to communicate their feelings, by acting out feelings with actions.”*
- ➔ Invite participants to practise acting out different actions and feelings. Ask a volunteer to be the caller who will call out different actions or feelings, one at a time, for the rest of the participants to do (e.g., happy, clap, shake, sad).
- ➔ Ask another volunteer to be the caller and call out a combined action and feeling for the rest of the participants to act out (e.g., angry clapping or bored dancing).
- ➔ Play the game for three or five rounds. After every few turns, ask a new volunteer to be the caller. Encourage the callers to be creative with their feelings and actions.

- ➔ Invite participants to share their ideas for how to play the game in the following rounds.



Demonstrate the actions and feelings on video. All participants should then mimic what they see, leaving their cameras on.

- ➔ Wrap-up using the closing reflection questions on the activity guide:
  - **Reflect:** Which combinations of actions and feelings were the most fun to act out? Which were the most difficult?
  - **Connect:** When in your life is it difficult to express your feelings?
  - **Apply:** What can help you to share your feelings? How can you help others to share their feelings?
- ➔ End the reflection by connecting the exercise to their classrooms by asking:
  - *“How could an activity or game like this support your students’ wellbeing?”*
  - *“When and why might you choose to facilitate this activity in your classroom?”*
  - *“What skills could this build in your students? How do you see those skills being affected by conflict?”*





## Background / Theoretical Explanation



20 minutes



Handout 5: Characteristics of Playful Experiences



Facilitator explanation

- ➔ Explain that children's social and emotional skills can be affected by conflict and that playing games like Pantomime can help to rebuild these skills.
- ➔ Severe adversity – including displacement and direct attack, which many students will have experienced – can overwhelm the brain and interrupt the ability to process emotions in a healthy way.
- ➔ These interruptions in social and emotional processing can have significant effects, including on health and academic and economic outcomes, in the short, medium and long term.
- ➔ However, targeted skill-building activities, a safe and supportive learning environment and strong adult and peer relationships can improve these processes, which will enable children to cope better with adverse events and the emotions and responses that arise from them.

- ➔ Social emotional skills – such as emotion regulation, empathy and problem-solving skills – have been shown to have positive short- and long-term effects, such as reducing aggressive and antisocial behaviour, improving the ability to focus and academic outcomes, and creating healthier behaviour and outcomes. Although these skills benefit all children, including those not affected by crises, particular skills and competencies may strengthen the resilience of children affected by conflict and enable them to persevere, manage stress, and make and maintain strong, positive relationships.
- ➔ The most effective way to build and reinforce these skills is through:
  - Safe and secure environments and relationships
  - Explicit understanding of the skills that are being developed
  - Targeted skill practice (through activities like pantomime)
  - Reflection on the skills and applying them outside of the game/activity.
- ➔ Ask participants to reflect on the Pantomime game they just played – how did it meet the following criteria?
  - What did we do to ensure that the Pantomime was played in a safe and secure environment, with positive relationships?
  - How well did I, as the facilitator, communicate the skills that were being developed in the Pantomime?
  - What targeted skill practice did we do in the Pantomime?
  - How did we reflect on what we did/learned in the Pantomime?



➔ Collectively, reflect on why it may be important for activities that build social and emotional skills to have the five characteristics of play-based learning: **meaningful**, **joyful**, **actively engaging**, **iterative** and **socially interactive**, see Handout 5: Characteristics of Playful Experiences. First, provide a refresher on what these five characteristics mean:

- **Meaningful:** Connected to something they are already familiar with
- **Joyful:** Finding an experience joyful, exciting and motivating
- **Actively engaging:** Immersive activities that engage their attention, interests and developmental needs.
- **Iterative:** Trying to solve a problem or meet a challenge through repeated attempts or by figuring out different ways to approach the same game or problem
- **Socially interactive:** Encourages interaction and co-learning with peers and adults

For example:

- Activities that are meaningful build new learning from children's prior experiences and build on their existing knowledge, enabling them to learn more.
- When activities are joyful, students are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn. They are likely to address challenges and learn new skills when they're motivated by peer interactions, and especially when they enjoy the activity and want to improve at what they're learning.





- Developing any skills, including social and emotional skills, requires students to be actively engaged in the process of learning, i.e., immersed in the activity from which they will learn, making choices, guiding the process and practising the skills they're learning.
- Iterative games and activities allow the learner to try, fail and try again. This enables them to think critically and find new ways to achieve the results they want.
- Developing social and emotional skills requires games and activities to be socially interactive, so that students can practise the skills in real life situations with their peers. Games that are social also enable students to learn from one another.

➔ Invite participants to think of games they already know/play with their students – SEL games or otherwise. Ask for examples from the group and then invite them to brainstorm how to make the games more playful by using the five characteristics of play.

- How can the games be made more meaningful, joyful, socially interactive, iterative and actively engaging?



## Key Points

-  Two factors that support children's resilience (or wellbeing) are positive relationships and social and emotional skills. Teachers can strengthen these factors as they work with students in their classroom.
-  Through modelling behaviour, skill-building activities and supportive environments and relationships, teachers and classrooms can support the development of healthy coping mechanisms.
-  Social emotional learning can also help to rebuild healthy brain functioning that supports academic success.
-  Play-based approaches to learning are not only more fun and engaging for students, they're also effective and provide an opportunity to develop a wider set of skills.



## Practice: Playing P.O.W.E.R. Games



1 hour 40 minutes



P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank



Groups of 2–3, whole group

➔ Now, it's the participants' turn to lead the games.

➔ In groups of two or three, invite participants to select a game from the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank or one of their own play based SEL strategies to present to the whole group. Allow them a few minutes to prepare. Ask each group to share why they selected that game and what benefit they think it will bring to their students. Suggest that they consider how they would give the children agency, or ownership, over how they play the game. For example, can children choose the topic or theme for the activity?



Invite participants to lead a game from the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank and adapt it for the virtual setting. Alternatively, provide a list of relevant online games or invite participants to share/teach a game they already play virtually with their students. For examples and inspiration, see this article from Edutopia: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-virtual-games-play-your-elementary-classroom>.

➔ Bring the groups together and invite each group in turn to lead the others in the game they prepared.

➔ After each game, ask the other participants to share feedback:

- What would you replicate when teaching this game to your students?
- Could facilitation of the game be improved?
- How does the game, and facilitation technique, build children's agency?
- How were the four criteria implemented (safe environment, explicit understanding, targeted skill practice and reflection)?
- What adaptations could you make in different situations, e.g., online, hybrid, when students are especially scared or after a recent extreme event?



## Conclusion



10 minutes



Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, markers and pens



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

- ➔ Recap what you've learned (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap).
  - It's important to build social emotional skills during/after conflict because the development of these skills is affected by adversity, which can have an impact on many other life outcomes.
  - The four social emotional skill-building criteria: safe environment, explicit understanding, targeted practice and reflection.



Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

- How will they integrate social and emotional skill-building into their classroom?
- For example: They could allow students to choose a P.O.W.E.R. activity when they return to class after their lunch break.



# 4.6

## TALKING ABOUT CRISIS



2 hours 30 minutes



Flipchart, paper, markers and pens, Handout 10: Let's Talk About It: Check-in guidance, Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate basic support to children to help them process their feelings and experiences, before adjusting back into routine classes or activities
- Describe how creating a safe space supports children's wellbeing
- Demonstrate speaking and listening skills for supporting students' processing of their experiences, especially with the crisis or conflict
- Develop a plan for talking about the crisis or conflict in the classroom.



## Introduction



20 minutes



Flipchart, markers, pens



Whole group

- ➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.
- ➔ Explain that in this session, *Talking about crisis*,<sup>1</sup> they will learn about how to facilitate a welcome back session with students. They'll learn and practise important skills that will support them to speak to students about the difficult things they may have experienced and create a safe space where they feel heard and supported.
- ➔ Explain that because of current or recent crisis or conflict, children and families may have experienced displacement, loss of and separation from loved ones and attacks on homes and communities. Most children will have been out of school and without routine and close contact with peers and learning spaces. Some, but not all, will have had access to digital learning.

Say, for example:

- *"Some students will have witnessed their caregivers' increased anxiety, tension and exhaustion. As a result, their mental health and wellbeing could be at risk. Space to discuss these challenges among their peers and to share their experiences with the*

*guidance of a trusted adult, will support students to process the effects of the crisis and the various consequences."*

- ➔ Explain that today they will learn how to run a 90–120-minute check-in session with children aged six and up when they first come back to school or another activity space that has been closed due to conflict.  
Say, for example:
  - *"This check-in session aims to support children to process their experiences of crisis or conflict to help prevent longer-term negative effects on their psychosocial development. As an educator, you play an important role in children's lives, and can provide stability, comfort and reassurance. Through your everyday support, you can help children to adapt and resume life after their lives have been disrupted by displacement and other distressing events."*
- ➔ Explain the benefits of a check-in with children:
  - As a supportive adult, you will gain insight into how children are feeling about returning to school and what they need to feel safe and supported.
  - You will have the opportunity to put children at ease, listen, provide encouragement and normalize their experiences.
  - You will have the opportunity to observe whether any children need extra attention and support.
  - You will use play-based approaches to discuss how the conflict has affected children and promote hope for the future.

<sup>6</sup> This session is based on the *Let's Talk About It: Check-in Guide* developed by the MHPSS Collaborative and Save the Children: <https://mhpscollaborative.org/resources/lets-talk-about-it-check-in-guidance/>.



- Students will:
  - have the opportunity to reflect and strengthen self-awareness as they share their experiences
  - get the chance to understand their reactions to and feelings about their experiences, which will help them to manage their emotions
  - be able to see that they are not alone and that their peers had similar experiences
  - know that they are supported and gain an understanding of the resources available to them.

➔ This session includes a script for a 90–120-minute partially structured “check-in” conversation after the children have returned to school in person. The aim is to understand how they have been affected by the war or conflict and to reduce anxiety, sadness or confusion. These basic skills can also be used to speak with students about other types of crisis they might have experienced.

➔ Explain that the check-in session has six steps that will be discussed in detail later. Write them on a flip chart or PowerPoint slide.

1. Introduce the session: how much time will be spent on the check-in, how it will be done and its purpose.
2. How has the conflict or crisis affected you, your families and your communities?
3. What has helped you while you haven’t been able to come to school?

4. What are you looking forward to?
5. What are you nervous about?
6. How can we take care of one another?



Write the six steps on a PowerPoint slide.

### Adapting the check-in for different ages

Explain that educators should consider the age and developmental level of the children in their group before planning the check-in.

For example:

- **For younger children (6–8)**, they should consider shortening the session or repeating it over several days using different prompt questions or activities to give more children the chance to share their experiences and feelings. They could use play (such as P.O.W.E.R. games, including Freeze Dance, Shooting Stars, Hope is in the Air or Frozen Beanbag) to illustrate and prompt discussion. With any adaptation, they should make sure to end with Step 6 – how to take care of one another.
- **Older children (12–18)** should be given more time and space to discuss what they’re learning about the conflict and any worries or queries they may have. Expressing their feelings and experiences through writing in a journal or drawing could be particularly helpful for this age group.





## How to support children while speaking about crisis




1 hour



Flipcharts, markers, pens



Small groups, whole group, role plays

- ➔ Explain that in this activity, participants will brainstorm tips that educators can use when speaking with students about conflict or crisis.
- ➔ Break participants into three or four groups (depending on the size of the whole group). Ask them to write the tips they've brainstormed on a flipchart and prepare a short roleplay to demonstrate them to the whole group.
- ➔ Bring all the groups back together and invite them to demonstrate each of the tips they brainstormed.
  -  Divide participants into virtual breakout rooms and ask them to type their list on a virtual board. They can either roleplay virtually or read out their list.
- ➔ If any of the tips below weren't mentioned, discuss them and ask volunteers to demonstrate how they would be applied in a classroom.
  - Acknowledge when a child shares, for example by making eye contact and thanking them for their contribution. Make sure that anyone who wishes to get the chance to say something.

Dividing the students into smaller groups can help those who are shy to feel more comfortable, but don't put pressure on anyone to share.

- You can give general examples about your own experiences of the conflict if you've also lived through it but use only broad statements, such as, "I missed seeing everyone at school. What about you?" It's important that students remain the focus of the conversation.
  - Use normalization and generalization statements to support the children. We'll look at good examples of how to do this later in this session.
  - If there are students who are new to the school or the area (because they've been displaced), make a special effort to make them feel included and supported.
- ➔ Explain to participants that, as an educator, they will often be the first person to notice that a child may be in distress. They can be a supportive adult who can help to calm, comfort and stabilize the child. There are a number of ways in which to do this. Speak softly, slowly and calmly.
- Say, for example:
- *"Try to sit down next to the child or crouch down so that you're at the same level as them. If appropriate in your culture, maintain eye or physical contact, such as holding the child's hand or placing your arm around their shoulder. But always ask first if they feel comfortable with physical contact. If the child is panicking or seems disoriented, encourage them to focus on non-distressing things in the immediate environment. For*



*example, try to shift their attention to something they can see or hear, such as the colour of the room or the sounds in the environment. Ask them to focus on their breathing and encourage them to breathe deeply and slowly. You can make this playful by showing them how to breathe deeply like a cat or a lion, or their favourite animal. You could even make animal sounds!"*

➔ Explain that it's always important to practise active listening when speaking with a child in distress or with children about crisis or conflict. Ask participants to demonstrate examples of how they practise active listening and write these on a flipchart. When finished, add any of the following that weren't mentioned:

- Show that you're listening by nodding, smiling and using facial expressions.
- Paraphrase what the child said and repeat it back to them to show that you've understood them correctly.
- Encourage the child to talk if they want to.
- Respond to what the child tells you without judgement.
- Observe non-verbal cues and mirror them, if appropriate.

➔ Ask a participant to volunteer to play the role of a student. You, the facilitator, will play the role of the teacher and act out the opposite of active listening.

For example: Not holding eye contact, looking at your phone while the child is speaking with you, or interrupting them, etc.

➔ Ask participants to reflect on what poor listening skills were demonstrated.

➔ Break participants into pairs and invite each pair to choose one partner to play the teacher and the other to play the student.

➔ Ask participants playing the teacher/educator to practise using active listening skills for two minutes in a scenario where the student is sharing their experiences of conflict.

➔ After two minutes, ask the participants to switch roles so that each can practise active listening skills.



Divide participants into pairs in breakout rooms and ask them to practise active listening skills with their partner.

➔ Ask participants to think of a time when they shared something with a friend/family member/teacher who didn't actively listen to them. How did that make them feel compared with in the role play where they practised active listening. Ask participants to share their answers.

➔ Explain that it's also important when speaking with children about conflict or other crises to respond in a supportive and caring way and to use normalization and generalization statements to support them. Normalization statements are used to let the child know that they're having a normal reaction to a distressing event and that everyone experiences distress and adversity differently. Generalization statements let the child know that many other children share the same feelings and that they are not alone.



➔ Review the use of normalization and generalization statements when speaking to children about crisis and conducting the check-in session.

Say, for example:

- *“Normalization and generalization statements aren’t meant to ignore or dismiss what a child experiencing difficult emotions is expressing. Rather, they help the child to understand that they aren’t alone, and that the feelings they’re experiencing are common. The key point is that the child knows that their reactions are understandable and human. Normalization and generalization statements can also help to protect the child from saying anything they may regret later. Diving deep into emotions is not always useful, especially in a non-clinical setting or outside a close, trusting relationship.”*

➔ Share the following examples of normalization and generalization statements on a flip chart. Explain that statements like “you’ll be fine” should be avoided.

 Write the examples in a PowerPoint presentation.

Normalization statements:


- *“Living through a crisis can bring lots of difficult emotions. You may feel stressed and overwhelmed by everything that’s happening around you. It can be difficult to deal with these feelings, to communicate them to others, and to ask for help.”*
- *“Many of us who’ve experienced bombings, sniper attacks or other forms of violence [substitute with examples appropriate*

*to the context of your training] can feel relieved and even happy that we’re safe, but very confused, sad and scared at the same time. It’s not easy to experience so many emotions at the same time, but it’s perfectly normal, and it’s because of what happened.”*

Generalization statements:

- *“I’m so sorry that happened, it must be very difficult. Any child who hasn’t heard from their father [or other family member] for a long time will be very worried and may also have sleeping difficulties like yours.”*
- *“I know many children who found the first months very difficult, but who are now doing much better...”*

➔ Break participants into three or four groups (depending on the size of the whole group) and ask them to come up with two normalization statements and two generalization statements that are appropriate when speaking with children about crisis.

 Divide participants into virtual breakout rooms and type the normalization and generalization statements they come up with on a virtual board.

➔ Ask participants to share the statements they came up with and correct any that might be making false or empty promises that can’t be kept or that don’t take into account the child’s concerns.

Examples of false promises: *“Everything will change soon.”*  
*“The war will be over soon.”*



## How to run a check-in session in your classroom



1 hour



Paper, markers, Handout 10: Let's Talk About It:  
Check-in guidance



Whole group

- ➔ Explain that now you will facilitate a complete check-in session with each participant adopting the role of a student in their classroom. They can use this session to check in and discuss adverse events affecting the community even if children are not returning to school.
- ➔ Explain how much time should be spent on the conversation, how it will be conducted and its purpose (10 minutes). It's important to stick to the schedule and to limit the conversation to 90–120 minutes to get through all the steps and keep everyone's attention.
- ➔ Start the check-in session by singing a short song together or playing an interactive game as an ice breaker (e.g., use age-appropriate social or emotional development P.O.W.E.R. games).  
Say, for example:
  - *"Welcome back, it's great to see you! I've been really looking forward to it and hope you have too. It's been an unusual time and for some of us it's been very difficult. So, we'll spend the next hour or so talking about how things have been in our community, how we ourselves have been, and how we can*

*help each other adjust to being back together in our class or activities."*

- ➔ Go through the basic rules or get participants to suggest and agree on them (if possible, write them on the board or flipchart). For the training, you can use the ground rules agreed at the start of the training (in the Introduction).

For example:

- There are no right or wrong answers – we respect everyone's opinion.
- We don't laugh at each other.
- We let each other talk and we listen to one another.
- You don't have to say anything if you don't feel like it.

Ask if there are other ideas for ground rules.

### 1. How has the crisis affected them, their families and communities?

(10–15 minutes)

- ➔ This part has two steps. First, talk about how the crisis has and continues to affect their lives, then how it has made them feel. The key is for students to understand the connection between what has happened and the feelings they've had because of it.
- ➔ If a student shares something difficult, use techniques such as generalization or normalization. Say, for example: *"Yes, I'm sure there are many others who have felt the same."*



➔ Start by saying, for example:

*"The conflict has affected everyone in one way or another – children, adults and young people. Now let's talk about how it has and continues to affect our lives."*

➔ Focus on events and give some examples:

- We haven't been able to go to school.
- Schools were shut down.
- Many of us have been separated from our loved ones and this makes us anxious or feel guilty.
- Our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters had to become our teachers or help us with our schoolwork.
- Our community has come together, and we've experienced great generosity.

➔ If many children have been displaced or buildings destroyed, give these examples:

- We've had to leave our homes, villages and towns to be safe.
- Our schools, homes and/or communities have been destroyed.

➔ Ask for examples and acknowledge all those given.

➔ Then ask about how these experiences have made them feel.

Say, for example:

- *"We've seen a lot more news online and on TV that has made us worried."*

➔ Ask children to draw or act out how the events made them or people in their community feel. Prepare drawings representing sadness, anger, confusion, etc., or ask the children themselves to draw the various feelings they've named. (Make sure to ask them to draw the feelings and not the situation.)

➔ End this part of the conversation by emphasizing that their reactions are normal, and that how they feel is connected to how their lives have been affected by the war. Remind participants that it is often helpful to discuss feelings and thoughts of being scared or sad with others and to encourage children to talk to someone they trust.

➔ If students are hesitant to share, switch the exercise around. Instead of asking them for input, provide a list of common events and the feelings associated with them and ask if anyone recognizes these in themselves or within their community. It may be easier for children to recognize feelings they've experienced, rather than to name their feelings.

Say, for example:

- *"I had to leave my home and we could only take what we could carry with us. I wasn't sure where we were going or if I would ever see my home again, which made me feel sad."*

Or:

- *"I was in a bomb shelter with my grandmother and brother. When the bombing ended, I felt so relieved."*



## 2. What has helped while schools have been closed?

(5–10 minutes)

- ➔ This part of the conversation is a brainstorm on the strategies that have worked well for the students. They can start by talking together in pairs.
- ➔ Ask them to help make a list of what has helped them feel better during the crisis and to role play or draw their responses as a group or in smaller groups. Provide some examples:
  - Talking or texting with a friend or loved one they're separated from
  - Playing with their siblings
  - Asking for support
  - Supporting others
  - Making new friends in communal centres or temporary homes.
- ➔ Give examples of other ways people in the community have helped themselves to feel better during the crisis.
- ➔ Consider practising slow breathing as a group, which is one way to help students (and/or you) feel calm. In a calm slow voice, say and demonstrate:
  - *"Put both hands gently on your bellies and sit up straight but relaxed. If it feels comfortable, close your eyes or, if that feels better, look towards the ground. Now let's breathe in slowly and feel our bellies fill with air and get nice and round. Now, slowly breathe out and feel our bellies get small again."*
- ➔ Count from one to five slowly while you breathe in and then back down from five to one as you breathe out. Repeat four times, then ask the students how they feel and share how you're feeling too.

## 3. What are we looking forward to?

(10–15 minutes)

- ➔ The purpose of this step is to support children to think positively about returning to school and strengthen the sense of community in the classroom.
 

Say, for example:

  - *"Many children are really looking forward to seeing their friends and going back to learning together. What are you, or other students you know, looking forward to most about returning to school?"*
- ➔ If students are already back in school, ask them about their hopes for the future. This gives them an opportunity to verbalize their positive expectations and hear what their peers are excited about. This can be turned into a playful activity by dividing the students into small groups and asking each group to develop a role play demonstrating what they're looking forward to. Alternatively, small groups of students can draw posters illustrating their hopes to hang on the classroom walls.

## 4. What might we be nervous about?

(5–10 minutes)

- ➔ Remind participants that many students are nervous about coming back to school or rejoining other activities. Some will be wondering whether their friends are still their friends, some will be afraid of being away from their family, and some will be worried about having fallen behind at school. For some, it will be like their first day at a new school, with butterflies in their stomach. Ask participants if they can relate with any of these feelings.



Say, for example:

- *"It's important to know and talk about what we're nervous about. You can ask for help and together we'll find the best way to help and care for one another."*

## 5. How can we take care of one another?

(20–30 minutes)

➔ Start by saying, for example:

- *"We can all help to take care of ourselves and each other. I'm sure you've seen examples of how communities have come together to support one another since the conflict started."*

➔ Give examples of practices that will help students feel supported:

- Welcoming new students who may have been displaced
- Supporting new students to orient themselves to the new school environment (i.e., where things are located, how the school functions, etc.)
- Supporting one another with difficult emotions and feelings
- Being kind and supportive to one another.

➔ Encourage students to ask questions about the practices above.

➔ Then ask them: "What will it take for us all to start off well?"

Say, for example:

- *"Be patient with yourself and one another. Pay special attention in case anyone is feeling left out and be sure to include them. Tell an adult (preferably use a specific name) if you're upset or see others who are upset."*

➔ Ask students to create posters or leaflets (depending on the supplies available) with drawings or keywords showing how they're going to take care of themselves and each other and their difficult feelings and thoughts. Encourage children to create a song, drama or theatre production that can be put on for others.

➔ End on a positive note and say that all the adults are looking forward to helping everyone have a good time at school and that it will be great to get started.

➔ There may be students who need extra support or additional services. Before the check-in session, be aware of what services exist, how children can access them and how to refer children to these services if needed. After the session, and in following weeks, continue to monitor the group and identify and refer children who are particularly distressed or in need of additional support or specialized care.

➔ Give participants the opportunity to ask questions and share how they feel about running the check-in session in their classroom/virtual classroom.

➔ Provide participants with Handout 10: Welcome Back Check-in Guidance.



## Conclusion



10 minutes



Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, markers and pens



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

➔ Recap what you've learned (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap).

- Active listening skills
- Normalization and generalization statements
- How to facilitate a check-in session with students



Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

- What two normalization and generalization statements do they want to remember?
- Write up a plan of how the check-in session will be used in their classroom.





# 4.7

## GETTING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT



1 hour 30 minutes



Flipchart, paper, markers and pens, toy bricks (optional), [Handout 3: MHPSS Intervention Pyramid](#), [Handout 6: Common Signs of Psychosocial Distress in Children](#), [Handout 11: School Wellbeing Support Map](#), [Handout 12: School Wellbeing Support Map – Example](#)



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe existing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) resources in the school and external networks and resources that support the school
- Demonstrate identifying MHPSS needs
- Develop a plan for referrals.

### Note to facilitators

If possible, include a school psychologist/counsellor in Module 4.7. Support the development of a referral process or inform educators about an existing one.



## Introduction




10 minutes



Flipchart, paper, markers and pens, toy bricks (optional),  
Handout 3: MHPSS Intervention Pyramid



Whole group, small group, whole group

- ➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.
- ➔ Explain that during this session we will discuss how to connect students and caregivers (if applicable) to additional support. During the training, participants will have gained skills and knowledge to promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of students and support those in distress.
- ➔ Explain that in this activity, they will brainstorm the skills and techniques they have learned during the training.
- ➔ Break the participants into groups of three or four (depending on the group size) and ask them to build (using their bricks if available or other play materials) or draw a skill and technique they have learned during the training to support children in distress.
- 
 Divide participants into virtual breakout rooms and ask them to draw or build skills they have learned and discuss them with their group members.

- ➔ Ask groups to share their responses and write them on the flipchart. Highlight any skills that you think are missing from the list (refer to the training modules).
  - Examples include play-based activities, classroom routines, the five components of learning through play, the guiding principles of the training course, how to create safe spaces, playing games that build social emotional and coping skills, normalization and generalization statements, active listening skills, etc.
- ➔ Explain that today we're going to discuss a very important piece of the puzzle, which is connecting students to additional support when needed. Ask participants to bring out their copy of Handout 3: MHPSS Intervention Pyramid from Module 2). Explain that, for the mental health and psychosocial support systems surrounding the child to function, teachers need to know about school psychologists/counsellors or other supports and how to refer to them so that children can access these services when needed.



## Background / Theoretical Explanation



10 minutes



Flipchart, paper, markers, Handout 6: Common Signs of Psychosocial Distress in Children



Facilitator explanation

- ➔ Remind participants that in Module 3 they learned about the effects of conflict on children's wellbeing and learning and how each child will process conflict, war and stress differently. As an educator, their role is **not to be a mental health practitioner but rather the entry point for students who may need support.**

Say, for example:


*"As an educator, you're looking for changes in behaviour (refer to Handout 6: Common Signs of Psychosocial Distress in Children). At times, you might not be certain if the child needs more support but it's best to err on the side of caution and connect with available supports that can assess the child and speak with them further.*

*"Difficult experiences can lead to impulsive and aggressive/irritable behaviour and to impaired concentration and memory. Sometimes it can be difficult to see because some children keep their 'inner life' to themselves making their response invisible in their behaviour. When children grieve, for example, they seem to move 'in and out' of the pain – sometimes playing and interacting as they would usually – and then, maybe because of a memory, word, smell or other trigger, react with outbursts of anger or sadness."*



## Practice: Developing a support map


 45 minutes

 Flipchart, markers, Handout 11: School Wellbeing Support Map, Handout 12: School Wellbeing Support Map – Example

 Whole group, small group, whole group

- ➔ Explain that in order to know what services are available for students and caregivers (if applicable), it's important for each teacher/school to have a support map available with the names, numbers and other important information about the services available.
- ➔ Give participants Handout 11: School Wellbeing Support Map and, if possible, group them by school/location and ask them to complete the support map to the best of their ability.

As facilitator, it's important to know what services exist to support participants to complete the map.

 Divide participants into breakout rooms and ask them to complete the support map on a virtual board.

➔ Ask participants to share their completed support maps and discuss what might be missing (see Handout 12: School Wellbeing Support Map – Example for examples).

➔ Ask participants to return to their groups and discuss any barriers they see to children accessing these supports.

*Examples:* transportation, parental consent, stigma, etc.

➔ Discuss as a group how these barriers might be addressed and ask the participants to use Handout 11: School Wellbeing Support Map to mark potential barriers and possibly solutions.

➔ Explain that each teacher and school administrator should have a copy of the support map that is agreed upon by everyone.

**Note:** In some countries, there are hotlines that offer free support from psychologists and counsellors.

## Practice: developing a referral plan

 20 minutes

 Paper, markers and pens

 Whole group, small group, whole group

- ➔ In the previous activity, you developed a “support map”. If your school has a psychologist/counsellor, or if you have other service providers in the community, find out how to refer a child in distress to them.
- ➔ If possible, group participants by school or region, as they were in the previous activity. If there are school psychologists/counsellors at the training, divide them among the groups. Create a plan for how teachers should refer children in distress. Consider the following in your referral plan:
  - Discuss any confidentiality rules or protocols, review any forms used to make referrals, ensure that teachers have the school psychologists'/counsellors' emails, phone numbers, etc.

- ➔ If they're present, ask the school psychologist/counsellor to review the protocol for making a referral and agree how the teacher and the school psychologist/counsellor will continue to be in contact regarding the child. In addition, ask the school psychologist/counsellor to give an overview of their role and how they support and care for the mental health and wellbeing of students.

 Divide participants into virtual breakout rooms.

- ➔ Bring the whole group back together and ask each group to share their referral plan.

## Conclusion



5–10 minutes



Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, markers and pens



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

- ➔ Recap what you've learned (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap).
  - How will they use their support map to refer children who are in distress?
  - What resources are available in their community?



Invite participants to take five minutes to add notes in their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.

- How do they refer a student to the school psychologist/counsellor?
- What is their role versus the role of the school psychologist/counsellor?



# 5

## TEACHERS' WELLBEING



2 hours 30 minutes



Flipchart, markers and pens, two jars, set-up that makes it possible to display a video or listen to an audio file (if possible), Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, Handout 13: Conceptual Framework for Teacher Wellbeing, Handout 14: Mindfulness Script, Handout 15: Four Steps for Teacher Learning Circles, Handout 16: Self-Care Plan Worksheet



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Understand how crisis can affect teachers' wellbeing
- Understand the effect of teachers' wellbeing on student wellbeing and learning
- Identify and practise self-care strategies
- Develop a (realistic) self-care plan.



## Introduction




20 minutes



Paper, pens, markers, two containers




Individual, whole group

- ➔ Display the learning objectives for the session. Invite a participant to read them.
- ➔ Explain that participants will now play a variation of "Shooting Stars" (from the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank).
- ➔ Explain that the game can be played with their students, but that it's also a good way to demonstrate their own feelings and coping mechanisms.
- ➔ Invite each participant to write or draw on separate pieces of paper two things that make them feel stressed, sad or upset and four things that make them happy, relaxed or feel better.
-  Create two virtual boards (or one with two separate areas) called "stressful things" and "happy things". Invite participants to add two items to the stressful things board and four to the happy things board.

- ➔ Set up a happy jar and a stressed jar. Ask participants to crunch their pieces of paper into balls, keeping the happy balls separate from the stressed balls, and take turns throwing the happy balls into the happy jar and the stressed balls into the stressed jar. If they enjoy competing, each participant can have one or two throws at a time and keep track of how many they get into each jar.



Skip this step.

- ➔ After throwing the paper balls, invite participants to randomly select one ball from each jar and read them out as follows: *"When I feel upset because of [stressed ball], I can [happy ball] to feel better."*
-  If possible, randomly order the list and invite each participant to read one item from the stressful things virtual board and one from the happy things board as follows: *"When I feel upset because of [stressed board], I can [happy board] to feel better."*
- ➔ Read out the remaining happy jar ideas as a group and ask a participant to write them on a flip chart.








➔ Reflect:

- Ask participants to reflect on a time when they felt stressed and it affected their ability to teach or complete their job.
- Ask a participant to share their experience and focus on what tools or techniques they used to manage their stress and take care of themselves.
- Explain the links between feelings (stress, frustrated, etc.) and behaviour (getting frustrated easily, having less patience, etc.).

Say, for example:

*"When you feel (use the examples given by participants) and don't do something to take care of yourself it can affect how you are at work (use the examples given by participants). Stress can build up over time. It's like a cup of water that doesn't get emptied, but water continues to be poured in until it overflows. If we don't do things to take care of ourselves, it's not uncommon for these feelings to overflow and affect our work, relationships and lives. We'll talk more about how we can support our own and others' wellbeing."*

### Key Points

-  Stress doesn't only affect children. It can also negatively affect a teacher's ability to teach and plan and manage their classes.
-  Research has shown that when teachers feel stressed they're more likely to use harsh disciplinary techniques to control their students however they can.
-  Stressed teachers may feel more emotionally tired and find it more difficult to empathize with and engage with students, and build positive relationships with them. They may also find it more difficult to connect with their fellow teachers and engage in peer support, which can have a significant impact on their wellbeing.



## Background/Theory: Effect of teachers' wellbeing on students



45 minutes



Flipchart/cardstock, markers, Handout 13: Conceptual Framework for Teacher Wellbeing



Whole group, four groups, whole group

➔ Explain or lead a discussion on why teachers' wellbeing is important.

Say, for example:

*"How we feel affects everyone around us. This is especially true when we are in a position of power or influence, like as a teacher. As a teacher, how you feel can affect your students and the classroom dynamics in many ways.*

*Teacher wellbeing refers to how teachers feel and perform in their jobs. It is influenced by their emotions, attitudes, and assessments of their work, and is specific to their individual contexts.*

*To better understand teacher wellbeing, it is pertinent to understand the various profiles of teachers working in crisis and conflict-affected contexts."*<sup>11</sup>

For example, if a teacher is stressed, it will be more difficult to teach and be patient with students. If teachers preoccupied with their own wellbeing, it will be more difficult for them to notice any issues affecting their students. In these situations, students'

wellbeing and learning may suffer. On the other hand, if teachers have taken care of their own wellbeing and therefore are feeling well, they're more likely to be patient with their students, understand and accept their students' issues or distress, and calmly address issues that arise. Teachers are also better able to teach effectively and grow professionally when they're well.


➔ Give out Handout 13: Conceptual Framework for Teacher Wellbeing or display a slide showing the Conceptual Framework for Teacher Wellbeing.

- Explain that there are four areas that greatly influence teachers' wellbeing: 1) teacher self-efficacy, 2) job stress and burnout, 3) job satisfaction and 4) social-emotional competence. These are all influenced by individual factors, school factors, community factors, and the national, regional and global context. This means that each teacher's wellbeing will be different, even though everyone's working in the same general context and may work/have worked in the same schools previously.

If necessary, explain that self-efficacy is a teacher's belief in their ability to do their job and reach their goals given the situation around them. A person with high levels of self-efficacy may view challenges as something they can overcome. Someone with low self-efficacy may view obstacles as insurmountable, and that they have no control over the obstacles or outcome.




<sup>11</sup> Falk, D., Varni, E., Finder Johna, J. and Frisoli, 2019. *Landscape Review: Teacher Well-being in Low Resource, Crisis and Conflict-affected Settings*. Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), USAID and Education Equity Research Initiative. p.2.



- ➔ There are many factors, positive and negative, that affect teachers' wellbeing. For example, a positive factor might be supportive friends or colleagues, while a negative factor might be juggling teaching in person and teaching students online who are in different time zones.
- ➔ Divide participants into four groups. Give each group a flipchart and invite them to draw a table with positive factors on one side and negative factors on the other side. Each group will brainstorm and write down positive and negative factors that have an impact at one of four levels: individual, school, national, global. Remind them to consider the four components that affect teachers' wellbeing (teacher self-efficacy, job stress and burnout, job satisfaction and social-emotional competence).
  - Group 1: **Individual** level
  - Group 2: **School** level
  - Group 3: **National** level
  - Group 4: **Global** level
-  Divide participants into virtual breakout rooms for the brainstorm. If possible, provide each group with a virtual board to co-create their list of positive and negative factors.
- ➔ Bring all four groups back together and invite them to share what they brainstormed.

- ➔ Discuss as a whole group:
  - How these different levels relate to one another.
  - How we can support ourselves and each other to increase the positive and respond to the negative factors. What is within our sphere of control? (They can use some of the ideas in the happy jar, and the strategies they will learn throughout the rest of the session.)
  - What factors are within our control, and which are not? (Remind participants to focus on the factors that are within their control to improve their wellbeing.)
- ➔ End the activity by reviewing the key points of the discussion and explaining that they will now practise a few strategies to address their own wellbeing.

### Key Points

-  Teachers' wellbeing consists of many elements, including: teacher self-efficacy, job stress and burnout, job satisfaction, and social-emotional competence.
-  Our own wellbeing is influenced by our own personalities and experience, your school, community, and the national, regional and global context around you.
-  To improve your wellbeing, focus on the factors of teachers' wellbeing that are within your sphere of control.



## Practice: Mindfulness



10 minutes



Flipchart/cardstock, markers, guided meditations and mindfulness videos or Handout 14: Mindfulness Script



Whole group

- ➔ Explain that they will start by addressing individual factors, using mindfulness.

Say, for example:

*"Teachers can manage their stress through mindfulness activities. Mindfulness is the intentional state of being aware and focused on the present moment and accepting the reality you're presented with. Mindfulness helps you to understand where stress originates and how best to deal with it. When we accept our circumstances, we can gain a new perspective and move forward in a positive way. Calming strategies that focus the mind and body can help us achieve this."*

- ➔ Lead participants in a mindfulness activity. Use the script in Handout 14: Mindfulness Script or see page 106.

Mindfulness activities in several languages can also be found here:

- the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center: [www.uclahealth.org](http://www.uclahealth.org)
- IRC Healing Classrooms Mindfulness: <https://youtube.com>



Invite participants to participate in the mindfulness activity and leave their cameras on. Share your screen with a mindfulness activity from a vetted mindfulness video or lead an activity with your camera on.

- ➔ After the mindfulness activity, lead a discussion:
  - How did you feel before the activity and after it?
  - How and when could you use mindfulness in your own life?

(Remind teachers that they can always take one or two minutes to breathe deeply during a class, and even practise breathing with their students.)
- ➔ Explain that mindfulness can help to improve their job stress and burnout, as well as their social-emotional competence. Although it doesn't address the broader community or systemic factors that contribute to wellbeing, it does address individual wellbeing.
- ➔ Give out Handout 14: Mindfulness Script and explain that this is just one example of a mindfulness script that they can use with their students.



## Mindfulness Script

- ➔ Find a comfortable seated position or lie down on the floor on your backs if there's enough space.
- ➔ Now we'll take a few minutes to sit silently and visualize. If you'd like to, feel free to close your eyes.
- ➔ Begin by focusing on your breath. Put one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Breathe into your belly. Inhale (smell the flower) – 2 – 3 – 4. Exhale (blow out the candle) – 2 – 3 – 4. Continue to breathe slowly and fully feeling as your hand on your belly rises with each inhale and falls with each exhale.
- ➔ Let your back grow longer and taller, reaching your head to the sky (if you're sitting). Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, feeling your breath relax your body.
- ➔ Imagine that you can see a light in front of your eyes. Bring that light up to your forehead. Allow the light into your head, filling your entire head with bright, warm light. Where this bright light exists, there's only room for happy thoughts. There can be no darkness. Feel as the light pushes out any bad thoughts. Only good thoughts are left in your mind. See the light moving down to your ears, so you can only hear good things. See the light moving into your jaw and mouth. Let yourself speak only good words. Let the light travel

down your neck and shoulders to your heart. Let your heart be filled with the light, so you can feel only good feelings. Feel as the light shines out from your heart and you're showering everyone and everything around you with love and good feelings. Feel as your whole body is filled with the light, so you're aglow with good thoughts and feelings. Think, "The light is in me, I am the light. I shine light on everyone and everything around me."

(Pause for up to one minute of silence, or as long as they're comfortable with.)

- ➔ Begin to bring yourself back to the present. Focus on your breathing – in and out slowly. Wiggle your fingers and toes. When you're ready, open your eyes if you closed them.


(Wait a few seconds until everyone opens their eyes and seems ready to talk.)

- ➔ Lead a discussion using the following questions:
  - How do you feel?
  - What was easy about focusing on the light?
  - What was difficult?
  - How could you use this in your life?



## Practice: Social Support

 45 minutes

 Paper, pens, Handout 15: Four Steps of Teacher Learning Circles

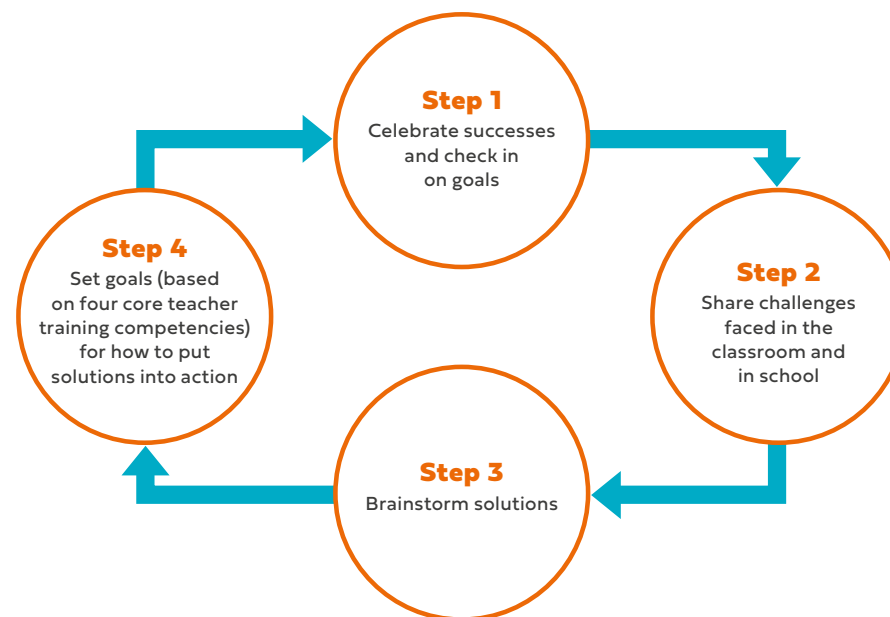
 Whole group

➔ Explain that, in addition to individual stress management, they can work with their fellow teachers to support their school and community through peer support groups (teacher learning circles). These groups can be created for in-person or remote sessions, for example using WhatsApp or other online platforms. This can address their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and even job stress and burnout and social-emotional competence.

- Teacher learning circles are small teacher communities that learn from and support one another, with the ultimate aim of improving teachers' wellbeing and student learning outcomes. The groups reflect on current teaching practices and seek ways to enhance their instructional effectiveness.
- Building in **regular** time for teacher learning circles or peer support networks is important in order to provide teachers with the support and relationships they need.

- Teacher learning circles and networks should be a space where teachers can share challenges and brainstorm solutions. They should also be a space where teachers' successes are celebrated and where teachers can help keep each other accountable to their goals – both professional and wellbeing. They can also help keep teachers motivated by reminding them that they're not alone, and that their peers may also be encountering similar challenges.

➔ Display the four steps of a teacher learning circle and give out Handout 15: Four Steps of Teacher Learning Circles for participants to reference.



➔ Explain the four steps of a teacher learning circle and their purpose:

- 1) Open by celebrating teachers' successes and checking in on their goals. This serves as an opportunity to share wins – little or big – which teachers don't often have the opportunity for.
- 2) Share challenges the teachers are facing in their classrooms and schools. This provides both an opportunity to describe challenges and is also an opportunity for the co-creation of solutions to begin. In crisis and conflict situations, they also provide a safe space for teachers to discuss the community, national or regional factors affecting their lives and that both indirectly and directly have an impact on their teaching and wellbeing.
- 3) All teachers work together to brainstorm solutions to the challenges discussed previously. This can help to start solving teachers' problems, but also serves as an opportunity for teachers to form bonds and support one another.
- 4) At the end of the virtual or in-person teacher learning circle, teachers should set goals for putting the solutions into action. This provides accountability since they will need to report on their progress at the next teacher learning circle meeting.

## Teacher Support Activity

- ➔ Remind them that all teachers have specific strengths and other elements of teaching they would like to improve on. Ask for a volunteer to share a strength that they have in teaching. For example, "I'm good at engaging students in group work". Ask another volunteer to share something they would like to improve on that's related to the strength that was shared. For example, "I'd like to be better at keeping my students' focused during lessons." Explain that this is an example of how they can learn from one another – by sharing their strengths and weaknesses.
- ➔ Give each participant three slips of paper. Each participant should write two strengths, each on one slip of paper, using the phrase "I'm good at..." On the third slip of paper, each participant should write one thing they would like to improve on using the phrase, "I'd like to be better at..."



Ask each participant to write these prompts on a virtual board (with their name) and invite all participants to look at each other's notes" as they finish writing.

- ➔ When they've finished writing, invite participants to walk around and look at one another's strengths and what they would each like to work on. Their task is to find someone who can help them with what they would like to work on and write down that person's name – and contact information if they don't already have it – to follow up and discuss how to improve. While they're mingling, they



should offer to share their strengths if they see someone who would like to be better at something they're confident in.



Participants should identify someone who can help them with what they would like to be better at. After they've browsed the notes, ask each person to identify who they'll go to and what for.

➔ After the mingling activity, lead a discussion:

- How did it feel to share your strengths with your colleagues?
- How did it feel to find colleagues who can support you with what you want to improve?
- How could you and your colleagues set aside time and space to support one another?

For example: Teacher learning circles, WhatsApp groups, meeting times, etc.

➔ End the activity by explaining that participants can address school and community factors by working together to advocate for the time and space that they, as teachers, need to address their own wellbeing and share teaching and other strategies to address the complex situation they are faced with. Peer support can improve their wellbeing across all four components:

- 1) Teacher self-efficacy – through peer support they can learn new strategies and become more confident in their teaching abilities.
- 2) Job stress and burnout – by learning new strategies for classroom management, organization and other pedagogical approaches, they may reduce job-related stress.
- 3) Job satisfaction – working closely with and enjoying the company of your colleagues can improve your job satisfaction.
- 4) Social-emotional competence – working with others improves cognitive, social, emotional and cooperation skills, and can also improve emotional wellbeing.






## Practice: Organization

 20 minutes

 Paper, markers, Handout 16: Self-Care Plan Worksheet

 Individual, whole group

- ➔ A third strategy that can help to improve teachers' wellbeing is keeping themselves organized and creating a plan for addressing their responsibilities, both personal and professional, and also for self-care.
- ➔ Explain that now participants will create a self-care plan from Handout 16: Self-Care Plan Worksheet, that should include:
  - Routine strategies to keep themselves feeling well (e.g., peer learning circles, meditation, running, cooking with family, etc.)
  - Emergency strategies to address moments of acute stress or anxiety (e.g., mindfulness, breathing, walking away, drinking water, etc.)

- ➔ Remind them to consider all stress levels (individual, school, community, national, regional, global), and the four components of teachers' wellbeing (teacher self-efficacy, job stress and burnout, job satisfaction, and social-emotional competence). Remind them different factors will be more influential at different times.

Say, for example:

*"It may be that your individual situation changes, or there are changes in the conflict that deeply affect you. This is normal. It's why it's so important to consider all levels and all aspects of your wellbeing, so you have strategies prepared for different moments in your life."*

- ➔ Invite participants to create the self-care plan in a way that fits their needs and their schedule but ensure that it's a clear plan for taking care of themselves and their own wellbeing.

Say, for example:

*"Focus specifically on what's within your control and what you can achieve. Not everything that could help you feel well will be achievable given the challenging and uncertain circumstances, but there are plenty of things you can do such as setting aside time for journaling or walks, etc."*

- ➔ While participants are working, walk around and help anyone who is having difficulty coming up with strategies for self-care.
- ➔ After all participants have finished, invite them to share what they put in their self-care plans and discuss them with one another.



## Conclusion



10 minutes



Individual Classroom Wellbeing Portfolios, markers and pens



Whole group review, individual drawing/writing

- ➔ Recap what you've discussed (ask questions of the group or invite one or two participants to provide a recap).
- ➔ Invite participants to take 5–10 minutes to add their self-care plan into their Classroom Wellbeing Portfolio.



# HANDOUTS AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLS

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# PARACHUTE ACTIVITY

## Parachute opening



15 minutes



Whole group

➔ Get all the participants to stand in a circle.



Use the explanation below. Invite participants to imagine that they're standing in a circle and creating a virtual safe space.

➔ Give instructions for the parachute opening activity.

Say:

- *"In the middle of the circle there's an imaginary folded parachute. Do you know what a parachute is?" (If they don't know what a parachute is, draw one or explain that it's like a big umbrella.)*
- *"The parachute is our 'safe space'. Whatever happens or whatever anyone says when the parachute is open is confidential. That means that it stays in our safe space. We don't judge or make fun of anyone here. This is a place where everyone is safe to feel and participate."*

- *"The parachute's folded, so we need to open it. Come into the centre, stand close together and each grab a corner. Then move back into a wide circle so that we can open up the parachute."*



Stand up and pretend that you're rolling out a parachute from the centre. Invite participants to do the same in their remote locations.

- *Say: "Imagine that our parachute is made up of lots of triangles of different colours. Choose a triangle that represents how you're feeling today. Take a moment to think about your triangle and why you've chosen that colour."*
- *As the facilitator, share your colour first and then ask everyone to take turns to share theirs. Do not share what it represents or why, just the colour.*
- *Say: "The parachute will always be here in our learning space. Remember, it's a safe space, where everything's confidential and everyone's safe to feel and participate. At the end of each session, we'll close the parachute."*



## Parachute closing



15 minutes



Whole group

➔ Get all the participants to stand in a wide circle with the imaginary parachute in the middle.

- Say: *"Before closing the parachute, let's shake off any bad feelings onto the parachute so that we're left with only the good feelings."*
- Demonstrate shaking your body.



Demonstrate shaking your body while on camera. Invite participants to stand up and do the same.

- Say: *"Now, the parachute's heavy with all the bad feelings we've shaken onto it. We need to lift it up and down so that the bad feelings fly away and disappear forever. Then we'll be left with only the good feelings."*
- With the participants, pull the imaginary parachute up and down 10 times, counting aloud together.



Invite participants to stand up and lift their arms up and down as if they're shaking out the parachute.

- Say: *"Choose a different colour triangle from the parachute representing how you're feeling now. Think about the colour you've chosen and why, then we'll take turns to share our colour."*
- Share your colour first, then ask each of the students to share theirs.
- Say: *"Stand on your triangle at the edge of the parachute. Imagine that you're taking in all the good feelings and colours from everyone's triangles, like a shower that's covering your whole body."*  
*"Now let's roll up the parachute, bring it to the centre and put it away."*
- Find a space where the imaginary parachute can be stored.  
Say: *"The parachute will be safe here and we can open it again in our next session."*



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PLAY-BASED MHPSS IN THE CLASSROOM

## Wellbeing at the centre

Wellbeing must be at the centre of any learning activity or classroom because, without wellbeing, we're unable to think clearly and learn. Supporting wellbeing has two components: promoting wellbeing and responding to distress.

## Practical

This training is practical. It's based on theory and evidence, but the tools and strategies learned can be applied immediately in your teaching and in your own life. They're intended to relate to what's happening in your classroom.

## Conflict-sensitive

This training, and your teaching needs to be conflict-sensitive. Conflict-sensitivity addresses the two-way interaction between education and conflict. The training is meant to help you minimize the negative and maximize the positive impacts of new, dangerous and traumatic experiences on education. It's also meant to minimize the negative and maximize the positive impacts of education on conflict.

## Play-based

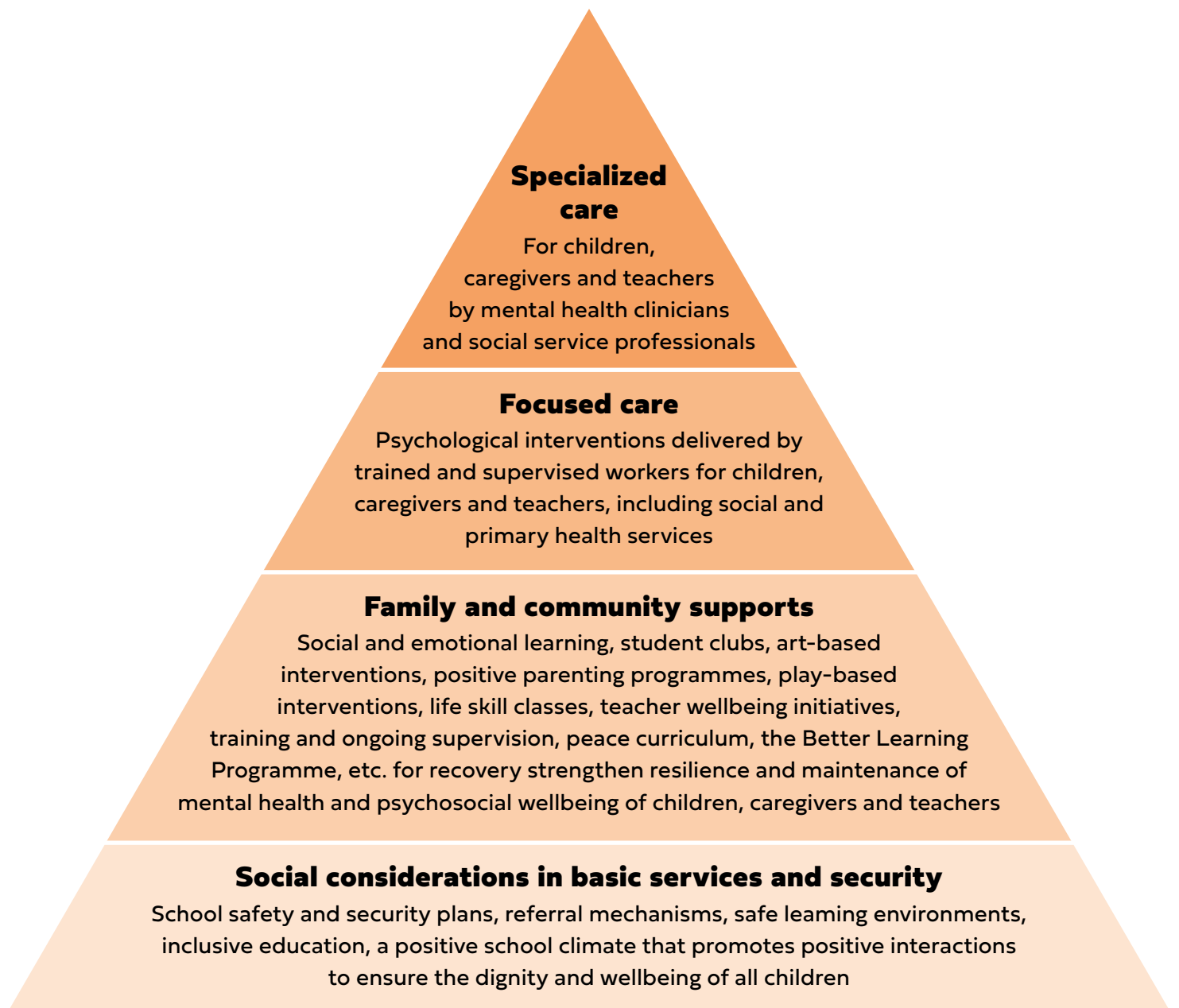
Play has been shown to be an effective way of healing, coping and learning. This training employs the five-characteristics of play-based learning to help you support your own and your students' wellbeing:

- Meaningful
- Joyful
- Socially interactive
- Actively engaging
- Iterative



# MHPSS INTERVENTION PYRAMID

The Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Intervention Pyramid is a widely used model to explain the different levels of care. It was originally developed for the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings in 2007. This version is adapted from the original model and UNICEF's Community-based Operational Guidelines on MHPSS in Humanitarian Settings (2018).



# Learning to cope through play

Playful learning as an approach to support children's coping during times of heightened stress and adversity



S. Lynne Solis, Claire W. Liu, and Jill M. Popp



# Coping through play



## Play provides a supportive context to help children cope with stress

Research shows a link between play and children's ability to understand and cope with the demands of their environment, respond to challenges with creative problem solving, and manage their anxiety in stressful situations. Increasing spaces and opportunities for quality play in children's daily life and contexts—at home, in school, and in public areas—provides them with ways to channel negative emotions and practice strategies to overcome stress.

## Play is a powerful experience for developing self-regulation, a central ability in children's coping with stress

Play interactions and playful learning activities, such as sociodramatic play and storytelling/story-acting, increase positive feelings and promote the cognitive skills that are critical in managing emotional and behavioral responses integral to learning and managing stress.





## Play supports children exposed to severe and prolonged adversity.

Playful experiences and interventions can be an effective way of addressing the needs of children who have experienced abuse, violence, poverty, illness, and other forms of adversity. Creating the community infrastructure and designing culturally responsive play approaches to facilitate children's learning and development, increases the chances of maintaining children's health and well-being when faced with adversity.

## When combined with adult guidance, the benefits of play are particularly effective in supporting children experiencing adversity

Implementing play interventions that address both adults' and children's coping skills can make an important difference in promoting children's ability to withstand the effects of adversity and supporting caregivers in engaging in responsive interactions with children. This underscores the importance of preserving the ties of children with their significant caregivers and fostering human connections through facilitated playgroups, familial play therapies, and community-based play programs.

## Professionals in a variety of settings can employ play to support families undergoing stress and adversity.

Educators, healthcare professionals, child life specialists, social workers, counselors, therapists, and other professionals who interact with children and their families can employ play in their work. This requires offering a variety of play approaches that suit the physical, emotional, and cognitive needs of children; developing protocols and ongoing education/training for professionals to introduce playful practices; and using non-traditional areas, like waiting rooms or school hallways, to promote playful interactions. This also means that professionals may need to coordinate with different systems of care depending on children's and families' needs and experiences.

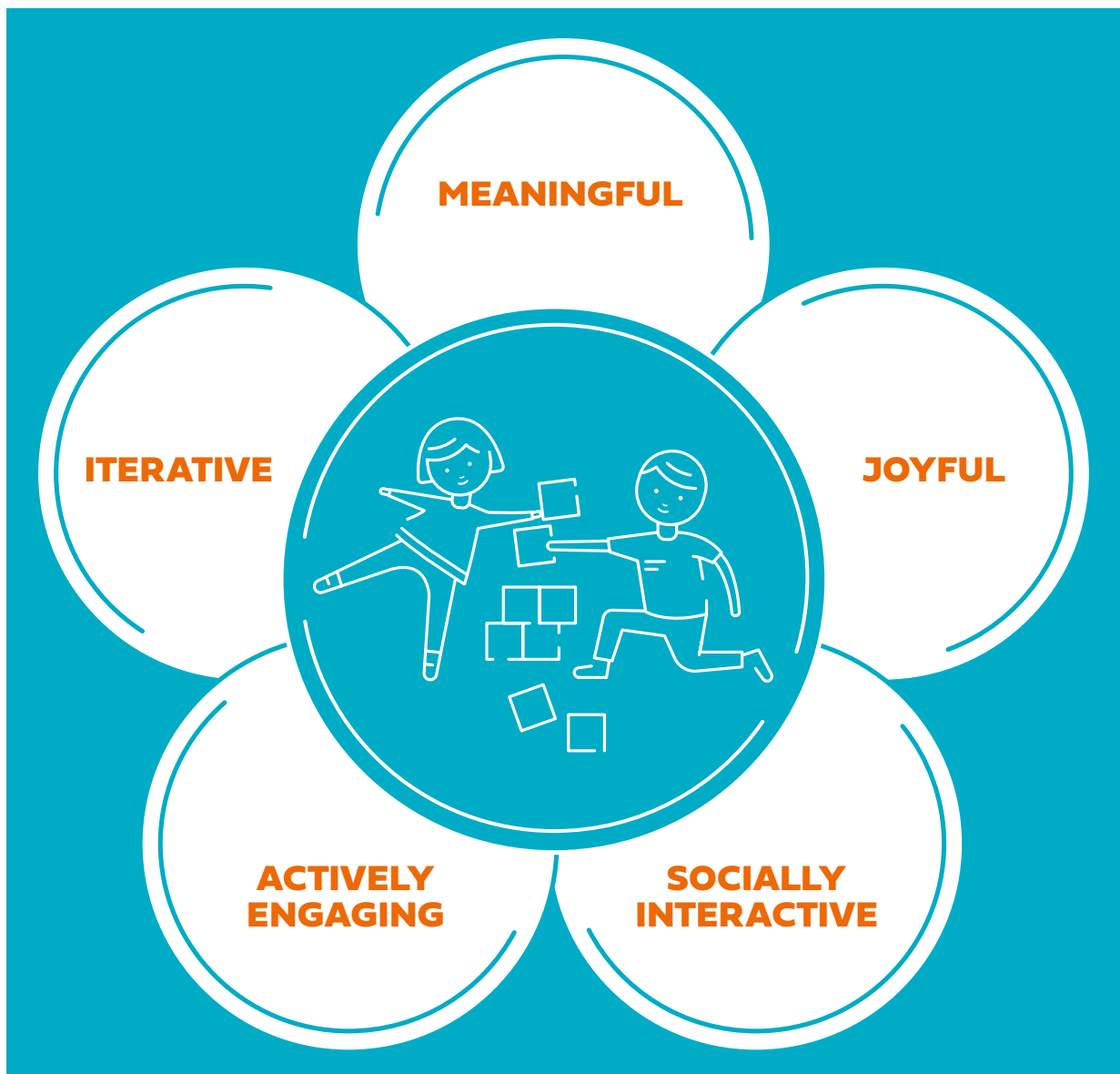


# CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAYFUL EXPERIENCES

The five characteristics listed below draw on extensive conversations with experts in the field, as well as reviews of the literature on play and learning. We do not view them as providing any formal definition of play, but they do help unfold how playful experiences lead to deeper learning.

We say learning through play happens when the activity (1) is experienced as joyful, (2) helps children find meaning in what they are doing or learning, (3) involves active, engaged, minds-on thinking, (4) as well as iterative thinking (experimentation, hypothesis testing, etc.), and (5) social interaction.

These five characteristics draw on evidence for how children learn best (the Science of Learning) and how to foster a playful mindset.



## Meaningful

Meaningful is when the child can relate new experiences to something already known. In play, children often explore what they have seen and done, or noticed others do, as a way of grasping what it means. By doing so, they can express and expand their understanding through a variety of media, symbols and tools.

## Joyful

Joy is at the heart of play - both enjoying a task for its own sake and the momentary thrill of surprise, insight, or success after overcoming challenges. Recent research shows how curiosity and positive experiences are linked to learning; for example, infants show more learning after a surprising event than after one that is expected.

## Socially Interactive

Social interaction is a powerful tool for both learning and play. By communicating their thoughts, understanding others through direct interaction and sharing ideas, children are not only able to enjoy being with others, but also to build deeper understanding and more powerful relationships.

## Actively Engaging

Learning through play also involves being actively engaged. Imagine a child who's fully absorbed in playing with a set of building blocks. She is actively imagining how the pieces will go together and is so engrossed that she fails to hear her father call her for dinner. This mental immersion and ability to stay focused are especially powerful in the context of learning through play.

## Iterative

From a toddler trying different ways to build a high tower with blocks, to a young child discovering that the angle of a slide impacts how far a marble will shoot across a room, iteration – trying out possibilities, revising hypotheses and discovering the next question – leads to increased learning.

These five characteristics ebb and flow as children are engaged in learning through play activities and all five are not necessary all the time. But over time, children should experience moments of joy and surprise, a meaningful connection, be active and absorbed, iterate and engage with others.







# COMMON SIGNS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DISTRESS IN CHILDREN

## Physical reactions

People of any age may experience physical reactions to distress. Some may experience several reactions, some none or very few. The physical reactions could also be signs of physical illness. If a child's symptoms persist, become worse or in other ways are a cause for concern, the child should see a doctor.



- Extreme tiredness
- Stomach ache
- Tight chest
- Dry mouth
- Muscle weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Shaking
- Headaches
- General aches

Age	Reaction	
<b>0–3 years</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinging to their caregivers more than normal</li> <li>• Regressing to former (younger) behaviours</li> <li>• Changes in sleeping and eating patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher irritability</li> <li>• Increased hyperactivity</li> <li>• More afraid of things</li> <li>• More demanding</li> <li>• More frequent crying</li> </ul>
<b>4–6 years</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinging to adults</li> <li>• Regressing to former (younger) behaviours</li> <li>• Changes in sleeping and eating patterns</li> <li>• Higher irritability</li> <li>• Poorer concentration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming more inactive or more hyperactive</li> <li>• Stop playing</li> <li>• Take on adult roles</li> <li>• Stop talking</li> <li>• More anxious or worried</li> </ul>
<b>7–12 years</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming withdrawn</li> <li>• Frequent concern about others affected</li> <li>• Changes in sleeping and eating patterns</li> <li>• Increasingly fearful</li> <li>• Higher irritability</li> <li>• Frequent aggression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restlessness</li> <li>• Poor memory and concentration</li> <li>• Physical symptoms/ psychosomatic</li> <li>• Frequently talks about the event or repetitive play</li> <li>• Feels guilty or blames themselves</li> </ul>
<b>13–17 years (teens)</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intense grief</li> <li>• Shows excessive concern for others</li> <li>• Feelings of guilt and shame</li> <li>• Increasingly defiant of authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased risk taking</li> <li>• Aggression</li> <li>• Self-destructive</li> <li>• Feeling hopeless</li> </ul>

Adapted from: UNICEF, 2022. *Common signs of psychosocial distress in children.*



# DAILY ROUTINES FOR THE CLASSROOM

## Morning Circle Time

Morning Circle Time is an opportunity for all students to come together, do an activity, sing a song, move their bodies, and/or check in. The routine can be specific to the class, but the overall goal is the same: to set aside time for the students to be together, set the tone of the day, reflect and check in together.

Morning Circle Time should always take place at the same time, in the same place, in the same way. However, Circle Time looks different in every class, and should reflect the goals of your class.

### Options

- Begin with a song or a chant, like a “good morning” song.
- Do stretches or a fun dance.
- Reset a calendar if you have one in your class to show today’s date.
- Ask a question or invite each student to share their feelings.
- Introduce a “theme of the day”.
- Be creative!

## “Do Now” Activities

A “do now” activity helps students to get into a mindset when they start class. It should be a short 5–10-minute activity. “Do now” activities should be built into a routine so that students come to expect them.

- ➔ Before students enter the classroom (in person or virtually), write instructions for a short activity or a question.
  - The activity should reflect on or review content from a previous lesson or prepare students for the content that the next lesson will cover.
  - Ideas for the activity include: free writing, a paired discussion, a game or a reflection.
  - The activity can relate to their own lives. It can help students to reflect on their feelings and experiences.
- ➔ As students enter the classroom, they should begin doing the activity or answering the questions written on the board or handed out.
- ➔ After the activity is finished, it should be referenced later in the lesson, allowing the class to reflect and connect it to their experiences and their learning.



## Reflection: Rose, Thorn and Bud

- ➔ At the end of the day, bring all the students together – if possible, sitting in a circle so that they can all see one another.
- ➔ Each student should say:
  - A "rose" – a success that happened today
  - A "thorn" – something that was challenging for them today
  - Some students may also choose to say a "bud," something they're looking forward to in the future.
- ➔ Instead of using the analogy of a rose – thorn – bud, you can find another way to represent something they are happy about, unhappy about, and excited about.

### Rose

**A highlight, a success or something positive that happened.**



- What was a highlight today?
- How have you been successful?
- What are you most proud of?

### Thorn

**A challenge you experienced, or something you could use more support with.**



- What was most stressful?
- Identify causes of difficulty.
- What made it hard to be successful?

### Bud

**New ideas or something you're looking forward to knowing or understanding more.**



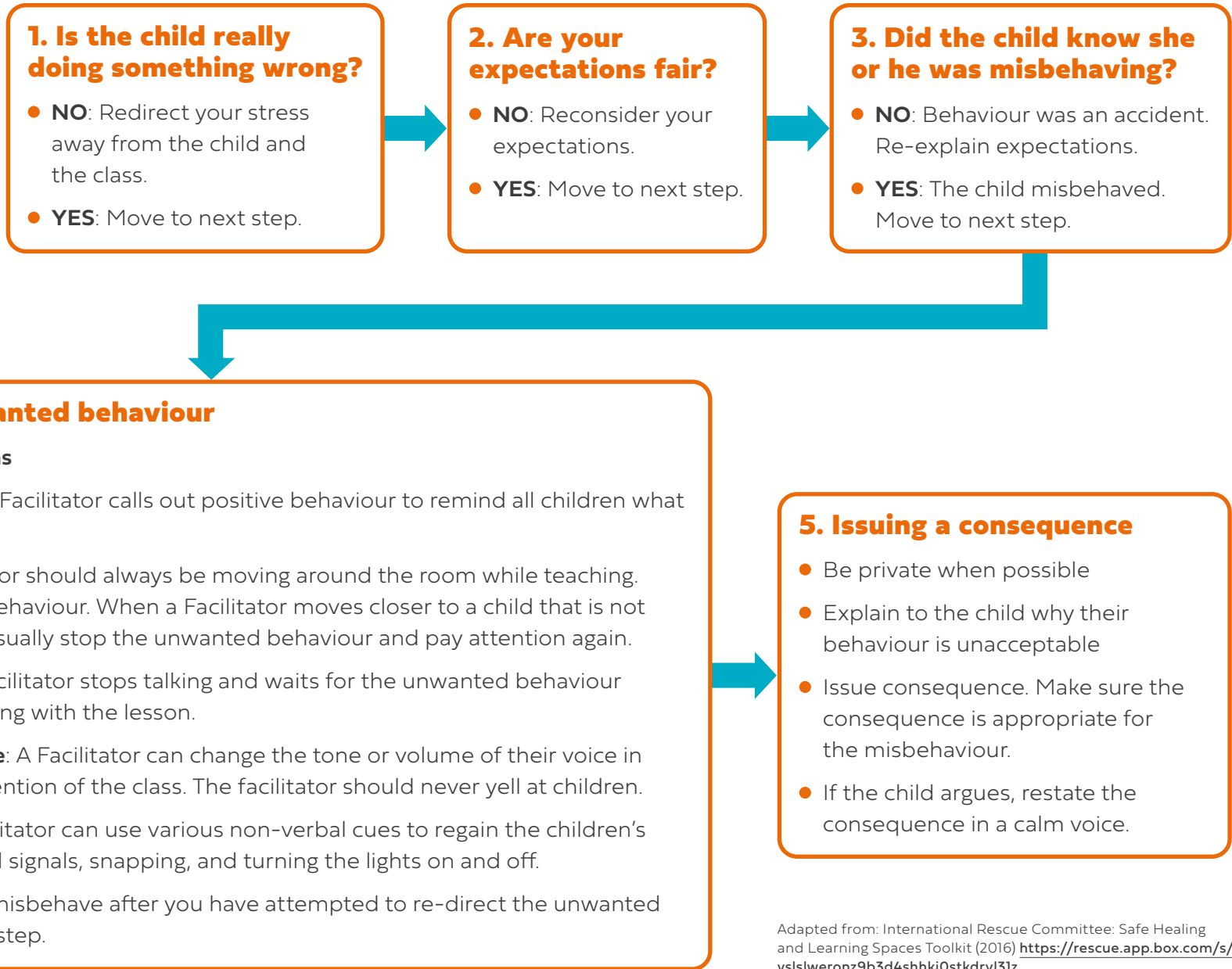
- What are you looking forward to?
- Describe opportunities for learning that excite you.
- What needs growth or nurturing?



# STEPS TO APPLY POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

## Stop and Think

When a child's actions interrupt instruction, ask yourself the following questions before you take action.



Adapted from: International Rescue Committee: Safe Healing and Learning Spaces Toolkit (2016) <https://rescue.app.box.com/s/vslslweronz9b3d4shhkj0stkdryl31z>





# ABOUT THE P.O.W.E.R. GAME BANK

The Play Opportunities for Wellness and Education Resource (P.O.W.E.R.) is a collection of 100 gender-responsive play-based learning activities.

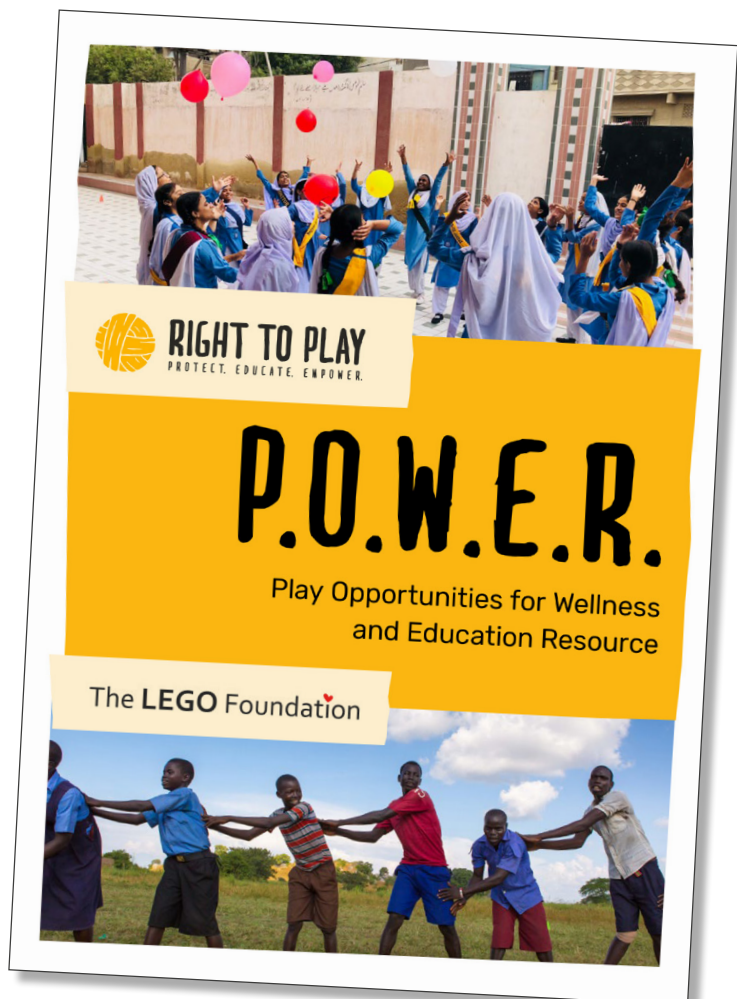
The 100 games are available as animated videos and short PDF manuals. They support holistic life skills like communication, empathy, creativity and confidence; promote psychosocial wellbeing; teach children how to process difficult emotions; and show them how to be inclusive of peers of all backgrounds, genders, and abilities.

The games are designed for children of varying ages, and are meant to be played in classrooms, community settings, or at home, with few to no materials required. Each game includes a play-based activity with one key learning, and guidance for how to encourage girls and boys to reflect on what they've learned, connect it to their own experiences, and apply it in their lives.

The games are available as animated videos and PDFs in English, French and Arabic through the Right to Play website: <https://righttoplay.com/en/landing/power-games/>



If you have questions about these resources, or would like a print-ready version of the games manual, please contact [gpd@righttoplay.com](mailto:gpd@righttoplay.com).



# LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

## CHECK-IN GUIDANCE

This practical tool provides instructions on how to facilitate a 90–120-minute check-in session with children aged six years and up when they arrive back at school or another activity space that was closed due to an ongoing war. It is designed for use by adults – including classroom teachers – to help children settle back into a regular school routine. Space to discuss their fears and experiences of loss, displacement and other impacts of war among their peers and with the guidance of a trusted adult will help them to process their feelings and the effect the ongoing war is having on them.

This guidance can also be used outside of a school context, i.e., in non-formal education settings, children's clubs, child protection-led activities, livelihood activities, etc.



## Discussions with caregivers

Discussing this welcome back check-in material with caregivers will enable them to reassure their children about the support they will get when they return to school and encourage them to practise activities such as belly breathing with their children at home. Explain that the check-in session is not psychotherapy and that a teacher/facilitator will be present if a child becomes upset. Be clear that you will not be asking the children to share personal stories they wish to keep private.

This initial discussion could take place at a parents' meeting. In some contexts, caregivers can be given the information in a letter, email or via another online platform. Encourage caregivers to reach out if they have any concerns or to share information that will help the school support their child.

## Why are check-in sessions important?

As a result of the current war, children and families in Ukraine have experienced displacement, loss of and separation from loved ones, and sirens and aerial attacks on their homes, schools, hospitals and communities. Most children have been out of school due to school closures and without routine or close contact their peers in familiar learning spaces. Some children have had access to digital learning, but not all.

Many children have witnessed their caregivers' increased anxiety, tension and exhaustion. As a result, their mental health and wellbeing could be at risk. Space to discuss and share experiences with their peers, and with the guidance of a trusted adult, will support children to process the effects and consequences of the war and help them return to learning.



## Common reactions to stress, war and displacement

Children who have experienced prolonged war, been out of school and separated from their peers and teachers may experience anxiety, extreme worry, sadness, and feelings of powerlessness and uncertainty. Although they may feel excited to see their friends and teachers when they return to school, and appreciate the routine of going to school, they may also be anxious about being separated from their caregivers, reconnecting with school life, and meeting new students. They may be worried about continued air raids, having spent a significant amount of time in bomb shelters or witnessed bombs or shelling. Some children may have been isolated at home, in a bomb shelter, or displaced many times with a vulnerable caregiver. Under these difficult circumstances, children's wellbeing and development may be affected by the lack of stimulation, routine, safety and security.

One common reaction to war is a lack of trust in others. War is a deliberate act, and it is often difficult for children as well as adults to understand why others have inflicted pain and grief. These feelings can lead to a sense of mistrust and 'polarized' thinking – for example, that people are either good or bad. Some people can lose empathy and understanding of people they perceive as 'not good'. This could lead, for example, to polarization of children from different language communities.

Difficult experiences can lead to impulsive, irritated and aggressive behaviour and to impaired concentration and memory. Sometimes this can be difficult to spot because some children keep their 'inner life' to themselves and do not manifest their feelings in their behaviour. When children grieve, for example, they often seem to move in and out of the pain, sometimes playing and interacting as usual. Then, perhaps because of a memory, word, smell or other trigger, they may react with outbursts of anger or sadness. It is important to tell the children that this is common and perfectly normal, there is nothing shameful in reacting this way.



## Benefits of a check-in with children

### As a supportive adult, you will:

- Gain insight into how children are feeling about returning to school and what they need to feel safe and supported as they enter back into routine classes or activities
- Have the opportunity to put children at ease, listen to their experiences and provide encouragement
- Have the opportunity to observe whether there are any children who need extra attention and support.

### Children will:

- Have the opportunity to reflect and strengthen their self-awareness as they share their experiences of the war
- Get the chance to understand their own reactions and feelings about their experiences, which will help them to manage their emotions
- Recognize that they are not alone and that their peers have had similar experiences
- Know that they are supported and learn about the resources available to them.

### Note to the facilitator

There may be children who need extra support or additional services. Before the check-in session, find out what services exist, how children can access them, and how to refer children if needed. After the session, and in the following weeks, continue to monitor your group and identify and refer children who are particularly distressed or in need of additional support or specialized care.



## Step-by-step guide to facilitating a check-in session

This guidance includes a script for a 90–120-minute check-in session consisting of a partially structured conversation, which takes place when the children return to school in person. The aim is to understand how they have been affected by the war and to reduce feelings of anxiety, sadness or confusion.

### The check-in session has six steps:

- 1** Introduce the session: how much time will be spent on the check in, how it will be done and its purpose.
- 2** How has the war affected us, our families and communities?
- 3** What has helped while face-to-face learning hasn't been possible?
- 4** What are we looking forward to?
- 5** What are we nervous about?
- 6** How do we take care of each other?

### You will need:

- A room or sheltered space where the whole group (preferably no more than 30 children) can sit safely together. If possible, everyone should be sitting in a circle, so they are able to see each other
- A blackboard/whiteboard and chalk/pen to write on the board
- Paper and pens for activities.



## Adapting the check-in for different ages

Facilitators should consider the age and developmental level of the children in their group before planning the check-in.

Ideas for adapting the session for younger and older groups of children include:

- **Younger children (6–8 years):** Consider shortening the session or potentially repeating it over several days using different prompt questions or activities to give more children the chance to share their experiences and feelings. Consider using art and play to illustrate and prompt the discussion. With any adaptation, make sure to end with Step 6 – how to take care of each other.
- **Older children (12–18 years):** Give them space to talk about what they are hearing about the war and any concerns or questions they may have. Time to journal – writing or drawing feelings and experiences – might be particularly appropriate for this age group.

### Tips for the facilitator



1. Acknowledge when a child shares, for example by making eye contact and thanking the child for their contribution. Make sure that everyone gets the chance to say something if they wish to. Dividing the children into smaller groups can make shy participants more comfortable about participating. You can invite a child to share, but don't put pressure on them.
2. You can provide general examples but be cautious about speaking about your personal experiences during the war other than broad statements such as, "I missed seeing everyone in school, what about you?" It is important to keep the children as the main focus of the conversation.
3. The times are indicative and flexible. Some groups may spend more time on one topic than another, but do not exceed the total time of 120 minutes.
4. It is important to use normalization and generalization statements to support children. Normalization statements are used to let the child know that they are having a normal reaction to a distressing event and that everyone experiences distress and adversity differently. Generalization statements let the child know that many other children share the same feelings and that they are not alone. See Appendix B for examples of commonly used statements.
5. If any children are new to the school or area (due to displacement), make a special effort to help them feel included and supported. See Appendix A for tips on how to support children in distress.



## Introduction to the session, how much time will be spent on the conversation, how it will be done and the purpose of the check-in

(10 minutes)

### Tips for the facilitator

The conversation must be led by a teacher who will be responsible for ensuring that the conversation is safe and inclusive. It is important to keep track of time as you have to get through all the steps and limit the conversation to 90–120 minutes in order to keep everyone's attention.



To start the session, sing a short song together or play an interactive game as an ice breaker.

Introduce the check-in session by saying something like, "Welcome back, it's great to see you! I've been really looking forward to getting back and I'm sure you have too. It's been a strange time and for some of us it's been really difficult. So, we'll spend the next hour or so talking about how things have been in our communities, how we ourselves have been, and how we can each help each other to adjust back into the routine of face-to-face classes or activities."

Go through the basic rules or have the children suggest and agree on them. (If possible, write them on a board.)

- There are no right or wrong answers – we respect everyone's opinion.
- We don't make fun of each other.
- We let each other talk and listen to each other.
- You don't have to say anything if you don't feel like it.

Ask if anyone has any other ideas for ground rules.





## 2

## How has the war affected us, our families and our communities?

(10–15 minutes)

### Tips for the facilitator



If a child shares something difficult, use techniques such as generalization or normalization. “Yes, I’m sure there are many others who have felt the same.” This part has two steps: first we talk about how the war has and continues to affect our lives, then how it has made us feel. The key is for participants to understand the connection between what has happened and the feelings they have had because of it. For example, “We’ve not been able to go to school and this has been difficult.” Or, “Many of us have been separated from our loved ones and this makes us anxious or feel guilty.”

Start by saying that, “The war has affected everyone in one way or another – children, young people and adults. Now we’ll talk about how the **events** have and continue to affect our lives.” Focus on **events** and give examples:

- We haven’t been able to go to school.
- Schools were shut down.
- Our parents, grandparents or brothers and sisters have become our teachers or helped us with our schoolwork.
- We’ve come together as a community and experienced great generosity.

If there are many children who have been displaced or shelling and bombs have destroyed a lot of structures, give these examples:

- We’ve had to leave our homes and towns to be safe.
- We’ve experienced bombing and shelling in our schools, homes or communities.

Ask for examples and acknowledge all the examples given.



Then talk about how these events have made us all feel many different emotions. Ask children to name some of the emotions they are feeling, or others might be feeling: sadness, fear, frustration, anger, confusion.

Emphasize that it is normal that we feel lots of different emotions. Normalize these feelings using statements in Appendix B.

Finish this part of the conversation by emphasizing that all reactions are completely understandable, and that there is a connection between the way our lives have been affected by the war and the way we **feel**.

Remind the participants that it may be helpful to discuss feelings and thoughts of being scared or sad with others. Encourage children to talk to someone they trust – whether that is with you as their teacher or another caregiver. Remember that if children do come to talk to you there are tips in Appendix A on how to support a child in distress.

### Note to the facilitator



If you notice that participants are hesitant to share (this may be the case with children who have experienced adversity) – you can switch the exercise around. Instead of asking the participants for input, you can provide a list of common events and the associated feelings and ask if anyone recognizes these in themselves or within their community. It may be easier for children to recognize feelings they have experienced, rather than to name their feelings.

For example, “I had to leave my home and only take what we could carry with us, and I wasn’t sure where we were headed and if I would ever see my home again which made me feel sad.” Or, “I was sitting in the bomb shelter with my grandmother and my brother and when the bombing was over, I felt relieved.”



## 3

## What has helped you while schools have been closed?

(5–10 minutes)

### Note to the facilitator

This part of the conversation is a brainstorm on strategies that have worked well for the participants. You can let them talk together in pairs first.



Next, make a list of the things that have helped them to feel better during the war. You can suggest ideas that others say have worked for them, such as:

- Talking or texting with a friend or loved one you're separated from
- Playing with siblings
- Asking for support

Give examples of other ways people in the community have helped themselves to feel better during the crisis:

- Being generous and supporting others
- Making new friends in community centres or temporary homes

Consider practicing belly breathing as a group to help everyone (including you!) feel calm.

### Belly breathing

With everyone sitting together in a circle, in a calm, slow voice, say:

“Sit up straight but relaxed and put both your hands gently on your belly. Look towards the ground if that makes you feel more comfortable. Now, let’s breathe in slowly and feel our bellies fill up with air. They should get nice and round. Now breathe out slowly and feel your belly get small again.”

Count from one to five slowly while you all breathe in, and then count back from five down to one as you all breathe out. Repeat four times. When finished, ask the children how they feel. Share how you are feeling too. Encourage children to practise belly breathing at home – maybe they can help teach their younger siblings or caregivers how to do it too.



## 4

**What are we looking forward to?****(10–15 minutes)**

The purpose of this step is to support children to think positively about returning to school and to strengthen the sense of community within the classroom.

Now say something like, “Lots of children are really looking forward to seeing their friends and going back to face-to-face learning. What are you, or other children you know, most looking forward to about returning to school?” This gives children an opportunity to verbalize positive expectations and hear from their peers what they are excited about. You can also turn this into an activity and ask the children to draw what they are looking forward to and share it with the group or the person sitting next to them.



## 5

**What are we nervous about?****(5–10 minutes)**

Reassure the group that many children are nervous about coming back to school or returning to other activities. Some are wondering whether their friends will still be their friends, some are afraid of sirens or being away from their family, and some are worried about having fallen behind in their studies. For some, it is like the first day in a new school, with butterflies in their stomach. Ask if they can relate to any of these feelings.

Tell the children, “It’s important to know and talk about what you’re nervous about. Ask for help, and together we’ll find the best way to help and care for each other.”





## How can we take care of each other?

(20–30 minutes)

Start by saying something like, “We all help to take care of ourselves and each other. I’m sure you’ve seen how communities have come together to support each other since the start of the war.”

Give examples of practices that will help students feel supported:

- Welcoming to the classroom new students who may have been displaced
- Helping new students find their way around the school (where things are located, how the school functions, etc.)
- Supporting each other with difficult emotions and feelings
- Being kind and supportive
- Making sure we all know what to do in an emergency; this can be an opportunity to remind children what will happen and what they can do in the case of an emergency, ensuring everyone understands the instructions and how they can help each other keep safe.

Now, let the participants ask questions about the practices above. Then ask them, “What will it take for us all to get off to a good start? Here you can add, “Be patient with yourself and each other, and be sure to include anyone you notice is feeling left out. Tell an adult [preferably name a specific person] if you are upset or see others around you who are upset.”

Ask the children to create posters or leaflets (depending on the supplies available). The posters can include drawings or key words that show how they are going to take care of themselves and others and deal with difficult feelings and thoughts. You can encourage children to create a song, drama or theatre production that can be put on for others.

**End on a positive note and say that you and all the other adults are looking forward to helping everyone have a good time at school and that it will be great to get started.**



## Staying well

War leaves a mark on everyone, including teachers. Many teachers will have been involved in efforts to support their community and witnessed the effects of war firsthand. It is important for teachers to also look after themselves and seek support from peers or professional help if needed.

### To manage stress on a daily basis:<sup>1</sup>

1. Take breaks when needed.
2. Take care of your basic needs.
3. Do something that brings you joy and something that is meaningful to you.
4. Take at least five minutes a day to speak to someone you care about.
5. Talk to your manager or other colleagues at work about wellbeing.
6. Establish and stick to daily routines.
7. Minimize unhealthy habits.
8. Regularly write down things you are grateful for.
9. Think about what you can and can't control.
10. Try relaxation activities throughout the day.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2020). *Basic Psychosocial Skills: A Guide for COVID-19 Responders*. IASC.



## Appendix A: Tips for supporting children in distress

As a teacher, you are often the first one to notice when a child may be in distress. There are a number of ways you can help to calm, comfort and settle them. First, speak softly, slowly and calmly. Try to sit down next to the child or crouch down so that you are at their level. If it is culturally appropriate, maintain eye or physical contact, such as holding the child's hand or placing your arm around or on their shoulder. Always first ask the child if they feel comfortable with physical contact.

If the child is panicking or looks disoriented, encourage them to focus on non-distressing things in the immediate environment. For example, try to shift their attention to something they can see or hear, such as the colour of the room or the reassuring sounds in the environment. Help them to reduce their feeling of panic or anxiety by asking them to focus on their breathing and encourage them to breathe deeply and slowly. You can even make this playful and show the child how to breathe deeply like a cat or a lion. Or you can ask what their favourite animal is and ask them to breathe deeply like that animal. You can even make animal sounds!

When speaking with a child who may be in distress, always practise attentive listening skills.

- Show that you are listening by nodding, smiling and using facial expressions.
- Paraphrase what the child said and repeat it back to them to ensure that you have understood them correctly.
- Encourage the child to talk if they want to.
- Respond to what the child tells you – without judgement.
- Observe non-verbal cues and reflect them back to the child if appropriate.



## Appendix B: Using normalization and generalization statements

Normalization and generalization statements are not meant to ignore or dismiss the difficult emotions a child is experiencing, but to help the child to understand that they are not alone, and that the feelings they are experiencing are common. It is an opportunity to help the child and other children present to understand that there is a connection between the events they have experienced and their thoughts and feelings. The key point is that the child understands that their reactions are understandable and human.

Normalization and generalization statements can also be very effective in protecting the child from saying more than they are later comfortable with. Diving deep into emotions is not always useful, especially in a group without a trained mental health professional or outside of a close trusting relationship.

### Some examples of normalization statements:

"It's completely normal to have strong emotions like this. Emotions help us or give us information. For example, fear tells us to run or leave a dangerous situation. Sadness helps us to rest so that we can mourn what we've lost before we move forward."

"War can bring a lot of difficult emotions. You may feel stressed and overwhelmed by everything that's happening around you. It can be difficult to deal with these feelings, to communicate them to others, and to ask for help."

"It's completely understandable to feel angry. It's a common response to war. That someone did this to us can make us feel angry..."

"Yes, of course those of us who have experienced bombings can feel relieved and happy that we are safe, but we can feel confused and very sad and scared at the same time. It's not easy to experience so many emotions at the same time, but it's perfectly normal and it's because of what happened."

"It's perfectly normal to want to play and be happy sometimes, even if someone has died. That's how we're made as humans. Sometimes feelings change back and forth. It doesn't mean we're not mourning, but our hearts sometimes need to take in what's happened a little at a time. They need a break and we need to concentrate on the world around us."





"It's perfectly normal to be nervous on the first days back at school, especially if it's a new school with new friends. You're not yet familiar with the place or the people. That's why we all need to be kind to each other."

The purpose of generalization statements is to let the child know that many other children share the same feelings, and that they are not alone. Using normalization and generalization statements together is important so that the child understands that their feelings and reactions are normal and that many other children share them. This helps reduce feelings of isolation and can create a sense of hope.

Avoid saying things like "You'll be fine" because you do not know this to be true.

**Examples of generalization statements:**

"I know a lot of children who are feeling the same way as you. Some are your age, some are older. I also know some children who are feeling much better now."

"I know one girl who's doing much better after talking to her mother about what was troubling her."

Such stories can be used to talk about how a child copes, without exposing the participants:

"I know many children who were very sad. It helped them to talk to their friends."

"I know many children who found the first months very difficult but are now doing much better..."

"Thanks for sharing this. I'm sure many of us in this room can recognize those feelings."

"I'm so sorry that happened, it must be very difficult. Most children who haven't heard from their father for a long time are very worried and can find it difficult to sleep, just like you described."

"I'm so sorry to hear that your [...] died. That's an extremely painful experience. Any child who loses their [...] will grieve and miss them and sometimes feel very alone. Many children I know have found it comforting to be with friends and do something ordinary like going to school. The feelings are still there, but for many it helps to spend time doing something ordinary."



# SCHOOL WELLBEING SUPPORT MAP

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position	Name	Contact details	Working hours



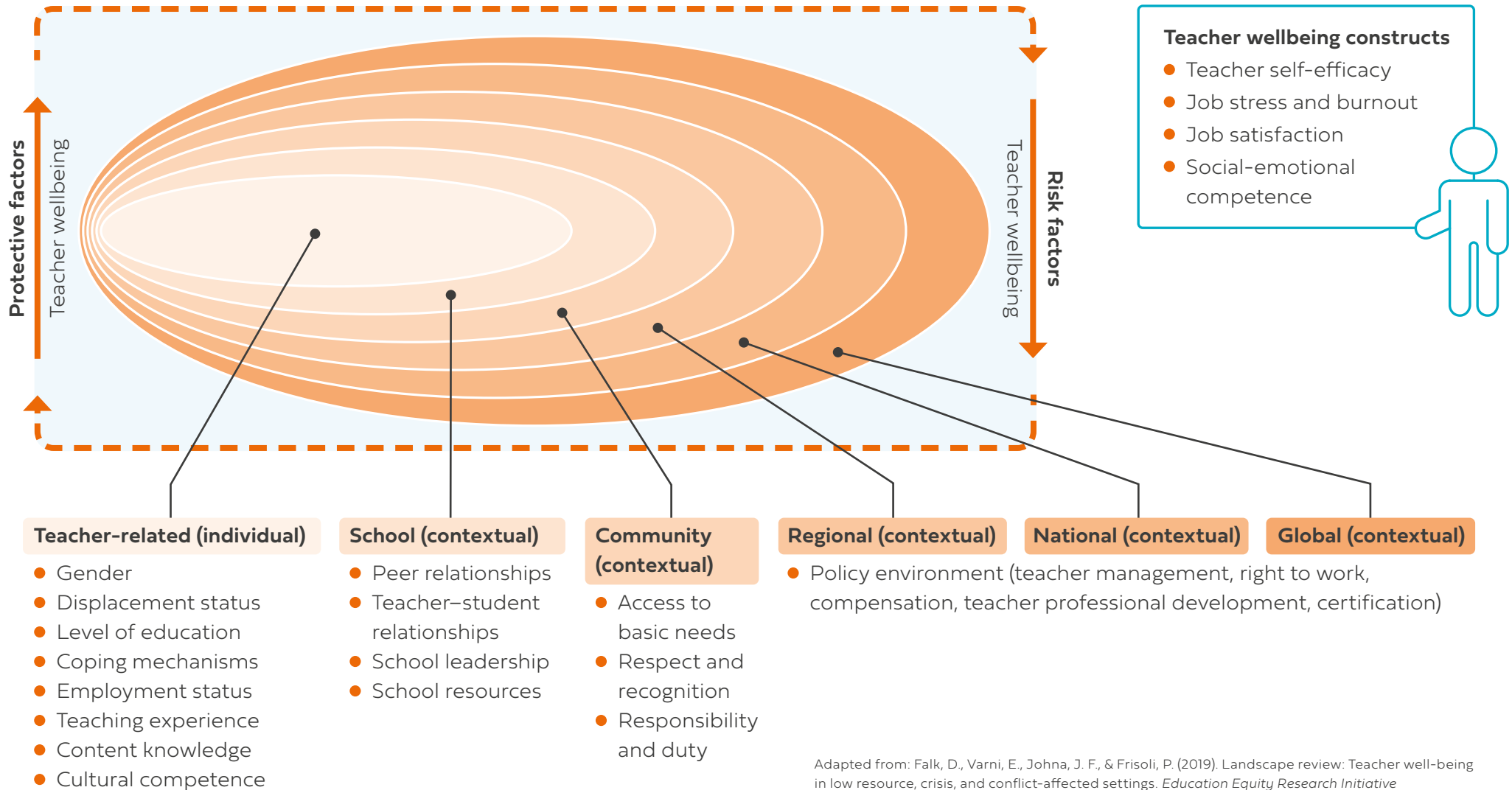
# SCHOOL WELLBEING SUPPORT MAP – EXAMPLE

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position	Name	Contact details	Working hours
<i>School psychologist/ school counsellor</i>			
<i>School nurse</i>			
<i>Head teacher/ administrator</i>			
<i>Non-governmental organization providing child protection services/support to children and families</i>	<i>Amna</i>	<i><a href="https://amna.org/">https://amna.org/</a></i>	
<i>Mental health and wellbeing hotline(s)</i>	<i>Poruch</i>	<i><a href="https://poruch.me/teenagers">https://poruch.me/teenagers</a></i>	



# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER WELLBEING



# MINDFULNESS SCRIPT

- ➔ Find a comfortable seated position or lie down on the floor on your backs if there's enough space.
- ➔ Now we'll take a few minutes to sit silently and visualize. If you'd like to, feel free to close your eyes.
- ➔ Begin by focusing on your breath. Put one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Breathe into your belly. Inhale (smell the flower) – 2 – 3 – 4. Exhale (blow out the candle) – 2 – 3 – 4. Continue to breathe slowly and fully feeling as your hand on your belly rises with each inhale and falls with each exhale.
- ➔ Let your back grow longer and taller, reaching your head to the sky (if you're sitting). Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, feeling your breath relax your body.
- ➔ Imagine that you can see a light in front of your eyes. Bring that light up to your forehead. Allow the light into your head, filling your entire head with bright, warm light. Where this bright light exists, there's only room for happy thoughts. There can be no darkness. Feel as the light pushes out any bad thoughts. Only good thoughts are left in your mind. See the light moving down to your ears, so you can only hear good things. See the light moving into your jaw and mouth. Let yourself speak only good words. Let the light travel down your neck and shoulders to your heart. Let your heart be filled with the light, so you can feel only good feelings. Feel as the light shines out from your heart and you're showering everyone and everything around you with love and good feelings. Feel as your whole body is filled with the light, so you're aglow with good thoughts and feelings. Think, "The light is in me, I am the light. I shine light on everyone and everything around me."

(Pause for up to one minute of silence, or as long as they're comfortable with.)

- ➔ Begin to bring yourself back to the present. Focus on your breathing – in and out slowly. Wiggle your fingers and toes. When you're ready, open your eyes if you closed them.

(Wait a few seconds until everyone opens their eyes and seems ready to talk.)

- ➔ Lead a discussion using the following questions:
  - How do you feel?
  - What was easy about focusing on the light?
  - What was difficult?
  - How could you use this in your life?

## Other mindfulness resources can be found here

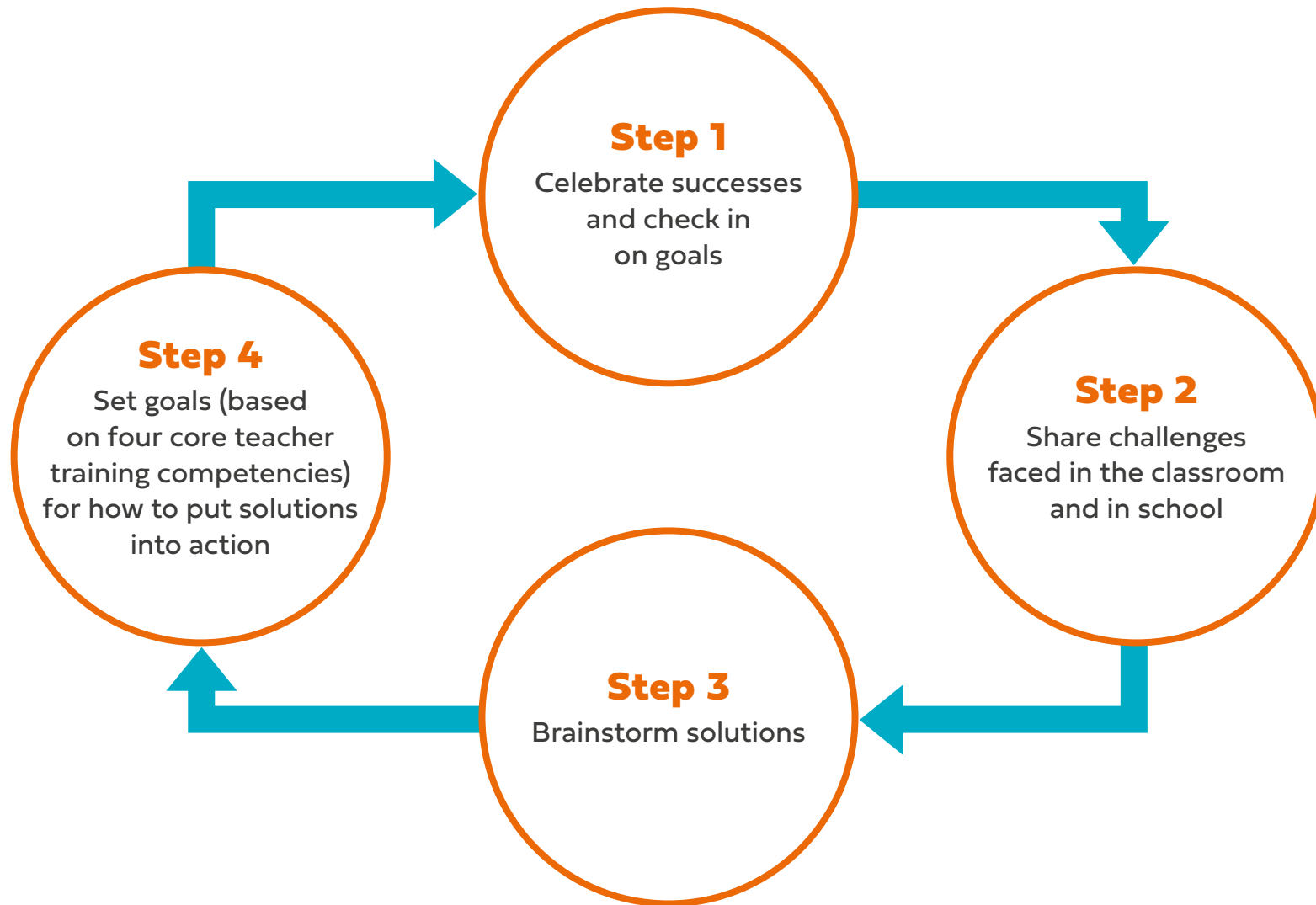
- UCLA Health offers free guided meditations in a variety of languages. They are available as sound and text from the website or through an app: [www.uclahealth.org](http://www.uclahealth.org)



- International Rescue Committee's Healing Classrooms programme offers a range of guided mindfulness activities on their YouTube channel in English and Arabic: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)



# FOUR STEPS FOR TEACHER LEARNING CIRCLES



More guidance on teacher learning circles can be found in the *Teachers in Crisis Contexts Peer Coaching Pack: Level 1 Toolkit*, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (2018). <https://inee.org/resources/teachers-crisis-contexts-peer-coaching-pack>



# SELF-CARE PLAN WORKSHEET

## Routine strategies

to keep yourself feeling well (i.e., peer learning circles, meditation, running, cooking with family, etc.)

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## Emergency strategies

to address moments of acute stress or anxiety (i.e., mindfulness, breathing, walking away, etc.)

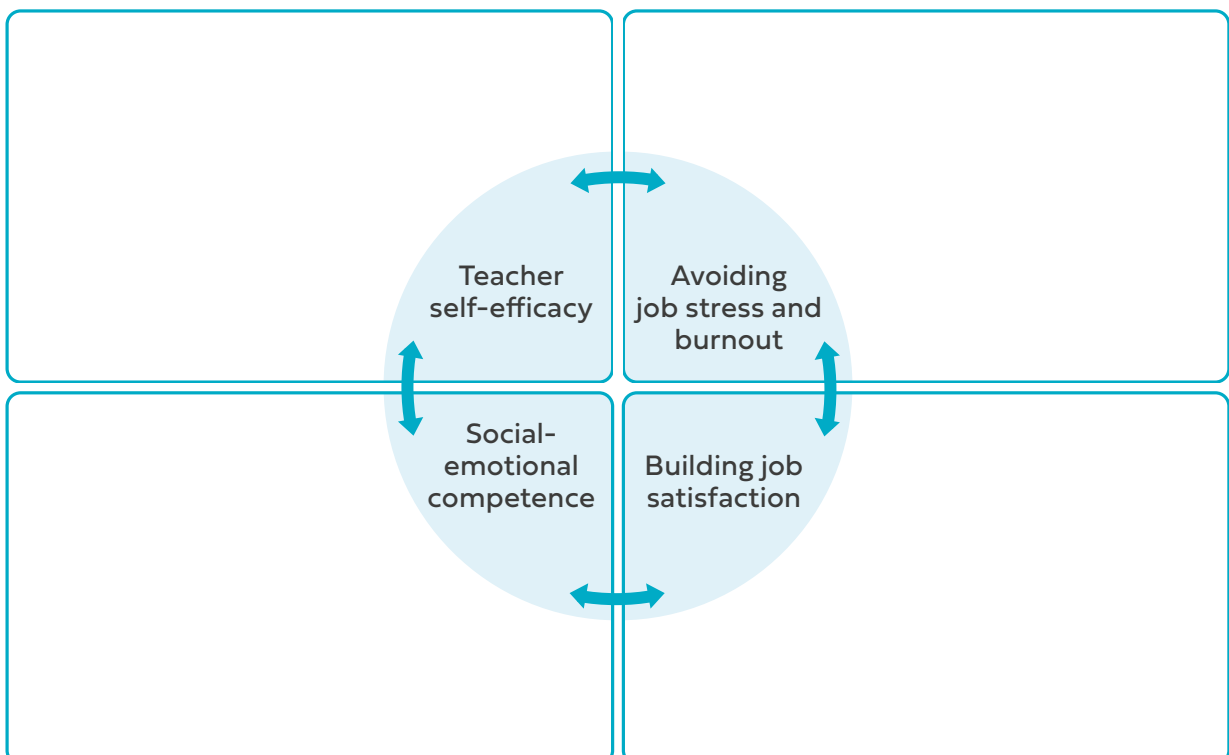
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## The components of teacher wellbeing

In the blue boxes, write strategies to address each of the components of teacher wellbeing. Many factors that affect your wellbeing are out of your control. Focus on strategies for things that are within your control.



# PRE- AND POST-TRAINING SURVEY

This survey has three sections. In the first section, mark how much you agree or disagree with statements about yourself. In the second, select all the answers that apply to the question prompt. In the third, write short answers about actions you can take. Please answer all questions honestly and to the best of your ability.

## 1. Statements about me

Place a check mark (✓) under your answer.

Statements	Strongly disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly agree (1)
1. I can identify signs of distress in my students.				
2. I know how to support students who are experiencing reactions such as anger, fear or grief.				
3. I know how to refer students with mental health or psychosocial concerns for additional support.				
4. I have the skills to support a student who is experiencing acute distress.				
5. I use classroom management practices that promote a safe and protective educational environment.				
6. I receive supervision and support that enables me to identify, support and refer students who need mental health and psychosocial support services.				
7. I don't feel I have the skills to support students' mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.				
8. I try to be considerate and understand the difficulties children may have experienced, including through displacement and conflict.				
9. I use sensitive language in the classroom and consider children's wellbeing.				
10. I observe confidentiality when dealing with issues relating to a student's distress.				





Statements	Strongly disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly agree (1)
11. I monitor how a student's wellbeing has or hasn't progressed after referral.				
12. I know who to contact when I need support regarding a student who might need mental health and psychosocial support services.				
13. My work environment supports my wellbeing.				
14. I know what motivates me to be a good teacher.				
15. I'm aware of the personal challenges I face as a teacher.				
16. I have skills that help me manage my own stress.				
17. I do not know where to seek support when I'm feeling overwhelmed and stressed at work.				
18. I use activities that start and/or end the class day as an opportunity to check-in on my students' wellbeing.				
19. My students know what will happen if they break a class rule.				
20. I feel confident leading social emotional skill-building games in my classroom.				
21. I have a regular scheduled time dedicated to social emotional skill-building games.				
22. I feel comfortable leading reflection discussions with my students after playing a game.				
23. I believe that play is important in helping children to heal from and cope with adversity.				
24. I use positive behaviour support strategies.				



## 2. Which of the following apply?

For each question, select all answers that apply.

1. Which of the following classroom management strategies do you use in your classroom? (Check (✓) all that apply)
  - Requiring students to be quiet
  - Co-creating classroom rules
  - Shouting
  - Routines
  - Displaying a class timetable
2. Which of the following are important for children's wellbeing? (Check (✓) all that apply)
  - Predictability
  - Strict rules
  - Positive relationships
  - Toys
  - Routines
3. Which of the following support positive behaviour? (Check (✓) all that apply)
  - Setting expectations
  - Punishing undesired behaviour
  - Creating a positive group environment
  - Rewarding desired behaviour
  - Redirecting undesired behaviour
  - Quietening children when they are loud
4. Which of the following support the development of positive relationships? (Check (✓) all that apply)
  - Compromise
  - Trust
  - Competition
  - Proximity
  - Communication
  - Respect



5. Which of the following contribute to developing social and emotional skills?

(Check (✓) all that apply)

- Lectures on social and emotional skills
- Safe and secure environments and relationships
- Explicit understanding of the skills that are being developed
- Targeted skill practice
- Punishment for misbehaving
- Reflection on the skills and applying them to real life

### 3. Actions

1. What actions can I take to address my biggest challenges in dealing with students' distress? (List a maximum of three actions.)

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2. What support do I need in order to take these actions?

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3. What actions will I take to support students' wellbeing?

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# TRAINING FEEDBACK

(To be implemented immediately after the training)

1. Please rate your overall experience as a participant on the course (check (✓) one) (1 = very bad, 2 = bad, 3 = OK, 4 = good, 5 = very good).

Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	OK (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)

2. Overall, the pace of the training was (check (✓) one response):

- Too fast
- Fast
- Just right
- Slow
- Too slow

3. Overall, the content of the training was (check (✓) one response):

- Too difficult
- Difficult
- Just right
- Easy
- Too easy

4. The number of training hours were (check (✓) one response):

- Too few
- Few
- Just right
- Many
- Too many

5. Do you think you were offered timely and sufficient information and support to participate in the training to the best of your ability? (check (✓) one response)

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat



6. When the training is conducted again, it should (check (✓) one response):

- Be completely online
- Be completely in person
- Contain a mix of online and in-person sessions

7. When the training is conducted again, it should be (check (✓) all that apply):

- Scheduled on weekdays during working hours
- Scheduled on weekdays after working hours
- Scheduled on weekends
- Split into two-hour sessions
- Split in full-day sessions

8. Overall, the facilitator (check (✓) all that apply):

- Was knowledgeable about the topics covered
- Explained new concepts and information in a clear manner
- Created a suitable environment for learning (i.e., safe, positive, inclusive)
- Was not well-prepared for the training session
- Provided clear instructions for the in-session activities
- Explained information in a way that was difficult to understand
- Had good facilitation skills

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. The in-session activities (check (✓) all that apply):

- Were difficult to understand
- Enabled my full participation in the session
- Were difficult to finish in the time available
- Helped me to interact with the other participants in the session
- Helped me to learn from the other participants in the session
- Did not help me to learn

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



10. Please rate the following aspects of the training. Check (✓) one box for each statement. Only select N/A if it was not applicable to your training experience. (1 = very bad, 2 = bad, 3 = OK, 4 = good, 5 = very good, N/A = not applicable).

	Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	OK (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)	N/A
Allocation of time to theory and practice						
Explanation of theoretical concepts						
Explanation/ demonstration of practical strategies						
Time allocated to practising strategies						
Handouts						
Training on the daily routines						
Variety of activities covered						
Focus on students' mental health and psychosocial wellbeing						
Focus on my own mental health and psychosocial wellbeing						
Use of play as a strategy to promote wellbeing						
Learning about the effects of conflict on children						
Strategies provided for identifying and referring children in need						



# FOLLOW-UP FEEDBACK

(To be implemented four to six months after the training)

## Training experience

- Please rate the following aspects of the training. Check (✓) one box for each statement. Only select N/A if it was not applicable to your training experience. (1 = very bad, 2 = bad, 3 = OK, 4 = good, 5 = very good, N/A = not applicable).

Statements	Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	OK (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)	N/A
Allocation of time to theory and practice						
Explanation of theoretical concepts						
Explanation/demonstration of practical strategies						
Time allocated to practising strategies						
Handouts						
Training on daily routines						
Training environment						
Training modality (e.g., online training, in-person training, hybrid or blended training)						
Pace of the training						
Variety of activities covered						
Focus on students' mental health and psychosocial wellbeing						
Focus on my own mental health and psychosocial wellbeing						
Use of play as a strategy to promote wellbeing						
Learning about the effects of conflict on children						
Strategies provided for identifying and referring children in need						



## Implementing the training content

2. Please indicate how often you use and implement the strategies and tools covered in the training (check (✓) one frequency for each statement).

Statements	Rarely (4)	Occasionally (3)	Weekly (2)	Daily (1)
I use the tools provided in the training for my own wellbeing.				
I implement the strategies learned in the training with my class.				
I use the P.O.W.E.R. Game Bank in my class routinely.				

3. Which aspects of the training have you used in your classroom? (Check (✓) all that apply.)

- Setting classroom routines
- Creating classroom rules
- Mental health and psychosocial support
- Play for wellbeing
- Effects of conflict on children’s wellbeing and learning
- Calming corners
- Steps for positive behaviour support
- Strategies for building positive relationships
- Five characteristics of play-based learning
- P.O.W.E.R. games
- Talking about crisis
- Identification and referral of MHPSS needs
- Teacher wellbeing
- Creating a self-care plan
- Facilitating discussions on the conflict / crisis with children





4. Which aspects of the training have you NOT used? (Check (✓) all that apply.)

- Setting classroom routines
- Creating classroom rules
- Mental health and psychosocial support
- Play for wellbeing
- Effects of conflict on children's wellbeing and learning
- Calming corners
- Steps for positive behaviour support
- Strategies for building positive relationships
- Five characteristics of play-based learning
- P.O.W.E.R. games
- Talking about crisis
- Identification and referral of MHPSS needs
- Teacher wellbeing
- Creating a self-care plan
- Facilitating discussions on the conflict / crisis with children

5. Have you faced any obstacles or challenges in implementing what you learned during the training? (Check (✓) one.)

- Yes (proceed to Q6)
- No (proceed to Q7)
- Maybe (proceed to Q6)



6. Which obstacles/challenges have you faced in implementing what you learned? (check (✓) all that apply)

- I don't feel confident in applying what I was taught
- I don't think the training content is important
- I feel I can't support the wellbeing of my students because I'm not a psychologist/counsellor
- I don't think the training content is relevant to the needs of my students
- I prefer to use other methods and tools to support the wellbeing of my students
- I don't have time to implement the training
- I lack resources to implement the training with my students
- I lack support from school administration/leadership
- The government's policies are not supportive of this training
- I haven't been teaching since I received the training
- I didn't receive sufficient supervision and support to implement what I learned in the training

Other: (fill in) \_\_\_\_\_

## Impact of the training

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (check (✓) one for each statement).

Statements	Strongly disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly agree (1)
The training provided tools that have been useful for my own wellbeing.				
The training provided knowledge, tools and activities that have been useful to support my students' wellbeing.				
I feel comfortable speaking with students about their mental health and psychosocial needs.				
My students like play-based activities and approaches.				



8. How were the following affected by the training? (Check (✓) one for each statement.)

	Worsened a lot	Worsened a little	Did not change	Improved a little	Improved a lot
My wellbeing					
Student wellbeing					
Student behaviour in the class					
Collaboration between teachers (i.e., working together)					
Students' sense of safety in the class					
Inclusivity in the classroom					
Students reaching out for help					
Peer support among students (e.g., listening to one another and helping one another with problems)					
Peer support among teachers (e.g., listening to one another and helping one another with problems)					

