

Playing *with* **RAINBOWS™**

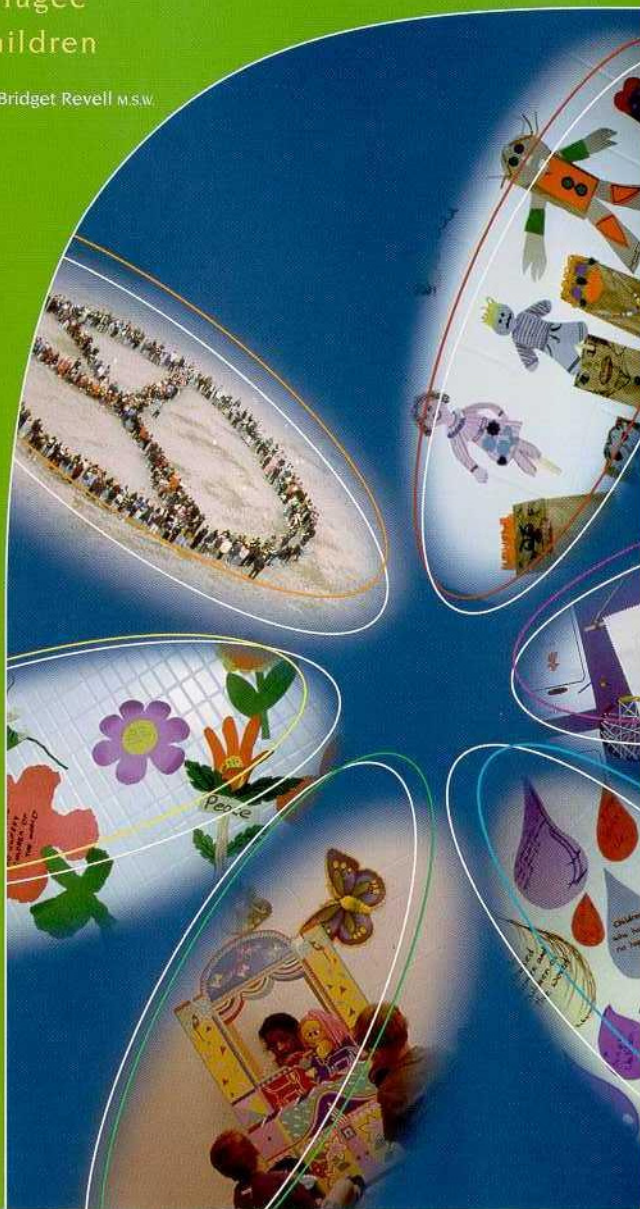
A National
PLAY program



for at-risk
refugee
children

by Bridget Revell M.S.W.

F A C I L I T A T O R T R A I N I N G M A N U A L



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PLAYING WITH RAINBOWS™ MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

Playing with Rainbows – The Project

Playing with Rainbows: A National Play Program for At-Risk Refugee

Children¹ is an initiative of The YWCA of/du Canada and is

supported by YWCA Member Associations across the country.

Funding for the project was provided by Human Resources

Development Canada and Health Canada.

The YWCA of/du Canada is part of the World YWCA movement which operates in 100 countries around the world speaking for over 25 million women to promote the full and equitable advancement of women in all sectors of society. The YWCA of/du Canada is a voluntary, charitable women's organization which was established in 1893 and serves as a national coordinating body for 42 YWCA and YMCA-YWCA member associations in Canada. The mission of YWCA of/du Canada is to provide **"A Voice for Equality... A Strong Voice for Women"**. This mission has inspired a variety of visions and led to a diversity of programs being offered throughout Canada. Community based programs and services are offered to over 1,000,000 women and their families in 200 communities across the country. These services include shelters and support programs for victims of family violence, childcare services, housing and employment services and health, fitness and recreation programs.

Over the years, as immigrant and refugee populations in urban centers have grown, YWCAs have developed specialized programs and services to meet the unique needs of these families. In 1994, the YMCA-YWCA of/d'Ottawa Carleton developed and implemented The Child Refugee Play Program which was a culturally sensitive community-based art and play program for young refugee children from war affected countries.

The success of The Child Refugee Play Program inspired the YMCA-YWCA of/d'Ottawa Carleton to approach the YWCA of/du Canada to nationalize the program. To this end a four phase project was developed which included the following activities:

- 1) Conducting a feasibility study to explore the needs of refugee children, the ability of the Play Program to meet these needs and the ability of YWCA Member Associations to implement the Play Program on their sites.
- 2) The production of a Facilitator's manual which would guide Member Associations and other community agencies in implementing the Play Program.
- 3) Provision of training and support to Member Associations and other community agencies, which would facilitate implementation of the Play Program at six pilot sites.
- 4) Evaluation of the training model and overall project implementation.

¹The project was initially called "Clearing their Path: A National Play Program for At-Risk Refugee Children in Canada."

Playing with Rainbows – The Group

The Playing with Rainbows program makes use of a group counselling process involving play and art to facilitate healing in children between the ages of four and seven, who have been traumatized by the experiences of war and migration. The program model has two major components:

- 1) A twelve session children's group which is designed to provide normalization, support, and education to the children who participate as well as to encourage the development of their coping skills.
- 2) A three session caregivers' group which is intended to provide the caregivers with information and support which will enable them to support their children's participation in the group, understand the impact of war and migration on their children and connect them with appropriate community resources.

Playing with Rainbows – The Facilitator's Manual

The primary purpose of this manual is to guide facilitators of the Playing with Rainbows program by providing them with the information that they need to lead the twelve session children's group and the three caregivers' sessions. While the manual provides an outline for the group and includes detailed descriptions of activities that can be used in the group, it is hoped that group facilitators will use the material creatively, adding their own activities and making adjustments to those suggested so that each session is tailored to meet the needs of the specific group of children the program is being offered to.

The manual has been designed to meet the needs of facilitators with varying levels of skill in using play in counselling and in working with refugee children and families. It is expected that the manual may also be of interest to professionals providing counselling to individual children and to those working with children in an educational or recreational setting. Those who facilitate other types of children's groups (children who have witnessed domestic violence, survivors of child abuse, separation and divorce) may also be able to make use of some of the session outlines and many of the activities that are suggested.

The manual is intended to be a flexible resource that can be accessed at any point in the group process to meet the needs of different group facilitators. It is expected that group facilitators may make adjustments to the group sessions depending on the age, needs and skills of the particular children they are working with.

The outlines for sessions, which are provided in this manual, contain a wide variety of activities. Some groups will move quickly through these activities, completing them all. However, other groups may move more slowly and facilitators may choose to leave out one of the suggested relaxation exercises, the story creation component of the group or the time set aside for formalized discussion of topics. Issues of particular importance to group members may emerge as the sessions progress and facilitators may need to find a way to integrate these into the existing group framework. The program outline was designed with enough flexibility to allow for these and other changes.

This manual contains a number of exercise sheets that are designed for use in Playing with Rainbows Groups. YWCA of/du Canada invites owners of the manual to make photocopies of these exercise sheets for use in counselling work with children and families.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PLAYING WITH RAINBOWS GROUPS

The words in italics, which are found throughout the manual, are examples of things that group facilitators might say. These sections are intended to provide suggestions for ways that group facilitators may address issues and examples of the types of relaxation exercises that might be used. It is expected that group facilitators will alter these to suit their own style and to meet the needs of the children in the group. Group facilitators may choose to use different centering or relaxation exercises than the ones included in italics.

It is hoped that this manual will provide group facilitators with the information and inspiration that they need to begin the process of healing with children and families who have migrated to Canada from war affected countries.

Program Goal

To facilitate the process of healing in children between the ages of four and seven, who have been traumatized by the experiences of war and migration, through the use of a group counselling process involving play and art¹.

Objectives of the Children's Group

- 1) To provide at-risk refugee children with an opportunity to talk about their experiences of war and migration and help them recognize that they are not alone.
- 2) To encourage the children to express their feelings and emotions.
- 3) To help the children develop an understanding of the concept and phenomenon of war.
- 4) To allow the children to explore the losses that they have experienced and begin to focus on the present and a plan for the future. To provide the children with an opportunity to say the goodbyes and hellos that will enable them to continue their growth and development.
- 5) To provide the children with opportunities for comfort and healing.
- 6) To assist the group participants in developing skills to cope with the effects of war trauma, migration stress and the feelings that these generate.
- 7) To assist the children in developing appropriate conflict resolution skills.
- 8) To increase the children's self-esteem through developing self-awareness and self-acceptance.
- 9) To help the children understand that there are people in their family and community who are able to listen to them and support them.

It is expected that if the programs goals are met, the symptoms and level of anxiety, depression and dissociation shown by the children will be reduced. This may in turn lead to improvements in the children's interactions with other children and adults. It is hoped that this may also lead to increases in the children's ability to concentrate and participate in school or pre-school activities. Participation in the group may also lead to increased access to services and support for all family members.

¹ While the program was designed for children between the ages of four and seven, the program format and many of the ideas can be adapted for use with older children.

What the Children's Group Cannot Do

Given that the Playing with Rainbows group is time limited (12 sessions) there are limitations to what the program can achieve. Group facilitators will not be able to provide the highly personalized individual therapeutic process that may be needed by a severely traumatized child. Careful screening of group members is essential to ensure that the Playing with Rainbows group can meet the needs of participants.

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members is essential to ensure that the Playing with Rainbows group can meet the needs of participants.

While a Playing with Rainbows group will give participants opportunities to discuss their experiences of war and migration, it will not be able to erase these experiences or change the fact that the children or their families have been exposed to traumatizing events. The children's memories and experiences will remain with them and there is the possibility that these could pose challenges for the children at a future date, in their adolescence or adulthood. Even in situations where the children have not directly been exposed to war or may not remember these experiences, they may be struggling to cope with the memories and experiences of other family members.

It is expected that a Playing with Rainbows group will provide the children who participate with an opportunity to explore their feelings, resolve some issues and develop coping skills to assist them when faced with ongoing challenges. It is hoped that providing this early intervention will give the children skills that they can continue to use to cope successfully with a wide variety of situations as they grow. However, the group may or may not lead to long term behavioral change. The amount of appropriate adult support that is available to the children during the group and on an ongoing basis, as well as the life events that the children face following the group, will play a significant role in determining the extent to which the group experience influences the children's long-term functioning.

As children grow and develop, the way in which they look at and understand issues also changes. For example, a young child may simply understand war as a conflict between "good" guys and "bad" guys. However, an older child may begin to understand some of the political complexities involved in the conflict. With this new understanding, the older child may come to view the conflict differently, new questions may arise and issues which had previously been resolved may resurface in light of these new questions. As a result, it is possible that children who have benefited from a Playing with Rainbows group may require additional counselling in the future to deal with new issues as they emerge.

Children who have been exposed to war trauma and have migrated to a new country often continue to face challenges following their migration which are not specifically addressed by a Playing with Rainbows group. These children may make multiple moves within the new country, may struggle with poverty and racism, face cultural alienation or dislocation, or may be faced with other crises not related to their past experiences (i.e. parental divorce, family violence, death of a family member). Furthermore, these children often have to cope with news related to continued conflict in their country of origin which can lead to fears about the safety of friends and family. These issues impact not only the children in the group but also their caregivers. The number of these additional challenges that group members must contend with and the way in which their caregivers are able to manage them will have a significant impact on the children's functioning and unfortunately fall out of the reach of a Playing with Rainbows group.

While there are some limitations of Playing with Rainbows groups, it is believed that many of the skills and lessons learned can be used by the children when facing future difficulties and as a result it is hoped that participation in the group will be beneficial for the children, both at the time they participate and in the future.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PLAYING WITH RAINBOWS GROUPS

Goals of the Sessions for Caregivers

- 1) To provide caregivers with information and support that will enable them to support their children's participation in the Playing with Rainbows group.
- 2) To increase caregivers' understanding of the impact of war trauma and migration on the child and her or his future.
- 3) To help caregivers understand the importance of acknowledging the family's past experiences.
- 4) To improve caregivers' awareness of and access to community resources.
- 5) To allow opportunities for caregivers to increase their awareness of options for responding constructively to the children's behaviour.

This manual is written with the expectation that group facilitators will offer three sessions for the children's caregivers. However, the number of caregiver sessions may be increased or decreased depending on the needs, interest and availability of those involved. The primary focus of the caregiver's session is the children and supporting the children's participation in the group. As a result, group facilitators will not be able to help caregivers resolve their own trauma and will not be able to provide in-depth training in parenting. It is recommended that caregivers be referred to other counsellors or to parenting groups when their needs warrant this.

Playing *with* RAINBOWS™

BACKGROUND Information



THE IMPACT OF WAR AND MIGRATION ON CHILDREN

This chapter will explore the impact of war and migration on children who have faced these challenges. A variety of topics will be addressed. Initially, time will be spent considering what the experience of living through a war or conflict and migrating to a new country involves. The lessons that their experiences may have taught the children will be considered along with the physical, emotional, social and behavioural symptoms exhibited by children who have dealt with these traumas. The impact of war and migration on parenting practices will be discussed. Finally, factors which can mediate the impact of war and migration on families will be outlined.

The information in this chapter will necessarily be general. In order to understand the experiences of the children in your Playing with Rainbows group, you must allow them to tell you their story and what their experiences mean to them. Individual children exposed to the same situation will react differently. You cannot make assumptions about which experiences were most difficult for the children, how the

children feel, or what they need or want. While significant events, such as the death of a loved one can be troubling for children, so can other events which adults might deem minor. Listen carefully to what each child in your group is telling you and allow them to identify the issues that they need to work on.

Experiences Faced by Children Living Through a War and During Migration¹

There are a wide variety of overwhelming experiences that may be faced by children and families who have lived through a war, spent time in a refugee camp or migrated to a new country. A number of these are listed below. It should be noted that although families are seeking safety within a refugee camp and during migration, difficult and dangerous situations may continue to exist.

- 1) Deaths of family or community members** – Those who die and are killed may be children or adults. Individuals who die may be directly involved in the conflict, caught in the crossfire, jailed during the conflict or taken from their homes or community by one of the parties involved in the conflict and then killed. In addition, individuals may die in a refugee camp or on a migratory journey due to starvation, poor conditions, illness or ongoing conflict.
- 2) Disappearance of family or community members** – Individuals may be taken from the community by one of the parties to the conflict, after which their whereabouts may be unknown. Children may be separated from family or community members as they try to flee the conflict and then not know if these people are dead, alive, safe or still in danger.
- 3) Experiencing Torture** – The children may have been direct victims of torture during the conflict, in the refugee camp or on their journey or they may have a family member who has been a victim of torture in one of these settings.
- 4) Experiencing Sexual Assault** – Children, girls in particular, may be the victims of sexual assault, including rape, which occur during the conflict, in the refugee camp or on their migratory journey. In addition, children may be aware of and trying to cope with sexual assault of members of their family.
- 5) Witnessing the torture and/or killing of family or community members** – The children may witness these events accidentally or be forced to watch.

¹ The information contained within this section is based on the work of: Behnam Behnia and Behnaz Behnia, *Clearing Their Path: National Play Program for At-Risk Refugee Children in Canada Feasibility Study* and Chitra Sekhar, *Training Program For Front Line Workers in Sri Lanka on Intervention Strategies For War Traumatized Children*.

- 6) **Abandonment** – Children may be abandoned, left in orphanages or left in the care of relatives by parents who are trying to protect them or are unable to care for them.
- 7) **Loss of home, property, friends and family** – During the conflict, the children's homes and property may have been forcibly taken, burned or destroyed. When families are forced to flee a community, they must leave behind their home and much of their property. When children and their families leave their community, they often leave behind other family members and friends. The property that family members are able to take with them may be stolen or lost on their journey or in refugee camps.
- 8) **Loss or change of status** – When families are forced to migrate, they often experience a change in financial or social status. Families that were well off in their country of origin may struggle financially in their new country. This situation will be aggravated if the adults in the family are unable to find jobs. Families who were welcomed in their home community may find that they are not welcomed in the refugee camps. Children may also experience a change in their personal status. For example, as the result of the deaths of the other children in the family, a child may move from being the youngest child to being an only child, which changes her or his role in the family and her or his relationship with her or his parents.
- 9) **Language issues** – As the children leave their home communities and embark on a journey to a new country they are often faced with the monumental task of learning new languages. Until the children have mastered a new language they may be isolated, experience difficulty in school and experience poor peer relationships.
- 10) **Malnourishment/Undernourishment** – During the conflict, in refugee camps and on the journey to a new country, there is often not enough food. Children may be malnourished or undernourished which can have a significant impact on their overall development, as well as their emotional well being.
- 11) **Interruptions to schooling** – The conflict, time in a refugee camp, time in transit to a new country and time resettling in a new country may all interfere with a child's schooling. This can lead to significant academic problems when the children are able to re-enter school. These academic difficulties may in turn contribute to social problems.
- 12) **Interference with developmental tasks** – The child's experiences may prevent her or him from completing age appropriate developmental tasks. For example, parents may need to curb a child's natural curiosity and desire to explore in order to ensure her or his safety. Alternately, the children may be required to "grow up fast" and assume adult roles (become "the man in the house", fight in the army, care for younger children, become "the mother") which interferes with their ability to "be a child". Children who have, in the past, been able to appropriately rely on their parents for support may find themselves in the position of helping and supporting parents who are having difficulty functioning in a new culture, speaking a new language.
- 13) **Uncertainty** – Living through a conflict, fleeing a conflict and migration are all situations which are fraught with uncertainty. The child is unable to predict if she or he is safe or what will happen next. This uncertainty continues when the family reaches the country they settle in due to concerns about refugee claims and fears of deportation.
- 14) **Lack of privacy** – Children who are living in refugee camps may have no opportunity for privacy due to extreme overcrowding. This situation may continue if families must share dwellings or live in inadequate housing when they arrive in the new country.

15) Discrimination – Children and their families may experience social isolation, racial intolerance or discrimination as a result of being newcomers to the country. Children may suffer as a result of discrimination against their parents (i.e. jobs, housing) and may also have to deal with personal bullying and teasing based on racial intolerance.

16) Violence or Abuse – Like many other children, children who have migrated from war-torn countries may have witnessed family violence or been the victims of physical or sexual abuse. These experiences may not have been directly connected to the war or the process of migration.

It should be noted that while adults experience many of the same things as children during war and migration, children may have a more difficult time coping because they are powerless and are dependent on the adults around them. Adults may have a general understanding of war, are often aware of the type of violence they may face and may be able to predict what will happen next. Children, on the other hand, may not have the

In order to understand the experiences of the children in your Playing with Rainbows group, you must allow them to tell you their story and what their experiences mean to them.

knowledge and experience to anticipate what the war will mean to them or how it will influence their day to day lives. Finally, children may not understand how the conflict came to be or the role that they and their family play in it. Their limited understanding of the conflict can leave some children living in fear that the danger and violence may recur at any time.

The Effects of War and Migration on Children²

As they grow, children develop coping skills which enable them to manage with their day to day experiences. However, when faced with an overwhelming experience, such as war or migration, the skills that the children have previously developed are often inadequate. The fact that a child is unable to cope with a given situation is often communicated through an array of behavioural and emotional symptoms. Research has shown that war-related trauma, like many other traumas, can affect the psychological, intellectual, emotional, moral and physical development of children (Ignatieff, 1997). For many children and families, issues

may be reawakened and behavioural difficulties can become more apparent as the anniversary of significant events (deaths, bombing, leaving home) draw near. Many of the emotional and behavioural problems exhibited by children who have lived through war and experienced migration are outlined below. The ways in which a Playing with Rainbows group hopes to address these difficulties are also listed.

Everything a child experiences tells her or him something about the way the world works, how she or he should behave and what she or he can expect. Some of the “things” that the experience of living through war and migrating to a new country may “teach” children are listed below³. These “lessons” are outlined in conjunction with the emotional or behavioural issues they are most likely to contribute to. While war and migration may provide the children with some positive messages (You are a helpful child because you were able to look after your brother and sisters; You are a smart child because you have learnt a new language) these will not be discussed here, since the purpose of this material is to understand the negative impact of war and migration on children.

² The information contained within this section is based on the work of: Behnam Behnia and Behnaz Behnia, *Clearing Their Path: National Play Program for At-Risk Refugee Children in Canada: Feasibility Study* and Chitra Sekhar, *Training Program For Front Line Workers in Sri Lanka on Intervention Strategies For War Traumatized Children*.

³ The ideas for “What War and Migration May Teach Children” were arrived at by considering the experiences that children live through during war and in the process of migration and then thinking about what lessons the children might take, rightly or wrongly, from these experiences.

Fears and Anxieties

What War and Migration May Teach Children:

- Everyone is in danger, You are in danger, Your family is in danger, Your friends are in danger.
- No where is safe. (This may include the child's home, community or school in the country of origin, the refugee camp, the stops along the migration journey and the country the child is settling in.)
- You cannot predict what will happen next. You never know what tomorrow may bring. Things can change at any time.
- Humans are capable of horrendous cruelty.
- Your parents have no control. Your parents are powerless.

Understandably, having faced life threatening danger, which was to their minds, unpredictable and might reappear at any moment, many children manifest problems associated with fear and anxiety.

In ordinary circumstances, children perceive their parents as almost invincible. They trust that their parents can and will look after them and protect them. When children witness the torture and the humiliation of their parents and see that their parents are completely powerless to cope with or change the danger that they are facing, children's faith in their parents can be shattered. If children are placed in the position of caring for their parents by interpreting for them in a new country or helping their parents negotiate the systems in a new country, the children's reliance on their parents can be further undermined. Becoming aware, on some level, that one's parents cannot be depended on for protection and security can be an incredibly frightening experience for children. If their parents cannot fill this role, can anyone be counted on to keep them safe or is danger around every corner?

Children may exhibit separation anxiety, that is, an inability to separate from a trusted caregiver. The child may fear that if she or he lets this person out of her or his sight, something bad will happen or they will never see that person again, since so many people that the child knows have disappeared or been killed.

Children may be easily frightened by sights, sounds, smells and tastes, which are not alarming for others, but which the children associate with their experiences. For example, a child may be frightened of police officers because in her or his country of origin, police represented a direct threat to the child and her or his family. Children may exhibit uncontrolled physical reactions when faced with these frightening sights, sounds, smells or tastes.

Other children may appear hypervigilant, always on the alert for danger and may show exaggerated startle responses.

Some children may have difficulty coping with unfamiliar situations due to fear of what these situations might mean.

It has been noted that many traumatized children exhibit regressive symptoms. This may mean that they resume wetting their bed, become less adept at using their language skills, start sucking their thumb again or become more dependant on the adults around them for help. For some children regression may represent an attempt to return to a safer more comfortable period of their lives, while, for other children, it can be a sign that they don't have the energy to maintain a higher level of functioning.

Understandably, having faced life threatening danger, which was to their minds, unpredictable and might reappear at any moment, many children manifest problems associated with fear and anxiety.

THE IMPACT OF WAR AND MIGRATION ON CHILDREN

Nightmares and sleep disturbances may be another expression of the children's fears. Some children are reported to have sleep difficulties because they try to stay awake in order to ensure that nothing bad is happening.

The group sessions focusing on "Anxiety and Not Remembering", "Dreams", "Coping Skills and Conflict Resolution" and "Safety" are designed to directly address some of the children's fears and assist them in developing additional coping strategies. In addition, many other group sessions will provide the children with an opportunity to discuss and explore their frightening experiences.

Difficulty Communicating and Expressing Emotion

What War and Migration May Teach Children:

- If you let people know what you are feeling, you will be in danger. (In conflict situations, expressing vulnerability may lead to punishment.)
- If you let people know where we are from, you will be in danger. (Children may be warned to keep quiet about their origins in order to avoid retaliation by opposing parties in the conflict or because it is felt that sharing information may jeopardize the family's refugee claim.)
- If you talk about it you will hurt my feelings. (Children may be directly or indirectly given the message that they should not talk about their experiences or their feelings because it upsets those around them.)

Children may have learnt not to discuss their experiences or their emotions. Even when they are in apparent safety, these children may continue to have difficulty communicating and sharing their feelings.

If children remain silent for an extended period of time, their emotions may be expressed through a variety of behavioural difficulties or somatic complaints. Many children express their emotions through their bodies and present with a variety of complaints including headaches, stomach-aches, loss of appetite or other physical problems. However, medical issues should always be ruled out before it is assumed that a child's complaints are a manifestation of emotional distress.

Throughout the group, the children are provided with a safe environment to discuss their experiences and explore their emotions. It is hoped that through this process, the children will come to learn that talking is not dangerous. Specific skills for expressing and managing emotions are considered in the sessions "Feelings", "Anxiety and Not Remembering" and "Coping Skills and Conflict Resolution".

Grief

What War and Migration May Teach Children:

- Your (father, mother, uncle, aunt, grandmother, grandfather, brother, sister, friend etc.) is gone forever because she or he is dead.
- When people leave, you may never see them again.
- You have lost ... (your home, your community, your friends, your language etc.).
- Caring about people can hurt.

Grief is an emotional, physical, intellectual, social and spiritual experience which represents an attempt to understand and come to terms with a loss. A child who has migrated to a new country has faced loss: loss of country, loss of home, loss of community, loss of language, and loss of friends. If in addition to these losses, the child is trying to cope with the death of family members, friends and/or community members, her or his grief will be compounded.

When a child is facing life threatening situations she or he may need to postpone some aspects of her or his grieving in favour of survival. Once the child is safe and stability has been provided, she or he may then resume the grieving process. This may mean that some of the children participating in the Playing with Rainbows group are still struggling with significant grief issues.

Grief is marked by a variety of intense emotions (sadness, anger, powerlessness, fear, guilt and self-blame, abandonment). In children, these emotions are often expressed through their behaviours. These behaviours might include: regression, crying, tantrums, hyperactivity, withdrawal, clinginess, difficulty concentrating, and testing behaviours. While many of these behaviours are also seen in response to trauma, the possibility that a child may be struggling with grief should be considered.

Grief is further complicated when children feel they are to blame for what has happened. Young children often see themselves as central to the events around them and as a result erroneously assume blame for many things. In addition, some individuals who have witnessed death and killings, suffer from survivor's guilt, feeling guilty because they were spared. If children are struggling with these feelings, it may make it more difficult for them to resolve their grief. When children express feelings of guilt, whether for the death, the migration journey or having survived, these feelings should be explored. Ask the children why they feel they are to blame and what they feel they should have done differently. By listening carefully to the answers, group facilitators will be able to address the children's concerns. If reassurance is given to children too soon and they do not have a chance to vocalize the reasons for their feelings of guilt, the children will feel that they have not been listened to and the words of the adults will ring hollow.

There are several sessions which may assist the children in exploring and beginning to resolve some of the losses they have experienced: "Pre-migration and Migration", "Family", "Goodbyes and Hellos" and "Self-esteem and Closure". Other sessions may also provide the children with an opportunity to discuss their experiences, develop skills to cope with their feelings of grief and look towards the future.

Glorification of Violence

What War and Migration May Teach Children:

- Violence is the best way to resolve conflicts and solve problems.
- Others will respect you if they fear you.
- You need to contribute to the war.
- You must seek revenge for what has happened to your family or community.
- You should be proud of your heritage. (In some cases, this heritage, the stories and history of the children's cultural, ethnic or religious community may promote the glorification of violence.)

If reassurance is given to children too soon and they do not have a chance to vocalize the reasons for their feelings of guilt, the children will feel that they have not been listened to and the words of the adults will ring hollow.

Children who feel that problems and conflicts are best solved through aggression may experience significant difficulties in family and peer relationships. The session dealing with "Coping Skills and Conflict Resolution" is designed to help children develop new problem solving skills. During the "Feelings" session, it is hoped that the children will learn appropriate ways of expressing their anger. Throughout the group process, conflicts between peers and problems facing the group will be resolved without resorting to violence, providing an alternate model for the children to emulate.

Desensitization to Pain, Torture, Killings and Death

What War and Migration May Teach Children:

- Pain is part of life.
- Killings and torture happen all the time.
- Death can happen any time.
- Death and pain are part of your duty to your country.
- Killing yourself is honourable.

Out of necessity, when children face the horror of pain, torture and death on a regular basis, they become desensitized. In order to survive physically and emotionally, the children cease to react to these events. Unfortunately, even once the children are in a new country and are apparently safe, they continue to minimize the importance of these events. This may contribute to aggression and difficulties empathising with others, which may in turn contribute to difficulties in family and peer relationships.

During the Playing with Rainbows group, the children are encouraged to discuss their experiences and emotions. It is hoped that this process will allow them to begin accepting and exploring their feelings. The empathic responses of group facilitators and other group members may help the children recognize that their experiences were unusual and extreme and that it is natural to experience a variety of strong emotions in association with these experiences.

Uncertainty of the Future

What War and Migration May Teach Children:

- Life is uncertain.
- Tomorrow may never come.
- You can't know what tomorrow will bring.

Life for children living through war and during their migration is often unpredictable. They are unable to discern when or why things happen. As a result, some children stop looking to the future and live purely in the present. This may result in children taking extreme risks or appearing to be accident prone since they feel that it does not matter if they live for tomorrow. The greatest danger is that children who stop looking to the future, stop hoping and dreaming. They become hopeless and despondent. This issue is addressed in Playing with Rainbows groups through attempts to have children think about, imagine and discuss their future.

***The greatest danger
is that children who
stop looking to the
future, stop hoping
and dreaming.***

Difficulties Trusting

What War and Migration May Teach Children:

- You cannot trust anyone.
- Human beings are capable of horrendous acts.
- You should hate ... (others involved in the conflict, members of a particular racial or ethnic group, members of a particular religion) ... they are evil.
- Certain groups (others involved in the conflict, particular professions) cannot be trusted.
- Your parents are unable to keep you safe.

As a result of their experiences during the conflict and the process of migration, children may become suspicious and untrusting. As infants, our initial experience of trust is with our primary caregivers. For children who have lived through war and migration, this trust may be damaged because the caregivers, through no fault of their own, are not able to protect the children. In some instances, children come to fear specific groups, religions or professions because individuals from these groups played a significant role in the conflict witnessed by the children. Some children will have internalized stereotypes which make it difficult for them to trust people from a particular racial, ethnic, cultural or religious group. The more experiences a child has of being or feeling unsafe, the greater the likelihood that her or his lack of trust will be generalized to all people.

Difficulties trusting can lead to significant difficulties in future relationships. It is hoped that the experience of being safe, supported and valued while participating in a Playing with Rainbows group with other children and adults can serve a reparative function and teach the children that it can be safe to trust some people. For this reason, it is essential that the group environment be safe for all participants.

Pseudomaturity

What War and Migration May Teach Children:

- You must look after your brothers and sisters.
- You must look after your caregivers. (This message may be particularly strong in instances where the child's caregivers are having difficulty integrating into a new country and are seeking help from a child who is more familiar with the language and culture of the new country due to her or his participation in school.)
- You must fight in the war and be willing to make sacrifices for the cause even though you are young.

When they are asked to take on tasks which would ordinarily be reserved for older and more mature individuals, some children cope by adopting a pseudo-mature facade. They may dress, talk and act as though they were several years older. This facade can help some children feel safer. They may believe that they become less vulnerable by appearing older. This can lead to difficulties in peer relationships and may hamper a child's overall development. Playing with Rainbows groups provide all the participants with an opportunity to "be children". Specific attempts should be made by group facilitators not to thrust children into adult roles and to be aware of the children who try to take on these roles.

Self-Esteem

What War and Migration May Teach Children:

- You are hopeless.
- You are powerless.
- You have no control.
- You are in danger because you are a girl/boy.

Children who have experienced trauma often suffer from low self-esteem. It seems, to the children, that if only they were different, they might not have had these experiences. This thought leads to some children feeling guilty and blaming themselves for what has happened. The last group session "Self-esteem and Closure" is designed to directly address some of these issues. It is also hoped that participating in a Playing with Rainbows program and being valued by group facilitators and other group members will serve to improve each participant's self-esteem.

Academic Difficulties

Many children experience difficulties in school after living through a war or following migration. A variety of factors may contribute to these difficulties. The children may have missed a significant period of schooling due to events in their country of origin. Many children have difficulty concentrating and suffer from intrusive thoughts because they are still struggling to come to terms with their experiences. In addition, the sleep difficulties and nightmares experienced by some children mean that they are often too tired to actively participate throughout their school day. Finally, many children are struggling to learn a new language and function in a new culture. Until they are competent in the new language and culture, full participation at school can be difficult.

While academic issues are not directly addressed in Playing with Rainbows groups, it is hoped that participation in the group may assist the children by reducing the frequency of intrusive thoughts and providing the children with skills to cope with these thoughts.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder⁴

Another way to consider the impact of war and migration on children is to explore the concept of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It has been found that some, although by no means all, children who live through a war show signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Saigh, Fairbank and Yasik, 1998).

⁴ The information for this section is taken from "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in Children", *The Child Therapy News*, Vol. 5, No. 5.

The diagnostic criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder were outlined in *The Child Therapy News*, Vol. V, No. 5:

- The person has experienced an event that is outside the range of usual human experience and that would be markedly distressing to almost anyone.
- The traumatic event is persistently reexperienced – recurrent thoughts of the event, repetitive play related to the event, recurrent dreams connected to the event, intense reactions to things or cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
- There is persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma or numbing of general responsiveness.
- There are persistent symptoms of increased arousal – sleep difficulties, irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response.
- Symptoms have been present for at least one month.
- The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupations, or other areas of functioning such as school settings.

Although research into the efficacy of different treatment methods in working with PTSD has been limited, group treatment designed to facilitate the sharing of feelings, increase coping skills, and develop problem solving skills has been recognized as one way of working with children who are experiencing PTSD. It has been found that parallel groups for parents may also be effective.

The Effects of War and Migration on Caregivers and their Parenting Practices⁵

Group facilitators must consider not only the impact of war and migration on the children in the group, but also the impact of these events on the children's caregivers, since this may affect the caregivers' ability to meet the needs of the children as they participate in the group.

During the conflict and migration journey, it is expected that the children will have been aware of their caregivers' fears and anxieties. While children are able to tolerate seeing some level of distress in their caregivers, the children's own difficulties may be compounded in cases where the caregivers were completely overwhelmed by their experiences.

The children's caregivers may be struggling with their own trauma or with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder brought on by their experiences. If the caregivers are feeling overwhelmed, they may be unable to provide needed emotional support to the children who are participating in the group. This issue should be considered when families are screened for the group. It may be necessary to obtain additional supports for the caregivers prior to having the children participate in the group.

Due to the years of living in unsafe situations, some parents may place undue restrictions on their children, thereby interfering with their child's ongoing development and reinforcing the children's fears. If this appears to be happening, group facilitators should work with the caregivers to assess their fears and to determine what support the caregivers require to feel more confident in their child's safety.

⁵ The information contained within this section is based on the work of Behnam Behnia and Behnaz Behnia, *Clearing Their Path: National Play Program for At-Risk Refugee Children in Canada: Feasibility Study*.

THE IMPACT OF WAR AND MIGRATION ON CHILDREN

In some instances, parents who have successfully migrated to a new country wish to put their past experiences behind them to focus on the present and the future. While this is understandable, it can interfere with the children's ability to explore and resolve their experiences. It is suggested that this issue be considered as part of the screening process.

Variations in Reactions to Traumatic Events⁷

Different people will react to the same events in different ways. Even within a family, individuals make use of different coping skills and respond in different ways to the same traumatic experience. The factors that may influence a child's reaction to traumatic events are listed below. While many of these are outside of the group facilitators' control, group facilitators may be able to adjust other factors to the children's benefit.

- the child's personality and coping style
- the child's intelligence
- the child's sense of mastery of the world – Feeling that she or he can impact the world around her or him.
- the child's age at the time of the trauma
- the child's gender
- the nature of the traumatic event faced by the child – Personal, chronic and repeated trauma may be more overwhelming.
- the number of losses experienced by the child – In many cases, as the number of losses increases, so do the difficulties faced by the child.
- the ability of the child's caregivers to provide support. (Group facilitators may be able to influence this by working with the child's caregivers).
- having a positive family environment
- availability of positive problem solving models within the family – Group facilitators may have an opportunity to work with caregivers to develop effective problem solving methods for use in the home.
- development of a good relationship with at least one adult – Group facilitators may play this role for a brief period of time and may be able to facilitate the development of other relationships through community services.
- the existence of a strong support network outside of the immediate family – This may be provided by community agencies, religious organisations, or schools. Group facilitators may be able to help families form connections with a variety of groups in the community.

Different people will react to the same events in different ways.

Even within a family, individuals make use of different coping skills and respond in different ways to the same traumatic experience.

⁷ Some ways of raising and discussing this issue are outlined in the chapter "Screening".

⁸ The information contained within this section is based on the work of: Behnam Behnia and Behnaz Behnia, *Clearing Their Path: National Play Program for At-Risk Refugee Children in Canada: Feasibility Study* and Chitra Sekhar, *Training Program For Front Line Workers in Sri Lanka on Intervention Strategies For War Traumatized Children*.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

An Overview of Child Development

In this section, some basic information about developmental stages of 4 to 7 year olds will be considered. This information is obviously general in nature. It must be recognized that there are wide differences in the rates at which children develop. Factors which affect children's rates of development will also be considered briefly. In addition, it should be noted that the resources used to prepare this material are based on North American and European developmental norms and may not accurately reflect the development of children from other cultures.

Older Pre-schoolers - 4 - 5 Years Old

- enjoy music, dancing and singing
- fine motor skills are improving - children will be able to use scissors, crayons and markers fairly well
- fairly good gross motor skills - children are able to run, jump and climb
- energetic - like to run and play
- like to organize and categorize things
- enjoy "make-believe" play
- peers gain increased importance in the children's lives
- enjoy group games
- may have an insecure sense of self - this can result in boasting, bragging or putting themselves down
- begin to form a "conscience" and begin to distinguish between "good" and "bad"
- may lose control of their emotions easily - can have "mood swings"

Early School Age Children - 5 - 7 Years Old

- gross motor skills are well developed - children can run, hop, skip and jump with ease
- increased physical independence
- may have "invisible playmates"
- become more secure in their own identity
- are able to follow directions more easily
- peers are continuing to play a very important role in the children's lives
- enjoy group games
- become curious about pregnancy, childbirth, death
- begin to learn simple reading, writing and math
- children's self-confidence increases
- may become competitive
- may be prone to bedtime fears and nightmares

Factors Affecting Child Development

A variety of factors which influence the ongoing development of children will be reviewed below. You may want to consider the extent to which the children in your Playing with Rainbows group have been affected by these factors.

Basic Needs

Children need food and shelter in order to survive. When children and families must focus on meeting their basic needs, energy may not be directed towards other developmental tasks, for example learning to read and write.

Maternal and Child Nutrition

The development of children's bodies and brains is dependent on adequate nutrition. If the children in the group have experienced a period of malnutrition, it may impact their physical development, their language development or the development of their cognitive skills and in turn interfere with the achievement of developmental milestones. Consideration should also be given to the impact of not having access to clean water during the conflict, on their journey or during their stay in the refugee camp.

Stimulation

In order to grow and develop children require physical and mental stimulation. When inadequate stimulation is received, it can have a negative impact on children's development.

Opportunities

Children gain new skills when they are provided with the opportunity to learn and practice these skills. When children's opportunities are limited, they may not develop skills at the expected time. For example, a child who has never had an opportunity to work with clay or a modelling material will not have the same level of skill as a child who has been working with clay throughout her or his life.

Cultural Factors

Different cultures will emphasize the development of different skills based on the demands and needs of people's day to day lives. Keep in mind that cultures may treat children of the same age differently. For example, the age at which children are expected to assume responsibility for helping with chores or caring for younger children may vary from culture to culture.

Motivation

There must be a motivation for children to continue to grow and develop. They must see that there is a point to gaining new skills and changing their habits. They must feel that there is a reason to excel. Most importantly, children must understand that there is a reason to live. Without such motivation, children's development may well be limited.

Life Needs

Children have a wide variety of life needs¹: Love, safety, limits, stability, models, social opportunities, being valued, opportunity for self-expression, touch, nurturing, relaxation, challenges, ability to explore the world, new experiences, develop a sense of wonder and passion about the world, spirituality, praise and recognition, an opportunity to give, and responsibility. If any of these needs are not met, it can have an impact on a child's development. As the number of unmet needs increases the number of difficulties the child faces may also increase.

¹ This list is inspired by the work of Mark Barnes in the workshop presentation *Exploring the Play Therapy Journey*.

Children's Understanding of Death²

This information should be read with the understanding that it is culturally specific and that it is primarily based on experiences with North American children. It does not necessarily reflect the experience of children who have witnessed or been exposed to multiple deaths. Some issues such as "magical thinking" may still apply in these cases, but others such as not understanding that death is permanent may not. Furthermore, it must be recognized that children's understanding of death will depend to a large degree on the information that has been provided to the children by their caregivers and on the way death is discussed in their culture.

Two to Six Year Olds

- see death as reversible - may become angry when the person does not return
- may raise the same questions constantly or need to repeat the same conversation several times
- fear further losses
- engage in "magical thinking" - Children believe that their thoughts may have caused events. For example a girl might believe that her wish that her father would leave her alone led to his death. Magical thinking may also apply to issues surrounding migration.
- feel guilt and self-blame - Children may feel that if they had done something different the death would not have occurred.
- connect events that don't belong together - For example, there was a thunderstorm the night before the army took my brother. Thunder makes the army come. This type of reasoning can lead to irrational fears.
- idealize the person who has died
- may feel angry at having been deserted
- use denial and fantasy to cope with the death.
- may feel that dead people live an enfeebled life in a casket

Six to Nine Year Olds

- retain remnants of magical thinking
- continue to fear additional losses
- may begin to worry about how their own needs will be met
- continue to use denial and fantasy to try and cope with the loss
- feel guilt and self-blame - Children may feel that if they had done something different the death would not have occurred.
- may see death as a "taker", something that comes to get you
- understand that death is final for those that it happens to
- fear that death is contagious
- show an interest in biological details of death

² Summaries of children's understanding of and reaction to death at different ages can be found in *The Seasons of Grief: Helping Children Grow Through Loss* by Dr. Donna Gaffney, *The Grieving Child: A parent's guide* by Helen Fitzgerald and *How Do We Tell the Children? A Step-by-Step Guide for Helping Children Two to Teen Cope When Someone Dies* by Dan Schaefer and Christine Lyons.

Talking to Children about Death³

It should be remembered that caregivers in some cultures feel that it is not appropriate to tell children about death until they are "old enough to understand"⁴. Group facilitators should discuss this issue with caregivers during screening. What have they told the children about death? Are the children aware of the deaths of any specific individuals? Group facilitators must ensure that they do not inadvertently inform the children of deaths that have not yet been discussed by the children's caregivers.

Children should be helped to understand death concretely. Children need to understand the reality of death in order to mourn.

Dead means that the body has stopped working. It won't walk. It won't talk. The body doesn't move, see, hear, think or feel. The body isn't happy, sad or afraid any more. The body does not feel hot or cold. None of the parts of the body work anymore. It doesn't breathe, swallow or go to the bathroom.

Do not make use of euphemisms or analogies. When children are told that someone has "gone to sleep", they may develop a fear of going to bed. When children are told that "We lost Grandpa", they do not understand why people don't try to find him again. If children are told that the person has gone on a "journey" they wait for that person to come back. Some parents try to explain death to children by referring to the seasons and the changes that plants and flowers undergo. This can be confusing since spring returns when winter is over and tulips grow again.

Group facilitators should not try to integrate religious explanations into their discussions of death. This should be left to the child's caregiver. It should be noted that some religious explanations can be problematic for children. For example, when children are told that someone was taken because God loved her or him, the children may start misbehaving so that they will not be loveable and will not be taken. Other children may try to behave very well so that God will choose them and they can be reunited with the person that died. Sometimes children are told that they should not be sad because the person who has died has gone to a "better place". This can be difficult for children who still miss their dead loved one. Teaching abstract religious and spiritual concepts to children is not an easy task. As a result, it should be left to caregivers who can communicate the messages that they feel are important. If it appears that the messages the caregivers have given the children are leading to problems for the child, group facilitators can discuss this with the caregivers.

Issues to Consider when Looking at a Child's Level of Development

Begin by considering what you would ordinarily expect from a child of this age. Does the child you are thinking about show any major deviations from what you would expect?

Are there any areas that stand out from the child's general developmental picture? For example, consider a ten year old child who has the physical and language development appropriate to her age but appears unable to socialize with her peers, choosing instead to play alone. If there is a particular area where the child appears to have more limited skills, explore all the possible reasons for this:

- Are there any physical problems that may be connected to the difficulty you are considering?
- Has the child had the opportunity to learn and practice the skills in question?

³ This information is a summary of suggestions contained within *The Seasons of Grief: Helping Children Grow Through Loss* by Dr. Donna Gaffney, *The Grieving Child: A parent's guide* by Helen Fitzgerald and *How Do We Tell the Children? A Step-by-Step Guide for Helping Children Two to Teen Cope When Someone Dies* by Dan Schaefer and Christine Lyons.

⁴ This issue is discussed in *In the Midst of the Whirlwind: A manual for helping refugee children* by Naomi Richman.

Carefully, consider all

the possibilities and do

not jump to unwarranted conclusions.

- While you may feel that the child is exhibiting a developmental problem, would it be considered a problem in their country of origin? In some cases, cultural factors can impact a child's development. For example, children who customarily eat with their hands or with chopsticks may not be able to competently use cutlery. Clearly, this difficulty should not be taken as an indicator of a developmental problem, since the child has never had the need to develop these skills. Get input from an individual who is familiar with the child's culture and country of origin to help you determine if cultural issues may influence the issue you are concerned about.
- Could the parenting practices and styles that the child has been exposed to play a role in the issue you are considering? For example, in many cultures, children sleep with their caregivers. As a result, the fact that a child is sleeping in her or his caregivers' bed cannot be taken as a sign of immaturity or dependence. In many cultures, parenting is shared between a number of adults in the community. Children raised in this way may seek comfort from a variety of adults, rather than relying on their biological parents for comfort. As a result, you could not assume that there was a problem in the children's relationships with their parents if they did not immediately turn to their parents for comfort.
- Is it possible that the child's history of trauma has influenced her or his development? For example, could the child who chooses to play alone be avoiding contact with her peers because she has witnessed the death of many friends and prefers being alone to losing another friend?
- Would the fact that the child is struggling to learn a second language play a role in what you are seeing?
- Was the child exhibiting any developmental difficulties before the war or before the migration journey? If the child appeared to be developing normally before these events you should seriously consider the role that these experiences might play in the child's current difficulties. In addition to considering the psychological impact of traumatic events, you should consider the impact that malnutrition, poor water, lack of stimulation and limited opportunities for play might have had on the child's development.

Carefully, consider all the possibilities and do not jump to unwarranted conclusions. For example, it could be that a child is having trouble getting along with her peers because she has a hearing problem rather than because of her trauma or language difficulties.

Are the concerns described by the child's caregivers developmentally appropriate? For example, many children go through a period of "stuttering" which is not indicative of a serious problem.

Consider the developmental tasks which faced the children at the time that their lives were disrupted by the war and migration journey. This will help you highlight difficulties the children may experience. For example, four year old children are generally beginning to gain more independence from their caregivers and to explore more of the world around them. If, at this stage, a child is hurt in a conflict or witnesses the killing of a family member, she or he may feel that it is dangerous to explore the world and may choose to stay in close contact with her or his caregivers.

It is possible that if a child's early needs have not been met, she or he could benefit from an opportunity to regress and have these needs met now. This opportunity could be provided by a counsellor. For example, a counsellor working with a young boy who missed much of his early nurturance spent time rocking and singing to him. It is also possible, that the children may reach back to make up for an earlier stage. A six year old girl who has not previously had an opportunity to assert her independence may now go through the "terrible twos".

Structuring Interventions

Developmental information can help group facilitators plan their interventions to meet the needs of the children in their Playing with Rainbows group.

Interact with the children in an age appropriate manner

Unless there is a good reason not to, group facilitators should strive to treat children in an age appropriate manner. This is particularly important with children who tend to present as older or younger than their chronological age. Many children who have had to assume responsibility during a difficult situation (i.e. care for siblings, cook all the meals, care for a sick parent) will assume an adult facade. It is important to allow these children to "be children" again, to let them play and give them time to be silly and giggle. One way to help children do this is to ensure that they are treated in an age appropriate manner.

Help the children learn through experiences

In general, younger children learn through experience, while older children can benefit from both experience and cognitive insight. Given the age range of the children who will be participating in Playing with Rainbows groups, it is recommended that a wide variety of experiential exercises be used with them. While these children may be able to participate in a conversation about how to telephone 911 in an emergency, they will benefit most from an opportunity to actually practice this skill in a role play.

Understanding how children interpret information and reach conclusions

It is important to understand how children reach conclusions and to keep this information in mind during your discussions with children in the Playing with Rainbows group. Children tend to believe that the world revolves around them and as a result they assume the blame for many things that happen. For example, a child might think: "I knew I had to get in line early to get water. I didn't get any water. My sister got sick. I made my sister get sick." Young children tend to link together unconnected events. For example a child could think: "I yelled at my father, My father got shot. I made my father get shot by yelling." If the children express feelings of self-blame, these should be explored so that group facilitators understand how the child has come to blame her or himself (*Why do you think it is your fault? What do you think you should have done differently?*). If group facilitators reassure the children too quickly, the children will not feel understood and it is very possible that the group facilitator's comments will not address the children's real concern.

Think about the way that the children will use symbols

The way in which individuals use symbols deepens with age. While group facilitators can ask young children why they have chosen to use a particular symbol, the children may not be able to provide an answer. For example, a young child may have a hard time explaining why red is the colour of anger for her or him, while an older child may be able to say that red is an angry colour because she or he feels hot like a fire when she or he is angry and fire is red. As people age, they become more consciously aware of their use of symbols. This suggests that group facilitators should limit the number of questions they ask young children about their use of symbols and metaphors.

Consider how children understand the motives behind their behaviour

At times, the counselling process is designed to help clients explore "why" they do things. Selman (1980)⁵ has studied the development of children's understanding of the motives behind their actions. He suggested that prior to the age of four, children do not really think about the motives behind their behaviour or the behaviour of others. Between the ages of five and nine, Selman (1980) states that children begin to see actions as intentional and feel that the motives for that behaviour are obvious. For example, a child at this stage might say that if a child hugs an adult, it is because they love that adult. Somewhere between the age of seven and twelve, Selman (1980) suggests that children begin to realize that the motives and feelings behind behaviour can be hidden from others. At this stage, a child could understand that another child might hug an adult because she or he has been told to and that this does not necessarily mean the child loves the adult. Selman (1980) indicates that it is not until at least the age of ten that children realize they can hide their motives from themselves. This framework suggests that there is little point in talking to the children in a Playing with Rainbows group about the motives underlying their behaviour. The children will either not have any idea what is motivating their behaviour or will feel that the motive is obvious. They will not be able to understand that things they are not aware of could be generating their behaviour. For example, the children in a Playing with Rainbows group would have a hard time understanding that their silly behaviour could be a manifestation of sadness or fear.

Take into account the way in which a child's sense of self develops

A number of writers have considered how a child's sense of her or himself develops⁶. For the purpose of a Playing with Rainbows group, it is important to note that young children tend to define themselves through their behaviours and through observable attributes:

- I can jump high.
- I have a dog.
- I live in an apartment.
- I came to Canada on an airplane.

Group facilitators should keep this in mind when working to develop the children's self-esteem. Saying "You are a kind girl" will not be as effective as saying "You are a kind girl because you helped Sara when her knee was hurt. You came and told me and then you helped me get a bandaid." Praise must be linked to the children's behaviours and observable attributes to be effective.

Having a basic understanding of Child Development will help group facilitators assess the children in their Playing with Rainbows group and tailor their interventions to the children's needs.

⁵ This information is found in R. Selman's work *Interpersonal understanding*. A summary of this work can be found in "Cognitive-Developmental Considerations in the Conduct of Play Therapy" by Susan Harter in *Handbook of Play Therapy*.

⁶ This work is summarized in "Cognitive-Developmental Considerations in the Conduct of Play Therapy" by Susan Harter in *Handbook of Play Therapy*.

USING PLAY IN COUNSELLING

It has long been recognized that play and play based techniques have the power to be an integral part of a counselling process for children and adults alike. While cultures around the world have been making use of storytelling, art, music and ritual for healing purposes for centuries, play was first formally used in counselling with children in the early 1900's. Since that time therapists and counsellors have developed a wide variety of ways to bring play into the counselling experience:

A small girl draws a picture of the monster from her nightmare. Then with gentle guidance from a therapist she draws a cage to hold the monster and talks to him about why he scares her in her dreams.

A young boy, who has endured years of watching his parents fight, places the dolls around the dining room table in the doll house and acts out a friendly family dinner, showing what he wishes would happen at his house.

A young girl who has moved houses and changed schools many times as her parents look for jobs, dresses up in an officer's hat, gets a gun and builds a fence out of blocks. She orders the therapist to stay behind the fence and not to try and escape. In this moment, the girl gains some power to influence the world around her, which is otherwise, so often, out of her control.

A counsellor and a boy whose uncle has died read *The Dead Bird*, a book which describes what a group of children do when they find a dead bird, including the burial ceremony that the children hold for the bird. As they read, they talk about the feelings of the characters in the book, how the boy feels about his uncle's death and about the uncle's funeral.

A group of children in Sri Lanka were given rocks, stones and miniature war toys and were invited to create pictures in the sand using these. The children's play focused on the war toys. As they set these up, they talked about the conflict they have been exposed to. After using these materials for the first time, the children came to the sessions early and asked to play with the war toys. Using their play as a starting point, the counsellor spoke with them about their feelings during the conflict, things that have changed because of the conflict or ways to cope when the fighting is near.

These are just some examples of how play can become part of the counselling process.

In the remainder of this section, additional information will be provided which will help group leaders understand the different ways in which play can be used during the children's group and provide some guidelines about how to facilitate the children's use of play. Specific ideas for play and art based activities are provided in the outlines for Sessions 1 through 12 of the Playing with Rainbows group.

Why Use Play in Group Counselling

When play is used in counselling, children may be invited to draw, tell stories, put on a puppet show, make masks, or play checkers. They are not given these opportunities merely because play is something that children naturally do, but so that a counsellor can make deliberate use of the therapeutic properties of play. The fact that play can be an inherently healing, natural activity is capitalized on when using play in counselling. However, it is crucial that counsellors recognize that "play in itself will not ordinarily produce changes... the therapist's interventions and utilizations of the play are critical" (Chethik, 1989, p. 49).

The Therapeutic Aspects of Play

- 1) Play can be used to help establish a relationship with a child. It is easier to get to know a child as she or he plays a game, reads a story or draws a picture than it is by sitting down and talking to her or him.
- 2) Play is the "natural medium of communication" for children (Axline, 1969; Landreth, 1991, pg. 10)

"Play is the child's symbolic language of self-expression and can reveal (1) what the child has experienced; (2) reactions to what was experienced; (3) feelings about what was experienced; (4) what the child wishes, wants or needs; and (5) the child's perception of self" (Landreth, 1991, p.15). In addition, through their play children may show us how they view and understand the world around them.

Some of the issues that children need to talk about may be too difficult or painful to deal with directly. Play allows children to explore these issues at a safe distance.

Play allows children to make their inner world concrete. While adults may be able to talk about what they are thinking or feeling, children benefit from being able to make their thoughts and feelings concrete. When a car accident is played out with small cars, the images and thoughts that were inside the child's head are now observable and can be changed or explored.

As children replay their experiences over and over, the experiences can become less overwhelming and more manageable.

A child's play may reflect thoughts and feelings that she or he is not aware of. For example in a story which a young girl told about a turtle who was left alone every night, the young turtle yelled at his mother for leaving him alone. After the child had finished telling the story, the counsellor and the girl talked about the turtle's feelings and what the turtle wished could happen. The counsellor later asked the girl if she was ever left by her mother. The girl said that she wished her mother could see her off to school in the morning.

- 3) Through play, children can release and explore their emotions (Gil, 1991).
- 4) Play provides children with an opportunity to manipulate and control objects.

Many children who are involved in counselling have not had the opportunity to be in control of their experiences, their lives or their fate (i.e. war in their country, separation from their parents, placement in a refugee camp, migration to Canada). When playing, children are in control of the toys, they can decide how to play with the toys and what the toys will do.

When they use toys to act out stories, children can try out a number of possible endings to a given scenario. They can consider how they would have felt if things had turned out differently which will help them come to an understanding of how they feel about the way things did turn out.

- 5) Play can provide a corrective emotional experience.

A child who has always been in danger, can act out a story in which adults make her or him safe. As the child plays, she begins to sense what it feels like to be looked after and what it feels like to have the adults take care of her. Having this experience in play can be healing for the child.

- 6) Play can assist children in their overall development as well as in developing basic play skills, self-esteem, and social skills (Gil, 1991).

How Play is Used in Group Counselling

Play can be used in a wide variety of ways in individual, family and group counselling. This section provides a brief overview of the ways in which play can be used as part of a counselling group. Specific ideas for play and art based activities are provided in the outlines of Sessions 1 through 12 of the Playing with Rainbows group.

Individual Activities

At times group members will be asked to work on their own when completing a task (i.e. draw a picture of their family). Generally, when the group members have finished the task, they will come together, show each other their work and talk about it.

Group Activities

At times the entire group will complete an activity together (i.e. playing a game of feelings charades). The group may also be divided into smaller segments to work on a particular task (i.e. the children are separated into groups of two and asked to act out a scene of a mother saying goodbye to her children in the morning or to put on a puppet play about their migration)

Activities Based On Real Life

Play and art activities are used to provide a description of real life events (i.e. a child is asked to draw a picture of a refugee camp, children are invited to use the puppets to demonstrate how they came to Canada or use war toys in the sand to portray their experience with war).

Activities Based On Metaphor

One of the most powerful ways to use play and art is in the creation of metaphors which allow the symbolic exploration of issues being dealt with by group members. For example:

Children can be asked to choose an animal to represent their temper. Time can then be spent talking about what makes that animal angry and what it does when it is angry. If necessary, time can be spent talking about other ways the animal could express its anger. As the conversation continues, the counsellor can ask the children questions which help them talk about things that make them angry and how they cope with these feelings.

Children may be asked to think about all the plants and flowers that they know and draw a flower of hope. Sharing and talking about these drawings could help group facilitators and other group members understand what hope means to each child and what they hope for.

Group leaders could talk about the way in which the water in a river or the waves in an ocean slowly wash over stones and change them, the same way that our experiences slowly change us. Children could then be asked to model a stone to represent themselves before they came to Canada and a stone to represent themselves now. In the discussion that follows the children could talk about how they have changed and what experiences led to those changes.

Choosing Play Materials for Group Counselling

In this section, the issues that should be considered when selecting toys for use in counselling will be outlined. When play is being used in a children's counselling group, the materials selected will, to a large extent be determined by the activities being used in each group session. However, the general guidelines reviewed below should be considered, wherever relevant, as materials are selected for use in group activities.

Criteria for selecting toys have been outlined by several authors, including Garry Landreth (1991) and Greg Lubimiv (1994). Below you will find a list of some of the things they suggest should be considered when selecting toys, as well as some other considerations that are specific to Playing with Rainbows groups.

1) Are the toys interesting?

2) Are the toys age-appropriate?

Make sure the toys are appropriate for the age range of children in your group. It is important that the children have the skills required to use the materials that you supply. However, it is equally important that they do not feel insulted by being asked to work with materials that they consider "babyish". Remember to consider the size of the children's hands: Can they hold the objects? Are their hands big enough to work the puppets? Will their hands fit in the puppets?

3) Make sure the materials are durable.

If durable toys are selected, replacement costs will be minimized and children will not be embarrassed by accidentally breaking a toy.

4) Is there a choice of materials?

In individual counselling it is recommended that a variety of materials be available so that the child can choose what they wish to use. Every time a child gets to make a choice, there is an opportunity for them to feel empowered and in control. While this may not always be possible when pursuing particular group exercises, providing a choice of materials remains a good idea when it is practical. For example, if children are being asked to draw a picture of their family, you may allow them to choose between using pencils, crayons, or markers. You may also provide them with the opportunity to use magazine pictures to make a collage representing their family or use clay to model their family, in case they are not comfortable with drawing.

5) Do the toys facilitate creative expression?

The best toys to use are the ones that can be used by the child to express and explore a variety of different issues in a number of different ways.

It is highly recommended that you avoid using toys with a predetermined use (i.e. an ordinary baby doll is preferable to one that crawls or cries) and that you avoid using toys which have predetermined roles or emotional experiences (i.e. a generic toy lion is preferable to a character from the Disney movie 'The Lion King' who may already have been given a "good guy" or "bad guy" role).

6) Do the toys encourage emotional expression?

One of the goals of counselling with children is to help them recognize, differentiate and appropriately express their emotions. As a result, there must be toys available that encourage a full range of emotional expressions. Puppets, dolls, and animal figures can be used by children to express a variety of emotions. Any activity in which the child creates a product (i.e. drawing, mask making, storytelling) allows them to be in control of the emotions expressed.

7) Do the toys allow for exploration of real life situations?

Having human toy figures available (i.e. dolls, puppets) will let the children play out experiences from their home, school or community. Medical kits will allow a child to consider a visit from the doctor. Using toy dishes a child might act out a family dinner, illustrate a family fight or demonstrate their nightly chore routine. Rescue vehicles (police cars, ambulance, fire trucks) allow children to act out scenes in which people who are in trouble are helped and supported.

There has been some controversy about whether or not children should be allowed to play with war toys. For counselling purposes, war toys can be invaluable. They allow the children to directly portray what they have experienced. Although the children may use the toys to depict nasty, hurtful violence, this may well be what the children have witnessed. Children participating in counselling must be provided with toys that allow them to explore both their positive and negative experiences.

8) Do the toys provide an opportunity for success?

Children should be helped to feel creative, competent and successful during a counselling experience. As a result it is important to ensure that toys are not too complicated or difficult for the children to operate.

9) Do the toys reflect the children's cultural identities?

Toys must be selected that reflect the children's cultural identities. Group facilitators should make use of crayons and clay, now available, which reflect a wide variety of skin tones. Similarly dolls and human puppets with different skin tones should be available to the children. If group facilitators are aware of the style of clothing worn in the children's countries of origin, dolls or puppets can be clothed in a similar manner.

10) Do the toys allow the child to connect their play with the rituals and symbols of their cultural background?

Where possible, select toys that will allow the children to reflect, act out or connect to the rituals and symbols of their culture. This can help the children feel valued and respected. In addition, the children will have an opportunity to express pride in and share important elements of their culture. For example, if a particular animal is important to a child's culture, you may wish to make sure that you have a puppet or stuffed toy which represents this animal available during group sessions.

11) Limit toys that allow children to isolate themselves.

Some toys (puzzles, playing cards, books) will allow children to isolate themselves or prevent themselves from engaging in imaginative and creative play. These toys should be removed if they are interfering with the success of group activities or a child's involvement in the group.

The Role of the Leader When Using Play in Group Counselling

Garry Landreth's Tenets for Relating to Children

The ten "Tenets for Relating to Children" that follow were outlined by Garry Landreth in *Play Therapy: The Art of Relationship* and should be considered as group facilitators think about their interactions with the children in the group.

- 1) Children are not miniature adults and the therapist does not respond to them as if they were.
- 2) Children are people. They are capable of experiencing deep emotional pain and joy.
- 3) Children are unique and worthy of respect. The therapist prizes the uniqueness of each child and respects the person they are.
- 4) Children are resilient. Children possess a tremendous capacity to overcome obstacles and circumstances in their lives.
- 5) Children have an inherent tendency towards growth and maturity. They possess an inner intuitive wisdom.
- 6) Children are capable of positive self-direction. They are capable of dealing with their world in creative ways.
- 7) Children's natural language is play and this is the medium of self-expression with which they are most comfortable.
- 8) Children have a right to remain silent. The therapist respects a child's decision not to talk.
- 9) Children will take the therapeutic experience to where they need to be. The therapist does not attempt to determine when and how a child should play.
- 10) Children's growth cannot be speeded up. The therapist recognizes this and is patient with the child's developmental process.

Landreth (1991, pg. 49-50)

General Guidelines For Interacting With Children In Group Counselling

Respect the child

Children must be respected for who they are.

As noted by Garry Landreth (1991), children must be allowed to remain silent if this is what they choose. If a child is not ready to talk about her or his experiences or does not want to share her or his feelings with the group this must be respected. Since traumatic memories are difficult to deal with, children and adults alike need inner strength and outer security before they are able to talk about or work through these memories. Some children may choose to remain silent when they do not have the inner resources required to handle the traumatic memories. In the same way that forcing a child to ride a two wheel bike before their legs are long enough or they have developed a sense of balance can result in physical injury, forcing a child to talk about difficult issues before they are ready can result in additional emotional damage. Other children may remain silent due to concerns about their safety and security or because they have been directed to do so by their parents.

¹ The second part of this tenet "The therapist does not attempt to determine when and how a child should play" relates directly to non-directive play therapy and does not apply to the type of group being outlined in this manual.

Garry Landreth (1991) states that a child's growth cannot be speeded up and in a workshop told a wonderful story to illustrate this point. He spoke of a kindergarten child who had planted beans in a white Styrofoam cup. He said that the child was eager to help the bean grow, so he watered it and placed in it the warm light of the sun. When the first shoots appeared the child was so excited that he decided to help the plant grow faster and he pulled on the shoots. The plant fell out of the soil and died. Likewise if we force children to grow too fast or push them too hard, we can hurt them. Respect the pace children set for themselves.

In the same way that forcing a child to ride a two wheel bike before their legs are long enough or they have developed a sense of balance can result in physical injury, forcing a child to talk about difficult issues before they are ready can result in additional emotional damage.

Respect the limits set by the children

A child may pull away from physical touch because it reminds her or him of being constrained. A child may refuse to finger paint because the paint reminds her or him of the mud in the refugee camp. A child may be scared of a puppet because it reminds her or him of a figure in a nightmare. When a child is wary, acts scared, or asks not to do something, you may talk about why she or he does not want to participate but you must respect the limit. If the children know that you take them seriously and listen to them, they will begin to feel safe with you. Before initiating any physical contact, it is highly recommended group facilitators ask the children's permission and adhere strictly to any limits set by the children.

When a child is respected for who he or she is, the counsellor will demonstrate a kind caring acceptance for all that the child is. It is imperative that this includes taking into account cultural and religious differences.

Be there with the child

While you are in the group with the child, you must be there with the child. Clear your mind of worries about bills, car repairs and what is for supper. The children in the group need you to focus on them. Being truly with the children will help you understand what they need and want and respond to this.

An aspect of being with the child is staying where the child is. When a child is talking about the city they lived in, you may be tempted to begin talking about what happened to the city when it was bombed. You must resist the impulse and allow the child to talk about the issues that are important to her or him.

Listen carefully to the child

Listen carefully to everything that the children have to say. Listen to their voices but also listen to their body language. Children may say one thing with their words and another with their actions. The effective counsellor will listen to and respond to all these messages.

Be open to what the child can teach you

We can never know what it is like to walk in someone else's shoes. We can guess and we may be able to decide what we would feel and how we would react if we were walking through someone else's life, we may even have had very similar experiences, but we can never know what it was like for that person. Let the children tell you what their experiences were like for them. Do not assume that you know what was happy and what was sad, what was difficult for them and what was easy. Let them tell you.

Allow the children to express a range of emotions

During the group the children will need to talk about all kinds of feelings. Sometimes, when children are talking about very sad feelings, adults around them want to wipe the tears away immediately and help the child feel better. Feeling pain and sorrow is part of healing. Group facilitators must sit with and support the children as they begin to touch and work through their pain.

Adults can feel overwhelmed by a child's deep anger and rage and may want to quickly help the child calm down. Your job as a group facilitator is not to change or get rid of the anger but to help the child express it safely.

During a session about grief, children may begin talking about happy memories. Perhaps they need to remember that happy things happen or perhaps the sadness is too much for them. Whatever the reason, the children must be allowed to express what they are feeling at the time they are feeling it.

Whatever the child is feeling must be considered a legitimate feeling by group facilitators. It does not matter if the feeling makes sense to you; the feelings make sense to the child and should be respected. It does not help any of us if we are angry and someone tells us there is no reason to be mad. Reason or not, you feel mad and you need to talk about it. The same is true for the children participating in the group.

Be true to yourself

While there are many general guidelines for how to relate to children, what to do and what to say, your own personality will play a role in how you interact with children. Someone who is not comfortable with giving and receiving lots of physical affection should not force themselves to do so. If a counsellor is uncomfortable singing, then they can find another way to bring music into the group. If you force yourself to do something that is not comfortable or natural for you, the children will sense and react to your discomfort. It is best to facilitate the group in a way that will allow you to relax and show the best of who you are.

Say what you mean and mean what you say

Many children who have been traumatized, have been in situations where they have been tricked or deceived. Children must know that their group facilitators can be trusted or they will not feel safe in the group. The best way to ensure that you can be trusted is to say what you mean and mean what you say.

You must think carefully about the rules you set and the promises you make. Will you be able to enforce the rules? Can you follow through on your promises?

Children who have been exposed to war trauma and migration stress have faced numerous difficulties. Sometimes there is a tendency to try and shield the children from other difficult issues (i.e. death of a relative in their home country, conflict between parents). In general, it is best to be honest with children. If you mislead the children, they will inevitably discover it. Unfortunately when the discovery is made, the children will have learnt that you, along with others, cannot be trusted. Most issues, no matter how difficult and how traumatic can be explained with compassion. After talking with the child's caregiver about what they have told the child and what they want the child to know, think carefully about what the child needs to understand about the issue at hand and how it can be explained to her or him. Keep explanations as simple as possible, providing additional information if the child requests it.

Before initiating any physical contact, it is highly recommended group facilitators ask the children's permission and adhere strictly to any limits set by the children.

Guidelines For Observing Children's Play

Observation is one of the key skills used by adults who facilitate children's counselling groups which use play. Careful observation lays the ground work for the questions and comments made by the counsellor. Whenever you notice something unusual or interesting, consider what it may mean. You must consider the impact of the child's culture, the environments they have been in, the environment they are in and their overall development. Take note of the following things as the children participate in the group.

1) Child's play skills

Is the child able to use the materials in the ways that you would expect from a child her or his age? If a child appears unable to use the materials in an age-appropriate manner developmental, environmental and cultural issues should be considered. Has the child been able to use these materials before? A child who has never seen a puppet, may not understand how to use it. Are there any cultural prohibitions against using the materials? For example, some cultures do not support the use of masks. How do the child and her or his parents feel about play? Different cultures may have different concepts of what play is. This may lead to their emphasizing different skills and different types of play. Some families may not value play as a separate entity and may have focused on academic learning or work skills as the child was growing up. Should the possibility of a developmental delay be considered?²

2) How does the child interact with other children and group facilitators?

Is the child able to interact with the other children and the group facilitators? Can the child take direction from the group facilitators? Will the child ask for help from the group facilitators? Is the child able to share materials? Does the child always try to lead or follow the other children? If any difficulties are noted in these areas, environmental, cultural and developmental issues should be considered. For example, some children who have lived in poverty may feel a need to hoard play materials and be reluctant to share them. At times, children who have had difficult experiences may feel a need to maintain a tough facade and will not ask for help because, in the past, they have learned that they will get hurt if they show any vulnerability. Some cultures may teach children to take direction from male or female figures. This may result in the child showing resistance to following the direction of group facilitators of the other sex. At times, the oldest child in the family takes responsibility for the younger child and becomes used to "leading" groups of children. This child may try to be the group facilitator's helper and lead the rest of the children.

3) What materials does the child use?

Take note of the materials the child uses and whether this changes over the course of the group. For example, some children in need of nurturance may gravitate towards soft cuddly toys or towards toys that they can care for like baby dolls. Children may use the materials that they feel most comfortable with and may begin to try out new materials as they develop more confidence in the group setting. Think about what the child's choice of materials may be telling you.

² For further information on this area see the chapter titled "Developmental Considerations".

4) How does the child use the materials?

The way in which a child uses a toy may tell you something about how they feel about that particular toy. For example, a child may be reluctant to use fingerpaint if she or he does not like getting messy or has been taught that it is not acceptable to be messy. The way in which materials are used by children may also tell you something about their own inner issues. For example, children who are trying to cope with a great deal of anger may use all the materials they work with in a violent or aggressive way.

5) What themes and trends appear in the child's stories, drawings and play?

Consideration of the themes in the children's work is a central aspect of using play in counselling. Themes which appear again and again in the child's play tend to reflect issues that are important to the child. For example, one young girl who had been adopted at the age of four organized all the toys into family groups. Dolls, animals, cars, even lego blocks and crayons were divided into family groups. It seemed that she was trying to understand what "family" meant, who belongs in families, and what families do as a part of coming to understand her own experience. Conflicts and fights may play a prominent role in the play of children who are struggling with anger.

As children begin to work through their issues, you may notice changes in the themes in their play. War scenes which always ended with everyone getting killed may now end with characters on one side managing to escape. New solutions to problems in the children's stories may be introduced. A rabbit who has always coped with a mean dog by running away, may suddenly stand its ground and tell the dog to go away.

Themes may be dropped from a child's play when an issue has been resolved. For example, a boy who was afraid that strangers would burst into his home at night told many stories about animals who would hide away in caves to hibernate. In most of his stories other animals would bother the sleeping animals and try to wake them up. When the child's mother had shown him how their windows and doors were locked at night and talked to him about how the police could be called in an emergency, the hibernation stories stopped.

New themes may be introduced into children's play as healing progresses. For example, a lonely girl, who had always drawn pictures of dinosaurs in barren landscapes, one week drew a picture of a farmer milking his cow. Around this time, the girl also began talking about visits with her Big Sister.

Guidelines For Framing Questions and Comments

The comments made and questions asked by counsellors in a children's group serve a variety of purposes:

- Social – i.e. greetings, endings, communicating caring
- Providing direction – i.e. providing instruction about activities, setting limits
- Encouraging verbal and play based interactions with adults and other children
- Inviting children to share information about themselves and their experiences
- Exploring the meaning of the children's play
- Helping the children to express, explore and cope with emotions
- Sharing information – e.g. providing education re: death

Because counselling is a process designed to meet specific goals, the comments and questions of group facilitators should be purposeful.

Many of a counsellor's interactions with the children in the group happen instinctively, without a great deal of forethought. Despite this, upon reflection, it will be determined that most comments or questions will have been designed to meet one of the purposes listed above. Because counselling is a process designed to meet specific goals, the comments and questions of group facilitators should be purposeful. Take the time to make sure that, in general, the things you say and the things you ask, help the children reach the goals that have been set for the group.

Exploring the meaning of children's play

In all children's groups, the comments made and questions asked by facilitators will serve many of the purposes outlined above. The primary difference when using play based techniques is that a great deal of time is spent exploring the meaning of the children's play.

Listed below are five different types of comments and questions that can be used to explore the meaning of children's play and later connect their play to their personal experiences. These tend to progress from the least intrusive to the most intrusive. In early sessions, when dealing with a new topic or when beginning to explore a child's drawing, play or story, it often makes sense to begin by asking the least intrusive types of questions and to progress to more intrusive comments or questions as the conversation continues.

1) Reflection

The counsellor makes a comment which identifies what they see happening:

- You are drawing a purple house.*
- You and Jenny are hugging each other as you say hello.*
- The mother is yelling at the children and telling them to be careful.*
- The soldier is cutting that guy's head off.*

Reflection lets the child know that you are paying attention to what she or he is doing.

Reflection can help you avoid making statements which may inflict your values on the child. For example, a child who has been a victim of violence may need to explore that experience by assuming the role of the aggressor and shooting other characters. If you ask questions such as "I wonder how the people getting shot feel?" or "I wonder if he could find another way to let people know he is mad?", rather than simply reflecting what is happening "Those people are being shot.", the child may feel that you disapprove of her or his play and stop it. While eventually, the child does need to explore the feelings of victims and look at other ways of resolving conflicts she or he may first need a chance to feel powerful. When you use reflection as a way of noting what you see, there is less chance that you will inhibit the child's play by subtly communicating your values.

2) Musing to Yourself

The counsellor wonders about issues to herself/himself rather than asking the child questions directly:

I wonder how he will get home?

Hmmm, he seems really stuck.

It looks like he is having a hard time.

Questions will not seem as intrusive when they are spoken to the air. The child has a choice about whether or not to answer.

3) Metaphoric Content Questions

Explore the contents of the metaphor:

In general, the answers to these questions are things that would be "observable" if the drama continued or if the picture came to life. These questions tend to begin with who, what, where and when.

What would happen if the family ran out of food?

That monster looks angry, what will he do next?

That Dad is going with the police, what will happen to him?

Where could the teddy bear look for help?

What is a doctor's job?

These questions are crucial to understanding what the child's play means to her or him and may provide clues as to the child's thoughts and feelings and the way that she or he perceives the world. The more information you get about the characters and the story, the better you will understand what the metaphor means to the child. For example, if a young girl who was telling a story about a wedding said that the next week the village was bombed and the husband was killed, the metaphor would have a very different meaning than if she said that the wife and the husband ran away to a new country and lived happily ever after.

Before you begin to explore the feelings in the story or make connections to the child's life, you must get as much information as possible about the plot of the story. Hidden within the plot are the clues telling you what the play means to the child and what issues the child is working to understand.

4) Metaphoric Process Questions

Explore the underlying process, dynamics and feelings in the metaphor.

These questions help the counsellor understand why things happen in the child's play. The answers to these questions are "not observable" since they reflect the inner feelings and thoughts of the characters.

What is the girl saying to herself as she watches the fighting?

How does the boy in your picture feel?

What does the bunny rabbit need?

Why is the eagle mad?

5) Linking Questions

Help the child make connections between their play and their life:

Do you ever feel like that bird?

What would you do if that happened to you?

*I remember that you said you have to eat alone sometimes just like the girl in the story.
How do you feel when that happens?*

This type of question can be very difficult for children, especially young children, to answer. An interim step would be to move from talking about the metaphor to talking about other imaginary children.

The bunny was sad when he ran out of food. How do you think that would make a little girl feel?

Other things to consider when asking questions and making comments

Never ever make assumptions. Allow the children to tell you what you need to know. Do not assume that you know what the children's experience was like for them. While you may feel that arriving in a refugee camp allows the child to feel safe and secure, they may have spent their time worried about members of a rival group who were also living in the camp.

Do not assume that you know what a child's drawings, play or stories mean to her or him. While red may mean anger to one child, it may represent love to another. While a mouse may be a cute companion in one child's eyes, another child may see the same mouse as a scavenger who steals the family's grain. No metaphor, symbol, image or colour has a set meaning. The meaning will be different for each individual and must be approached as such.

Do not assume you know how a child is using a toy. In one playroom, a young boy said that a magic wand was a stick of dynamite.

Let the child tell you about the feelings of the characters in the play. In one play session, a young girl was feeding the dolls and the counsellor said "You like to feed the dolls". The girl said no and stopped playing. It turned out that at home the girl had to look after her younger brothers and feed them supper all the time. The girl was acting out a scene that was unpleasant for her. When the counsellor assumed it was a happy scene the girl felt she was not being understood and stopped playing.

As a general rule, ask the child open ended questions that allow her or him to talk to you at length about her or his play, feelings, or experiences. Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.

Make sure that all your comments and questions are tentative and that the child is free to disagree with you.

| *It looks like she enjoys feeding the baby. Does she?*

As much as possible, you should draw answers out of the child rather than making guesses.

| *How did you feel when that happened? vs Did you feel sad?*

If the child is having difficulty answering questions, you can make some suggestions for possible answers. Make sure you give several options and do not limit the child to your choices.

| *What kind of hurting did he do? Was it hitting, kicking, biting, poking or something else?*

Self-Disclosure

At times, counsellors are tempted to talk about themselves and their experiences during a children's group. While this can be appropriate, there are some dangers to doing this.

The counselling group is there to meet the children's needs, not the counsellor's needs. A counsellor's need for comfort, to talk, to share their experiences should never, ever, be put ahead of the child's needs.

- If the counsellor talks about her or his own feelings the child may feel that she or he has to help the counsellor feel better.
- When a counsellor talks about how sad the child's story makes her or him feel, the child may stop talking to protect the counsellor's feelings.
- When a counsellor talks about how she or he solved a problem, the child may feel that they are expected to use the same solution.
- Self-disclosure can leave the child feeling that she or he is not being listened to or are not being cared for.

Successful self-disclosure will put the focus back on the child. Think carefully about what you plan to say and why you are saying it. Is there another way to meet the same goal?

Self-disclosure may be warranted if it is instigated by a child and it will facilitate the development of a relationship with her or him. This may be particularly true if the facilitator and child share a common experience or cultural identity. However, even in these instances, it is wise to consider if there are other ways of achieving the same end, to limit the information shared and to return the focus to the child as soon as possible.

The safest way to disclose personal information may be to speak about an imaginary adult's experiences.

| *I once met a woman who had that problem and she ...*

This section has outlined the general principles of using play in counselling. The use of specific techniques is covered in the chapters "Storytelling", "Puppetry" and "The Use of Art in Working with Children".

STORYTELLING

The qualities that have made stories a valued tool for relaxation, entertainment, education and healing for generations in cultures around the world make them an important element of counselling with children. This section of the manual will explore the general ways in which stories can be integrated into group counselling for children¹.

Benefits of Using Stories in Group Counselling for Children

1) Familiar medium

Most children are used to listening to stories. Many children have informal experience telling stories as they recount their day to day activities. Children may also have experience creating imaginary stories in their families or as part of school activities.

2) Minimal resources are required and as a result storytelling is cost efficient

3) Human contact

A relationship is created between the storyteller and the listener.

"It is possible for one's whole life to be changed by a story told at a crucial time by someone whom we respect and trust. For the effect of the tale rests not only with its content, but also in the timing of the telling, and abides above all within the relationship between the teller and listener"

(Gersie and King, 1991, p.30)

4) Relaxation

Stories can be used to facilitate centering and relaxation.

5) Distancing

When a story is told, difficult issues that the child is struggling with can be removed from the here and now and from the child. This distance is created simply through the opening line "Once upon a time, far far away...".

6) Communication

Stories provide a way for children to communicate their experiences, feelings, longings, desires and wishes. Stories are an indirect way for the children to talk about their own experiences and share their own stories. Symbols can become an important part of stories and provide a way for children to communicate unconscious issues.

7) Imagination and creativity are enriched and stimulated

8) Development of self-esteem

Participation in a creative endeavor is inherently rewarding.

The stories that a child tells are personal and unique. They reflect each individual child.

When a child tells a story in a counselling group, someone listens. This teaches the child that she or he has a voice that is worth listening to, that can be heard and understood.

¹ Specific storytelling techniques to be used in Playing with Rainbows groups can be found in the session outlines.

In story telling, the child has an opportunity to be in control. She or he can determine what is said, when things change and who does what. This may be very important for children who have been powerless and out of control in their lives.

9) Development of Problem Solving Skills

Every story involves some type of problem. Stories told in group counselling can be used to illustrate coping strategies and develop solutions to problems.

10) Building connections to community

Stories and mythology are a vital part of many cultures. Through the telling of cultural stories, children can be linked to the culture they were born into or share this culture with others. Both the children and their caregivers' can show pride in their culture by bringing stories to share with the group. Canadian stories can be used to help the children in the group connect to their new country.

Developmental Considerations

Children of any age can benefit from listening to stories. When stories are to be told for a particular purpose in group counselling, it is important that the language is appropriate for the ages of the children in the group. If English is not the first language of the children in the group then this must also be taken into account when selecting stories. Picture books may help children understand the story being told, but obviously limit the children's ability to create pictures in their head to accompany the story.

The age of the children in your group will determine, to a large extent, how listening to stories will benefit them. Starting in pre-school, children find listening to stories relaxing and soothing. While children of all ages may learn lessons from listening to stories, it will be easier to discuss and process these lessons as the children get older. Similarly, metaphors in stories can touch children of all ages, but it is difficult for very young children to discuss these metaphors or connect them to their own lives.

As children develop, their ability to create stories also develops². While pre-school children are capable of telling stories about their day to day activities and can also tell brief fantasy stories, this tends to be done spontaneously, when the mood strikes them. Preschool children will likely have difficulty formulating stories on demand as part of a group activity. However, it has been suggested that young children's ability to tell stories may be improved if they are involved in dramatizing the story (Engel, 1995). In addition, young children can contribute to the development of the story if the body of the story is told by an adult and the children are asked to provide specific details (e.g. the names of characters, where characters meet etc.). By the time children reach grade one or two, their ability to tell detailed stories will improve.

Stories and mythology are a vital part of many cultures. Through the telling of cultural stories, children can be linked to the culture they were born into or share this culture with others.

² For detailed information about the development of children's narrative skills, consult the *Stories Children Tell: Making Sense of the Narratives of Childhood*, Susan Engel (1995).

Using Stories Told by Counsellors

When counsellors are telling stories to children in a group, they may choose from stories that have been written by others or they can create their own stories for use in the group.

Using Stories Written by Others

Therapeutic Stories

A wide variety of stories that have been written specifically for counselling purposes can be found. If you are selecting one of these stories to use in a children's counselling group, you should be clear about your goals in reading the story to the group. The purpose of these books is not entertainment or relaxation. These stories can be useful in helping children understand that they are not alone in struggling with a particular issue and may help the children develop solutions for specific problems.

If you are planning to use therapeutic stories written by others read them carefully and consider the impact of all the information in the books on all the children in the group. Sometimes these books will deal with issues that the children in the group have not faced or will suggest resolutions that are not appropriate for the children in the group. Make sure that the information in the book is realistic and accurate.

Children's Books and Fairy Tales

Although many of the books we find in the children's section of the library or bookstore are written for entertainment, almost every one can be a powerful tool in a counselling group. The images and events in these stories often contain themes and messages that hold meaning for children in counselling (The Three Little Pigs - problem solving). These stories may be easier for children to listen to and seem less overwhelming than stories that have been written for the specific purpose of counselling since they do not deal directly with therapeutic issues. A major benefit of using these types of stories is that there is a vast variety to choose from and you will be able to find a story that appeals to you and speaks to you. When you are touched and inspired by a story, this is communicated to the children as you read or tell it.

At times it may be appropriate for group facilitators to involve stories from the children's cultures or countries of origins. Doing so can help the children feel respected and valued. However, care should be taken when using these stories. As with all stories, you should consider the messages contained within the story and make sure that they are consistent with the group's goals. It is also essential to determine if other children in the group will be offended or distressed by the content of the story due to their own cultural or religious beliefs.

If you are planning to use therapeutic stories written by others read them carefully and consider the impact of all the information in the books on all the children in the group.

Making Your Own Stories to Use

Counsellors can create extremely powerful stories to use in their children's group. Using your knowledge of the children in the group, the struggles they have faced and their culture, you can weave a tale that speaks directly to them. By moving carefully through the following steps, you can create a variety of stories designed specifically for the children in your group.

Preparation

- What is your purpose in telling the story?
- What images spring to mind?
- What do you know about the children in the group?
- What do you know about the children's cultures?
- Do the children have any favourite objects?
- What would be familiar for the children?
- What symbols would be meaningful in this story, for these children?
- Who are the characters in the story (people, animals, magical figures)?
- Where will the story take place?
- What feelings do you wish to include in the story?
- What is the central problem in the story?
- What is the solution to that problem?

The Beginning of the Story

The first line of the story should invite the listener into the story world. It could be as simple as "Do you want to hear a story?" or "Once upon a time, in a village far away..."

You must introduce something of interest at the very beginning of the story. This is usually the main characters. In the beginning of the story you will also establish the setting and outline the situation that is being faced by the main characters. You must arouse the children's interest in this part of the story.

The Problem

In this section you outline the problems being faced by the characters in the story.

The Struggle

This is the climax of the story. Often this involves a test that the main character must use her or his skills to overcome.

The End - The Resolution

At this point in the story, the problem has been overcome. You may find the characters celebrating or they may return to their home or community. The story ends with the listener being returned to their world (e.g. And that's the end of my story).

Tips for Helping Children Create Stories

A number of ways to help children create stories are outlined below.

The Five W's of storytelling (who, where, when, what, and why) can be used to help children begin a story by asking questions such as: *Who is in the story? Where does the story take place? or When does the story happen?* (Barnes, 1996). Whether children start their story with the Five W's or in one of the other ways listed below, they may get stuck as their story develops. You can help them continue telling their story by using Five "W's" of storytelling (Barnes, 1996). For example, if a child was telling a story about a turtle who was trying to find a safe place to sleep you could ask any of the following questions: *Who else is in the story? Where has the turtle already looked? When did the turtle last have a safe place to sleep? What does the turtle need to feel safe? Why is the turtle feeling scared?*

Give the children a starting point for their story

- Provide an opening line: *Once upon a time there was a small grey bunny rabbit. She had a lot to think about. One day...*
- Give the child an object and ask them to tell a story about it (e.g. a key).
- Have the children create a character to tell a story about (e.g. an animal with three special powers.)
- Have the story begin with a magic object (e.g. a magic chair).
- Tell the children the end of the story and ask them to work backwards to create the story.
- Create "why" stories with the children. (e.g. Why does the raccoon wear a mask?)

Tell the story with the children

- Encourage the children to continue a story they have already started by asking questions (e.g. *So he tripped and fell off the cliff, what happened next?*)
- Tell half a story and have the children finish it.
- Start a story and then have the group complete it with each group member adding a line to the story.

Helping children make books

Children can be encouraged to make books dealing with a variety of topics.

- Me Book (a book about the child)
- Places I have lived
- Feelings
- Memories of my grandmother

Working with Stories

Telling a story or having children tell a story is only one part of using stories in counselling. After a story has been told, counsellors can ask questions and suggest other activities to emphasize the story's message.

If a child has told a story, the counsellor should ask questions to ensure that he/she understands the meaning of the child's story.

Telling and listening to stories involves speaking and hearing. One way to highlight the message in a story is to involve other senses. Have the children draw a scene from the story or act out part of the story. This will help them experience the story in a new way.

Stories provide a good opportunity for children to develop empathy skills. Have the children talk about what they think characters in the story were feeling.

Ask the children in the group to pretend they are the different characters in the story. The children should then talk about what they wanted or needed in the story. Each child could take a turn saying what their character was thinking during the story. The children could write letters or draw pictures while they pretend that they are a character from the story.

Stop a story half way through and have the children in the group write a letter of advice to a character in the story.

Many stories teach a lesson or have a moral. Have the group decide what the lesson in the story is.

At times stories can be explored further by considering things that happened before the story began or after it ended. Ask the children to draw pictures of what would happen to a central character a month after the story ended. Have the children talk about what an adult in the story was like as a child.

After a story has been told, group members can answer "What if" questions. For example: *What if the three little pigs had invited the wolf over for tea?* Some questions may allow the children to explore alternate solutions for problems: *How else could the Pied Piper have gotten rid of the rats?*

¹ Some suggestions for ways to explore the meaning of children's stories or play are found in the section "Using Play in Counselling with Children".

PUPPETRY

Puppets are used in many cultures as a form of drama and as a way of telling stories to children and to communities. The way in which puppets can be used in counselling for children has been outlined by a number of authors (Barnes, 1996; Lubimiv, 1994; Oaklander, 1978). This section of the manual will briefly outline ways in which puppetry can be used in group counselling with children¹.

Benefits of Using Puppets with Children in Counselling

Comfort

Soft cuddly puppets can provide a source of comfort for children in the group. Children can be found soothing themselves by stroking a puppet without even being aware they are doing this.

Regression

Puppets may allow children and adults to regress to an earlier age (Barnes, 1996). Children who have had to assume many adult responsibilities can be encouraged to play and "be children" again by having them use puppets.

Distance

"It is often easier for a child to talk through a puppet than it is to say directly what he finds difficult to express. The puppet provides distance, and the child feels safer to reveal some of his innermost issues this way."
(Oaklander, 1978, p. 104)

Modeling

Puppets can be used to model behaviours and coping skills for children. For example, the counsellor can use two puppets to tell a story about children fighting on the school yard. The way in which the puppets solve their conflict can serve as a model for the children in the group.

Exploring aspects of the self

When the a quiet, shy girl uses a loud, outgoing puppet, she tries out a new way of being. She can practice telling people what she thinks and see how they react. Children who have been taught not to show their anger, may be able to express their anger by using a ferocious animal puppet. Both the quiet, shy child and the angry child are exploring aspects of themselves through the puppet. It is an illusion to think that it is the puppet that is speaking. Obviously, the quiet child who has a puppet yell at the top of its lungs is capable of yelling herself.

Building connections to community

The creation and use of puppets are an art form in many cultures. Children can be connected to the culture they were born into and share this culture with others through making and using puppets during the Playing with Rainbows group. In some cases, it may be appropriate to invite children to bring cultural puppets from home for use in the group. The children and their caregivers' can show pride in their culture by bringing puppets to share with the group. Using puppets which are associated with Canada (e.g. beaver, Royal Canadian Mounted Police) can help the children in the group connect to their new country.

¹ Specific suggestions for ways to use puppets in group exercises are found in the outlines of Sessions 1 through 12.

Developmental Considerations

Preschoolers may have some trouble generating stories using puppets due to limited storytelling abilities and due to difficulty taking on the position of another person. The puppet play of preschoolers may become very active and out of control if they touch on a difficult issue and they cannot find a way for the puppet to express it (Barnes, 1996). It is likely that the best way to use puppets with these very young children is in directed exercises where they are asked to use the puppet in a very specific way. For example, preschoolers could use puppets in a feelings exercise in which they are asked to show what the puppet would do if it was sad. Preschoolers will also be able to use soft cuddly puppets as a source of comfort.

Puppets are a wonderful tool for children between the ages of six and twelve who have a rich fantasy life. These children will be able to make use of puppets in many of the ways outlined below.

Choosing Puppets to Use

The types of puppets you choose for the children in your group will depend on the kinds of exercises you will be using them for. Here are some things to consider when selecting puppets:

While people puppets can be useful when children are involved in feelings exercises or creating stories that reflect their experiences, animal puppets provide a greater distance between the issue being discussed and the child's own experience (Lubimiv, 1994).

Soft cuddly puppets are good when puppets are to be used as sources of comfort.

Barnes (1996) notes that he includes puppets which have built in places to hide (turtles, snails, armadillos, baby dinosaur in an egg) in his collection. These allow children to deal with issues of fear, vulnerability and safety.

It can also be beneficial to include puppets which possess magic powers in your collection (Barnes, 1996). Using these puppets, children may reveal their wishes. These puppets have the ability to magically change and control situations that the children have been unable to alter.

It is useful to have puppets who can take on a variety of personalities and can express a range of emotions. You want to have kind gentle, puppets; ferocious, mean puppets; silly, goofy puppets; and wise, knowledgeable puppets.

You will be able to find a wide variety of puppets available in local toy stores. However, it is important to remember that puppets can be easily made with socks, paper bags, popsicle sticks, and paper plates. These home-made puppets may hold more meaning for the children because they are designed specifically for them.

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knowledgeable puppets.***

If group facilitators are going to be using puppets, it is important to become comfortable and familiar with them before the group begins.

Ways of Using Puppets in Counselling

Spontaneous Use

Puppets are available to the children and they choose when and how to use them.

Directed Use

The group facilitators provide the children with some direction as to how to use the puppets:

I want you all to go and choose a puppet to help you draw a picture of your home.

Please go and get some puppets and show us what it is like when your family eats dinner together.

A group of children are instructed to pick some puppets and put on a play for the rest of the group.

Some directed exercises would involve having children make puppets for a particular purpose. For example, each child might be given a feeling and told to make a puppet to reflect that feeling. After they had made their puppets, the children could take turns using the puppets to express the various feelings.

The ideas outlined in the storytelling section, can also be used to encourage the children to create dramas using the puppets.

Companions for the Children

In some groups, children select a puppet to be their "buddy" or "friend" throughout the group. At the beginning of each group, they go and get their "buddy" and take it with them from activity to activity. Counsellors may actually tell the "buddies" to complete some activities, e.g. draw a picture (Barnes, 1996), or may ask the "buddies" questions during the group, e.g. What would help Sara feel better when she is sad?

Co-Facilitators

Group Facilitators may choose puppets to be their co-facilitators. These puppets may be introduced at the beginning of the group and be part of all group sessions or may join the group for one particular session. The co-facilitator puppets can be used in a variety of ways:

The group facilitator can provide information to the puppet that the children would also benefit from hearing: e.g. *You know everybody gets scared sometimes. It is o.k. to feel scared.*

The group facilitator may have the children help the puppet with a problem, which in turn helps them find solutions to their own problems: e.g. *What do you think Turtle (the puppet) can do when she feels scared?*

The puppet can be used to ask questions or say things that may be difficult for the children to say: e.g. *Hey, if I need to go to the bathroom, what do I do? or I really miss my grandmother now that she is dead. Does anyone else miss their grandma?*

When counsellors are using puppets as co-facilitators, the puppets must only say things that the counsellors themselves would say to the children. Do not have puppets ask questions or make suggestions that you know would be threatening if you asked them yourself. Even if the puppet is on your hand, the words are still coming out of your mouth and you are responsible for them.

***When you are working
with puppets, it is
essential that you treat
the puppet as real.***

Tips for Using Puppets

If group facilitators are going to be using puppets, it is important to become comfortable and familiar with them before the group begins. Practice in front of the mirror, use puppets at home with your family or bring the puppets to group preparation meetings. The more you work with a puppet on your hand the more comfortable it will be for you.

When you are working with puppets, it is essential that you treat the puppet as if it's real (Lubimiv, 1994). When you are using a puppet, make sure the puppet is moving as it talks. Keep the puppet up and alert as long as it is participating in the conversation. Have the puppet look around and make eye contact with the children. You can encourage the children to make eye contact with the puppet you are using by holding it in front of your face. You can make the puppet seem more alive by having it act independently of you (e.g. hide behind your back and poke its head out while you are talking, jump up and down in front of you while you are talking). When you are talking to the puppet, look at it and have the puppet look at you. A mistake made by many people who are just beginning to use puppets is that they start by having the puppet sitting alert on their hand but as their conversation with the child continues the puppet gets forgotten and their hand falls to their side.

If you are planning to use a puppet as a co-facilitator throughout the group, you must develop a voice and personality for the puppet and ensure that you always remember to use that voice when the puppet is speaking.

You must also treat the puppets the children are using as real. Talk directly to the puppets and make eye contact with them. To emphasize the difference between the child and the puppet, talk to the puppet about the child (e.g. *How is Jane feeling today?*).

THE USE OF ART IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN

This section will briefly outline how art can be used as part of a group counselling process with children¹.

In a group counselling process, art activities may be directed (the children are asked to complete a specific task) or non-directed (the children are given materials and are free to use them as they choose).

In most cases, the children will be provided with direction as to how to use the materials. However, non-directed activities can be useful at the beginning of the group as you wait for other children or at the end of the group as a way to relax following a difficult discussion.

Why Use Art with Children in Group Counselling

Art activities work well in group situations because they can be done individually and shared with the group or they can be done by all the children together.

Art helps the children:

1) Communicate

Pictures can depict issues more clearly than words (e.g. A boy drew a picture of himself sitting all alone in a playground. He drew himself and all the playground equipment in grey. When he was talking about his picture and how lonely he felt, the bleak grey in the picture seemed to represent just how alone this boy felt).

Pictures can be a starting point and a focal point for discussion. (e.g. After a child draws a picture of her or his family, time can be spent talking about individual family members. The child and the counsellor can refer back to the picture and explore the elements of the picture as the discussion continues).

Communicating through art provides the child with some distance from the material.

2) Express different aspects of themselves

Through art the child may get in touch with other aspects of themselves (e.g. An aggressive child who is asked to draw a picture of someone helping someone else may begin to explore her or his gentle side.)

Using certain art materials (e.g. fingerpaint) may facilitate regression. This can be beneficial for children who have taken on too many adult responsibilities or never had the opportunity "to be a child".

Art materials may allow children to symbolically represent unconscious issues. For example, a young girl who was always smiling and said that she was happy, drew a lion who was crying because he had no one to play with. After talking about the lion for some time, the girl admitted that she often had to play alone on the school yard.

¹ The field of art therapy is a distinct field. The comments in this section relate to using art as part of a counselling process with children rather than using specific "Art Therapy" techniques with children. Specific suggestions for art activities to be used in Playing with Rainbows groups can be found in the outlines for Sessions 1 through 12.

3) Express their creativity

This can be crucial for building a child's self esteem and helping them develop self-awareness. As they work the children will become more aware of their own ideas and potential.

4) Be spontaneous

Certain art materials (clay, fingerpaint, chalk) may encourage a child to be spontaneous because mistakes can easily be erased. For some children who have always had to think carefully before every move, having the experience to be spontaneous can be quite freeing.

Developmental Considerations

Preschoolers may have limited fine motor skills and as a result can have difficulty using some art materials. However, many activities can be adapted so that preschoolers can participate (e.g. rather than drawing their family, preschoolers can use cut out magazine pictures to represent their family²).

When you are working with older children, make sure that you have age-appropriate materials available (e.g. pencil crayons, markers, thin flexible paint brushes). Many children's programs rely on kindergarten art materials and this can be demeaning for the child who has progressed beyond this.

People of any age may worry that they can't draw well enough when working with art materials. To counteract this feeling, give the children easy, non-production oriented activities when they first start using the materials (e.g. abstract tasks, scribbling tasks, finger-painting).

Art Materials

A variety of art materials that can be used in counselling with children are outlined below. Which ones you select will depend on the specific activities you are using in group sessions.

Paper – Have a variety of sizes, shapes, textures, and colours of paper available.

Drawing materials – These may include crayons, markers, coloured pencils, pastels, paints and paint brushes. When you are working with younger children ensure these materials are non-toxic and washable.

Joining materials – tape, glue, glue sticks, staples

Building materials – clay, playdough, paper mache

Bits and pieces – egg cartons, toilet paper rolls, paper towel rolls, magazines

² If magazine pictures are going to be used it is essential to ensure that pictures which represent each child's racial group are available.

Art Activities

There are a variety of different therapeutic areas that can be explored using art activities:

- Exploration of Self (e.g. Draw yourself as a baby, yourself now and yourself in the future.)
- Family Exploration (e.g. Create your family doing something.)
- Feelings Exploration (e.g. Draw a "Mad Monster".)
- Exploration of Needs (Make a collage of your favorite treats.)
- Problem Solving (Draw and discuss a picture of a problem.)
- Issue Specific Work (e.g. Draw a map of a refugee camp.)

Talking About the Children's Artwork

As Garry Landreth (1991) points out, there are many good reasons for making sure that you do not make value statements about a child's artwork. It is best not to tell children that their picture is "beautiful" or "wonderful". If you do this, the child may feel that she or he always has to make pictures that you find beautiful and may not be able to draw pictures about their ugly feelings and experiences. If you tell children how wonderful their picture is and they think it is not their best work, the children may decide you are untrustworthy. They may think that you are saying things just to make them feel good and not because it is true. To avoid these difficulties, ask the child questions about her or his picture, rather than making comments. When you do make comments restrict them to making notes of observable aspects of the picture, (e.g. *You used lots of different colours in that picture, You spent a long time drawing that car, or There are lots of different people in that picture. Tell me about them.*)

The counselor should think of her or himself as an explorer who is on a journey with the child, working towards discovering the meanings hidden in the child's picture. Begin the journey by having the child provide a general description of their work: Tell me about your picture. Listen carefully to the events and feelings that are emphasized by the child and follow up on these³.

You may consider specific points of interest and ask the child about these. For example, is there a place that is particularly darkly shaded? Is there something odd about the picture (e.g. It is pouring rain in one half of the picture.)? Is there something missing in the picture (e.g. The child has not included her or his younger sister or brother)? What is central to the picture, what sticks out in the picture?

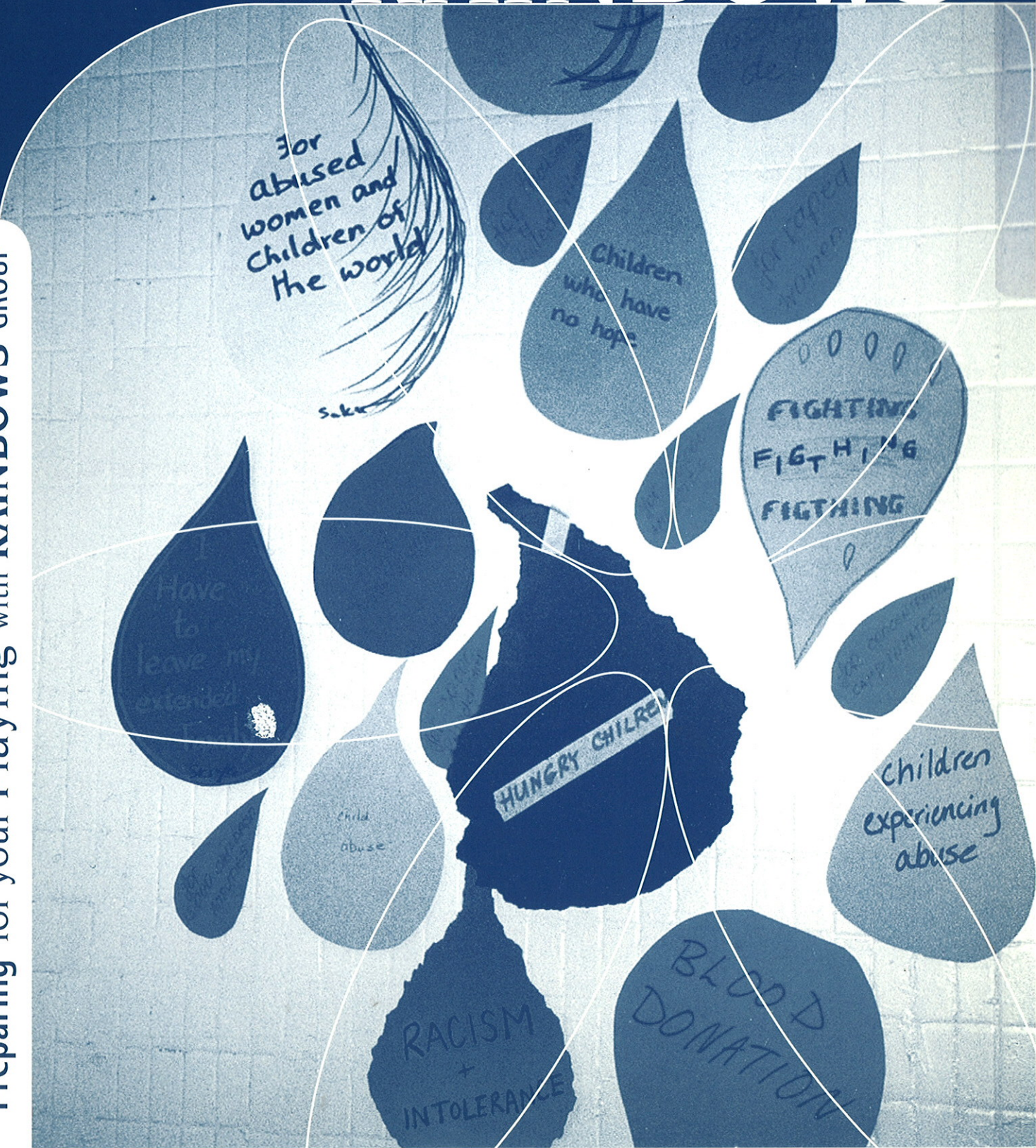
When you are asking the child questions about her or his picture, focus on the content of the picture, not the way in which the picture was drawn. For example, if the child has drawn and then scribbled out a car in the picture, you can say *Tell me about that car* rather than "Why did you scribble out the car?". As a general rule, try to avoid "why" questions. People usually have difficulty explaining why they have drawn pictures the way they have. As you talk about the picture, the answers to the "why" questions will often become apparent.

There are many good reasons for making sure that you do not make value statements about a child's artwork.

³ Additional guidelines for talking to children about their art and play can be found in the chapter "Using Play in Counselling".

Playing *with* RAINBOWS™

Preparing for your Playing with RAINBOWS GROUP



GROUP FORMAT

Group Composition

The Playing with Rainbows program has two main components:

- Twelve sessions for eight to ten children between the ages of 4 and 7
- Three sessions for caregivers which are offered to the primary caregivers of the children participating in the group¹.

In many cases, the children's primary caregivers and the participants in the caregiver's sessions will be the children's mothers. If there are both men and women operating as the children's caregivers who wish to participate in caregivers' sessions, this should be facilitated. However, it is essential to take into account the relative roles played by men and women in the cultures represented by the caregivers and to ensure that participation of both sexes will not be intimidating for anyone. If there are concerns about the ability of all caregivers to freely participate in a mixed group, strong consideration should be given to offering two sets of sessions, one for female caregivers and one for male caregivers.

Duration

Ideally, the Children's Group will consist of twelve sessions lasting an hour and a half each². While it would be possible to run the group for less than twelve sessions by eliminating some meetings, this should be done with great care since the group sessions tend to build on skills and concepts learned in earlier sessions.

The group model also includes three Sessions for Caregivers: An introductory session, a mid-point feedback session and a final session just before or following the last children's session. Where needed, group facilitators may also elect to meet with caregivers separately to review concerns related to individual children in the group.

Session Topics

The following topics will be covered over the twelve sessions:

Session 1	Getting to Know Each Other
Session 2	Feelings
Session 3	Pre-migration and Migration
Session 4	Families
Session 5	The Concept and Phenomenon of War
Session 6	Goodbyes and Hellos
Session 7	Dreams
Session 8	Anxiety and Not Remembering
Session 9	Coping Skills and Conflict Resolution
Session 10	Stress Management
Session 11	Safety
Session 12	Self-esteem and Closure

¹ Further information about the selection of children for the group is provided in "Screening". While the program was designed for children between the ages of four and seven, the program format and many of the activities can be adapted for use with older children.

² Sessions could be extended to two hours for older children.

Session Framework

Each session will follow the general framework outlined below. This will provide consistency and predictability for the children, which will in turn contribute to their feeling comfortable and safe in the group setting.

- Creating the Circle
- Circle Time
- Centering
- Topic and Activity of the Day
- Discussion
- Story Creation
- Relaxing and Review
- Snack and Social Time
- Goodbye

Group Facilitators

It is essential that there be at least two facilitators for each children's group. There must be one adult available to manage a crisis, support a child in need or handle problem behaviours while the other adult continues with group activities.

In some situations it may be beneficial to involve additional adult volunteers to work with the children in Playing with Rainbows groups (For example additional adults may be useful if several children in the group have difficulty speaking and understanding the group facilitators' language). Volunteers can provide support to the children and assist them with group activities. If volunteers are to be involved, group facilitators must provide clear direction about the volunteers' roles. It is suggested that there be no more than one adult for every three children in the group or the children may tend towards developing a relationship with a specific adult rather than becoming part of the group as a whole.

***It is essential that
there be at least two
facilitators for each
children's group.***

Confidentiality

In general, the content of group sessions remains confidential. Both the children and the adults taking part in the group are expected to help maintain confidentiality. Children participating in the group are free to talk about their own experiences but are encouraged not to discuss the experiences of the other children. The limits of confidentiality and the responsibility of the group facilitators to protect the safety of the children in the group by reporting suspicions regarding abuse or concern that a child may come to harm should be explained clearly to the children and caregivers participating in the program.

Challenges to Recruiting Families to Participate in Playing with Rainbows Groups

Language Barriers

Families whose children are being considered for a Playing with Rainbows group may be in the process of learning the language of their new country. Any situation requiring communication in this new language can be stressful. It is very likely that this stress will be increased when difficult topics, such as war and migration, are being discussed.

It is suggested that you ensure all the printed material you present is translated into the languages of prospective clients. Not only does this make it easier for them to understand the material, but it also conveys a message of understanding and respect. Wherever needed, involve interpreters to facilitate clear communication.

Being New to a Country

Since many families whose children are participating in a Playing with Rainbows group will have completed their migration journey in the recent past, they may still be in the process of accommodating to a new country and a new way of doing things. Due to differences in cultural practices and routines, seemingly simple things such as arranging transportation, adjusting to climate changes and shopping can become significant challenges. When caregivers are trying to cope with these day to day issues, the thought of participating in a specialized program may seem overwhelming or simply unnecessary.

If possible, ensure that the family's basic needs are being met and offer support where appropriate. When describing the Playing with Rainbows group, emphasize the benefits of having the children participate now rather than a year or two in the future. Explain that if the children are able to explore and resolve their experiences now, they may be freer to focus on things such as school, peer relationships and enjoying their lives in the future. As much as possible, offer the family services that will facilitate their participation in the program (transportation, child care etc.).

Trust Issues¹

Families who have lived through a conflict and migrated to a new country have often been hurt and betrayed. In some cases, institutions such as the army or a particular professional group such as police or doctors have played a role in torturing or harming civilians in the conflict. Some families are betrayed by friends, extended family members or long time neighbours who are desperately trying to ensure their own survival. Other families may have had the experience of being befriended by an apparently supportive individual, only to have that person violate their trust through betrayal. Having lived through these experiences, families may become wary in unknown situations and when meeting new people. Caregivers can lose faith in their ability to separate those who can be trusted from those who pose a threat to the family's well-being. The result is that many families are frightened and reluctant to allow new people or agencies into their lives.

As will be discussed further later, the best way to reach out to caregivers, who are understandably nervous in unknown situations and with new people, is to work in close collaboration with groups and individuals the families have already learned to trust. Group facilitators must be willing to take the time necessary to earn the trust of the families they are working with. You may want to allow additional time for the recruiting process. This will allow you to approach families gently and slowly, giving them time to think, ask questions and consider your answers before they must make a decision about participating in a Playing with Rainbows group.

¹ For a more complete review of the issues discussed here, see "Distrust and Resettlement of Survivors of War and Torture" by Behnam Behnia in *International Journal of Mental Health*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1997.

Reluctance to Discuss Past Experiences

Families may be reluctant to discuss their experiences during the conflict and on the migration journey for several reasons: fear of deportation, fear of retaliation by others who were involved in the conflict in the family's country of origin and who are now living in the new country, fear of reprisals against family and friends still living in the country of origin and fear of being overwhelmed by their emotions and memories. In addition, some caregivers may be reluctant to discuss their past because it makes them feel as though they are somehow responsible for any difficulties their child is currently experiencing.

You may be able to address a family's reluctance to discuss their past experience in several ways. Stress the value that you place on group confidentiality. Let the children and their caregivers know that they can choose whether or not to participate in particular discussions and decide how much they want to contribute. Let them know that they always have the right to "pass". Become informed about the refugee claimant procedure. Evaluate when and where families may need to be concerned about sharing information about past experiences. Use this information to address the caregivers' concerns and to assist you in planning specific group sessions. Spend some time with caregivers normalizing their child's response to the family's experiences. It is important for caregivers to understand that their child's reactions are understandable and that many children react in a similar way.

Questioning Therapy

The need for and benefit of counselling and therapy may be questioned by individuals from non-western cultures and indeed by many people from western cultures. When people are struggling to find food, locate shelter and stay safe, they do not have the time to sit down and talk about their feelings. Counselling and therapy may be frowned on by members of non-western cultures where elders, extended family members and communities are sources of support during difficult times. When families arrive in a new country, they may question the benefit of reliving bad memories. In addition, many people see participation in counselling as a sign of failure. Caregivers may feel that by inviting their child to participate in a Playing with Rainbows group, you are implying that the caregivers are deficient. Allowing their child to participate in the Program may be seen as an admission that they or their child has a problem or is "crazy".

Clearly explain the purpose of the group to the children's caregivers. Review the reasons that you feel it will be valuable for the children to talk about their feelings and experiences. Help the caregivers understand the value of having the children learn that they are not the only children who have had to live through war and migration. Be clear with caregivers about how you came to approach them to participate in the group. Caregivers need to know that all families, who have recently migrated from war torn countries, in the school, community centre, day care etc. were approached and that they were not singled out in any way. Make it clear that you do not feel the caregiver's child is "crazy" by normalizing the child's response to the family's experiences and by pointing out that many children experience social, emotional or academic difficulties at some point in their lives. It may be beneficial to have someone that the caregivers trust or another member of the caregivers' religious, cultural, racial or ethnic group assist you in conveying these messages.

Focus on the Future

Having escaped a traumatic and dangerous past, families may be reluctant to revisit it. Many families talk about a desire to "get on with our lives" and to focus on the future. They do not see the point of participating in a group that is going to force them to think about their past.

Reassure the caregivers that the goal of the group is to give the children the skills that they need to participate fully in their future. Talk with the caregivers about the kinds of issues that children may struggle with and the way that these can interfere with their day to day progress. Help the caregivers understand the potential benefits of allowing their child to participate in A Playing with Rainbows group².

² Issues you may want to address with caregivers are outlined in the chapter "Sessions for Caregivers".

Key Points to Review During Recruitment

When recruiting participants for A Playing with Rainbows group, the following messages should be communicated to caregivers. These messages may not be stated as directly, but should be conveyed both by your actions and your words.

- We will communicate with you in the language of your choice.
- We will try to make it easy for you to participate in the group.
- All group material is confidential.
- You and your child can choose what to talk about.
- You have done a good job of protecting your child.
- You have done a good job of raising your child in difficult circumstances.
- You are a good parent.
- We did not select you for the group because you were a bad parent.
- We do not think your child is crazy or sick.
- We did not choose your child for this group because we think she or he is bad.
- The group will teach children to cope with their feelings.
- The group will help the children learn to solve problems.
- The group will help the children learn to get along with others.
- The group will help the children deal with their memories. Some children think about what has happened all the time and this stops them from learning at school or having fun.
- The group will answer the children's questions about war and migration. Some children are confused about what has happened. They spend a lot of time thinking about their questions and they don't do well at school or they don't enjoy their time with friends.

Inviting Families to Participate in a Playing with Rainbows Group

It is strongly suggested that you work with a group or organization that has established itself as a safe, non-threatening, helpful body in the lives of the families you are approaching. For example, you may want to create an alliance with a settlement agency, community centre, shelter, school, or day care. It may also be possible to build connections with individuals from particular cultural groups and have them work with you when you approach caregivers.

Find a way to provide families with some basic information about Playing with Rainbows groups. You may choose to do this by presenting them with a flyer or a letter. In some cases you may ask a particular individual (teacher, community counsellor, member of the caregivers' cultural, religious or ethnic group) to provide the initial information to caregivers. It is best if this initial approach is made by someone who has already established a trusting relationship with the caregivers.

RECRUITING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

During your initial contact, the caregivers should be made aware of the nature and purpose of the group. For example, let the caregivers know that:

- the group is for children ages 4 - 7
- the group is for children whose families have recently migrated from a war-torn country
- all families who have recently migrated from a war-torn country are being approached
- during the group, the children will be given opportunities to play, talk, draw and create stories
- during the group, the children will learn new ways to relax and get along with others
- the group is designed to help children cope with their feelings about war and migration and to help them answer any questions that they might have about these experiences
- giving children a chance to talk about their feelings and ask questions about their experiences can help them at home, in school and in the community
- the group gives children a chance to talk with pride about their country of origin
- discussions in the group are kept confidential.

After families have been provided with some basic information about Playing with Rainbows groups, they should be given a chance to think about what has been said and to decide if they would like to participate in the group. Invite them to contact you if they have any questions or would like further information. Provide the caregivers with an easy way to express their interest in attending the group (telephone a group facilitator, express their interest to a member of a collaborating agency, sign a piece of paper indicating their desire to participate).

Listen carefully to what caregivers say when the group is presented to them and respond honestly. If you do not feel that you are going to be able to address their concerns, clearly state this. Do not run the risk of letting the family down by making promises you cannot keep, since this would only further damage their ability to trust support services.

If there are some caregivers who do not respond to your first inquiry, you may wish to approach them a second time. Make sure that if you do attempt to contact the family again, they do not perceive this as overly intrusive.

When caregivers express interest in having their child participate in A Playing with Rainbows group, collect the following information:

- child's name
- child's age
- caregiver's name
- contact Phone Number
- child's country of origin
- length of time in this country
- language that the caregivers would like to use during the screening process

Invite the caregivers to participate in the screening process. Describe the screening sessions as an opportunity for caregivers, who are interested, to find out more about the group and find out if it is right for their family. Also let caregivers know that the screening interview gives group facilitators a chance to decide if A Playing with Rainbows group will be helpful for their child.

SCREENING

The purpose of the screening process is to provide the children and their caregivers with an opportunity to meet the group facilitators and hear about the Playing with Rainbows group. In addition, it gives the group facilitators an opportunity to determine if the children and their caregivers are ready to participate in the Playing with Rainbows group and if the program will be helpful to them. While some families may be reluctant to participate in the full screening process, it is suggested that group facilitators strive to complete as much of the process as possible since the information obtained is important for planning and running group sessions.

Objectives of Screening:

- 1) Get acquainted with the children and their caregivers.
- 2) Explain the program to the children and their caregivers.
- 3) Evaluate the readiness of the children and their caregivers to benefit from the Playing with Rainbows group.
- 4) Assess the suitability of the children to participate in the Playing with Rainbows group.
- 5) Assess other resources that may be needed by the children and their caregivers.
- 6) Reduce caregivers' anxiety by giving them an opportunity to meet group facilitators.

Screening Process:

An hour to an hour and a half interview should be scheduled for each child and her or his caregivers. If several children in the family are being considered for the group a joint screening is appropriate.

Both group facilitators should be present for all screening sessions.

If necessary, involve an interpreter in the screening session. It is not appropriate for children to interpret for their caregivers. You will need to allow more time for the interviews if an interpreter is going to be used.

The screening process will consist of four sections which are outlined below. Initially, both group facilitators will meet with the child and her or his caregivers. Following this, it is suggested that one group facilitator meet with the child while the other group facilitator meets with the child's caregivers. At the end of these meetings, the group facilitators will bring the child and her or his caregivers together again.

Throughout the screening process, remember that the children and their caregivers may be very nervous about participating in the interview and in the Playing with Rainbows group. Reasons for their nervousness are outlined in the chapter "Recruiting Group Participants". In particular, families may feel that it is not safe to discuss their experiences in their country of origin or on their migration journey. Family members may fear that this will interfere with their refugee claim. They may fear reprisals by others who were involved in the conflict in their country of origin and are now living in this country or they may fear retribution against family and friends still living in their country of origin. Raise issues gently and respect the family's need to remain silent.

Keep notes during the meetings to review after you have met all the children and their families. You may choose to use the forms for the "Intake Interview With The Caregivers" and "Intake Interview With The Child" found at the end of this chapter to record your interview.

1) Meeting of Group Facilitators, Child and Caregivers

Prior to the screening session, the group facilitators should review the referral information that is available. This should include: child's name, child's age, caregiver's name, contact phone number, the child's country of origin, the length of time the child and caregiver have been in this country and the language that the caregivers would like to use in this screening session. It is suggested that you obtain some background information about the conflict that has been faced by the family prior to the screening session. This information can be obtained from: some of the organizations listed in "Bibliography and Resources", cultural representatives, Internet sights, newspapers etc.

When everyone has settled in the room, have everyone introduce themselves.

Following introductions review the purpose of the meeting. Ask the child if she or he knows why she or he is there. Ask the caregivers what they have told the child about the meeting. Review the purpose of this session (to meet the child, to meet the caregivers and to see if the group would be beneficial for the family) with the caregivers. Then briefly describe the purpose of the meeting to the child.

Mary and I (Group facilitators) are going to have a group for children who have lived in a country where there has been war and fighting before they moved to Canada. (Pause so that the child can comment about her or his own experiences if she or he chooses). We are going to do lots of different things in the group like drawing, playing with puppets, singing and talking. One of the things we talk about is what it was like to live in a country where there was war and fighting and what it was like to move to Canada. Today we are getting together so that we can meet you and your (name the child's caregivers). After the meeting we will decide if you might be able to join our group.

Talk with the child and her or his caregivers about her their current situation (where the child lives, who else lives in the child's home, where she or he goes to school, what she or he likes to do at home).

Speak very briefly with the child and her or his caregivers about their country of origin and the conflict that took place there. This can be pursued in more depth at a later time.

I know that you used to live in another country. (Address the next question to the child. If the child is unable to answer then ask the caregiver for assistance). What was the name of that country? (Give the child a chance to answer this question) Do you remember when you left (Name the country the child migrated from and then give the child an opportunity to answer the question.) I know that there used to be a war or fighting in ... (Name the country that the child migrated from.) Do you remember that? (If the child is unable to answer the questions, have her or his caregiver provide assistance. If the child appears unsure if she or he is allowed to answer the questions then cue the child's caregiver to provide the child with permission to answer the question - Some children who come to the group talk about their experiences with war, is it all right if Sara talks about it? If the caregiver appears uncomfortable or indicates that it is not acceptable for the child to talk about the conflict, you must keep this in mind during the rest of the screening interview.)

At this point, one group facilitator can invite the child to come to another room to talk and draw some pictures. The other group facilitator will continue to speak with the child's caregivers. This allows you to assess the child's ability to separate from her or his caregivers and will also allow you to discuss some issues in detail without worrying about the impact of the discussion on the child. Group facilitators should agree on a time for these separate portions of the screening process in order to ensure that they both finish at the same time.

2) Meeting with the Caregivers

Provide the caregivers with a brief overview of the program, the topics that will be discussed and the types of activities that will be involved. Provide them with clear information about who will be involved in these sessions, including any volunteers or cultural interpreters. Talk a little bit about the rationale behind the Playing with Rainbows group¹. After sharing this information, ask the caregivers if they have any questions. You may wish to give them permission to ask specific questions (*Some caregivers are not sure how playing will help their child. Do you have any questions about that?*). Discuss the Caregivers' Sessions briefly.

Ask the caregivers to outline any concerns they have about their child. You may want to ask specific questions about the child's functioning at home and at school. If the child is involved in any group activities, find out how she or he functions in a group setting. Ask how she or he tends to get along with other children? Has the child demonstrated an ability to sit still and listen in a group situation? Find out if the child is struggling with any particular fears. Make sure you ask about the child's sleep habits find out about the child's dreams, including nightmares. (This information will be useful for Session 7 which focuses on dreams.)

When listening to the caregivers' concerns, consider whether or not cultural issues may be playing a role in the situation the caregiver is describing. Is the child exhibiting behaviour that is age-appropriate in Canada but which the caregivers are uncomfortable with due to their own cultural expectations? Is the child exhibiting behaviour that is considered appropriate in their country of origin but is leading to difficulties in Canada? If cultural factors do appear to play a role in the caregiver's current concerns, speak with them about this.

Ask the parents how the child usually responds to difficult situations or problems. Does she or he withdraw, act out, become clingy, become belligerent, take on the role of a clown etc.? You may find that the child will use the same strategies to cope with difficult situations in the group. Knowing in advance how the child manages problems will help you be alert to activities or discussions that the child is finding difficult during the group.

Obtain some basic developmental information from the caregivers. When did the child learn to walk, talk, read? Has the child's development been consistent with her or his peers? Do the caregivers have any concerns about the child's development?

Let the caregivers know that some children who participate in the Playing with Rainbows group choose to talk about their migration journey. Suggest to the caregivers that if they can provide you with some basic information about their journey, it will help you understand the comments that their child may make during the group. Try to obtain information about the reason they left their country of origin, the way they travelled, the places they stopped, their experiences along the way and their time and place of arrival in Canada. Determine if the family spent time in a refugee camp and if so get some basic information about that experience. Keeping the focus of this conversation on the child's experiences may make it easier for the caregiver to discuss. Ask if there are any particular issues the caregivers feel the child may be struggling with. Having this information may help you avoid using symbols or pictures that may be troubling to the child. Find out if the child or family talks about the journey at home.

When listening to the caregivers' concerns, consider whether or not cultural issues may be playing a role in the situation the caregiver is describing.

¹ Some ways of explaining the rationale behind the Playing with Rainbows group are included in "Sessions for Caregivers".

Talk with the caregivers about the fact that some children in the Playing with Rainbows group may talk about the conflict that occurred in their country of origin. Suggest to the caregivers that if they can provide you with some basic information about the conflict that their family experienced it will help you understand their child's comments, as well as helping you plan how to best support their child. Try to get some information about the groups taking part in the conflict and the type of fighting that was involved. It is suggested that you keep the focus of this conversation on the child to make the discussion easier for the caregivers. For example, ask the caregivers what they feel the child might have experienced, seen or heard. Having a clear picture of the child's experiences may help you ensure that images that may be troubling for the child will not be brought into group sessions. Ask the caregivers if they feel there are any particular issues that may be troubling for the child. Find out if the conflict is discussed by the child at home.

Ask the child's caregivers if the child has had to cope with the death of any significant family members or friends. Find out if the child would have been aware of any deaths that took place during the conflict or migration. Ask the caregivers how they have explained death to the children. Briefly review how you will approach the topic during the group and offer the caregivers a chance to express any concerns they might have about this. You must ensure that you give the caregivers an opportunity to outline any issues that they do not want you to discuss with their child, including the deaths of specific people.

One of the reasons that the caregivers and children are separated for this portion of the screening is to allow the caregivers to speak freely about migration and war without having to worry about the impact of their comments on the children. This also means that caregivers are free to express their emotions without being concerned about how this will affect the child.

Some caregivers may have difficulty understanding how talking about their past experiences will be helpful for the children. You may want to review the following points with the caregivers:

- Some children who have had similar experiences spend a lot of time thinking about what they have seen.
- Some children who have had similar experiences have lots of questions about what has happened.
- Some children spend so much time thinking about their experiences and questions that they cannot focus on their school work, making friends or having fun.
- Talking about their experiences and having a chance to ask questions may allow the children to resolve some issues which can in turn allow them to begin focusing on the present.

Ask the caregivers to describe the child's strengths and skills. Talk about the activities the child is involved in. Find out what things the child does outside of the home. Does the child have other experiences of separating from her or his caregiver?

If participation in the group will require any particular skills (i.e. literacy, fluency in a particular language) review this with the caregiver to see if the child has the required skills.

Let the caregivers know that snack will be served in the group. Find out if the child has any particular allergies or other dietary restrictions.

Ask if there are any medical issues that you should be aware of. Find out if the child has received any immunizations in the past and if these are up to date. Information about immunizations will be important to have if the children become ill during the group sessions.

Review the concept of confidentiality with the caregivers. Let them know that their child may discuss her or his own experiences in the group but should not be encouraged to talk about the other children. Let the caregivers know that you will not be giving them detailed information about everything their child says but that you will provide them with general information at the Caregivers' Sessions. Make it clear that you will alert them to any particular concerns that arise during the group. Explain the limits of confidentiality to the caregivers. Briefly review your responsibility to report abuse.

Talk with the caregivers about challenges that may arise as a result of the child's participation in the group. For example, children who participate in the group may wish to discuss the conflict or migration more frequently. Some children who begin exploring their experiences and feelings develop increased behaviour problems because they are trying to cope with strong feelings that they previously kept buried. Try to determine who the child and caregivers use for support in difficult times.

If you have already decided when and where the group will be held, share this information with the caregivers to determine if it will present a problem for them. If the time and place have not yet been set, review the possibilities with the caregivers to see what would be best for them. Outline the expectations that you will have of the caregivers (bringing the child to each session on time; reminding the child to complete her or his homework between sessions; attendance at the Caregivers' Sessions). Discuss the importance of the child attending on time and regularly.

Spend some time discussing the caregivers expectations for the group. What are they hoping their child will get out of participating?

Ask the caregivers if they have any questions or concerns. Find out if there is anything that you can do to help the caregivers feel safer or more comfortable about their child's participation in the group. Find out if they have any specific concerns about their child discussing the conflict that the family was involved in or the family's migration journey.

Try to end this portion of the screening by talking about the caregivers' strengths and skills.

3) Meeting with the Child

Have the meeting with the child in a child-friendly room. It is suggested that drawing materials be available throughout the meeting. You may choose to have toys available for the child to play with if your discussion is over before it is time for you to rejoin the child's caregivers. However, these should be kept out of sight until you are ready for the child to play with them.

Begin your meeting by talking briefly with the child about the group. Remind her or him that all the children in the group will have moved to Canada from another country and will have seen war or fighting in that other country. Ask the child if there is anything she or he would like to tell you about the war or her or his experience moving to Canada.

Discuss the types of activities you have planned for the group and some of the topics that will be covered.

Talk with the child about the people she or he lives with. You may choose to have the child draw a picture of these people. Ask the child about the things she or he likes to do at home and the kinds of things she or he does not like to do. Try to determine who the child feels is a source of support at home (*Who do you talk to at home if you have a problem? Who helps you if you hurt your knee?*). This information will be useful when discussing coping strategies during group sessions.

Spend some time talking with the child about her or his likes and dislikes. You could have the child complete the sheet at the end of this chapter or just hold a general discussion about the same things.

You may wish to explore the child's feelings vocabulary. Ask her or him to tell you about a happy thing, a sad thing, an angry thing, a scared thing and an excited thing in her or his life.

Let the child know that one of the things you talk about in the group is "worries". Ask the child to describe what her or his biggest worry is.

With older children, you may choose to discuss the concept of group confidentiality at this point. However, this concept can be difficult for young children to understand and it may be more confusing than beneficial to discuss it at this time.

End the meeting by talking about the things the child feels she or he does well and things that make her or him feel good.

If there is time left before the other group facilitator will be finished meeting with the child's caregivers, invite the child to draw, play or look at books.

4) Final Meeting of Group Facilitators, Child and Caregivers.

Review your meetings to date.

| *We talked to all of you about the group, the kinds of things we would talk about and the kinds of things we would do. Does anyone have any questions?*

You may wish to review the concept of confidentiality with everyone present so that the child and the caregivers are aware that everyone is aware of this expectation.

Ask the child and then the child's caregivers if they are interested in being part of the group. At this point remain tentative about your commitment to having the child in the group.

| *Right now we don't know who will be in the group. We have to meet all the children and their families before we can decide. We will let you know by (Give the family a clear idea of when they will know if they can participate.) If you have any questions before then, feel free to call us.*

Let the family know that you may be able to offer them other services or refer them for alternative assistance, if the child is unable to participate in the group.

Issues to Consider:

The following issues must be considered in determining if a child will be an appropriate participant in the Playing with Rainbows group. You should have obtained the information necessary to consider these issues during your screening session.

Language issues

Does the child have the level of fluency required for participation in the group? Will the child benefit from the use of a cultural interpreter²? Remember that sessions will take much longer when interpreters are involved.

Ability to discuss conflict and migration

Is the child able to acknowledge and talk about the conflict that her or his family experienced? Is the child able to acknowledge and talk about her or his family's experiences of migration? How did the child respond when these topics were raised? Do the child's caregivers appear able to give her or him permission to discuss these issues? Given that the conflict and migration are central topics in the Playing with Rainbows group it is essential that the children in the group are willing to acknowledge that these things took place. If a child vehemently denies that there was any conflict or appears extremely distressed when the topics are discussed by others, she or he may not be appropriate for the group. Similarly the child's caregivers must understand that these issues will be discussed in the group and be willing for the child to participate in these conversations.

Child's ability to separate from her or his caregivers

Was the child able to separate from her or his caregivers as part of the screening process? Is the child able to separate from her or his caregivers in other situations?

The child's ability to function in a group setting

How does the child function in other group settings (School, library programs, recreation programs, church, mosque, or synagogue programs)? Is the child able to sit still and attend? How does the child interact with other children? Is there a history of any difficulties with aggression?

Significant behaviour problems

Has the child exhibited any extreme behaviours which would be disruptive in the group? These might include severe aggression, inability to sit still in a group setting, hiding when strangers are present etc.

The child's experiences

What type of trauma has the child been exposed to? Has the child directly witnessed violence or heard about it from family members? How does this compare to the experiences of the other children who are being considered for the group? You want to ensure that the children do not become victims of "secondary traumatization" when they listen to each other's stories. The best way to ensure this is to form a group of children who have had similar experiences or have been exposed to similar information. Some children in the group may not remember the conflict and migration or may not have been directly exposed to it but have become aware of these issues through family members. While these children may still be appropriate for the group, you must be honest with the child's caregivers about the issues that will be discussed so that they can make a clear decision about whether or not they want the child to participate.

² A cultural interpreter is an individual who will translate the words, meanings and ideas communicated by you and your client. The cultural interpreter may also help you and your client understand cultural issues that may be impeding your communication. A cultural interpreter offers interpretation in a particular cultural context. For more information see "Tips on Communicating Through a Cultural Interpreter."

Has the child been the direct victim of significant violence or sexual assault?

In these cases, the child may require individual treatment before being able to benefit from a group program.

How recent were the child's experiences?

A group will function best when the members are dealing with similar issues. It may be difficult to work in a situation where one child has been in Canada for a month and another child has been in Canada for three years. These children may be struggling with very different issues. It would not be impossible to run a group under these circumstances but this issue would need to be taken into account when planning the group.

Do the children being considered for the group come from opposing groups in the same conflict?

You should consider not only situations where the children are directly involved in the same conflict, but also instances where their culture or religion may play a role in the conflict. In these instances the children may be from different regions but still perceive each other as a threat. It may be very difficult to run a group where children are from communities that were in conflict in their country of origin, especially if their feelings are inflamed by family members.

Do the child's caregivers appear able to provide support for the child?

It is possible that as the group progresses and the child talks about her or his experiences, she or he may have to face new or stronger emotions. When this happens, children often experience increased behavioural difficulties. Does it appear as if the child's caregivers will be able to manage increased behaviour problems? Will they be able to provide additional emotional support to the child? What supports will the caregivers require in order to facilitate this? What level of trauma have the caregivers experienced? Will this have an impact on their participation in the group?

Will siblings be involved in the same group?

It can be appropriate to involve sisters and brothers in the same group as long as they will not interfere with each other's involvement. How did the children interact during the screening session? Were they willing to let each other speak? Did it appear that any of the children were trying to prevent each other from sharing information? How do the children get along at home? Is there any history of extreme physical or emotional conflict between them?

Final Evaluation

When the two group facilitators have met with all the children and their caregivers, they should sit down, review the available information and consider the following issues. The number and type of children you can accommodate in the group will depend on a variety of factors including the skills of the group facilitators, the resources available and the other children who will be participating in the group. For example, while it would not be possible to run the group with eight very aggressive children, one child who has a tendency to be aggressive might be accommodated with volunteer support. The focus should not be on screening children out but on ensuring there is an appropriate mix of children that also matches the skills of the facilitators so that all children will be able to benefit from the group.

What are the child and family's current needs?

Will these be addressed by the group? If a family is in dire need of shelter and food, they may not be able to focus on participation in the group. It may be most appropriate to refer them to other sources of support so that their immediate needs can be addressed first.

Based on the issues outlined in "Issues to Consider", **how many children appear appropriate for the group?**

Is there an appropriate mix of ages?

For example, while a group could run with two four year olds, three five year olds, a six year old and two seven year olds, you might not want to hold a group with one four year old and six seven year olds.

Is there an appropriate gender mix?

It is recommended that you not place a child in the position of being the only girl or boy in the group.

Will the children be able to communicate with each other?

Ideally the children will all have some degree of fluency in the language that group facilitators will be using in the group. It may be possible to involve one interpreter in the group to assist children from one language group. However, involving more than one interpreter could be unwieldy.

Are the children's caregivers interested in participating in the Caregivers Sessions?

It is expected that the Playing with Rainbows group will have the greatest impact when the caregivers are involved in their own sessions.

Based on these considerations, the issues outlined above and the information you collected during your screening sessions, select the children who you feel will make the best mix for the group.

If there are children who you feel are not appropriate for the Playing with Rainbows group, try to determine what other services and/or support you or others can provide for the family.

THINGS I LIKE AND THINGS I DON'T LIKE

LIKE	DON'T LIKE
COLOUR	COLOUR
FOOD	FOOD
T.V. SHOWS	T.V. SHOWS
GAMES	GAMES
STORIES	STORIES



Playing *with* RAINBOWS

INTAKE INTERVIEW WITH THE CAREGIVERS

Name of the parents/caregivers _____

Name of the child _____ Age _____

Name of the school _____

Name of the teacher _____

Telephone number and address _____

Country of origin _____ Length of residency in Canada _____

Occupation in homeland _____

Occupation in Canada _____

Occupation in homeland _____

Other members in the family (including pets)

Name

Age

Address

Description of the Migration Process to Canada

Reason for leaving _____

Time of leaving _____ Number of people leaving _____

Mode of transportation _____

The stop overs _____

Any significant incidents _____

Time and place of arrival in Canada _____



Playing *with* RAINBOWS

INTAKE INTERVIEW WITH THE CAREGIVERS

Strengths of the child _____

Description of the Child's Reaction to Conflict and Migration

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep disturbances | <input type="checkbox"/> Nightmares and night terrors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedwetting | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hyper-vigilant | <input type="checkbox"/> Clingy/separation anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inability to concentrate | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor attention span |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abusive to parents and siblings | <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talks about the past all the time | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches and other physical symptoms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Never mentions the past |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties at school | <input type="checkbox"/> Regressive behaviour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor peer relationships |

The child's idea and expectation of the group _____

Developmental Milestones for the Child

Age of walking _____ Age of talking _____ Age of reading _____

Any developmental concerns _____

Any medical concerns _____

Any safety concerns with regards to the child being in the group _____

Any other comments and concerns _____

Child care and transportation requirements _____



Playing *with* RAINBOWS

INTAKE INTERVIEW WITH THE CHILD

What is your name? _____

Do you go to school? _____

What school do you go to? _____

Where do you live? _____

Who lives with you now at home? _____

Do you remember where you used to live before? _____

Do you know who lives there now? _____

Can you draw me a picture about the other place/country? _____

Do you remember what happened there or why you had to move away to Canada? (Maybe you can draw me one more picture about that if you don't want to talk about it?)

Do you know about our group?

What are the things you would like to do in your group?

What kind of snack would you like to eat?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

PLAYING WITH RAINBOWS™ MANUAL

GETTING READY FOR YOUR PLAYING WITH RAINBOWS GROUP

This chapter will outline the issues that should be considered and the things that should be planned for before beginning a Playing with Rainbows group.

Are the Group Facilitators and Volunteers Ready?

Selection of Volunteers

Think about the following issues when selecting volunteers for involvement in your Playing with Rainbows group:

- How many adults can be involved in the group? It is recommended that there be no more than one adult for every three children in the group. If there are too many adults involved, the children may focus on developing a relationship with a specific adult rather than interacting with the group as a whole.
- Would it be beneficial to involve a volunteer from a particular cultural, ethnic or religious group? If a number of children from the same group have been selected to participate in your Playing with Rainbows group, it may be beneficial to involve a volunteer who is also part of this group. This volunteer would then be able to help group facilitators understand and deal with cultural and language issues. Caregivers who are reluctant to have their child participate in a Playing with Rainbows group may be reassured to know that a volunteer from their cultural, ethnic or religious group will be part of the program.
- It is recommended that volunteers have experience working with young children.
- Volunteers should be encouraged to share their ideas but must also be willing and able to take direction from group facilitators.
- "Evaluating Group Facilitator and Volunteer Readiness to Participate in a Playing with Rainbows Group", explores a number of issues which should be considered as you get ready for your program. You may want to discuss these with volunteers before selecting them to participate in the group.

Evaluating Group Facilitator and Volunteer Readiness to Participate in a Playing with Rainbows Group

Throughout your Playing with Rainbows group, group facilitators and volunteers must remember that counselling is not a mutual or equal relationship. The adults are there to meet the needs of the children, but the children are not there to meet the needs of the adults.

- 1) Group facilitators have the power and responsibility to make sure the group is safe for all those involved and to determine what direction the group will take. The children come to the group with a right to and expectation for support and counselling. The group is not there to meet the needs of the adults involved. In keeping with this premise, it is expected that the children, not the adults, will be the ones discussing their experiences and exploring their emotions.
- 2) When adults are involved in leading a counselling group, they bring their "self" to the group. Their own life, their past experiences, their current needs and feelings, as well as their values and beliefs will play a role in how they interact with and respond to the children in the group. Group facilitators and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that these issues do not impinge on the children's experience in the group. For example, a group facilitator should not pressure a child to talk about her or his father's death when the child appears intent on talking about the death of the family dog. While the group facilitator may feel that the father's death is more important, the child may have been more affected by the death of the dog because the dog was a constant companion and source of support, or the child may find it too difficult to discuss her or his father's death and is instead choosing to explore the death of the dog. If the group facilitators or volunteers impose their values on the child, they run the risk of interfering with the child's healing process.

Throughout your Playing with Rainbows group, group facilitators and volunteers must remember that counselling is not a mutual or equal relationship. The adults are there to meet the needs of the children, but the children are not there to meet the needs of the adults.

- 3) Group facilitators and volunteers should take some time to evaluate their skills and to outline the areas in which they may need additional support. For example, it may be useful to explore the age range of children that group facilitators and volunteers are most comfortable working with. If children who are outside this range will be participating in the group, it may be useful to seek input from others who are familiar with children of that age.
- 4) Group facilitators and volunteers must be aware of their preferences and their areas of discomfort. In general, counsellors with children will suggest activities that they themselves would find enjoyable or beneficial. On the other hand, group facilitators will tend not to plan activities which would make them feel uncomfortable or which they would not enjoy. If group facilitators and volunteers are aware of the impact of their likes and dislikes on the group program, they can ensure that they do not unnecessarily limit the children's experiences.
- 5) Group facilitators and volunteers must be aware of the issues that they have faced in the past and that they are facing now (death of a parent, divorce, new job etc.). Given the focus of Playing with Rainbows groups this will be particularly important for those who have lived through traumatic experiences during war and migration. What has been learned during these experiences? What can be taught to the children as a result of having worked through these issues? Do any of these issues continue to be emotionally charged? Is there any possibility that the topics covered in group sessions will be a trigger? How will this be handled? Will group facilitators and volunteers be able to continue to focus on the children and their needs if their own emotions and issues are triggered?
- 6) During the course of the group, the children may talk graphically about violence, death and/or sexual assault. Group facilitators and volunteers must assess their ability to listen to this type of information while staying focused on the children. Group facilitators and volunteers must manage their own emotional reactions so that the children in the group are never put in the position of trying to comfort the adults. Group facilitators and volunteers should also make sure that their comments do not communicate expectations about how the children should feel about their experiences. Comments such as "That must have been awful", "That must have made you sad" or "You must have been scared" all convey assumptions that may or may not be true. It is best to respond with gentle encouragement and questions (*Would you like to tell me anything else? How did you feel when that happened*) when the children are talking about their experiences.
- 7) It is suggested that group facilitators and volunteers consider the type and amount of emotional expression that they can tolerate. Are there situations in which they may wish to appease the children and help them feel better rather than allowing the child to continue to explore difficult feelings? The adults involved in the group must be able to let the children experience their pain. They should be aware of the feelings that make them uncomfortable to ensure that they do not avoid these in session or discourage the children from expressing them. Similarly, those leading the group should consider which emotions they are most comfortable with and ensure that they do not have the children place undue focus on these.

Clarifying the Roles of Volunteers

Group facilitators should establish clear expectations regarding the roles of volunteers and these should be communicated to the volunteers. In particular, if there are some things that group facilitators do not want volunteers to do, this must be made apparent. For example, if the volunteers are not trained counsellors, it may be suggested that they do not take an active role in facilitating discussions but limit themselves to supporting the children during the group and assisting the children during activities. It is suggested that group facilitators make use of volunteers' skills and assign them specific tasks which take advantage of these skills.

Building Relationships with Community Supports

Prior to beginning the group, it is important for group facilitators to establish links to a variety of community organizations and groups. These may include:

- **Professional Cultural Interpreters** – Group facilitators should be aware of the availability of interpreters in all the languages that may be required for screening sessions, children's sessions, the caregivers' sessions and individual meetings with the children's caregivers. Make sure that you clearly understand the process for obtaining these services. The individuals sponsoring the group should assume responsibility for the cost of interpretation services.
- **Cultural Liaison Workers, Settlement Agencies, and Cultural Representatives** – Identify at least one individual from the culture of each of the children in your Playing with Rainbows group who can be available to help facilitators understand and work with specific cultural issues. If information related to specific children or families will be discussed with these individuals, signed consent must be obtained from the children's caregivers.
- **Children's Mental Health Workers** – Group facilitators should identify child and youth workers, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and/or parent-child resource centres in the community who work with children. It is hoped that one of these individuals will agree to be available for consultation during the group. Resources that will be available to the children and families after the group should be identified. Group facilitators should determine how referrals for service can be made and what types of waiting list may be encountered.
- **Adult Mental Health Workers** – Group facilitators should identify community workers, therapists, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists who provide mental health services to adults in the community. These individuals may be required to provide support and counselling to the children's caregivers. In addition, these professionals may be able to provide support and assistance in debriefing to group facilitators, volunteers and/or interpreters. Try to identify at least one individual who will be available to meet with the adults involved in the children's sessions on an as needed basis.
- **Emergency Services** – Group facilitators should familiarize themselves with the resources that will be available in the case of an emergency (suicidal ideation, child abuse, violence in the home). Clear information about how to contact these services should be available.
- **Community Support Systems** – Group facilitators should be familiar with the groups and agencies within the community who provide a variety of resources to children and families (food banks, shelters, settlement service workers, legal clinics, child protection agency, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, parent-child resource centres, women's groups, ethno-specific groups and agencies, Scouting, Guiding, recreation programs etc.). Having this information will allow the group facilitators to link families to needed supports.

Creating a Child-Friendly Healing Environment

In order to create a child-friendly and healing environment, group facilitators must ensure that the children are provided with the following:

Unconditional Acceptance

- Group facilitators and volunteers should value and accept the children exactly as they are.

Predictability and Consistency

- Make sure that the room is set up in basically the same way for each session so that the children will know where to find things.
- The group sessions are designed so that activities occur in a predictable order. The beginning and end of each session are marked by the same activity every time.

Respect

- Children in the group should be respected.
- The children's caregivers should be respected.
- Group facilitators and volunteers must be respected.

Safety

- The physical and emotional safety of all group participants must be assured. This makes the establishment and maintenance of clear group rules essential.

Belonging

- The children should feel that the group room is "theirs". This can be facilitated by ensuring that the room is set up before the first child arrives each week. While the children may be aware that other individuals use the room between sessions, obvious signs of this, such as empty paint containers or broken toys, should be removed.

Selecting the Group Room

Choose a room that will be comfortable, welcoming and safe for the children in the group. It is important that the room be appropriate for the ages of the children in the group. For example, make sure that they can comfortably use the furniture and that the decorations are age appropriate. The space you choose must be practical. Group facilitators should not have to worry about sessions being interrupted, the room being damaged or things in the room getting broken. If at all possible, try to select a space that is close to washroom facilities for clean up purposes and to make it easy for children to get to the washroom.

Where possible hold the group in a setting that will be safe, comfortable and familiar for the children's caregivers. Try to find a space for the group that can be easily accessed by all the families involved. If possible find a space that is close to public transportation. If there are some families who may have difficulty transporting their children to the group, consider ways that you may be able to provide assistance.

GETTING READY FOR YOUR PLAYING WITH RAINBOWS GROUP

Choose a room that contains:

- space for the group circle to be created
- space for active work
- space for all the children to lie down during relaxation exercises
- place for a Cozy Corner which is removed from the central group activities
- tables and chairs as needed
- windows which make the space bright and airy

Creating a Cozy Corner

Choose one corner of your room to be the Cozy Corner. Fill this corner with pillows, blankets and stuffed animals. If possible, include a rocking chair or bean bag chair in the corner. The Cozy Corner should be a safe, soft, nurturing place for the children to escape to when they need a break from the group. You may wish to have some books in the corner as well.

Planning for Group Sessions

Consents for Service and Consents to Share Information

If children are to take part in a Playing with Rainbows group their caregivers must sign a consent authorizing their participation. If adults other than the group facilitators (i.e. volunteers, interpreters) will be part of the group, this should be clearly noted on the consent form. Plans should be established to ensure that these consents are signed at or before the first group session. If the initial Caregiver's Session will take place prior to the first children's group meeting, the consents could be signed at this time. It is essential that the caregiver's have a clear understanding of what they are signing. If necessary, have the consent forms translated into the caregivers' first languages or involve an interpreter in the presentation of this material.

If group facilitators will be consulting on a regular basis with other professionals or cultural representatives and will be using identifying information during these consultations, consents must be signed by the children's caregivers permitting this contact. Again, group facilitators must assume responsibility for ensuring that the caregivers have a complete understanding of the material that they are signing.

Obtaining Background Information

Once you have determined which children will be in your group, try to obtain some background information regarding their country of origin and culture. It is suggested that you collect this information from another member of the culture or someone who has migrated from the country of origin in question. Since there may be vast regional differences in these countries, try to speak with someone from the region that the child lived in. Ask this person what they think you need to know. You may want to seek specific information regarding cultural stories, rituals or music. You may wish to ask some general questions about the expression of emotions and also inquire specifically about grieving rituals. During your discussion, it may be useful to review your planned activities to ensure that they will not be offensive or overwhelming for the children. Consider asking about the climate, scenery and wildlife in the child's country of origin. This information can be invaluable when planning visualization exercises.

You should also ensure that you have basic information regarding the conflict each child experienced, the parties to the conflict and the type of warfare to which they were exposed.¹ While you may have obtained this information during your screening sessions, you may require additional information and it can be beneficial to obtain a second perspective from someone who is familiar with the dynamics of the conflict.

Preparing for Sessions

It is recommended that all twelve group sessions be reviewed before the group begins. This will ensure that group facilitators are aware of the topics that will be addressed and the activities that are part of the group.

The session outlines in this manual are general guidelines and should be adapted to meet the needs of each group of children. For example, body tracing or relaxation exercises requiring children to lie down may be difficult for children who have been sexually assaulted or hurt when lying down. In these cases, group facilitators should find other ways of completing activities such as doing body tracings with the children standing against the wall or having the children complete relaxation exercises sitting up.

Group facilitators are encouraged to be creative in their presentation of the sessions. It is suggested that group facilitators be alert to the children's need for movement and build in physical activities such as short quick stretches or active songs as needed.

Prior to each session, review the material that will be covered and the activities that will be included. Make sure that you have everything you will need for the group. Remember that activities and discussions will take much longer when cultural interpreters are involved in the group. Keep this in mind when you plan your sessions.

Group Rules

Prior to beginning sessions with the children, the facilitators must decide what rules need to be part of the group in order to ensure everyone's physical and emotional safety². These rules will be discussed and agreed to by the children in their first session. Group facilitators should also consider what the consequences for breaking group rules will be³. Time should be taken to think about how group facilitators will manage situations where a child does not comply with the established consequence, for example she or he refuses to sit on the Time Out Chair. Group facilitators should also discuss ways to manage common problems that arise in children's groups³.

Regular and timely attendance, by the children, at sessions is important for building a cohesive group. Prior to the group, facilitators should consider how they will handle lateness and how many sessions a child can miss before they are asked to leave the group³.

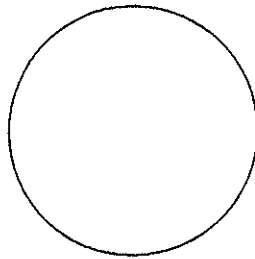
¹ Organizations which may be able to assist you in finding this information are listed in "Bibliography and Resources"

² Recommendations for basic rules are included in the outline for "Session 1- Getting to Know Each Other".

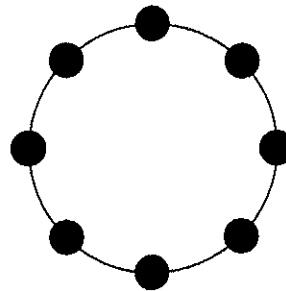
³ Further information can be found in "Managing Problems In A Playing with Rainbows Group".

Planning for Creating the Circle⁴

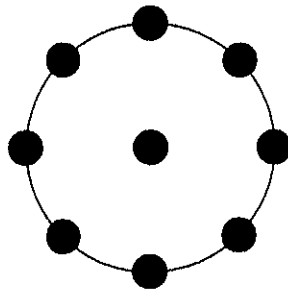
Each week the children will be asked to create the circle to be used for circle time and discussions. As the group progresses, the circles created by the children become more complex representing the group, the children in the group, the support systems available to the children and the connections between these. Each step in the circle creation will be repeated two times. See the six different circle arrangements that will be created, below:



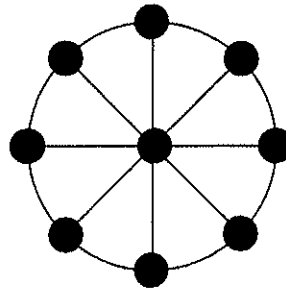
SESSION 1,2



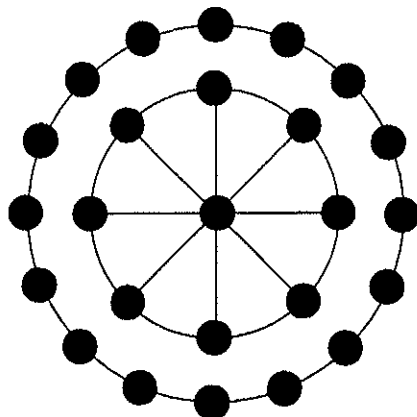
SESSION 3,4



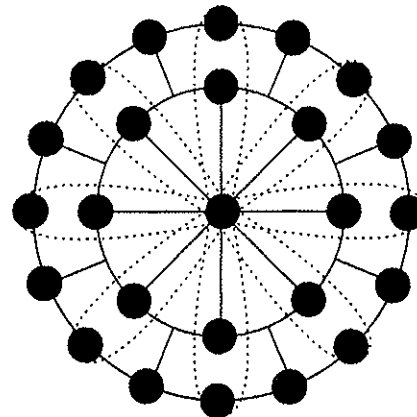
SESSION 5,6



SESSION 7,8



SESSION 9,10



SESSION 11,12

⁴ The progressive Circle Creation was designed by Chitra Sekhar and used during the "Training Program for Front Line Workers in Sri Lanka on Intervention Strategies for War Traumatized Children".

A number of different materials could be used to create the circles:

- coloured chalk
- string, ribbons or fabric
- coloured sand
- coloured rice flour
- dry flowers
- Hoola hoops can be used to make the circles to mark where the individual children sit and/or the "Helping People" circles.

The way in which you create the circles with the children will depend to a large extent on where the group is taking place. While chalk would be appropriate on a tile or concrete floor, it would be difficult to use if you have a carpeted room. You may choose to consistently use one material (i.e. fabric and ribbons) or you may choose to incorporate a number of different materials over the course of the twelve group sessions.

Comfort Objects

In the first session, the children will be involved in decorating or choosing Comfort Objects. These are objects that will be available for the children throughout the group and can be taken home when all the group sessions have been completed. Think about the type of Comfort Objects you wish to use and how the children will decorate these. It is suggested that the basic Comfort Object be prepared in advance and that in the first session, the children be given an opportunity to decorate it, making it their own. Four different ways of creating Comfort Objects are listed below:

- **Pillows** - Small pillows are made for the children. These could be stuffed with herbs, cotton or fabrics. You may wish to leave an opening in the pillow and have each child choose a small object to place inside the pillow before it is finally sewn together by the group facilitators. For example, a stone, a marble, a button, a tiny bell, a small shell etc. could be placed inside the pillow. If you choose to do this, you may wish to equate the small object with the uniqueness of each child.

Has every one chosen a pillow? OK. Can anyone find a hole in one side of their pillow? We left them open because we want you all to put one more thing in your pillow. Each of you is different and special. You have different names. You come from different countries. You like different foods. You are good at different things. What kinds of things are you good at? (Try to encourage each child to label one of her/his strengths). You are all different and special. I want each of you to pick a stone to go inside your pillow. The special stone inside the pillow will be just like the special things inside each of you.

Another way of having the children make the pillows "their own" would be to have them decorate them using fabric paints or by gluing other fabrics and items on to the pillows.

- **Pocket Teddy Bears** - Small teddy bears, about three inches in height could be made for the children. Felt or fleece are the best fabrics to use for making these teddy bears because they do not fray and seams do not need to be turned in. They can be made simply, by cutting a front and a back for the teddy bear. Sew these together, placing a little stuffing in the bear's stomach and head. Have the children make the bear their own by drawing a face for the bear or gluing clothing on the bear. Group facilitators may choose not to place stuffing in the bear's stomach and to leave a small opening in the side of the bear. The children can then choose a small object to go inside the bear. As noted above, with the pillows, this object can be equated with the uniqueness of each child.

- **Comfort Pouches⁵** - Small drawstring bags made out of fabric are presented to the children. In the first session have them decorate these “pouches” using fabric paints, thread, beads or fabric and glue. Following the final relaxation exercise in each session, give the children a special object which is associated with some aspect of the group to place in their bag. For example, if the one of the relaxation exercises included images of water, you could give the children a blue marble to represent this water. In the session about dreams when the “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” relaxation is done and star beads are placed in the Dream Catcher, the children could be given a glow in the dark star for their pouch. If you used the Pool of Tears and Flowers exercise as part of the Goodbyes and Hellos meeting, the children could be given a small silk flower to put in their pouch. When the children are given the objects for their pouches, group facilitators should take some time to explain how the object is connected to the work that was done in the session. After the final session, the children will take their pouch containing all the special objects home as a reminder of the activities and topics that were part of their group. When initially explaining the idea of the “comfort pouch” to the children, group facilitators may want to talk about the comfort that a baby kangaroo finds in her or his mother’s pouch. For children who are familiar with Native American traditions, group facilitators may wish to introduce the children to the concept of medicine bags or amulets. This should be done in consultation with someone from the Native American culture who can ensure that the way the comfort pouch is being used is respectful of their traditions.
- **Puppets** - Group facilitators can have the children make sock puppets. These puppets could then be used by the children throughout the group. Group facilitators may choose to have the children use the puppets in discussions or integrate them into group activities.
- If time does not allow for group facilitators to make Comfort Objects or for the children to decorate their own Comfort Objects, ready made puppets or stuffed animals could be used as Comfort Objects. With a little effort, small stuffed animals can be purchased at a price that will be cost-effective for the group. If you are using ready made puppets or stuffed animals, they can be personalized by having the children name their animals and by making name tags for them.

When you discuss Playing with Rainbows groups with individuals from the children’s countries of origin, you may become aware of other ways to make Comfort Objects.

Make sure that you have the Comfort Objects made and available for the first group.

Centering and Relaxation Exercises

Choose the Centering and Relaxation exercises you will be using in each session. Where possible, try to integrate music from the children’s countries of origin into these exercises.

It is suggested that you practice saying the exercises before each group session. This will allow you to see if the music you are using is long enough, to make sure you are speaking slowly enough to allow for deep breathing and to determine if the exercise will serve the purpose you have developed it for.

Puppets

Think about whether the group facilitators or children will use puppets as a regular part of the group. Each group facilitator may choose to have a puppet that is associated with her or him that can be used periodically during the group to lead discussions, raise issues or introduce activities. You may wish to have each child select a puppet that they will use for particular purposes in the group. Possible ways of using puppets as a regular part of the group are described in “Puppetry”.

⁵ This activity was designed by Chitra Sekhar for use in training Playing with Rainbows group facilitators.

Talking Stick

Some children's groups make use of a Talking Stick to help moderate discussions. Only the person holding the Talking Stick is allowed to speak. Decide if you would like to use a Talking Stick and if so for which parts of the group. The Talking Stick may be particularly useful during Check-In, Discussion and Relaxing and Review. You may choose not to use the Talking Stick during group activities in which you wish to encourage the children to spontaneously share ideas.

If you decide to make a Talking Stick, you can have the children create and decorate it in the first session or you can have it ready for them at the beginning of the session. You may choose to incorporate decorations that reflect the children's countries of origin. For example, you could have the children decorate the Talking Stick with feathers or fabric in the colours of their countries' flags. It is also possible to make the Talking Stick part of a Goodbye Activity in the final session⁶.

Journal or Folder

Some group facilitators choose to make a journal or folder for each child. This is used to collect their pictures and work in each session and is presented to them in the last session. If you choose to use Journals or Folders, you may wish to have the children decorate them in the first session.

Homework

Group facilitators must decide if they wish to assign the children homework during their Playing with Rainbows group. While assigning homework can be beneficial (allows the children to think about issues between sessions, provides a vehicle for introducing topics, allows group facilitators to include more material), there may be drawbacks if many of the children do not complete the homework. If you are going to assign homework, discuss this with the children's caregivers in screening sessions. Provide the caregivers with the Homework Sheets at the end of each session. If necessary, have these sheets translated so that they will be easy for the caregivers to understand.

Integrating Culture Specific Activities into Counselling for Children

All cultures have activities and rituals that are part of daily life or which are used to celebrate seasonal changes or recognize important days. These may include stories, music, dance and ceremonies. With a little thought these can become play activities which are integrated into a group counselling program for children. Many cultural rituals already involve symbolism and metaphor and as a result have the power to touch group participants deeply. Furthermore, when these rituals become part of the group process, children may feel validated, welcomed and comforted by participating in something familiar. Using rituals from their country of origin provides group members with an opportunity to share an aspect of their culture with others in the group.

If you are considering bringing culture specific activities into the group program, **it is essential to ensure that this will not be considered inappropriate by any group member or their family.** Consult with individuals from the culture which practices the ritual and ensure that using it in the group process will not demean the ritual and that the way you intend to use the ritual will not be considered dangerous. You must also speak with individuals from all the other cultures represented in your group to ensure that the ritual will not be frightening or offensive to them.

⁶ Directions for including the Talking Stick in a Goodbye Activity are included in "Session 12".

Examples of Using Cultural Rituals in Counselling

Chitra Sekhar (1998) described the use of Kolam with a group of war traumatized children from Sri Lanka:

"Kolam is an ancient art form used in South India and some parts of Sri Lanka. It is a religious ritual performed by the womenfolk of the Hindu household. In the early morning before the sun rises the women clean and purify the front yard with cow dung and water. Then they make small or elaborate designs with rice flour to reflect the mood and occasion. For example a very elaborate design will be indicative of a joyous happening like the birth of a new baby, an engagement, or a religious ceremony or festival. ... Absence of kolam in front of a house may mean the absence of women in the house or illness or death and bereavement in the family." (Sekhar, 1998, p. 12)

Kolam can be adapted to become a feelings exercise, a meditative exercise to be used at the end of a group, or an exercise to help the children to focus on their futures. For example, each child could be asked to imagine a great day in their future and make the Kolam that they would like to see on their front yard on that day. To have children explore their feelings using Kolam, group leaders could ask the children to make a design with rice flour to represent themselves. Children could then be asked to pick four feelings that are a part of their lives and four colours to represent these feelings. The children could be invited to use these four colours to make a pattern around the design they created to represent themselves.

Mark Barnes (1996) describes using the making of a Hawaiian Lei as part of a healing ritual with a woman who had been severely abused as a child. He suggests that to make a lei individuals select a variety of flowers, a piece of string and a needle. A necklace of flowers is formed as the flowers are slowly threaded onto the string. As each flower is added the participant thinks of a positive healing thought. As the lei is completed, the person has had an opportunity to "thread all the good thoughts together" as they form the lei (Barnes, 1996, p. 347).

The same concept of making a lei could be expanded to help children explore other issues. For example, each flower could represent a family member or source of support for the child. When they finished making the lei, they would have a concrete representation of their support system. Flowers could be chosen to represent particular feelings. The finished lei could then serve as a reminder of the different feelings the child has and the coping strategies that were discussed in the group.

How to Integrate Cultural Rituals into the Group

Cultural rituals may come into your group in two different ways. You may have a specific goal in mind (i.e. relaxation) and seek a ritual that will help you meet that goal. In other cases, you may hear about a ritual and wish to make it part of your group process. Considering the following issues will help you bring cultural rituals into your group:

1) What is the goal of the activity?

Establish a clear goal for the use of the cultural ritual (i.e. relaxation, centering, feelings exploration, discussion of memories, exploring support systems). The goal will help you determine how to adapt the ritual.

2) Choose a ritual which will meet your goal. Consider what aspects of the ritual will help you to meet your goal.

Consider choosing cultural rituals which involve the following:

Physical activity

(i.e. threading a flower, scattering rice flour) – The physical activity in rituals is often repetitive which contributes to its relaxing power.

Use of multiple senses

During the making of a lei, children are making use of their visual (flower colours), smell (flower scent) and tactile (feeling flowers) senses. In general, the impact of an activity will be increased with the number of senses involved.

Use of colour

Different colours can be associated with feelings, experiences or people.

A communicative purpose

(i.e. Kolam is designed to communicate to others who view the designs in the front yard) – When the original purpose of the ritual is to communicate with others, it can be adapted to serve a communicative purpose within the group. For example, a container that is usually used to hold prayers can be created to hold messages for people in the child's country of origin.

3) How does the ritual need to be adapted to meet your goal?

Think carefully about the goal you have in mind and the ways that the ritual will meet that goal. In many cases you will want to simplify the ritual or focus on one aspect of the ritual. Make sure you can explain the activity in language that the children will understand.

4) Are you making acceptable use of the ritual?

Consult with individuals who are part of the culture from which the ritual was borrowed. Can they anticipate any problems with the way you are using the ritual? These people may be able to offer you suggestions that will improve upon the activity you have planned. You should also briefly mention the activity to parents of the other children to ensure that the activity you have planned will not be objectionable to them.

There are many wonderful opportunities available to counsellors who choose to adapt cultural rituals for use in children's groups, provided that this is done with understanding and sensitivity.

GROUP FACILITATORS' SELF CARE¹

There are three levels of self-care that must be addressed by group facilitators. Facilitators should develop a variety of ways to care for themselves on a day to day basis. In addition, group facilitators must develop strategies for taking care of themselves following each group session. Finally, group facilitators should identify ways in which they can continue to facilitate their professional growth and development. Each level of self care is briefly addressed in this chapter.

Day to Day Personal Care

It is essential for group facilitators and volunteers to maintain a life outside of their work and the issues that are dealt with in Playing with Rainbows groups. Group facilitators should strive to have a balanced personal life that includes entertainment, relaxation and social activities which are not directly connected to working with traumatized children or refugee families.

Group facilitators and volunteers should do everything necessary to look after their own physical and mental health as well as their personal relationships. These are the things that sustain us when we are working in difficult situations.

Every adult who is working in a Playing with Rainbows group should be able to answer the question: "How do you relax?". Not only should they be able to identify a range of relaxation strategies, they should also use them on a regular basis.

It is essential for individuals working with traumatized children or refugee families to be aware of their own support systems. Who can you call when you have had a bad day? Who will listen to you, share a cup of coffee with you or sit and watch the sky with you as you think about your day?

When ending work with clients, some counsellors will ask: "How would you know if you needed help again? What would be the signs that you are having a hard time?" Group facilitators and volunteers should be able to answer these questions themselves: "How would you know if working in this group was getting to you? What would be signs that you are having a hard time as a result of working in our Playing with Rainbows group?". It is suggested that, as part of preparing for the group, each individual who will be involved in facilitating the group make a list identifying at least five things that would indicate they are experiencing difficulty as a result of their participation. These might include nightmares, intense sadness, an inability to stop thinking about group members, sleeplessness, having a short fuse, depression etc. This list should be reviewed periodically during the group. If group facilitators or volunteers find that they are beginning to experience some of the things on the list, this should be discussed with other group facilitators, a supervisor or another supportive individual.

Many professionals and volunteers run into difficulty because they are unable to turn down requests. When you are asked to participate in a group, work with a new family, or do some research for a new project, consider carefully how this will affect you. If you are not able to complete the task then you must address this honestly. The reality is that individuals who try to take on too much often end up doing a mediocre job or feeling resentful.

Group facilitators should make use of relaxation exercises and rituals which they find soothing. This may be as simple as soaking in a hot tub surrounded by candlelight and listening to soothing music or it could involve a structured meditation.

¹ The work of Mark Barnes in *The Healing Path With Children: An Exploration for Parents and Professionals* and of Chitra Sekhar in *Training Program For Front Line Workers in Sri Lanka on Intervention Strategies for War Traumatized Children* have been of great assistance in preparing this chapter.

Taking Care of Yourself after Group Sessions

After each group session, volunteers and group facilitators should review the session.

- Talk about what happened, what went well and what was difficult.
- Some time should be spent talking about what the children said and how the group facilitators and volunteers felt as they listened.
- Any problems that occurred in the group should be reviewed and plans for handling similar incidents in the future should be outlined.
- After each session, group facilitators and volunteers should discuss and complete the Children's Session Review Sheet found at the end of the chapter "Group Evaluation" in this manual. These sheets will be used as part of the group evaluation but may also provide a focal point for debriefing discussions.

Group facilitators should strive to have a balanced personal life that includes entertainment, relaxation and social activities which are not directly connected to working with traumatized children or refugee families.

You may wish to consider using some creative activities to assist you in debriefing following group sessions. For example, prior to any discussion of the session, group facilitators and volunteers could take some drawing materials and scribble with colours or create a design to express their feelings about the session. The debriefing process could begin by sharing these drawings. Alternately, each person could choose three words which capture the essence of the session for them. Debriefing could begin by sharing those words. By expanding and colouring in the pattern of the group circle that is created by the children in sessions 11 and 12, group facilitators could create a healing mandala at the beginning of each debriefing session. Group facilitators and volunteers may wish to consider keeping a journal. This could be used to document their thoughts about group sessions. Portions of journal entries could be shared during debriefing.

It is important for group facilitators and volunteers to have small, achievable goals and tasks for each session. Review the group goals and be aware of the things that the group cannot do². If you find that you are becoming frustrated with progress in the group or with the progress of individual children, take a step back to determine if your expectations are realistic.

When working with children, it is important to remember that the seeds you sow today may grow and develop over time and the rewards may only be evident years from now. The way you interact with the children and the things you say to them teach them invaluable lessons. Your message of respect and caring is an image that the children can carry with them for years. While you may not see an immediate impact, you must rest assured that the children can draw on and benefit from your messages and interventions throughout their childhood and into their adult lives.

Group facilitators and volunteers should identify resources, including other professionals, who are available to provide support to them. You may choose to access these supports individually or as a group if you find that you are struggling during your Playing with Rainbows group. Group facilitators and volunteers must look after themselves so that they can continue to be effective in their work with the children.

² Group goals and a list of things that Playing with Rainbows groups are not able to address are found in "Goals and Objectives Of Playing with Rainbows Groups".

Helping Your Professional Self

Group facilitators will benefit from continuing to educate themselves through reading, attending workshops or conferences and keeping in touch with others who work in the same field. New ideas and new information are invigorating and can lead to a wide range of exciting developments in our work.

Those involved in a Playing with Rainbows group must be willing to continue learning and consider new approaches. This is particularly important when working with families who have lived in other countries and may not be open to traditional western approaches. In addition, group facilitators should be aware of and remain open to the wealth of information, including new stories, rituals and music, that are available to them when working with children and families from other cultures.

Group facilitators should identify and maintain a professional support system for themselves. This system may be able to offer consultation on specific problems, act as a sounding board for new ideas or provide an opportunity for debriefing.

Throughout a Playing with Rainbows group, group facilitators and volunteers must strive to look after themselves, to cope with issues that arise as a result of their participation in the group and to continue their own professional growth. When this is done, they will be able to provide the best and most effective service to the children and families they are working with.

When working with children, it is important to remember that the seeds you sow today may grow and develop over time and the rewards may only be evident years from now.

TIPS ON COMMUNICATING THROUGH A CULTURAL INTERPRETER¹

A cultural interpreter's job is to translate the words, meanings and ideas communicated by you and your client. The cultural interpreter will offer interpretation in a particular cultural context and help you and your client understand cultural issues that may be impeding your communication. The cultural interpreter should make sure that both parties in the conversation feel that they know what is going on at all times and have an opportunity to participate fully in the conversation. The cultural interpreter should work in a neutral manner to facilitate clear and effective communication between you and your client (Shackman, 1995).

Where possible discuss the selection of interpreters with the children's caregivers. Some caregivers may feel more comfortable if the interpreter being used for the group sessions is not a member of their immediate community. It is also important to consider whether the racial, ethnic or cultural group of the interpreter could be problematic for the children or their caregivers. Try to determine if there are any reasons to choose or avoid a female or male interpreter. While it may be difficult to locate an appropriate interpreter, try to make sure that children are not put in the position of interpreting for each other or for their caregivers.

The following suggestions may help you make effective use of an interpreter's services:

- Maintain responsibility for the interview. The interpreter's role is to accurately convey what you and your client are saying not to determine the content of the discussion. It is suggested that you meet with the interpreter prior to meeting with the client and clarify the interpreter's role. Be clear about your expectations of the interpreter.
- At the beginning of the interview, briefly explain your role and the purpose of the interview.
- Speak directly to your client. Use first and second person speech such as "I" and "you". For example, it would be appropriate to say "I am wondering how you feel about Sara coming to the group". It would not be appropriate to say "Ask her how she feels about Sara coming to the group".
- If you need to discuss anything with the interpreter, explain what you are doing to the client involved. Likewise, you are entitled to be told the nature and content of any discussion between the interpreter and your client.
- Give the client lots of opportunities to ask for clarification of anything she or he may not have understood.
- Encourage the interpreter to provide insights if she or he senses that some misunderstanding is affecting the communication process.
- Allow enough time for your interview. It will take twice as long if an interpreter is being used because everything must be translated. Keep this in mind when planning your screening interviews, children's group sessions and caregivers' sessions.

Allow enough time for your interview. It will take twice as long if an interpreter is being used because everything must be translated.

¹ This chapter is based on information provided by Cultural Interpretation Services of Ottawa-Carleton/Services d'interprétation culturelle d'Ottawa-Carleton

TIPS ON COMMUNICATING THROUGH A CULTURAL INTERPRETER

- Speak in short sentences and pause frequently to allow the interpreter to translate. You may wish to plan your meeting taking this into account.
- Try to avoid the use of idioms, slang, and jokes since it may not be possible to translate these accurately or appropriately.
- If you are going to be using the interpreter to communicate with children, it is suggested that you discuss this with the interpreter in advance to determine if there are any additional factors you should be considering. It is essential that you have written consent from all the children's caregivers, if an interpreter is going to be participating in the children's group sessions.
- Be aware that some interpreters may have lived through the experiences of war and migration themselves. Be clear with the interpreters about the type of material they will be dealing with to ensure that they feel comfortable working with the emotionally charged material that is part of all Playing with Rainbows groups. It is suggested that you meet with the interpreters prior to each session and review the material that will be discussed and the activities that will be taking place. This will allow the interpreters to prepare themselves for the content of the session. It is recommended that you meet with the interpreters following each session to provide them with an opportunity to review the session and discuss their emotional reactions to the material in the session. Try to identify an adult mental health worker who can provide support to the interpreters if they feel that they are becoming overwhelmed as a result of their participation in the group.

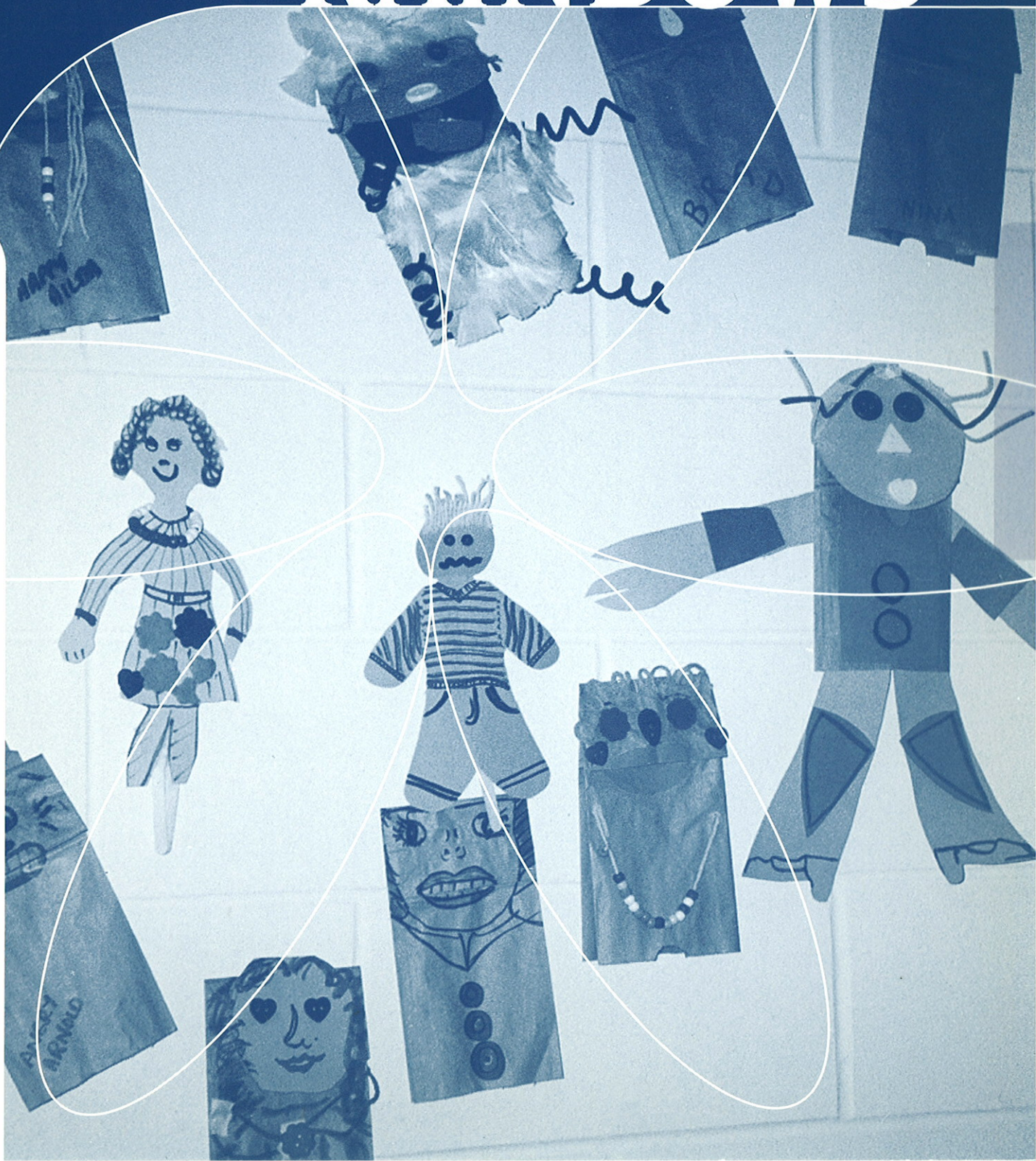
It is strongly suggested that you make use of a professional interpreter for a variety of reasons:

- A professional interpreter will be tested for competence in language and interpreting skills.
- Professional interpreters will be trained to interpret what is said accurately and faithfully. They greatly reduce the risks of omissions, distortions, misunderstandings, confusion and frustrations which commonly occur with untrained interpreters.
- Professional interpreters are trained not to take sides. Their own values, beliefs and opinions will not interfere in the communication process. Untrained interpreters may withhold, filter, add or distort information.
- Professional interpreters maintain absolute confidentiality about everything pertaining to an interpretation assignment. Assurance of confidentiality fosters trust and promotes better communication.
- Professional interpreters may be able to provide cultural bridging by providing insights into the values and assumptions behind the words if so requested.
- Professional interpreters should adhere to a Code of Ethics. They avoid conflicts of interest and stay within the limits of their role.
- If you use a professional interpreter, you will have assurances that you have used a reliable interpreter. This is especially important in cases where miscommunication may harm you or your client.
- Professional interpreters may have received specialized training in crisis intervention and counselling which can be helpful to your work.

Be aware that some interpreters may have lived through the experiences of war and migration themselves.

Playing *with* RAINBOWS™

The Playing with RAINBOWS GROUP SESSIONS 1-6



SESSION 1 - GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Objectives:

- 1) Group members will be introduced and begin to get to know each other.
- 2) Group members will come to understand that they have all had some similar experiences.
- 3) Group rules will be established.
- 4) The purpose of the group will be outlined.

Preparation:

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Group Rules
 - Centering
 - Getting to Know Each Other Activity
 - Making or Choosing Comfort Objects
 - Story to read
 - Music for relaxation
 - Snacks

Welcoming the Children

All group facilitators should be in the group room and ready to greet the children about a half hour before group begins.

Greet the children by name as they come in the door and show them where to put their things (coats, boots, school bags). Help the children say goodbye to the adult who brought them to the group. Have the adult explain where she or he is going and when she or he will be back to pick up the child¹.

Invite the children to come and sit in the circle area. Have some toys (i.e. paper and markers, puzzles) and books available for the children to play with while they wait for other group members.

When all group members are present, a group facilitator should introduce her or himself.

| *Hello, my name is Mary. It is nice to see you all today.*

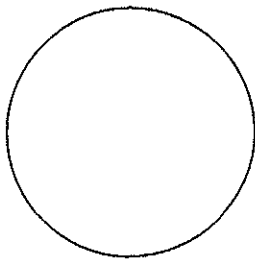
¹ For suggestions on helping children who are having trouble saying goodbye to the adult who brought them to the group see "Managing Problems in a Playing with Rainbows Group".

Creating the Circle

Each week the children will be asked to create the circle to be used for circle time and discussions. As the group progresses, the circles created by the children become more complex representing the group, the children in the group, the support systems available to the children and the connections between these. The specific instructions that you give the children will depend on the method you have chosen for making the circle².

In the first session, the children mark a large circle to sit inside. The directions that follow could be given if you were having the children mark the circle with a ribbon or rope.

We are going to make a circle for us to sit in when we want to relax or talk. Everybody join hands and let's walk around in a circle. O.K. stop (Have the children stop when they have formed a circle). Now I am going to pass around a ribbon (Make sure the ribbon is large enough for all the children to hold onto with a few extra meters at the end). Let's all take two steps backwards and then put the ribbon on the floor. One, Two, put the ribbon down. Now we have made our circle. Let's all sit down inside the circle (When you are finished the children should be sitting inside the ribbon circle). We made our circle by holding hands and it is a place for us all to be together.



The circles may get moved or jostled during the course of the group. Let the children know that this is OK.

² For details regarding the creation of the Circle see "Getting Ready for your Playing with Rainbows Group"

Circle Time

Introductions

Have the children introduce themselves by stating their:

- name
- school (if the children are in school)
- their country of origin
- favourite animal/favourite flower from their country of origin

Now let's find out everyone's names. We are going to go around the circle and I want you to say your name, what school you go to, what country you lived in before you moved to Canada, and a favorite animal or flower that you used to see in that country. We are going to put stickers on this map to show all the different countries that you lived in before you came to Canada. I will go first (You may want to have another group facilitator introduce her or himself next and then go round the circle so that the children and other group facilitators can introduce themselves. When the children are introducing themselves help them remember the four things they are meant to share with the group. Have a map of the world available during the introductions and have everyone in the group mark their country of origin, using a sticker with their name on it.)

If group facilitators have chosen puppets for them to use as a regular part of the sessions, these characters can also be introduced at this time.

Check In

It is suggested that you choose a Check In method that you will use in each of the twelve sessions. Possible exercises are listed under "Check In Activities" at the end of this chapter. Using the same method each week provides predictability and consistency for the children. After a few sessions, Check In will come to mark the beginning of the group.

Each week we are going to go around the circle and find out how everyone is doing. I have a feelings puzzle we are going to use each week. I am going to pass the puzzle around and I want each of you to make a puzzle to show how you feel today. (Have each child complete the puzzle and show it to the group. Ask each child to talk about the feeling and to share why she or he is feeling that way. After the child has explained the feeling ask them if there is anything that happened in the last week that they want to tell the group.)

Review the Purpose of the Group

Take the time to make sure all the children understand the purpose of the group. This is an important opportunity to help each child begin to recognize that she or he is not the only one that has witnessed war or been through the experience of migration.

Does anyone know why we are all here? (Give the children a chance to answer. Elaborate on any of the answers which reflect the purpose of the group.)

After the children have provided their answers, summarize them. If the children have not shared any ideas, briefly outline the purpose of the group. *Everyone in this group used to live in another country where there was a war or fighting and now you have all moved to Canada. In the group we are going to talk about living in another country, what it felt like to see war and fighting and what it was like to move to Canada. (Give the children a chance to respond to your comments.)*

Group Rules

The children and group facilitators should work together to create the rules for the group. It is suggested that you ask the children for ideas for group rules. However, when the rules are completed you must ensure that the following concepts have been included:

- One person talks at a time. (You may wish to introduce the use of a talking stick.)
- No physically hurting others (hitting, kicking, biting etc.).
- No hurting others with words (swearing, name calling).
- Time outs (If children are feeling angry or need a break they should go to the Cozy Corner or talk to a group facilitator.)
- Permission to pass
- Confidentiality

In all the groups I work in we have rules to make sure that everyone stays safe, so that no one gets hurt and so that we all have a chance to talk. We need to make rules for our group. What rules do you think we should have?

When the children make suggestions, make sure they are appropriate and help the children to generalize them. For example if a child says “no punching” you can generalize this to include no hurting in a variety of ways.

Write the rules down. When you are dealing with young children, it is important to have a limited number of rules. You may wish to create symbols to go with each written rule to serve as a reminder of the rules for the children who cannot read. After the list has been written, have the children sign the list, trace their hand on the list, or make a mark on the list as a way of showing that they have agreed to the rules. Hang the rules list in the group room each week.

If some necessary rules are not been raised by the children, they should be brought up by group facilitators and added to the list.

The children may need help understanding some rules such as confidentiality.

We are going to be talking about all kinds of things in this group. Some of the things we talk about are very personal, so we have a rule that what other people say in the group is private. You can tell your family and friends what you do in the group and what you said in the group but you are not allowed to tell what the other children said in the group. The group leaders won't tell other people what anyone says in the group. We won't tell your Mom or Dad or teacher all about what you said. There is one time we break the rule. If we think that someone in the group is not safe, is getting hurt, or that something is happening that shouldn't be then we will tell someone to try and make sure that everyone stays safe and doesn't get hurt. (It will help if after explaining confidentiality, you can get the children to explain it in their own words. You can use their language when writing down the rule.) What do you think we should call this rule?

³ Information related to setting consequences can be found in “Getting Ready for your Playing with Rainbows Group” and “Managing Problems in a Playing with Rainbows Group”.

Group facilitators will be having Caregivers' Sessions in which group information will be shared. It would be too confusing to try and explain this to the children at this point. Instead, this issue should be discussed in the group prior to the Caregivers' Sessions. At that time group facilitators should let the children know what group information they will be sharing in Caregivers' Sessions. If you plan to show the caregivers any of the children's work, ask the children's permission.

When reviewing the group rules, you may wish to let the children know what will happen if they break the rules³.

Centering

Each week, following Check In, a brief centering exercise will be completed to help the children relax before they begin the work for the day. At this point in the first session, the children have been sitting for some time and it is suggested that the centering activity be kept very brief. You may wish to have the children get up and walk around the circle or around the room a few times before you begin this exercise.

Have the children sit in a circle and practice deep breathing (deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth.)

One of the things we are going to try and learn in this group is how to calm ourselves down, how to relax. Before we try this, I want you all to get up and stretch. Reach for the sky. Touch your toes. Now, walk to a wall and pretend you are going to push it over. O.K. come back and sit down inside the circle again.

Today we are going to practice breathing deeply. Close your eyes if you want to. Now pretend you are going to try to blow out a candle. This is a special candle and you have to blow it gently. Hold up your finger and pretend it is a candle. Take a deep breath in through your nose. Now slowly, slowly let out the air out of your mouth to make the candle go out. Try to gently tickle your finger with the air. (The children may become silly at this point. Have group facilitators go around and try to help each child gently breath in and out. You may wish to use another image rather than a candle, i.e. blowing bubbles, ruffling the petals on a flower.)

Topic and Activity of the Day

Getting to Know Each Other Activity

Choose from among the "Getting to Know Each Other" activities listed at the end of this chapter. There are a number of quiet exercises that can be used to help group members get to know each other. However, because much of the group so far has involved sitting and talking, it is suggested that an exercise involving physical activity be chosen at this point.

Creation of Comfort Objects

The children will be involved in making or choosing comfort objects to keep with them in all group sessions. If time allows, it is preferable for the basic comfort object to have been created by group facilitators and for the children to be involved in decorating the comfort object and making it their own. The directions that you provide at this point will depend on the type of Comfort Objects you have chosen to use in the group.

³ The different types of Comfort Objects that can be created are outlined in "Getting Ready for your Playing with Rainbows Group".

Discussion

Have the children introduce and explain their Comfort Objects.

Now we are going to show each other our (pillows, puppets etc.). You can tell us all about it, (how you decorated it, why you chose it). Who wants to go first?

It is highly recommended that the comfort objects be left with group facilitators between groups. Otherwise, some children will forget to bring them and the comfort objects will be less valuable as a tool during group sessions. After the children have introduced their comfort objects the group facilitator can show the children the special bag or box where the objects will be kept between sessions. The Comfort Objects should be collected at the end of each session.

Story Creation

At this point in the session each week, the children will be involved in activities which contribute to the creation of a story. At the end of the group, the children will have created a complete story.

Introduce the children to the idea of story creation.

Each week we are going to spend some time working on a story. We are going to do a little bit each time we meet. By the end of our group, we will have made a whole story. Today we are going to listen to a story to help us get ready to make up our own story.

Choose a story to read to the group. You may wish to select a story that contains a "Canadian" theme and use this to briefly reaffirm the fact that all the children have migrated to Canada. If one of the group facilitators has moved to Canada from another country, she or he could select a story from her or his country of origin and briefly allude to the migration process. If you are working with young children who may have difficulty continuing to sit still after the earlier quiet activities, you may wish to select a story that would allow the children to engage in some physical activity (e.g. You could read "Jack and the Beanstalk" and have the children pretend they are climbing the beanstalk and running away from the giant).

Relaxing and Review

During this portion of each session, the children will be involved in a relaxation exercise and in reviewing what they have done in the group.

It is suggested that music be used in this portion of each session. Choose soothing, relaxing music to use. This may be a good time to use music from the children's countries of origin. For this session, have the children choose a space in the room and make themselves comfortable. The children may be able to get most comfortable if they are not confined to the circle. Play the music and encourage the children to practice the deep breathing they learned earlier. Let this continue for a minute or two until the children appear relaxed and then invite them back to the circle.

Let the children know that group is almost over for the day. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Do you have anything you want to say or anything you want to ask about our meeting today?

SESSION 1 – GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Each week, invite the children to evaluate the group using their fingers and make note of their ratings.

Every time we meet, I want you guys to tell us what you thought about the group. We are going to use your fingers. If you hold up five fingers like this (hold up one hand all fingers outstretched) it means the group was fantastic, wonderful and amazing. If you hold up no fingers like this (hold up one hand with no fingers outstretched) it means the group was terrible. The more fingers you hold up, the more you like the group. Does everyone understand? O.K. I want you each to hold up your fingers and show me how you felt about the group today. (You may want to go around and have some of the children explain their rating to make sure they understood the concept. However, you must be careful when you do this so that the children do not feel they have to change their rating to please you).

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

Tell the children that you will be holding a session for caregivers in the near future. Provide them with an overview of what will be discussed and let them know if you will be sharing any of their work.

If you have decided to use homework in your group, let the children know what their assignment is. For this session, ask them to draw or cut out a picture of something that makes them feel happy.

Snack and Social Time

Snack is provided to the children and they are allowed to socialize with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

When everyone is finished their snack, bring the children back to the circle for a goodbye. Have the children place their Comfort Objects in the bag or box where they will be stored.

Choose an exercise that you will use to say goodbye each week. This provides predictability and consistency for the children and signals to them that the group is over. Different ways to end the group are listed in the "Goodbye Activities" at the end of this chapter.

Once the group is over, the children can play quietly with toys or read books until they are picked up. If the children need assistance, help them collect their things and support them as they reconnect with the adult who has come to pick them up.

Check In Activities

A variety of Check In exercises are listed below. In general, the children are involved in talking about or showing how they are feeling at the beginning of the group and are then asked if there is anything they would like to share about their last week. They may wish to talk about good or bad things that have happened since the last group.

Verbal Check In

Children are invited to talk about how they are feeling and are asked if there is anything they would like to share about their last week.

Feelings Faces Poster

Children are asked to walk to the poster and point out the face that shows how they are feeling. They are given an opportunity to talk about their feeling and asked if there is anything they would like to share about their last week.

Feelings Faces

Create a fabric face with facial features that attach to it using velcro. Create facial features that can represent a variety of feelings. Pass the materials around and have the children create a face to represent how they are feeling on this day. After the children have talked about this feeling, the children are invited to talk about their past week.

Feelings Puzzle

In the infant section of some toy stores you can find puzzles of animals which include different feelings faces. The puzzle can be passed around and the children asked to arrange the puzzle to show how they are feeling. After they share their puzzle arrangement with the group, the children can talk about their past week.

Positive Statements

Rather than starting the group by talking about their feelings, the children could be asked to say one good thing about themselves and then talk about what has happened in the past week.

Getting to Know Each Other Activities

The purpose of these exercises is for the children to share more information about themselves and get to know each other a little better. The age and personality of the children in your group will influence whether you want to select an active or quiet exercise. Make sure the children in your group will have the skills to participate in the activity you choose (i.e. catch a ball).

Same and Different

This activity requires a fairly large space in which the children can run from one side of the room to another. The group facilitator calls out a characteristic (i.e. "has a brother", "has blond hair", "name starts with S"). All the children who have that characteristic run to one side of the room. The children who do not fit that characteristic run to the other side of the room. When planning this activity, group facilitators should select characteristics that allow for different groupings of children. This will help the children recognize what they have in common with others in the group.

Tossing the Ball

Have the children stand in a circle. Use a soft ball such as a Nerf ball to ensure that no one gets hurt. The children throw the ball to each other and ask a question of the person who catches the ball (i.e. Where do you go to school? Do you have a brother? What is your favorite T.V. program?). Group facilitators can help the children come up with questions. Since this activity involves children choosing another person in the group to throw the ball to, group facilitators should be involved in the game and should ensure that no child is left out.

Bag of Favourite Things

Children are asked to create a bag of their favourite things (i.e. food, colour, animal, T.V. show, movie, story, sport). This can be done by giving children a brown paper bag and cards with the categories marked on them. Children then draw their favourite things on the cards and put them in the bag. The children could be given the sheet found at the end of this chapter and asked to draw in their favourite things.

Things I am Good At

The children are asked to draw a picture of three things they are good at and then share their pictures with the group.

Making the Talking Stick

Show the children the stick that will be used as the group's "talking stick". Give each child a white paper disk and some ribbon. Have them write about or draw a picture of something they are good at on the disk and decorate it with their favourite colours. After they have shared their work with the group, have them tie it onto the talking stick with ribbon. You could also have the children draw or cut out flags from their countries of origin to decorate the stick with. Working together on the "talking stick" gives the message that it belong to the group as a whole.

Goodbye Activities

These are short activities whose purpose is to mark the ending of each group session.

Poem, Song or Saying

Teach the children a short poem, song or phrase that you say as a group at the end of each session.

Squeezing Hands

Stand in a circle holding hands. One group facilitator starts the exercise by passing a gentle squeeze and saying goodbye to a child beside her or him. That child says goodbye to the person behind him and passes the squeeze along. This continues until the squeeze makes its way back to the group facilitator who started it.

Picking Up the Circle

The group can be ended by having the children reverse the process of creating the circle. After the circle has been cleared up, have everyone say goodbye together.

Goodbye Call

Have all the children put one hand into the centre of the circle, touching each other. Count to three and then all yell goodbye together.

A BAG OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

NAME _____

TOY	FOOD
T.V. SHOW	COLOUR
DRINK	STORY

SESSION 1 – HOMEWORK SHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please *draw or cut out a picture of something that makes you feel happy* and bring it to this meeting.

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 2 - FEELINGS

Objectives:

- 1) To allow the children to practice talking about feelings in the group setting.
- 2) To help the children identify and label feelings.
- 3) To assist the children in finding appropriate ways to express their feelings.

Preparation:

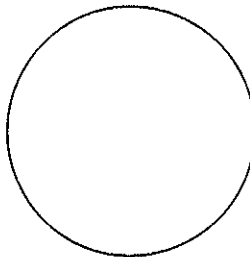
- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Review of Group Rules
 - Centering
 - Feelings Activity
 - Story Creation
 - Music for relaxation
 - Snacks
- 3) Prepare the story for Story Creation.

Welcoming the Children

As the children arrive, greet them and direct them to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

Creating the Circle

In this session, the children will again create the large circle for group members to sit inside. Use the same method of creating this circle that you did in the first session. After the children have created the circle, have them collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down in the circle.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Make sure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute. Ask the children if they have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the last group.

Review Group Rules

Have your list of group rules available. Ask the children if they remember the group rules. Allow them to come up with as many of the rules as they can remember. When the children have run out of ideas, bring out the list of rules and go through it with them. Make sure that the children also remember the general consequences for breaking the rules that were outlined in the first session.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. It is suggested that you involve some simple visualization as part of this session's exercise. However, it is important to recognize that young children may have difficulty manipulating complex visualizations. Ensure that the visual images you choose will not be frightening or overwhelming for the children. While the forest may be a relaxing image for some children it may be anxiety provoking for others if the war or fighting to which they were exposed took place in the forest. If you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one listed here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities.

I want you all to get comfortable in the circle. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Remember what we learned last week. Breathe in slowly through your nose and gently out through your mouth. Imagine that in your mind you can see a quiet lake. A gentle breeze is blowing. There is a bird in the sky and the sun is shining brightly. Imagine you are lying beside the lake, breathing slowly, in and out, in and out. You feel warm and cozy lying in the sun beside the lake, breathing in and out, in and out. Keep breathing in and out, in and out. Feel the sun and the gentle breeze. Breathe in and out, in and out. When you are ready, say goodbye to the lake and slowly open your eyes. Sit up.

Remember to give your directions slowly, pausing often and giving the children time to imagine the scene. Breathe slowly in and out yourself as you are giving the breathing instructions to make sure you are not speaking too quickly.

If the children are fidgeting or giggling, this may be a sign that the visualization is not being effective. In this case you may need to simplify your exercise. Some children may have difficulty creating the images in their minds. However, if they are sitting comfortably and relaxing as they breathe slowly, they will still benefit from the exercise.

¹ For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources."

Topic and Activity of the Day

Review of Homework

Give the children a chance to share the homework pictures they brought in with them.

Does anyone remember the homework from last week? (Give the children a chance to answer. If no one answers, continue the discussion yourself). We asked you draw or cut out a picture of something that makes you feel happy. Who has a picture they would like to show us? (Have the children share their pictures with the group and encourage them to talk briefly about their pictures. If some children did not bring pictures, give them an opportunity to talk about things that make them feel happy.)

Introduce “Feelings” as the topic of the day. Involve the children in a general discussion about feelings.

Today we are going to be talking about all kinds of feelings. Does anyone know the name of any feelings? (Write down the children’s answers and encourage them to provide other answers.) Can you think of any other feelings? How would you feel if it was your birthday? How do you feel when you fall down and hurt your knee? What does it feel like when someone calls you a name? (By the end of this discussion you want to have a list which covers a variety of feelings. Make sure you include: Happy, Sad, Angry, Scared, Worried, Love, and Excited.)

Feelings Activity

Lead the children through the Feelings Activity you have selected for the day. A variety of Feelings Activities are outlined at the end of this chapter.

Discussion

The discussion related to feelings may take place during the Feelings Activity or after it has been completed. This will depend on the activity you have selected and whether time is allowed for discussion as the activity progresses. Your discussion about feelings could focus on any of the following areas, depending on the needs of the children in the group:

- What are feelings? Where do feelings come from?
- How are feelings expressed?
- How can you cope with feelings (i.e. What helps if you are feeling sad? What do you need if you are feeling mad? What makes you feel good/happy/wonderful?)

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for “Story Time”.

At this point in the group process, you are still introducing the children to the idea of participating in creating a story. In this session, provide the children with the opportunity to join in the telling of a story by identifying characters’ feelings.

You may either select a children’s story that has been written by someone else or write your own. Write or select a story in which the characters have a wide variety of experiences. While you are reading the story add in questions about how the characters are feeling.

Remember last week I told you we were all going to work together to make up a story? Today we are going to practice by guessing what the people in a story are feeling. Are you ready? OK Listen carefully as I read the story: “One morning in Maine, Sal work up. She peeked over top of the covers. The bright sunlight made her blink, so she pulled the covers up and was just about to go back to sleep when she remembered “today is the day I am going to Buck’s Harbor with my father!”. Sal pushed back the covers, hopped out of bed, put on her robe and slippers, and hurried out into the hall.” What did Sal feel about going to Buck’s Harbor? “Sal and Jane put on their life preservers while their father prepared to start the outboard motor. He pulled and pulled on the rope to start it, but the outboard motor just coughed and sputtered and wouldn’t start.” I wonder how Sal’s father felt when he couldn’t start the boat motor. How do you think he felt? ...

Relaxing and Review

Before you start the relaxation, have the children talk about things that make them feel happy. Listen for images that you can build into the relaxation. Have the children practice deep breathing, giving them a variety of their happy moments to think about as they breathe. You may choose to play some music during this exercise.

We are going to have a quiet moment now. Find a place to get comfortable. You can sit down or lie down, whatever makes you feel comfortable. OK, let’s do some deep breathing. Close your eyes, now breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Slowly, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Think a little bit about the happy moments we talked about. Imagine that you are licking an ice cream cone....Think about going to a toy store and getting a new toy....Imagine someone is giving you a wonderful hug. Keep breathing slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth, in and out, in and out. When you feel ready, open your eyes, come back to the circle and sit quietly.

Remember to talk slowly. Give the children time to imagine the things you are talking about. It may help if you breathe slowly in and out as you are speaking.

If you used the “Feelings Rainbow” as the Feelings Activity in this session, you may wish to replace the above relaxation exercise with one which focuses on the visualization of a rainbow.

When the children have come back to the circle, let them know that the group is almost over for the day and that it will be snack time in a moment. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn’t like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

² The text inside the quotes is taken from *One Morning in Maine*, written by Robert McCloskey and published by Penguin Books Canada Ltd., © Robert McCloskey, 1980.

SESSION 2 – FEELINGS

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to bring in a photograph from the country they used to live in. Tell the children that if they do not have any photos, they can draw a picture or bring in a picture from a magazine.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. This should be the same Goodbye Activity that you used in Session 1. You will continue to use this activity throughout the group. After the exercise, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds them.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

Feelings Activities

One of the goals of Feelings Exercises is to increase the children's feelings vocabulary. As a result it is useful to include a variety of feelings words in the exercises. In most cases, these should be words the children tend to be familiar with (happy, angry, sad, scared) as well as a few new ones (frustrated, worried, upset, excited, love, important, cared for). Be creative. There are a wide range of feelings words out there. With a little bit of thought, it is possible to come up with a feelings word starting with every letter of the alphabet with the exception of "x". The number and complexity of the words you use should be determined by the age of the children and their language skills. For very young children or those with limited language skills you will want to use a limited number of feelings words.

In most Feelings Exercises, the children will be asked questions to facilitate their discussion of the feelings. A number of questions that might be used are listed below:

- 1) Define the feeling. What does that feeling mean? (Before the children answer questions about the feeling, it is recommended that they define it to ensure that you have a common understanding of what the word means.)
- 2) When was the last time you felt ...?
- 3) Talk about a time you felt ...
- 4) If the child says that she or he never has a particular feeling, ask her or him to guess what might make her or him feel that way or to make up something that would make her or him feel that way.
- 5) What makes your (Mom, Dad, friend, teddy bear ...) feel sad/mad/happy? (This question can be used to help the children discuss a variety of feelings and helps them develop an understanding of the feeling by looking at the different types of situations that generate the feeling.)
- 6) What do you do when you feel ...?
- 7) How can you show people that you feel ...?
- 8) What does your body do when you feel ...? (It will help children identify their feelings if they become more aware of their bodies' reactions to particular feelings)
- 9) What does your (Mom, Dad, friend, teddy bear ...) do when they feel? (This question will help the children explore different ways of expressing their feelings.)
- 10) What are other things you could do if you feel ...? (This question can be used to help children develop more appropriate ways of expressing their feelings.)
- 11) What do you need/want when you feel ...? (These questions help children consider different ways of coping with their feelings.)
- 12) What would help when you feel? (This question also helps children think about different ways to cope with their feelings.)
- 13) What can you do to get more of that feeling? (This question can be asked when talking about positive feelings. It helps children develop strategies for coping with difficult situations.)

Feelings Grab Bag

A variety of feelings are written on index cards which are placed in a bag (You can use a wrapping paper bag or a draw string bag). If children have difficulty reading, you may wish to include a feelings face on the card and have group facilitators help the children read the card. Pass the bag around and have a child pull out a card. When the child has taken a card have them define the feeling and then answer two or three questions asked by one of the group facilitators. Usually each child in the group answers the same set of questions. To make this a more active game, ask the children to act out the feeling before they talk about it. The other children and group facilitators can guess what feeling the child is acting out. Since some feelings are difficult to act out, one group facilitator can help the child with their acting. After the group has guessed what feeling the child is acting out, the child can define the feeling and answer their two or three questions.

Feelings Masks

Give the children mask making materials and ask them to make masks to reflect a feeling. You may let the children choose what feeling to portray on their masks or you may assign each child a feeling to portray. Involve the children in some drama using their masks. Either you can have each child use the mask she or he made or put all the masks in a pile and have each child take a mask to use. Once the child has a mask to use, have them act out a scene involving the feeling on the mask. The children may need some guidance from group facilitators to get their scenes going. If group facilitators take turns using the masks they can model different ways of acting out feelings. Have the other children and group facilitators guess what feeling the child is portraying. After each child's turn, talk about the feeling that was on the mask: When was the last time the children had that feeling? What do the children do when they have that feeling? What do they need when they have that feeling? etc.

Feelings Puppets

The children are involved in using puppets that portray a variety of feelings. Each child can choose a puppet and put on a play incorporating the feeling of the puppet into the story. Children may need assistance in developing their stories. It may help if group facilitators take the first few turns to show the children examples of ways to use the puppets. After each skit is finished talk with the children about the feeling that was portrayed. Ask if the puppet could have done something else when she or he was having the feeling? Talk to the children about times they have the feeling and what they do when they are feeling that way.

Feelings Graphs

Provide the children with a blank Feelings Graph (an example is included at the end of this chapter) and make sure they know the meanings of all the feelings. Ask the children to pick a colour to go with each feeling. Tell them to make a line to show how big each feeling is in their life. The biggest line is for the biggest feeling in their life and the smallest line is for the smallest feeling in their life. When all the children have finished working on their graphs, bring them back to the group. Talk about which feeling is biggest, which is smallest, which feeling the children would like to have smaller, which feeling the children would like to have bigger, which feeling the children need help with etc.

The Feelings Sponge Game³

To get ready for this game, group facilitators must make a construction paper target using a variety of colours. The easiest way to make this target is to tear pieces of construction paper in half and then tape the various pieces together to make a large rectangle. Group facilitators must then make a number of feelings cards of each colour. To play the game, the children throw a damp sponge at the target. When they hit a square, they pick a card of the same colour and talk about the feeling listed on the card (If children miss the target they get to throw again. If they hit two squares they get to choose one of those two colours. While black squares can be used on the target, it is hard to write on the black cards. As a result it is suggested that if children hit a black square they are allowed to pick any colour card they want.) Group facilitators can ask each child to define the feeling on the card she or he has chosen and then ask two or three other questions about the feeling. If a black board is available, the target can be drawn in coloured chalk.

Feelings in My Body⁴

Group facilitators and volunteers should help each child make a body tracing. This can be done by having the children lie down on a piece of paper or stand against paper on the wall. Since this activity requires physical closeness and can be perceived as intrusive by children who have been sexually assaulted or physically harmed, it is recommended that group facilitators clearly explain what they intend to do and then demonstrate the process of body tracing using a doll or a teddy bear. Ask each child if they want to make a body tracing and give her or him a choice of whether to make the tracing lying down or standing against the wall. If there are children who are not comfortable making a body tracing, you can provide them with a standard body form that you have created in advance or have them trace their hands or feet.

After the body tracing has been created, have the group associate colours with particular feelings. Ask the children, as a group, to come up with one colour to represent each of the following feelings: happy, sad, angry, love, scared. On a large sheet write down the feeling, draw a simple feeling face to represent that feeling and show the colour that the children have chosen to associate with that feeling. Hang this up so that the children can refer to it during the rest of the exercise.

Have the children colour in their body tracings. On one side of the body tracing they can draw their clothing and face. Using the colours that were identified above, have the children colour in the other side of the body tracing to represent the feelings that they have inside. You may want to ask them to think about where in their body they feel particular feelings and use the colours to mark these specific places.

After the children have finished their work, have them share it with the group.

Showing My Feelings

The purpose of this exercise is to have the children focus on body language and facial expressions that are used to express a variety of feelings. Have a number of long mirrors around the room. Divide the children into groups so that there are two or three children in front of each mirror. Ask the children to practice showing their feelings using their bodies. Call out a feeling and have the children take turns portraying that feeling in front of the mirror. Encourage them to look in the mirror when they and the other children are having turns. When all the children have had a turn with the first feeling you named, call out a second feeling. Repeat this process for a variety of feelings.

³ This activity was originally taught to Bridget Revell by Dr. Susan Meyers.

⁴ This activity was described by Chitra Sekhar who uses it in groups for pre-schoolers who have witnessed family violence.

After the first part of the exercise you could bring the children back to the group and play a guessing game. A group facilitator would whisper a feeling into one child's ear. That child would act out the feeling using body language and facial expressions. The rest of the group would take turns guessing what feeling is being shown. Continue until all the children have had a chance to portray a feeling.

Feelings Rainbow

Create a story using the Playing with Rainbows Story Outline below (An example of a Feelings Rainbow Story follows this outline). In the story give the main character a variety of experiences which generate a number of different feelings. When the character sees the rainbow, have her or him match her or his feelings with the colours of the rainbow. When you have finished telling the story have the children make rainbows, associating their feelings with the different colours they use. Rainbows can be made by tying strips of fabric together, gluing fabric on paper, stringing beads, drawing or painting. If rainbows are made with small enough strips of fabric, they can be stored in film canisters and carried by the children as comfort objects. Have the children come back to the group and talk about their rainbows after they have finished making them. Let the children talk about the different feelings in their rainbows, when they have these feelings and how they cope with these feelings.

*The Playing with Rainbows Story Outline*⁵

"Playing with Rainbows" stories can be adapted to a variety of situations. There are many opportunities to get the children's input as you develop the story which makes the story more relevant to them.

- 1) Before you begin telling the story, decide what the colours of the rainbow will represent (i.e. feelings, people, safe places etc.)
- 2) Open by introducing and describing the main character
 - Usually the main character will be someone with whom the children can relate (i.e. similar age, experiences, likes and dislikes), unless this is too threatening for them.
- 3) Outline the main character's day, building on themes that will allow the rainbow to be introduced as a solution.

For example:

- Feelings - introduce experiences which generate different feelings and have the colours of the rainbow represent these feelings.
- Safe Place, Personal Space - describe experiences which demonstrate why the main character needs a safe place to relax in, which is just for her or him.
- Goodbyes\Endings - Have the main character visit places, people, experiences that she or he is saying goodbye to. Associate the colours of the rainbow with these.
- Beginnings - Develop the story so that the main character meets and is welcomed by new people or visits new places. Associate the colours of the rainbow with these people and places.
- Support System - Have the main character seek help with a problem and then meet different people to help her or him with the problem.

⁵ This outline was originally developed by Bridget Revell, M.S.W. for use in a conference sponsored by The Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy.

- 4) Have the main character take a walk to think about or get away from the experiences of the day. Describe the setting in which the main character walks. Talk about the rain and then the sun coming out to create the rainbow.
- 5) Associate the rainbow with the message you have chosen for it to represent (e.g. the character looks at the rainbow and the colours make her or him think about all the feelings she or he had that day or all the people that helped her or him that day). Have the main character retrieve the rainbow. Describe how the main character uses the rainbow in the future.

Fatima's Rainbow⁶

In this example of a "Playing with Rainbows" story, the rainbow represents the feelings Fatima has during her day.

Fatima was a young girl with brown eyes, curly black hair and shiny white teeth. On most days, Fatima would get up, put on a T-shirt and her favourite scruffy overalls. And that is exactly what she put on the morning that this story begins.

Fatima woke up to the shrill cry of her alarm. Her mother was standing beside her bed. She kissed Fatima, brushed the hair out of Fatima's eyes and said "Come on, my darling. If you don't get up now, you will be late for school." Fatima dragged herself out of bed and looked out the window. It was a cold, grey morning. She shivered as she put on a striped T-shirt and those favourite scruffy overalls.

Fatima tried to get ready for school and eat her breakfast quickly but she missed the bus anyway. Fatima asked her mother to drive her to school but her mother said "No, you know I don't drive very well yet and I don't want to take your baby brother out in that cold." Fatima asked if her father could drive her to school but her mother said "Your father is at work. He went in for the early shift and he won't be home until late tonight. You will just have to walk to school."

Fatima stood on the front step of her apartment building and buttoned her jacket up. She wished she could find a way to stop the cold wind from sneaking between the buttons and making her shiver. She walked to school, dragging her school bag behind her. There were some other kids walking along the road with her but they didn't talk to her. Fatima felt a little scared as she walked, the cars and buses seemed so big and noisy. Fatima got to school just in time. The bell was ringing and she ran straight to her class.

Just as she got to her desk, Fatima remembered that the day started with spelling. She hated spelling, she felt so stupid when she couldn't figure out the new English words. She put her hand up but the teacher wasn't looking, so she tried it on her own. Fatima put her hand up again but the teacher was helping John, so Fatima decided to try by herself again. She put her hand up one more time and the teacher said "Not now Fatima, it is time for gym, I'll help you with it later."

After gym it was time for recess. Fatima found Liz and Ann. They all ran outside to play a skipping game. Fatima laughed and smiled as she talked and skipped with her friends. Recess was such fun.

In the afternoon, it was time for science. The class was talking about animals. Everyone listened when Fatima talked about the animals from the country she used to live in. She felt so proud.

⁶ The ideas incorporated into *Fatima's Rainbow* were provided by Chitra Sekhar

Fatima was glad when the bell rang at the end of the school day. When she got home, her mother gave her a wonderful warm hug and they talked about the day at school.

Fatima went to her room. She felt tired. Talking about the animals at school had made her think about home, not this new home but the other home, her old country, the place she used to live. Fatima started feeling homesick. She missed so many things. She especially missed her grandpa and her favourite cousin Sara. Fatima looked around and thought, "This apartment is so small. There is nothing to do. I want to get out of here." She put on an extra sweater, buttoned up her jacket again and decided to go for a walk.

As she walked, Fatima thought about how different things used to be. She knew she had to leave her country because of the fighting, but she missed it. She thought about the games she played with her cousin Sara, the trees and animals she used to see everyday and her grandpa's laugh. As Fatima walked it started to rain. She thought about going back to the apartment, but it was so small and she didn't want to listen to her baby brother crying, so she kept walking. She walked until she came to a big green hill she had never seen before.

Fatima sat on the hill and looked around. In one corner of the sky, the sun was slowly, slowly working its way out from behind a cloud. When the sun finally broke through, it brought with it a beautiful rainbow which spread across the sky in front of Fatima. It was just like the rainbows her grandpa showed her when she was little.

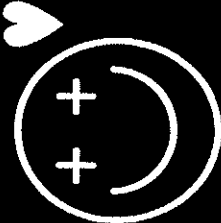





Fatima looked up at the rainbow and was filled with all kinds of feelings. One colour reminded her of how mad she was when she had to walk to school. Another colour made her think of how lonely and scared she was as she walked. There was another colour that reminded her of how stupid and frustrated she felt in spelling class. The best colour was the one that made her think of how happy she was when she was talking and skipping with Liz and Ann. The colour at the top of the rainbow reminded her of how proud she felt when she told her class everything she knew about the animals in her old country. When she looked at the colour on the bottom of the rainbow, Fatima could feel her mother's love, hugs and kisses.

The rainbow made Fatima feel good. Seeing the rainbow was like seeing her grandpa himself. She watched the rainbow for the longest time and then she started jumping. She jumped and she jumped and she jumped with her arms stretched towards the sky. Finally, just before Fatima was out of breath and could not jump any more, she touched the rainbow. She held onto it gently and pulled it out of the sky.

Fatima wrapped the rainbow around herself. The rainbow held Fatima and made a safe place just for her. Fatima felt good. After sitting with the rainbow for a long, long time and thinking about all her feelings, Fatima got up, folded the rainbow and put it in her pocket.

Now, whenever Fatima wants to think about her feelings, or she needs a space for herself to get away from her brother's crying, or if she wants a quiet place to read her book or practice her spelling, Fatima wraps the rainbow around herself and the rainbow holds her tight. When Fatima looks at her rainbow, she thinks of the rainbows she used to see with her grandpa. She sends messages to her grandpa, her cousin Sara and the animals in her old home. To her, it's one long rainbow connecting her new home with the old, so that she can get the best of both.

FEELINGS GRAPH

	 LOVE
	 SCARED
	 EXCITED
	 ANGRY
	 SAD
	 HAPPY

SESSION 2 – HOMEWORK SHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please bring a photograph from the country that you used to live in to this meeting. If you do not have a photograph available you could bring a magazine picture or draw your own picture.

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 3 – PRE-MIGRATION AND MIGRATION

Objectives:

- 1) To provide the children with an opportunity to discuss their pre-migration and migration experiences.
- 2) To assist the children in exploring their feelings connected to pre-migration and migration.
- 3) To have the children consider the losses and gains associated with pre-migration and migration.

Preparation:

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - World Map with dots noting children's countries of origin
 - Rainbow Seed Story
 - Migration Activity
 - Story Creation
 - Music and scarves for relaxation
 - Snacks
- 3) There may be some children in the group who are too young to remember their migration journey. Other children may have only sketchy memories of their journey. As a result, it is important that before this session, you have a clear understanding of each child's migration journey and that you have some information about their country of origin. Much of the information you need can be provided by the child's current caregivers. The type of information that you need will depend on the Migration Activity that you have chosen to use during the session. If you are not able to get specific information about the migration journey select one of the Migration Activities that does not depend on this information (Wishes on the Wind, Feelings about Migration, The People in My Life, Canada is Different, _____ and Canada).

Welcoming the Children

As the children arrive, greet them and direct them to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

Creating the Circle

In this session, the children will start by creating the large circle for group members to sit inside. Use the same method of creating this circle that has been used in the last two sessions. After the large circle has been created, have the children create small circles to mark their places around the larger circle.

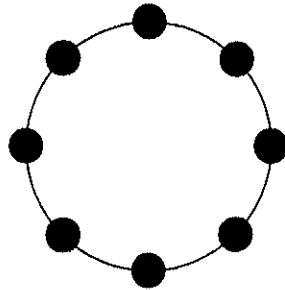
The directions that follow could be used if the children were creating the group circles with ribbon and fabric. Group facilitators should have a variety of pre-cut fabric circles available to use.

Now that we have made the big circle, let's make smaller circles to show where we all sit. I want each of you to pick one of these circles (Show the children the fabric circles). You can pick any colour you want. Take the circle back to your spot and put it down where you are sitting. Now we have a big circle that we all sit inside and little circles that show where we have been sitting.

After the children have created the circles, have them collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down in the circle again.

When the children come back to the circle for group discussions, it is not necessary for them to always sit in the same place. Interactions between group members will be freer and more spontaneous if the children can change places in the circle and sit beside different children or group facilitators. Explain this to the children when you call them back to the circle later in the group.

Let's go back to our circle and sit down. It doesn't matter what little circle you sit on. The little circles are for us all to share. They show us where anyone in the group can sit.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Make sure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute. Ask the children if they have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the last group.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. In keeping with the session topic of migration, you may choose to include an image related to a journey in your visualization. You may wish to incorporate an animal from one of the children's countries of origin in the visualization. You could choose an animal that is known as a traveller or which makes a regular migratory journey (camel, deer, elephants etc.). Based on your knowledge of the children and their experiences, make sure that you choose images that will not be frightening or overwhelming for the children. If you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one listed here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities¹.

Prior to leading the children through this exercise show them some pictures of Canadian Geese and talk about their migratory journey.

I want you all to get comfortable in the circle. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Remember to breathe in slowly through your nose and gently out through your mouth. Imagine that you are lying in a big field of grass. Remember to breathe in slowly through your nose and breathe out gently through your mouth. You are lying in a field of grass and the sun is shining in the sky above you. When you look up you see some Canadian geese flying across the sky. The geese are flying to their summer home. They have left their winter home and are crossing the sky to their new home. When they land, the birds will be comfortable and relaxed in their summer home. Imagine what the birds' summer home will be like. Keep breathing in slowly through your nose and out through your mouth, breathe in And breathe out. When you are ready open your eyes. (Following this visualization you might want to talk briefly with the children about the images they saw such as the number of geese or the summer home they envisioned.)

Remember to give your directions slowly, pausing often and giving the children time to imagine the scene. Breathe slowly in and out yourself as you are giving the instructions to make sure you are not speaking too quickly.

If the children are fidgeting or giggling, this may be a sign that the visualization is not being effective. In this case you may need to simplify the exercise you are using.

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce "Migration" as the topic of the day.

Today we are going to talk about moving from one country to another. Do you remember the map we used in our first group (Show the children the map that you worked on in the first session). Everyone in our group used to live in another country before they came to Canada. (Go around and ask the children what country they used to live in. Have each child find the dot or show her or him the dot which marks her or his country of origin.) Now we are all living in Canada. You all made a journey to Canada from the country you used to live in. We are going to talk about that trip today. Does anyone remember their trip to Canada? (Give the children a chance to talk about their journeys).

¹ For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources".

Review of Homework

Provide the children with an opportunity to share the homework pictures they brought in with them.

Does anyone remember the homework from last week? (Give the children a chance to answer. If no one answers, continue the discussion yourself). We asked you each to bring a photograph or a picture from the country you used to live in. Who has a picture to show us? (Have the children share their pictures with the group. Encourage the children to talk briefly about their pictures. Then talk about the different types of pictures -i.e. photos, magazine pictures, drawings that the children brought in and connect this to the theme of migration) Some of you brought in photographs but some of you did not have any photographs to bring. (If you are working with older children you may encourage them to guess and talk about why some children did not have photographs. When you are working with younger children, you might want to provide this information yourself. The examples you provide would depend on the experiences that you know the children in the group have had.). You know sometimes when people move from one country to another, they have to move so quickly that they don't have time to take anything with them and they have to leave their photographs behind. Did that happen to anyone here? Sometimes when people have lived near a war, their house gets burned or bombed and all their things are ruined, so they don't have any photographs. Did that happen to anyone here? There might be other reasons that people don't have photographs, can you guess what these might be? (You might want to use this last question to help the children talk about their own experiences. Give the children lots of chances to contribute during this discussion. When you let the children participate freely, you may not have to say as much or provide as many examples).

Rainbow Seed Story

Read the Rainbow Seed Story found at the end of this chapter. After you have read the story, talk about the different places the Rainbow Plant lived and link these to the different places the children stopped on their way to Canada.

The Rainbow Plant lived in three different places. First the seed fell down and started to grow, then the plant moved to a pot and at the end the plant moved to a new piece of land. You guys have all lived in different places too. Sometimes when people move from one country to another they have to stop in a refugee camp or in another country. Did anyone have to stop somewhere before they moved to Canada?

You may also want to talk about the reasons the Rainbow Plant had to move and have the children connect these to the reasons that they had to move.

The Rainbow Seed had to leave the place where it first started growing. Sometimes the sun was too hot, sometimes there was too much water and sometimes the ground was too dry. There are different reasons why people have to leave their homes. Does anyone want to talk about why they had to move? (Provide the children with an opportunity to briefly discuss the reasons for their move. Since the topic of war will be dealt with in more depth in future sessions, try to avoid the children going into too much depth about the war and conflicts at this time.)

Tracing Migration on the Map

Using the map that you used in the first session, mark the children's journeys from their country of origin to Canada on the map. Make sure to include their stops in other countries and refugee camps. You can mark the journeys using string, a marker or pen.

Let's use our map to show the journey that everyone took to get to Canada. (If one of the group facilitators or volunteers has migrated to Canada, you may wish to begin by having that person mark her or his journey. If you are working with very young children, it is suggested that you get the information about their journeys from their caregivers and then use this to mark the map). OK Sara, when you were born you lived in Bosnia. Have you lived in any other countries before you came to Canada? How did you get to Canada? Did your plane stop in any other countries? (Have the children come and stand beside the map as you are tracing their journey. Work with each child until all the journeys are marked on the map).

Migration Activity

Select one of the Migration Activities listed at the end of this chapter. When you are choosing an activity, keep in mind the children's individual experiences and the age at which they made the journey. When working with younger children who made the journey very early in their life, you may wish to select an activity that does not require the child to have detailed knowledge about her or his migration or which can be completed using information about the journey that has been provided by the child's caregivers. Have the children complete the activity you have selected.

Discussion

Much of the discussion related to migration may have taken place as the children talk about the Rainbow Seed Story, trace their journeys on the map and complete the Migration Activities. Depending on what you have already addressed, you may wish to have a group discussion to address additional issues. The issues that could be discussed include:

- feelings about migration
- memories of the journey
- people who are still in the country of origin
- how Canada is different from the country of origin

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for "Story Time".

In this session children are going to begin creating their own stories. Given the age of the children, it is recommended that you divide the children into two groups and have each group work on a story with one facilitator. Today the children will pick the main characters for their story. It is quite possible that additional characters will become part of the story as it continues to develop.

Today we are going to start working on our story. We need to figure out who the story is going to be about. The story could be about a girl or a boy, an animal or an adult. Who do you think should be in the story? (Through the conversation, try to have the children choose a main character for the story. They may also decide on some additional characters to be involved in the story. If the children are stuck then you could give them some books or magazines to go through for ideas. Depending on the age of the children, you may wish to discuss the characteristics of the characters. This would be too difficult for four and five year olds in the group.)

In order to have both groups finish this activity at the same time, it is useful if the group facilitators agree on a time frame for Story Creation. If you have time left after the children have chosen the characters for the story, let them pretend to be the characters.

Let's all pretend to be the wolf in the story. Can everyone be the wolf when he is angry? What would the wolf do when he is angry? Let's be the wolf when he is happy. What would he do when he is happy? Can you pretend to be the wolf when he is sleepy? Etc.

Keep notes detailing the information that the children have given you about the characters in the story. You will use this information to write an opening paragraph for the story after Session 5.

Relaxing and Review

Given that the children have been sitting still for much of this session, you may wish to build some activity into your relaxation exercise. For example, give each child a long scarf or piece of fabric. Play the music you have chosen for this exercise. The music should either be a slow relaxing piece of music or a piece that starts out fast and becomes slower and more relaxed over time. Invite the children to dance with their scarves in time to the music. As the music is playing you may want to give the children some minimal direction about their dancing. Keep your comments brief and leave lots of time between your comments so that the children can focus on moving to the music.

Dance with the music.... The music is fast, let your body move fast....Now the music is slowing down, slow your dance down. (Change your voice to reflect the slower music. Give this direction slowly and gently. Facilitators may wish to move beside children who are having a hard time slowing down and give them individual direction.)

Before the music ends have the children lie down with their scarves on the floor and lead them through a brief breathing exercise. You want to do this when there is a minute or two of slow, gentle music left or you may wish to select a different piece of music to accompany the breathing exercise on the floor.

Now the music is coming to an end. Find a place to lie down on the floor. Lie down gently and get comfortable. It is time to do our slow breathing. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. ...In through your nose and out through your mouth. Listen to the music as you breathe....slowly in and out...Keep breathing slowly in and out...(Remember to speak slowly and gently. If you practice slow breathing as you speak it will help to keep your instructions at the right pace.)

SESSION 3 – PRE-MIGRATION AND MIGRATION

As the music ends, give the children a moment or two to lie on the floor and then invite them back to the circle.

When the children have come back to the circle, let them know that group is almost over for the day and that it is almost snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to bring in a picture of their family. They can draw this picture or bring in a photograph.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. After this, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds these.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

The Rainbow Seed²

Once upon a time there was a small, beautiful seed. This seed glimmered and shone with all the colours of the rainbow. The shining seed fell to the ground and she started to nestle into the earth, sending out many coloured roots. As time went on, a small glistening shoot appeared from within the soil.

The rainbow seed slowly stretched out and became a rainbow plant. There were other plants around the place the rainbow plant was growing. They watched her grow and they came to love her glittering rainbow leaves.

Like all plants, the rainbow plant needed water and sunlight, and a soft soothing breeze to ruffle her shining coloured leaves. On some days, the sun was just right, the water she needed fell softly and a soothing breeze made her coloured leaves shimmer.

But, in the place the rainbow plant had fallen, the sun was sometimes too hot. Other times, the clouds were so thick the sun couldn't reach the growing plant. Sometimes the water fell too swiftly. At other times the sky was dry for days. Sometimes the wind was still and other times the wind blew harshly so the small plant's roots could barely grip the soil. The rainbow plant's colours began to fade, her leaves began to droop and her roots began to curl up.

Someone walking past the rainbow plant saw a glimmer of colour and stopped to look. They picked her up gently and placed her in a pot. For a while the rainbow plant grew bigger and stronger. The light, the water and the breeze she needed found their way to the pot. The glistening colours of the rainbow poured out of the plant again.

As time went on, the rainbow plant grew so big that her roots were dragging out of the bottom of the pot and her leaves were hanging over the edge. It was time to move.

Someone took the rainbow plant to a new patch of land, where other plants grew. Here she sunk her shimmering roots into the soil and her glittering leaves reached towards the sky. The sun shone down gently, the water fell down slowly and the wind wisped by tenderly, just as the rainbow plant needed. The other plants around, looked at her shining colours and they came to love her.

The rainbow plant was to stay on this new piece of earth, glistening, growing and changing as time went on.

The rainbow plant had been loved by many. She will never forget the place where she first fell, where she started to grow and where her rainbow colours first appeared. The other plants, the ones who saw her first tiny roots and her first glistening shoot, still think of the rainbow plant and miss her. On the cool whistle of the wind, they send their thoughts and wishes to her, on her new piece of land.

With time, the rainbow plant has come to know the plants around her new piece of earth. Together they keep her colours glimmering and shining.

The beautiful rainbow plant is still growing

² This story was written by Bridget Revell, M.S.W. and can be used to help children explore a variety of transitions in their lives (i.e. migration, adoption, the ending of a group).

Migration Activities

If there are children in the group who only have limited memories of their migration journey, group facilitators will need to take a more active role in some of the activities described below.

Wishes on the Wind

In the Rainbow Seed Story, there is a line which says “On the cool whistle of the wind, they send their thoughts and wishes to her, on her new piece of land.” Talk about this and then talk about the messages, wishes, and thoughts that the children might want to send to people who still live in their country of origin. Children may send their wishes by blowing out a candle, blowing bubbles or blowing dandelion heads.

Candles may not be appropriate to use in this exercise if you have many young children in the group or when children’s war trauma experiences have involved fire. If you are going to use candles, it must be done with careful and close supervision. Give each child a small birthday candle and have her or him make a candle holder out of plasticine. When all the children have finished, place the candles in the holders, light the candles, turn out the lights, have the children think about the messages they want to send and who they want to send them to. Have them blow out the candle and send the messages when they are ready.

If you are going to use bubbles, give the children each a chance to blow bubbles. Have them call out their messages as the bubbles sail across the room. It will probably help if a group facilitator models this activity for the children. Please note that the bubble solution will make a wood or tile floor very slippery.

If you are going to use dandelion heads, have the children go outside and choose dandelion heads. Bring them back to the circle and then have them blow the seeds into the air as they call out the messages that they wish to send. If possible, have a facilitator model this activity for the children.

Puppet Shows

Have the children use puppets to illustrate some aspect of their migration experience. Children could act out their last day in their country of origin and their first day in Canada. You could have children show their journey using the puppets. If the children have stopped in other countries or refugee camps during their journey, they could use the puppets to show a day in their life in this other country or the refugee camp.

Build an Airplane, Train, or Boat

This activity may be particularly appealing to younger children. Have the children arrange chairs and other props in the room to make the vehicles that transported them to Canada. After the vehicle has been made, let each child take a turn being the driver and talk about the time they spent on the vehicle. The driver can tell the other children what they should do on the vehicle. Facilitators can assist the driver by encouraging her or him to tell the other children what they eat, how they sleep, etc. If the children are taking an airplane, facilitators may want to have the children act out scenes such as waiting for the plane or going through customs. Make sure that each child gets to play the role of the driver or pilot for the type of vehicle that they travelled in. This means that you may make several different vehicles during the exercise. For example, an airplane may be made first. After all the children who travelled by airplane have directed scenes, you may next make a boat, etc.

Journey Collages

Have the children make collages related to their journeys. In order to do this, you will want to have available a variety of pictures for the collages (people, modes of transportation, buildings, flags of different countries, animals from different countries etc.). After the children have finished their collages, invite them back to the circle where they will show group members their work and talk about it.

Last and First

Using two sides of the same piece of paper, children are invited to draw the last thing they remember about being in their country of origin and the first thing they remember about coming to Canada. When the children have completed their pictures, have them show them to other group members and talk about their work.

Feelings about Migration

Review the feelings activities outlined in Session 2 and use one of these to discuss the feelings generated by the migration process. For example, children could take turns using the feelings masks and act out a part of the journey that led to a particular feeling or the children could complete a feelings graph to reflect the emotions they experienced on their journey. Feelings activities are likely to be most effective when the children in the group have a personal recollection of their migration journey.

The People in My Life

Have the children complete a picture depicting the important people in their lives, both in their country of origin and in Canada. For older children you may also want them to complete a picture about the people they met during their migration. You may have the children draw, cut out magazine pictures or cut out other figures to represent the people for their picture. If you select this activity, you must ensure that it will not conflict with the activity you choose for Session 4 - Families. When the children have completed their pictures, invite them back to the circle to share and discuss them.

Canada is Different

Have the children draw a picture, act out a scene or use the puppets to illustrate the differences between their country of origin and Canada. When they have finished their work, bring the children back to the circle to show and talk about their work.

_____ and Canada

Give the children the sheet from the end of this section. The children should write the name of their country of origin in the title and squares on the page. Leaders may choose to write the country names on the pages for all the children before the group begins. Children are asked to draw pictures for each category on the sheet. When they have completed working on the sheet have them come back to the circle to talk about their work.

Feelings on the Map

This activity will provide the children with an opportunity to discuss the feelings that they associate with the different countries they have lived in, stayed in or travelled through. In preparation for this activity, group facilitators should draw a variety of feelings faces on self-adhesive stickers like the ones that are used to mark file folders. It is suggested that you make faces to represent the following feelings: Happy, Sad, Mad, Scared and Love. Make enough stickers so that each child will have three stickers for each feeling (For example, each child will have three happy face stickers, three sad face stickers etc.).

Have the children sit in a circle. Go around the circle and ask the children to place the stickers on the map that was used to trace their migration journeys.

You are going to put the stickers on the map to show the feelings that you had in the different countries you have lived in or travelled through. Who wants to start? OK Michael. Where did you feel happy? Let's put the sticker on that country. Is there any other place you have felt happy?

Allow all the children to place their Happy stickers on the map and then move onto the Mad stickers. It is suggested that you end the exercise with Love stickers. The children may wish to place more than one sticker in the same country. For example, one child may choose to put all three Sad stickers in the same country while another child may place their Sad, Mad and Scared stickers all in the same country. Some children will choose not to use all the stickers they have available to them. Remember to let the children "pass" if they don't want to talk about or work on a particular feeling.

An Imaginary Child³

Have the children create a profile of a child who has moved to Canada from a war-torn country. Depending on the number of children in your group, you may wish to divide the group into two and create two separate profiles. Ask the children to decide:

- whether the child will be a girl or a boy
- how old the child will be
- the child's country of origin
- when the child came to Canada
- how the child came to Canada
- who the child is living with
- what kinds of experiences the child had in her or his country of origin
- what kinds of things happened on the child's journey to Canada.

When the children have finished talking about the profile, invite them to draw a picture, make a model or act out a small puppet play related to the story of the child they have imagined. If the children have been working in separate groups, bring them together to share their work with each other.

The Imaginary Child that the children have created can be used as a starting point for exercises in other group sessions. For example, in Session 7 - Dreams, the children could make up dreams that the Imaginary Child has had and talk about ways to cope with these dreams. Specific ways of using The Imaginary Child in future sessions will be outlined at the end of each chapter.

³ This activity is based on an exercise used by Chitra Sekhar during training for "Playing with Rainbows: A National Play Program for At-Risk Refugee Children".

SESSION 3 - PRE-MIGRATION AND MIGRATION

_____ AND CANADA	
Weather in _____	Weather in Canada
Games in _____	Games and Toys in Canada
Animals in _____	Animals in Canada
Food in _____	Food in Canada

SESSION 3 – HOMEWORK SHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please *bring a picture of your family* to this meeting.

If you do not have a photograph available you could bring a magazine picture or draw your own picture.

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 4 – FAMILIES

Objectives:

- 1) To discuss different kinds of family structure.
- 2) To provide the children with an opportunity to discuss changes in their families.
- 3) To allow the children to contemplate family life in the future.

Many of the children who participate in a Playing with Rainbows group will have experienced changes in their family during the conflict they faced or on their migration journey. This session allows the children to explore their memories, contemplate their losses, think about the supports that are currently available in their families and look towards their future family life.

Preparation:

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - Family Activity
 - Story Creation
 - Music for relaxation
 - Snacks
- 3) If the children are going to be creating representations of their families, it is essential to ensure that you have culturally appropriate materials available (i.e. crayons, dolls and puppets reflecting a variety of skin tones or clothing styles.)
- 4) When having children complete activities related to their family, allow them to define who their “family” is. If they ask you who should be in the picture, encourage them to make this choice by saying something like: *You can decide who you want to have in your family picture.*

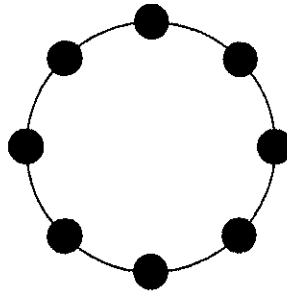
Welcoming the Children

As the children arrive, greet them and direct them to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

Creating the Circle

In this session, the children will start by create the large circle for group members to sit inside and the small circles to mark their places around the larger circle. Use the same directions that you did in Session 3.

After the children have created the circles, have them collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down in the circle. If necessary, remind the children that they do not always need to sit in the same spot.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Give all the children an opportunity to contribute. See if the children have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the last group.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. To accompany today's topic of Families you may wish to include images related to spending time with other people or being supported by other people in your visualization. Make sure that the images you suggest can be related to by all the children in the group and will not be frightening for them. As noted earlier, if you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities.

I want you all to get comfortable in the circle. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Remember to breathe in slowly through your nose and gently out through your mouth. Imagine that you are sitting on a big hill watching the sky. Keep breathing slowly, in through your nose and out through your mouth. You are sitting on a hill looking at the sky. Someone else is sitting beside you. It is someone from your family. Together you sit and watch the sky. It is nice to be together looking at the clouds in the sky and the sun in the sky. Keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Breathe in slowly and out slowly. When you are ready say goodbye to the person who has been sitting with you. Say goodbye to the sky and open your eyes. (Following this visualization you might want to talk with the children about the person they imagined they were sitting with, what they like to do with that person or what they would like to say to that person.)

¹ For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources".

Remember to give your directions slowly, pausing often and giving the children time to imagine the scene. If you breathe slowly in and out yourself as you are giving the instructions it will help to ensure that you are not speaking too quickly.

If the children are fidgeting or giggling, this may be a sign that the visualization is not being effective. In this case you may need to simplify the exercise you are using.

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce “Families” as the topic of the day.

Today we are going to talk about families. We are going to talk about all kinds of different families. There are lots of different people who are part of families like mothers and children and aunts and grandfathers. Let's make a list of the people who are in families. (Have the children brainstorm to create a list of the different people who may be found in families. If the children have difficulty with this, you may want to give them ideas by showing them magazine or book pictures about different families. For children who have difficulty reading, you could make your list using pictures. Hold up pictures of different adults and children and have the children guess who that person is in the family - i.e. grandmother, cousin, uncle, father etc. Paste the pictures on a piece of bulletin board and write the role beside them. When the group has created the list continue the conversation). You know families change a lot. Sometimes they get bigger when new babies are born or new people move into the family. One little girl I knew told me that her family got bigger when her grandmother moved in. Sometimes families get smaller when people die or move away. I knew a little boy who told me that his brother died and this made his family smaller. Can anyone think of other ways that families get bigger or smaller? (Provide the children with the opportunity to share ideas)

Review of Homework

Ask the children to share and talk about the homework pictures they brought with them.

Let's talk about your families. Maybe we can use your homework pictures. Does anyone have a picture they want to show us? (Have the children share their pictures and talk about who is in their family. The children who do not have pictures should also be invited to talk about their families.) Remember that I said families change, get bigger and get smaller. (At this point you want the children to talk about how their families have changed. Any of the following questions may help start this conversation.) Has anyone's family changed since they moved to Canada? Was anyone's family different in the country they used to live in? Sometimes when people move from one country to another, people in their family stay in the first country. Has that happened to any of you? Sometimes living near fighting or in a war changes families. Has that happened for any of you? (Allow the conversation to continue as the children talk about changes in their family. Some of these changes may be connected to the war and migration while other changes may have happened since the children moved to Canada.)

Family Activities

Select from the Family Activities listed at the end of this chapter. Depending on their length, you may wish to have the children complete two activities, one focusing on their current family situation and one concentrating on the family they would like to have in the future. Have the children complete the activities you have selected.

Discussion

Much of the discussion related to families will take place during the Family Activities. Depending on what you have already addressed, you may wish to have a group discussion to address additional issues. For example,

- Family changes
- People the children miss from their family
- The family they would like to have in the future
- Wishes for their families

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for “Story Time”.

In this session children are going to continue creating their stories. Divide the children into the two story groups you used last week. Today the children will draw pictures of the characters they have chosen for their story. Older children may be able to work on their pictures together. For other children, it may work best if they are each assigned a character to draw. Another way of making the pictures would be to have all the children draw pictures of the same character and have group facilitators create a composite picture, using characteristics from each child’s picture. For very young children who have difficulty drawing, you may wish to have the children direct the group facilitator as she or he draws the characters. You may choose to have the children cut out magazine pictures or make sculptures of the characters for their story. You can select appropriate magazine pictures based on your knowledge of the characters they chose for the story in the previous session.

In order to have both groups finish this activity at the same time, it is useful if leaders agree on a time frame for Story Creation. If you have time left after the children have drawn the characters for the story, have them further explore the characteristics of the characters through drama.

Remember last week we pretended to be the wolf. Let’s do that again. What do you think the wolf likes to do? (Have the children make suggestions). Let’s pretend we are doing that. What do you think the wolf likes to eat? (Allow the children to make suggestions and then have the children pretend to eat that thing. You can continue asking a variety of questions to help the children explore the characters’ likes, dislikes and skills.)

Keep notes detailing the information that the children have given you about the characters in their story. You will use this information to write an opening paragraph for the story after Session 5.

Relaxing and Review

If the children have been involved in a number of quiet or sitting activities, you may wish to incorporate some activity or drama in the beginning of this relaxation.

The relaxation outlined below will involve the children pretending to hug and walk with a family member. For younger children, you may wish to give them puppets or stuffed animals to help them during this exercise.

Start by playing soft and soothing music you have selected for this exercise. Then lead the children through the exercise. Please note that children who have been sexually assaulted may be uncomfortable with a visualization which focuses on physical contact with another person. If this is the case, you will need to make alterations to the exercise or choose a different visualization.

Everyone find a spot to sit in. Make sure you are comfortable. Start breathing slowly, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Think of someone in your family that you like to spend time with. Someone who gives good hugs and makes you feel cozy. Pretend you are hugging that person now. The hug feels nice and gentle. Stand up and pretend you are holding your family person's hand. It feels nice to hold hands. Pretend you are going for a walk together. It is a nice slow walk around the room. Find another place to sit down. Close your eyes and breathe in slowly through your nose and out through your mouth. Imagine you are listening to the music with your family person. It is quiet, gentle music. Keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth and listen to the music. Breathe in and out, in and out. When you are ready, say goodbye to the person from your family, open your eyes and come back to the circle.

When the children have come back to the circle, let them know that group is almost over for today and that it is almost snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to bring a picture of a comfortable, quiet, safe, place.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. After this, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds these.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

Family Activities

Making the Family

Have the children create a representation of their family. They could do this by drawing, creating a short puppet play, arranging dolls or creating a collage out of cut out pictures of people. If the children drew pictures of their family for homework another drawing activity will seem repetitive. You can alter the task slightly by having the child draw their “family doing something together” which would allow for discussion of the kinds of things the children do with their family. The activity can be expanded by having the children draw their family in the past, as it is now and as they would like it to be in the future.

Family as Animals²

Ask the children to draw their “family as animals”.

I want each of you to draw a picture of your family. But instead of drawing people in your picture, I want you to draw animals. You can pick one animal to be each person in your family, one animal to be you, one animal to be your Mom etc. (If possible, limit the examples in your directions to roles that exist within all the children's families.)

If the children have difficulty drawing then you can provide them with a selection of plastic animals and have them take turns choosing animals to represent their family members. In order to do this you should have a fairly wide variety of animals available (farm animals, jungle animals, loud animals, soft animals, gentle animals, aggressive animals etc.).

After the children have finished drawing their pictures or selecting the animals to represent their family, have them discuss their choices by asking questions like: *How is your Mom like a bear? How are your Dad and a dog the same? What do cows do? What are cows like? or Tell me about cows.* (Allow the child to answer and then ask a follow up question.) *Does your uncle do anything like that? or How is your uncle like that?*

Having Fun With My Family

Invite the children to draw or use puppets to show how they have fun with their family. Follow-up with a discussion about how the children have fun with their family and what fun things they would like to do with their family in the future.

A Day In My Family³

Provide the children with the sheet found at the end of this chapter. On this sheet, the children can draw pictures representing what their family does in the morning, afternoon and evening. You could have the children create puppet plays to represent the typical day in their family. Since this activity is quite time consuming, it is recommended that you divide the children into two groups to share their work.

Family Sculpture⁴

The children are asked to pretend that the group facilitators and other group members are the people in their family. Each child is then invited to arrange the people in the group, like a sculpture, to illustrate what their family is like. When they are finished the children can explain their sculpture to the rest of the group.

² This idea is taken from Violet Oaklander's book, *Windows to Our Children: A gestalt therapy approach to children and adolescents*.

³ This idea is adapted from Eliana Gil's book, *Play in Family Therapy*.

⁴ The use of Family Sculpture is described in *Family Assessment: Tools for Understanding and Intervention* by Adele M. Holman.

Does anyone know what a sculpture or model is? We are going to make sculptures of your families. Instead of using clay or stone we are going to use the people in the group. (It may be useful to have a group facilitator provide the first example.) Who would like to go first? OK, who is in your family. Pick someone from the group to be your Mom, grandmother, sister and brothers. (One person from the group is selected to represent each person the child has named as being in her or his family.) Now set them up to show us what your family is like. (Provide the children with some additional direction if this is required.) You can use chairs or other things from the room that you need. (You may want to provide some props and clothing.) Where should your Mom be? Should she stand or sit down? Should she hold anything? How about your grandmother? Etc.

When you are working with younger children, you may wish to have signs to pin on group members or hats that they can wear to indicate who they are in the family. If this activity is being used with older children (age 6 or 7), you could include a second step which would be having the children change the sculpture to reflect changes they would like to see in their family.

Let's pretend you are thirteen now. Why don't you move the people in the sculpture to show us how you would like your family to look when you are thirteen.

Think carefully about whether or not you want to include this second step, as it is a hard concept for some children to understand.

Family Circle

Children are invited to create a Family Circle. Provide the children with the sheet found at the end of this chapter and have them complete it. When all the children are finished, have them come back and share their work with the group. Use the sheet at the end of this chapter as a guideline only. You may choose to alter the categories in the sections to ensure that they are age appropriate and that they meet the needs of the children in your group.

Nurturing

The purpose of this activity is to have the children talk about ways their family comforts and nurtures each other. Children could use puppets or drawing to depict "How my family shows love"; "How my family look after me."; "What my family does if I am hurt". Since these concepts may be hard to understand, it is best to have a brief discussion of the issue and provide some examples before the children begin to work.

Family Wrap Around

During this exercise, the children will talk about their immediate family, their extended family and the supports available to their family within the community. Have the children complete the sheet at the end of this chapter. Have them draw pictures of or write the names of the people who would be found in each section of the chart.

You can use this exercise to help the children talk about family members who are still living in the child's country of origin as well as those that are living with or near the child now. To help the children make this distinction: a) have the child complete two sheets; b) divide the chart in half and use one half for the country of origin and the other half for the country the child is now living in; or c) have the child use markers to draw the people from her or his country of origin and crayons to draw the people who are living with or near the child now.

Family Quilt

This activity can be introduced by reading the book *Elizabeth's Quilt* which describes the process of a young girl and her grandmother making a quilt to commemorate the girl's dead father. The quilt is made with scraps of the father's old clothing. If you feel that it will be too threatening to raise the issue of death with the children in this session, you can introduce the activity by talking about and showing the children pictures of patchwork and heirloom quilts.

Have the children make quilts to commemorate their families. They can do this by gluing pieces of fabric onto a larger piece of fabric, gluing squares of paper onto a larger piece of paper, drawing pictures of family members on squares of paper and then gluing these onto a larger piece of paper or cutting out magazine pictures which they would glue onto squares marked out on a large piece of paper. In each case, the children would associate one square of the quilt with an important person in their immediate or extended family. If the children use fabric to make their quilts, the activity can be made more elaborate by having them use fabric paints to draw pictures or write the names of family members on the quilt. When the children have finished making their quilts, invite them back to the circle to share their work.

Wishes For My Family

Children are asked to draw or talk about three wishes for their family. Group facilitators could introduce this topic by talking about the wishes that children make when they blow out birthday candles or by talking about a wishing well. Prior to the group session, you may want to check and see if the cultures that the children represent have any particular rituals for making wishes. The children could then be invited to talk about these rituals. After the children have completed the drawings they should be invited back to the circle to share them.

After the children have shared their pictures, group facilitators may choose to have the children participate in a wish making ritual (i.e. throw a coin in a pool of water representing a fountain, blow out a candle etc.),. It is important that group facilitators do not support the children in making unrealistic wishes (i.e. I wish my dead father could come back and live with us). As a result it may be a good idea to have each child choose one wish for the ritual and for group leaders to assist the child in ensuring that it is a wish that has some possibility, even if very remote of coming true. When introducing the ritual, group facilitators should talk briefly about the fact that we all have wishes and hopes and that sometimes they come true and other times they do not. Group facilitators should not leave the children with the impression that the wish they are making in the group will come true.

My Family In The Future

The children can use dolls, puppets or drawing to represent the kinds of family they hope to have when they are "grown up".

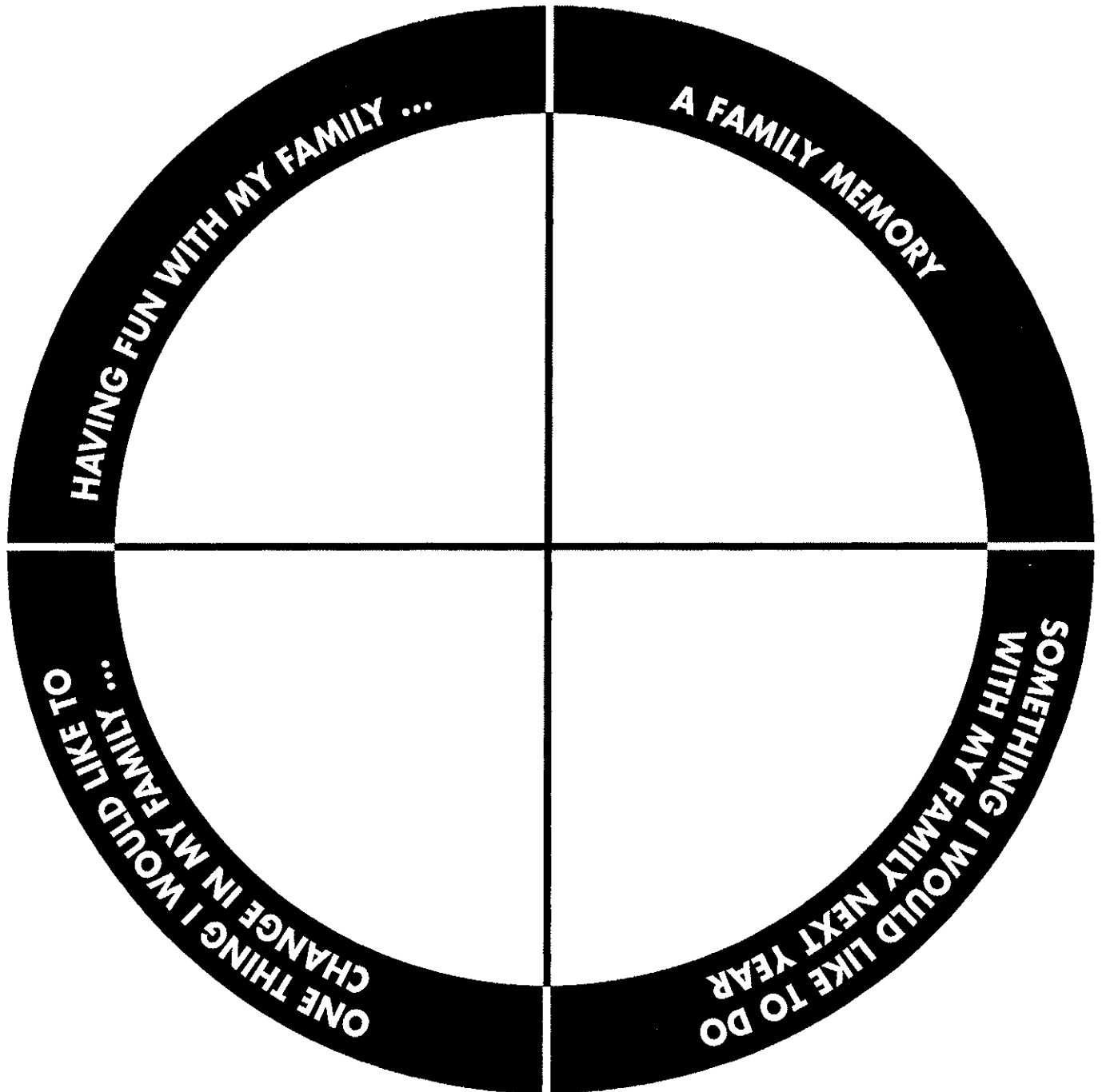
An Absolutely Wonderful Family

The purpose of this activity is to allow children to consider things they feel are missing in their family. Children are asked to draw "an imaginary absolutely wonderful family". When they have finished their work, they bring it back to the circle and talk about it. Part of the discussion should include looking at the similarities and differences between the "absolutely wonderful family" and the child's own family.

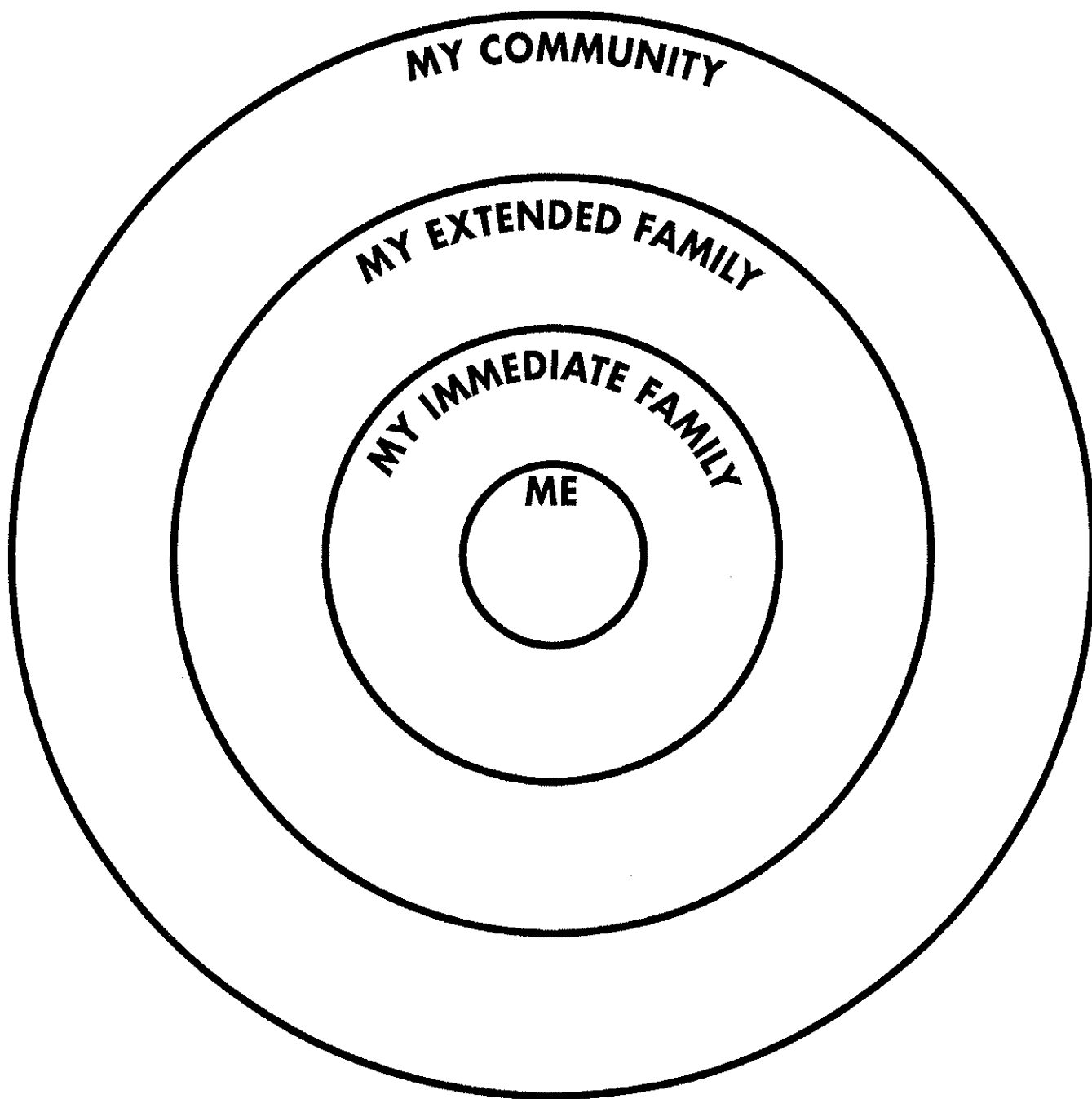
An Imaginary Child

If the children created the profile of an Imaginary Child in the third session, they can continue to develop this profile during this session. Have the children imagine who was in the Imaginary Child's family in her or his country of origin and who came to Canada with the Imaginary Child. The children can also talk about what type of family the Imaginary Child would have in the future. You could have the children draw, cut out pictures, put on a puppet play or create a small skit as they talk about the Imaginary Child's family.

FAMILY CIRCLE



FAMILY WRAP AROUND



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MY FAMILY

MORNING	AFTERNOON
DINNER	BEDTIME

SESSION 4 – HOME WORKSHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please *find a picture of a comfortable, quiet, safe place* and bring it to this meeting. You can draw this picture or cut a picture out from a magazine.

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 5 – THE CONCEPT AND PHENOMENON OF WAR

Objectives:

- 1) To help the children develop an understanding of the concept and phenomenon of war.
- 2) To provide the children an opportunity to discuss their experiences and/or their families' experiences with conflict and war.

Preparation:

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - Images of War
 - The Reasons for War and Conflict
 - War and Conflict Activities
 - Story Creation
 - Music for relaxation
 - Snacks
- 3) As you proceed through this session's activities, remember that, depending on the age at which the children came to Canada, they may not have direct memories of the conflict in their countries of origin. However, they may have heard stories that they can remember about the conflict from their parents or on the nightly news. It is important that group facilitators have some understanding of the conflict that was faced by each child or her or his family. This will help group facilitators understand and respond to the children's comments during the session.
- 4) Determine if there are any possibilities that the children will perceive each other as coming from groups or communities that were involved in the conflict in their country of origin. Even children who have lived in different parts of the world may see each other as coming from rival groups based on cultural or religious affiliations. Strong feelings and loyalties may be aroused as the children discuss the reasons for war and conflict. Make sure that these issues do not lead to conflict between the children or interfere with their physical or emotional safety. Group facilitators have an obligation to ensure that the conversation remains respectful and safe for everyone involved.
- 5) This is often a difficult topic for the children to discuss in groups. As a result it is suggested that you involve a variety of activities in the session and minimize the requirements for the children to directly talk about the conflict.
- 6) Remember that some families may feel it is not safe or appropriate for the children to talk about the conflict and that some children may have been instructed to avoid the topic. Families may fear deportation, retaliation by other groups involved in the conflict in their country of origin who are also living in Canada; and reprisals against family and friends still living in the country of origin. Group facilitators must respect the children's need to remain silent during this session.

Welcoming the Children

When the children arrive, greet them and direct them to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

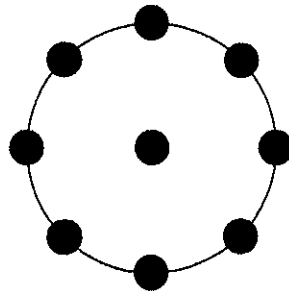
Creating the Circle

In this session, the children will create the large circle for group members to sit inside, the small circles to mark their places around the larger circle and a central circle to represent shared ideas and activities. Have the children create the outer circle and the circles to represent their places in the same way that they did in sessions 3 and 4. After these have been laid out, have them create the central circle. The instructions that follow might be used if the circles were being made out of ribbons and fabric.

Today we are going to make a new circle. We have made the big circle that we sit inside and we have put down the circles that show where we sit. Every week we have been sharing ideas and talking about our feelings. Let's make another circle that shows that we share things. This circle will go right in the middle of our big circle. We are going to make it on this piece of fabric. Everyone go and pick a marker. I am going to pass around this circle and I want you all to put a mark on the fabric. You can write your name or trace your hand or draw a very quick picture. (Have the children pass the fabric around. Everyone including group facilitators should place a mark on the circle and then show the group their mark. Group facilitators should work to ensure that the children's contributions do not become too complex, since the other children in the group will all be waiting.) Now everyone get very close together and hold on to part of the circle. Let's walk over and put it in the middle of our big circle. Good, now everyone go and find a place to sit down.

Since this central circle represents, in part, the shared ideas and experiences of the group, it is best if everyone can play a part in creating the central circle. If you are using rice flour, flowers, or chalk to create the circles, each child could take a turn drawing or marking the circle so that the central circle has been created by all children and adults involved in the group.

Once the circles have been created, have the children collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down in the circle. From this session on, you may choose to have the children place their Comfort Objects in the central circle while they are involved in group activities. If necessary, remind the children that they do not always need to sit in the same spot.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Allow all the children an opportunity to contribute. See if the children have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the last group.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. Given that today's topic of War and Conflict may involve discussion of frightening and overwhelming events, it is suggested that you use visualizations focusing on safety at the beginning and the end of the session. Make sure that the images you suggest will feel safe for the children. As noted earlier, if you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities¹.

I want you all to get comfortable in the circle. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Remember to breathe in slowly through your nose and gently out through your mouth. Imagine that you are sitting on a big soft chair. Keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. This chair is nice and soft and warm and comfortable. Remember to keep breathing, in and out. This is a safe chair. No one ever gets hurt when they sit in this chair. Keep breathing slowly, in and out. No matter what else is happening, this chair is always safe. Look at the colour of the chair and remember this. Feel the fabric of the chair and remember this. Snuggle up in this cozy, safe chair. Keep breathing in and out. When you are ready, say goodbye to the chair and open your eyes. (When the visualization is over, have the children talk about the chairs they imagined, including the colour and fabric. Depending on the other activities you have planned, you may choose to have the children draw pictures of their chairs. Remind the children that whenever they feel scared, they can close their eyes and remember this safe chair. Have them practice this skill now. Get all the children to close their eyes and imagine their chairs. Have them put their hands up when they can see their chair in their imagination again.)

Remember to give your directions slowly, pausing often and giving the children time to focus on the chair. If you breathe slowly in and out yourself as you are giving the instructions it will help to ensure that you are not speaking too quickly.

If the children are fidgeting or giggling, this may be a sign that the visualization is not being effective. In this case you may need to simplify the exercise you are using or choose a more appropriate exercise.

¹ For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources".

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce “War and Conflict” as the topic of the day.

Today we are going to talk about fighting and war. All of you have come from countries where there is fighting and war. What is war? (Give the children an opportunity to share their ideas and then continue the discussion.) Does anyone remember fighting or war in their country? (Give the children a chance to talk about the conflicts in their countries of origin. Listen to the words that the children use to describe the conflict and use these in the remainder of the session, i.e. uprising, war, fighting, shooting etc.. This will ensure that the children understand what group leaders are referring to.) Does anyone want to say anything else about war or fighting before we look at our homework?

Review of Homework

Ask the children to share and talk about the homework pictures they brought with them.

We asked you to draw or find a picture of a comfortable, quiet safe place. Sometimes war makes people feel scared or worried or hurt. (Remember that some children may have difficulty admitting their vulnerability). It is important to remember that there are comfortable, quiet, safe places in our lives. Who would like to show us their picture? (Allow the children to take turns explaining their homework pictures. If some children have not brought pictures, give them a chance to describe a comfortable, quiet, safe place. Following a review of the homework, you may wish to continue the conversation by having each child identify a safe place in Canada. This will help emphasize that, to some degree, the children may be safer following their migration. Keep in mind that this is not always true. The children may still be exposed to many dangerous situations in Canada. In addition, the children may still have to deal with the remnants of the conflict in their country of origin as part or in their daily life i.e. encounters with individuals from other groups connected to the conflict in the child's country of origin.)

The Conflict Game²

During this game, the children have an opportunity to work co-operatively while solving a problem. Have the children stand in a circle, holding hands with their neighbours. Ask the children to let go of one of the hands they are holding and reach across the circle to hold someone else's hand. In this process, the circle becomes knotted and entangled. The children are asked to figure out ways to get back into an intact circle without letting go of each others' hands. Very young children may have difficulty waiting for the circle to become untangled and may require support from a group facilitator or volunteer during this exercise. After the circle has been recreated, talk with the children about the non-violent strategies they used to resolve the problem they were faced with. You might start the conversation by saying something like: *When you were all tangled up, you had a problem that you had to sort out. How did you do that?*

² Directions for this game were provided by Chitra Sekhar.

The Reasons for War and Conflict

Involve the children in a discussion about war. You can encourage the discussion by asking the children some questions and then facilitating the sharing of ideas. The questions that you may want to pose could include: *Who starts wars? Why do wars happen? Why do people start wars? What do the people who start wars want when the war is over?* Any of these questions may lead to the children sharing their ideas. Additional questions which follow-up on the children's comments can be used to keep the conversation going. An alternative to having the children directly answer these questions would be to have each child choose a puppet and have the puppets answer the questions. This would probably be easier for the six or seven year old children in the group and might prove too difficult for the younger children.

Images of War³

In this activity the children explore their associations with war and conflict. Remember to use language that the children understand to describe war or conflict. You will have become familiar with the terms they use when you introduced the topic to them.

Have the children sit in a circle and discuss the following associations with war. Where possible involve some physical activity as part of the exercise. Have each child discuss each association (unless they choose to pass) before you move on to the next one.

- Colour of war - You may choose to have coloured paper or markers available and have each child select a colour that they associate with war.

We are going to talk a bit about war, fighting and feelings.. War is different for everybody so you may all have different ideas when we are talking about it. That's OK. Look at all these pieces of coloured paper. What colour is war? Each of you pick a piece of paper that you think shows the colour of war. (After the children have made their selections, have them share them with the group and explain them if they are able. Remember that it may be very difficult for the children to explain "why" war is red or black or green for them.)

- Smell of war
- Sound of war – Allow the children to stand up and make the noises they associate with war).
- Feeling in war – You could allow the children to use feelings puppets, feelings masks or faces on a feelings chart to indicate the feeling they associate with war. If using puppets or masks, encourage the children to act out a small scene about that feeling.
- A person you think about when you talk about war

War and Conflict Activities

Lead the children through the activity you have chosen for this session. Possible activities are listed at the end of this section. The purpose of these activities is to give the children an opportunity to talk and share feelings about their experiences.

³ This activity was originally used by Chitra Sekhar in the *Refugee Children in The Schools Project* run by the YMCA-YWCA of/d' Ottawa-Carellon in partnership with other community agencies.

Discussion

Discussion related to war and conflict will occur during the Images of War exercise, The Reasons for War and Conflict and the War and Conflicts Activities. There may be additional issues that you wish to address in a further discussion but remember that since this is a difficult topic, direct discussion should be kept to a minimum:

- Feelings about war
- Experiences of war
- What the children needed while they were facing the war.

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for "Story Time".

The children will continue working on their stories in the two groups that were used in earlier sessions. In this session, the children are going to decide where the story starts, where the main characters will be living when the story begins and who else will be there.

Today we are going to decide where your story should happen. Let's talk about the wolf. Where is he when the story starts? (Allow the children to brainstorm where the main character will be. After this has been done, work on a large group picture of this setting. It is suggested that this picture be the size of four or six pieces of bristol board. It may help if group facilitators help the children choose particular parts of the picture to draw. If you are working with children with limited drawing skills, group facilitators can draw the outline of the picture and have the children add in colour or other objects. Once the picture is drawn, the children can decide where the other characters should be.)

In order to have both groups finish this activity at the same time, it is useful if group facilitators agree on a time frame for Story Creation. If there is time left after the picture has been drawn, you can involve the children in some drama related to this day's work.

Let's all pretend we are in this picture. Stand up. We are going to pretend that we are in the picture you drew. (Invite the children by name to indicate where they would be.) Alex, where would you like to be in the picture? (Once the children have all chosen a place to be, ask them to decide what they would be doing and have them perform those actions). OK make believe the picture came to life and you are all doing something. Decide what you are going to do and then 1, 2, 3, start doing it. (Group facilitators can go around and help individual children come up with ideas for actions. After all the children are involved in action, change the scene slightly and encourage them to change their actions). Great, now it is lunch time, what are you going to do? ... It is night time and it is getting dark, show me what you do now. Etc.

Keep notes of the information that the children shared about the setting. After this session, write an opening paragraph or two for the story, incorporating the information that the children have given you about the setting and the characters. End the opening paragraph in a way that encourages the children to continue the story. For example, end the paragraph half way through a sentence - *The wolf thought he wanted to have an adventure so he ...* or *The wolf had a problem he didn't know*

Relaxing and Review

In keeping with the centering exercise used at the beginning of this session, the theme of this relaxation will be safety and peace. As noted earlier, if you have difficulty creating your own relaxation exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities⁴.

Start by playing soft and soothing music you have selected for this exercise. Then lead the children through the exercise. When working with younger children, you may choose to give them real blankets to use during the exercise.

Everyone find a spot where you can be comfortable. Settle down and wiggle around until you feel truly settled. You might want to sit down or you might want to lie down. Start breathing slowly, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Listen to the music and keep breathing slowly, in through your nose and out through your mouth. You are safe here and you can relax as you listen to the soft, soothing music. Keep breathing in and out, slowly, in and out. Pretend that you have a warm blanket to snuggle in. Wrap yourself up and remember that you are safe. You can rest here. Breathe in slowly and out slowly. Listen to the music and relax. Breathe in and out. It is wonderful to feel safe. Keep breathing slowly. When you are ready, unwrap your blanket, open your eyes and come back to the circle.

When the children have come back to the circle, let them know that the day's group is almost over and that it is almost snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

If you will be having a Caregivers' Session before your next children's group, let the children know that. Briefly review what you will talk about and ask their permission if you are planning to share any of their work during your meeting with the caregivers.

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to draw or bring in a picture of someone they have said goodbye to, something they have lost, something that they had to leave behind or something that they could not bring with them.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. After this, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds these or in the central circle that was created at the beginning of the session.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

⁴ Suggested titles can be found in "Bibliography and Resources".

War and Conflict Activities

Be very careful when selecting activities for this session. If children have recently left the conflict or it continues to be discussed frequently in their home environment, they may continue to have powerful feelings about why the war and violence are necessary or they may continue to have very strong feelings about the opposing groups in the conflict. These strong feelings may challenge the value system of group facilitators and could be offensive to other children in the group. If you suspect that this may be an issue, take it into account when selecting activities for the group. Free Play, Feelings or Masks may be the safest activities to use since they can be controlled to avoid the expression of highly contentious material.

Free Play

Divide the children into at least two small groups (it is recommended that these groups are not the same as the story creation groups) to play with a variety of miniature toys. These should include war toys and military figures so that the children can enact the war⁵. In addition, have a variety of other toys available. These can include human figures, farm and wild animals, vehicles including rescue vehicles, fences, houses and scenery. Ensure, as much as possible that your toys are culturally appropriate and that you have animals from the children's countries of origin available. If possible have sandboxes available for the children to set the toys up in or have playdough available so that the children can steady the figures.

Ideally, a group facilitator or volunteer will be available to observe each group of children. The role of this individual will be to observe the play but not to intervene or change the direction of the play unless absolutely necessary. Following a period of free play (The length will depend on the time available in the session, but it is best to allow at least fifteen minutes.) each group of children should be led through a small discussion about the process with the leader who observed the play. The purpose of this discussion is not to critique the content of the children's play. The discussion should give the children a chance to talk about what it felt like to play with the materials and how they felt as they played. Ask the children questions such as: *Tell me about the story you were making. What happened in your story? How did it feel to play with the army guys and tanks? What feelings did you have while you were making your stories?*

Drawing War

Working individually, in small groups or as a large group, the children may be invited to draw pictures about war. These can then be discussed as a group. You can begin this conversation by asking the children to tell you about their picture or a particular part of their picture. Once you have some idea of the events that are depicted in the picture, you may wish to ask some questions that will allow the children to talk about their feelings or the feelings of the people in the picture: *How does the girl in the picture feel? How did you feel when the bombing was happening near your house?* If the children do not talk about their own experiences, you may wish to give them an opportunity to do this. However, you should be cautious and ensure that you do not push them to discuss issues that they are not ready to talk about. Asking general questions such as: *Do you know anyone who has had to go to a bomb shelter? or Do want to say anything about the war that happened where you used to live?* will give the children a chance to talk about their experiences without putting them in a position where they must discuss things that are too overwhelming for them.

⁵ The rationale behind using conflict toys in counselling is discussed further in "Using Play in Counselling".

Feelings in War

Group facilitators may choose to use art, puppets or masks to help the children talking about the feelings that they associate with war and conflict.

Have the children complete the “War Feels...” page found at the end of this chapter. After the children have completed their work, have them share and discuss it with the group. If contentious issues arise in the children’s work, each child can be invited to talk about one specific feeling on their page. Children can be told that if they want to talk about the other feelings, they can do this individually with group facilitators during Snack and Social Time.

Exploration of feelings during war can also be facilitated using puppets. Have each child pick a puppet and enact a scene reflecting a feeling in war. In order to avoid highly charged issues, have the children tell group facilitators which feeling they want to work on. If it appears that work on this feeling will lead to inappropriate material, the group facilitator can help the child pick another feeling.

Children can be invited to make masks reflecting a feeling in war and then enact small scenes using these masks. As suggested for the use of puppets, the children can review the feeling they want to work on with a group facilitator before they begin creation of their mask.

A Letter About War

As a group, the children will compose a letter explaining war and what children need when they are living in or near a war. Ideally, this letter will actually be sent to a recipient and the children will receive an appropriate response. Think about an individual who this letter could be sent to - i.e. a school principal; the head of the organisation sponsoring the children’s group, an official at UNICEF etc.

Today we are going to write a letter about war. People who have never seen a war or lived near a war sometimes don’t understand what war is all about. You guys know a lot about war and what it feels like. I think we need to help other people understand this. We are going to write a letter to to talk about war. What do you think she or he needs to understand about war? ... What should we tell her or him about war?... What does it feel like to live in or near a war?... What do children need when they live in or near a war?... Etc.

The letter should be read back to the children after it has been written to ensure that they agree with it and then it should be signed by them. In order to ensure an appropriate response, the group facilitators should attempt to make direct contact with the recipient, explain the purpose of the exercise and, if necessary, provide suggestions regarding ways to respond appropriately .

Making Peace

The children are invited to write a list of reasons that they don’t like war.

Let’s make a list of the reasons that you don’t like war. (It is suggested that you write the numbers 1-5 on a large piece of paper or a blackboard to encourage the children to come up with at least five reasons that they don’t like war. They are free to list additional reasons after this if they choose. After the reasons have been written, talk with the children about how they feel conflicting parties should go about making peace.) Let’s pretend you guys were in charge. What would you do to make stop the fighting? What rules do you think people should have to follow so that there can be peace?

This activity may be completed fairly quickly by some groups of children. The amount of time it takes will depend to a large extent on the age of the children. You may wish to prepare an additional activity to accompany this one.

WAR FEELS ...

Draw pictures of four feelings you have about war.

SESSION 5 - HOME WORKSHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please draw a picture for this group. You can draw a picture of *someone you have said goodbye to* or you can draw a picture of *something you have lost, something that you left behind or something that you could not bring with you when you came to Canada.*

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 6 - GOODBYES AND HELLOS

Objectives:

- 1) To provide the children with a chance to explore the losses and changes they have experienced in their lives.
- 2) To allow an opportunity for the children to look at the future and consider the gains they are making in their lives.

Preparation:

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - Goodbye and Hello Activities
 - Story Creation - You must have written the initial paragraph of the story based on the information the children have provided in Sessions 3-5.
 - Music and materials for relaxation
 - Snacks
- 3) During this session, keep in mind that different children may be at different stages in their grieving process. It is important to respect the stage that each child is at and not to push them to deal with issues that they are not yet ready to handle.
- 4) It is important to remember that in addition to the obvious losses the children in the group have faced (loss of country, family members, friends) there are more subtle losses the children face which are often forgotten (loss of familiar landscape, loss of community celebration of festivals, change in relationships such as moving from being the oldest sister to being an only child etc.). Some of these more subtle losses may be just as important to the children. Try to listen for their allusions to these and allow them to expand on them.
- 5) Remember that some families do not feel it is appropriate to discuss death with young children and that some children may not be aware of the deaths of family or community members. This issue should have been discussed with caregivers during screening. Group facilitators must ensure that they do not inadvertently inform any child of a death that the family has not yet told the child about.
- 6) Goodbyes and Hellos are topics that can be difficult for group facilitators since many children express deep sadness and grief at the losses they have faced. Group facilitators must resist the urge to quickly assure children that everything is OK. If a child has lost a mother, father, brother, grandparent, uncle etc. to war, everything is not OK. Some children may be ready to move beyond their sadness and others may not. Group facilitators must respect the way each child chooses to deal with her or his losses.

Group facilitators must resist the urge to quickly assure children that everything is OK. If a child has lost a mother, father, brother, grandparent, uncle etc. to war, everything is not OK.

Welcoming the Children

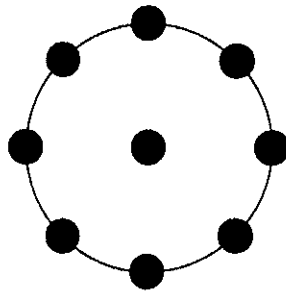
When the children arrive, greet them and direct them to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

Creating the Circle

In this session, the children will create the large circle for group members to sit inside, the small circles to mark their places and place or recreate the small central circle to represent shared ideas and activities in the middle of the circle. Have the children create the outer circle and the circles to represent their places in the same way that they did in previous sessions. After these have been laid out, have them create or lay down the central circle. The instructions that follow could be used if the circles were being made out of ribbons and fabric.

Now let's all get very close together and hold on to part of our shared circle. We're going to walk over and put it in the middle of the big circle. OK, here we are, 123 put it down. Now everyone go and get your Comfort Object and then find a place to sit down.

Once the circles have been created, have the children collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down in the circle. If necessary, remind the children that they do not always need to sit in the same spot. Remember that the children can store their Comfort Objects in the central circle when they are involved in activities.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Allow all the children an opportunity to contribute. See if the children have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the last group.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. Create a visualization that focuses on the process of saying goodbye and hello. As noted earlier, if you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities.

¹ For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources".

Everyone get comfortable where you are sitting. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Breathe in slowly through your nose and gently out through your mouth. Imagine that you are sitting on a green grassy hill. Keep breathing in and out as you think about sitting on the hill. A small kind animal appears beside you. Watch the animal. Keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. The animal is playing on the grass beside you, rolling around and jumping. As you breathe in slowly and out gently, watch the animal. Now it is time for the animal to leave. Say goodbye and watch the animal walk away. Keep breathing in and out. You are still sitting on the green grassy hill. You are alone. Keep breathing in and out. Now a new animal comes to the hill. Say hello to the animal. Watch the new animal play. Keep breathing in slowly and out gently. It is time for you to say goodbye. When you are ready, say goodbye to the animal and open your eyes. Come back to the circle to say hello to the group. (When the visualization is over, have the children talk about the animals they saw.)

Remember to give your directions slowly, pausing often and giving the children time to focus on the images they are creating. If you breathe slowly in and out yourself as you are giving the instructions it will help to ensure that you are not speaking too quickly.

If the children are fidgeting or giggling, this can be a sign that the visualization is not being effective. In this case you may need to simplify the exercise you are using.

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce “Goodbyes and Hellos” as the topic of the day.

Today we are going to talk about saying goodbye and saying hello. Everyone in this group said goodbye to the country they used to live in and said hello to Canada. I bet all of you have had to say goodbye to other things and people as well. Sometimes it feels sad or scary to say goodbye. We are going to talk about all of those things today. Let's start by looking at your homework.

Review of Homework

Ask the children to share and talk about the homework pictures they brought with them.

We asked you to draw or find a picture of a someone you said goodbye to or something you lost, something you left behind or something that you couldn't bring with you. Who would like to show us their picture. (Allow the children to take turns explaining their homework pictures. If some children have not brought pictures, give them a chance to talk about someone they said goodbye to or something they have lost. Encourage the children to talk about how it felt to say goodbye.)

Goodbye and Hello Game

The purpose of this game is to connect the idea of saying goodbye with the idea of saying hello. Every time we say goodbye to something, we say hello to something else. While this is always true, young children may have difficulty understanding the concept because the things that they say hello to are not always concrete. For example, when a child's father dies, the child must say goodbye to their father and say hello to life without their father. However, they do not necessarily say hello to a new father. Because this concept can be difficult for young children to understand, phrase it in flexible terms when you are explaining it to them.

We are going to play a game about Goodbyes and Hellos. I want everyone to stand up and turn around. Walk slowly and carefully forward. Keep walking until you gently bump into another person, a wall, a chair, or something else. Then stop. (Watch to see that everyone has stopped) Did everyone bump into something? OK say hello to the person or the thing. If you bumped into the wall, say "hello wall". Now, say goodbye. Turn around two times, and walk forward again until you gently bump into something. Has everyone stopped. OK say hello. Now say goodbye, turn around two times and walk again. Keep walking until you bump into something. Now say hello. Say goodbye and then come back to the circle. (Wait until all the children are back in the circle.) Now say Hello to the group. All together – Hello.

Review the game and its concept with the children.

Often when we say goodbye to one thing, we say hello to something else. This isn't always true but lots of times it is. When you say goodbye to Helen and me (Group facilitator's names) at the end of the group, you say hello to your Mom or Dad, Aunt or Grandmother (list some of the caregivers who pick the children up at the end of the group). When the day is over, we say goodbye to daytime and hello to night time. When the summer is over, we say goodbye to summer and what do we say hello to? (Have the children help you discuss a couple of other examples). Lots of times when you say goodbye you can find something else to say hello to and that's why we played the game.

Goodbye and Hello Activities

Lead the children through the activity you have chosen for this session. The Goodbye and Hello activities are listed at the end of this chapter.

Discussion

Many of the Goodbye and Hello Activities will provide an opportunity for discussion. Depending on the activity you have chosen and the depth of the conversation that followed there may be some additional topics you wish to discuss with the group:

- Experiences of saying goodbye
- Feelings about saying goodbye
- Memories of people, places etc. they have said goodbye to
- Hopes for the future

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for “Story Time”.

The children will continue working on their stories in the two groups that were used in earlier sessions. In this session, the children will begin to develop the main plot for their story. Read the children the initial paragraph of the story that was written using their ideas from earlier sessions. After reading this paragraph encourage a child to continue the story by adding another line. Work your way around the group, having each child add another line to the story. (The term line is used loosely here. When adding material, the children may add several ideas or sentences. There is no reason to limit them as long as each child has an opportunity to contribute.) Write down all the children’s additions. You may want to pause after each child has added a line and summarize what has happened before inviting the children to make further additions.

If the children are very young or the group appears to be having difficulty creating a coherent story, group facilitators may wish to contribute to the development of the story by asking questions (i.e. What happens to the wolf next?, What did the wolf do after that?) or by adding lines to the story. Group facilitators should add lines which keep the story moving but do not add substantial content to the story (i.e. The wolf and the rabbit kept walking along until they saw a ... , The wolf and rabbit were very surprised when they heard a ...).

Before ending this portion of the Story Creation, reread the story to the children.

In order to have both groups finish this activity at the same time, it is useful if the group facilitators agree on a time frame for Story Creation. If there is time left after the children have worked on the story, have them draw pictures or act out a scene from today’s additions.

Following this session, review the story that the children have created to date. If necessary, rewrite the story preserving all the children’s ideas and contributions.

A central point in all stories is the problem or conflict. This may not be an obvious problem and may not be an actual conflict between characters, but is a turning point in the story, a point where the characters are faced with choices and have to take action or make decisions that will change the direction of the story. Some examples of problems in stories would be the wolf threatening to blow down the three little pigs houses or Jack waking up to find a giant beanstalk in front of his house. Many stories involve several problems or conflicts.

At this point in the children’s story, a conflict or problem should have arisen. If this has not occurred, add a question or line at the end of the story which will encourage the children to create a problem or conflict for the story during the next session. For example - *Everything was fine until one day the wolf had a very big problem* or *The wolf was usually happy and content but one day something sad or scary happened*.

Relaxing and Review

It is suggested that the relaxation exercise at the end of this session focus on the theme of saying hello. As noted earlier, if you have difficulty creating your own relaxation exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities².

Start by playing soft and soothing music you have selected for this exercise. It may be appropriate to select a lullaby. Have each child select an object to cuddle or rock. This might be a doll, a puppet, a teddy bear or their comfort object. Then lead the children through the exercise.

² Suggested titles can be found in “Bibliography and Resources”.

Today we are going to practice saying gentle hellos. I want everyone to pick a stuffed animal to say hello to. When you have chosen your animal, go and find a spot in the room where you can both get comfortable. Sit down or lie down and make sure you are comfortable. Whisper hello to your new friend. Practice gentle breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Whisper to the animal and tell them how to breathe in through their nose and out through their mouth. Listen to the music together. Help your animal enjoy the music. You might want to gently, slowly rock your animal to and fro, to and fro. Keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Maybe your animal would like you to pat it gently, gently. Keep breathing slowly. Listen to the music while you pat or rock your animal. Keep breathing in and out. (Stay silent and let the children become absorbed in the music and their animals. As the music draws to a close you can begin speaking again). The music is almost over now. Whisper hello to your animal again. When you are ready, get up and come back to the circle. The animal can stay with you until it is time for you to go home today.

When the children have come back to the circle, let them know that the day's group is almost over and that it is almost snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

If you will be having a Caregivers' Session before your next children's group, let the children know that. Briefly review what you will talk about ask their permission if you are planning to share any of their work during your meeting with the caregivers.

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to draw a picture of someone new in their lives, someone they have just met, a new place they have visited or something else they have said hello to.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. After this, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds these or in the central circle.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

Goodbye and Hello Activities

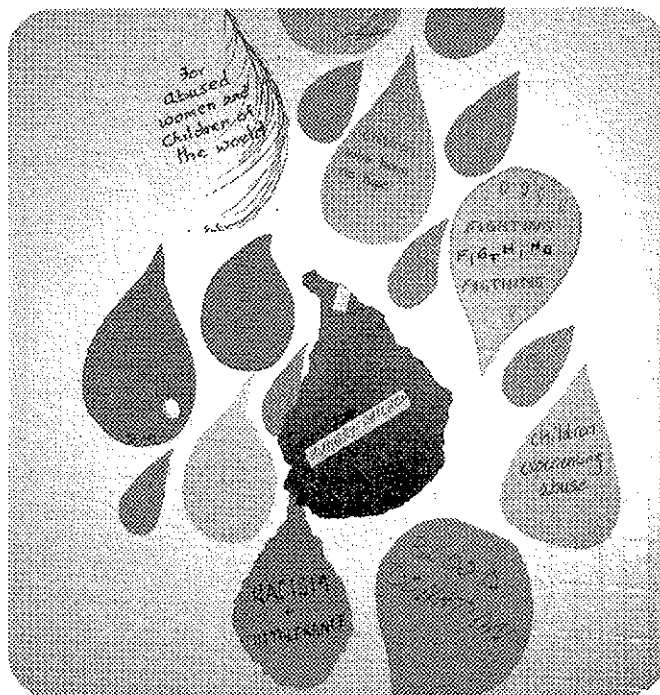
Pool of Tears and Flowers

In the first portion of this exercise, the children make paper tears to represent things that make them feel sad or things that they have said goodbye to. For older children this can involve cutting out and decorating tears. For younger children, group facilitators can have tears of different sizes and colours already available and the children can decorate them. Allow the children to make as many tears as they want. The children can draw pictures, write on their tears or have group facilitators write on the tears to help them remember what the tears represent.

When all the children have finished making tears, have them come back to the circle. The children take turns placing their tears in a "pool" in the centre of the circle. The "pool" could be made from a wading pool, a circle of ribbon on the floor or a large piece of blue paper. If group facilitators feel that the creation of the pool will interfere with the circles created earlier in the session, another spot in the group room can be chosen for this exercise. As they place the tears in the "pool", have the children name or talk about what the tear represents. Go around the circle, having each child placing one tear at a time in the pool. Keep going around the circle until all the tears have been placed in the pool. This will mean that the children who have made several tears, may have more turns than other children in the group. If children who have used all the tears they have made can think of other things they want to talk about, have them name these while placing imaginary tears in the pool. You may wish to play some soothing music quietly as the tears are placed in the pool. Group facilitators should be available to support individual children who find this part of the exercise difficult.

In the second portion of this exercise have the children make flowers to represent family and friends who are available to support them now, things that are new in their lives or things that they are looking forward to in the future. It is suggested that group facilitators provide the children with examples or ask questions to generate some ideas to help the children understand the types of things the flowers can represent (*Who helps you if you have a problem? Who can you talk to if you feel sad? What is new in your life? What do you hope will happen next year? What do you hope will happen when you get older?*).

There are a number of ways to make paper flowers and group facilitators should choose one that is appropriate to the age of the children in the group. Real flowers could also be used in this exercise instead of paper flowers. When the children's flowers are ready, have them come back to the circle and take turns placing them in the "pool". Have the children name the things the flowers represent as they place them in the pool. You may choose to quietly play some uplifting music during this portion of the exercise.



Tears completed by facilitators in training

Missing Hole

The "Missing Hole" represents the empty feeling some people feel in the pit of their stomach when they miss someone they are close to. The children are asked to fill the "Missing Hole" with memories of people and things they have said goodbye to. Give the children large circles of paper and some smaller pieces of paper. Have them draw pictures of the things and people they miss on the paper and glue these on the "Missing Hole". When working with children whose drawing skills are limited, you can have them fill the hole with pictures they cut out of magazines. When the children have completed their work, invite them back to the circle to share it with other group members.

This exercise could be explained in the following way:

Today we are talking about saying goodbyes and hellos. What does it feel like when you have to say goodbye to someone? (Give the children an opportunity to share their ideas.) Does anyone know what it feels like to miss someone? (Allow the children to talk about this feeling.) When I really, really miss someone I get a funny empty feeling inside my stomach. Sometimes it feels like there is an empty hole in my stomach. Does anyone else get a feeling like that? (Give the children a chance to answer.) Sometimes it helps to fill this empty hole when I remember times I spent with the person I miss. I want each of you to think about people that you have said goodbye to and the people that you miss. Let's pretend that these circles (Show the children the large circles) are like the empty places in our stomachs. I want you to draw pictures of the people you miss and things you did with them to fill up the empty hole. (Group facilitators can work with the children individually to help them come up with ideas to fill the hole.)

Paper Boats and Flowers³

Have the children make paper boats and have them write the names of or draw pictures of the people that they have said goodbye to on the boats. The children may choose to have boats for people that they will not see again, as well as having boats for people that they have said temporary goodbyes to and hope to see again one day. The children will use the flowers in this exercise to represent the people who are presently an important part of their lives. You may choose to have the children make paper flowers or use real flowers. Have the children float their boats in water (wading pool, swimming pool, river, lake). As they put their boat in the water, have them say "Goodbye _____". Next have the children float their flowers in the water. As the children place the flowers in the water, have them say "Hello _____" or "I like to spend time with you _____".

What Are The Tears Saying?

Provide the children with the sheet found at the end of this chapter. The children are asked to draw pictures or write words to show "What the tears are saying". It may help the children if some examples are discussed before they begin to work on their individual sheets.

You each have a sheet with tears drawn on it. I want you to imagine that the tears could talk. What would they say? Imagine that they are telling you why they have been cried? One tear might say: I was cried by a boy who was sad because he couldn't see his friend anymore. Another tear might say: A girl cried me when she fell and hurt her knee. Take your sheets and see what your tears are saying.

³ This activity was designed by Chitra Sekhar as part of her work in the Training Program for Front Line Workers in Sri Lanka on Intervention Strategies for War Traumatized Children.

Goodbye Ceremony

Group Facilitators can design a ceremony that will allow children to say goodbye to people who are no longer part of their lives. These may be people who have been killed, people who are living in the child's country of origin or people whose whereabouts are unknown. Group facilitators may wish to integrate rituals from the children's cultures into the ceremony they design. Make sure that the ceremony can meet the needs of all the children in the group. For example ensure that it is culturally appropriate and can be used in cases where the children have experienced the death of a loved one and when they have not. If all the children in the group are coping with the death of a loved one, the story *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown can be used to introduce the idea of goodbye ceremonies.

An example of a ceremony would be presenting each child with a flower and having them pull off the petals as they discuss things they remember about the person they are saying goodbye to. The petals could be discarded in a pool of water or a basin of sand. The children could then plant a seed while talking about the people that are available to support them in the present or things they hope for in the future.

Building a Cairn

A cairn is a pyramid of stones which is built as a memorial or landmark. Provide the children with some plain stones and have them paint them or decorate them in memory of the people they have said goodbye to. The children may choose to decorate more than one stone. When the children have finished decorating the stones, have them build a pyramid with the stones. You may wish to have the children name the people they are remembering or say something about the people as they lay their stones on the pile. You may wish to have soft music playing as the cairn is built and/or build the cairn by candlelight. If possible, leave the cairn in the group room until the last session. In the last session, let the children know that they can take their stones home, keep them in their room, place them in their garden, take them to a park etc.

Remembering With Our Senses

Ask the children to think of people or places they have said goodbye to. Talk with them about their memories of these people. Then have the children work on the sheet provided at the end of this section. Invite them back to the circle to share their work when it has been completed. It may be difficult for young children to complete all the sections of the work sheet. You may choose to rewrite the sheet, eliminating some sections for younger children.

The story *My Grandson Lew* by Charlotte Zolotow describes a young boy's memories of his grandfather. In the story, the boy describes memories of the way his grandfather looked, felt, smelt and sounded. It is a powerful story in which the boy learns that his grandfather is dead. Reading this story can provide a nice starting point for the Remembering with Our Senses activity.

Memories In My Heart

Ask the children to think about the people and places they have said goodbye to and talk with them about their memories of these people and places. Provide the children with heart shaped boxes to decorate. Next ask the children to draw or write down the memories they store in their hearts. Have them keep their work in the box they have decorated. Encourage the children to keep collecting important memories in their boxes in future.

Working Outside

Think about Goodbye Activities that you might do outside. The type of activities you can plan will depend on your location and the weather. For example, if there is a beach nearby, you could have the children write the names of people or places that they have said goodbye to in the sand and then allow the water to wash the names away. If the children are unable to write, you could complete a similar activity by having them draw pictures of the people they have said goodbye to or of the home they used to live in. In the winter, you could have the children draw pictures or write names in the snow. Have them use branches to sweep away the names and pictures as they say goodbye. In a city setting, you could have the children use chalk to write or draw on the pavement outside and then wash the pictures away with water. As mentioned above, a river or lake can be used for the Paper Boats and Flowers exercise. Rocks, stones or sticks can be painted in memory of people or places that the children have said goodbye to and then thrown into a river, lake or ocean. Children could then paint a second rock, stone or stick to represent the things that they have said hello to since coming to Canada.

An Imaginary Child

If the children created the profile of an Imaginary Child in the third session, they can continue to work with this profile during this session. Have the children talk about the people and places that the Imaginary Child has said goodbye to and the people and places that the Imaginary Child has said hello to. The children could use murals, drawing, drama or puppet plays to illustrate these goodbyes and hellos.

The Magic Bottle

Group facilitators must decide how the children will be using their Magic Bottles. The children can use them to store thoughts or messages for people who they have said goodbye to or the children can use the Magic Bottle to store memories about the people that they have said goodbye to.

Read the children the story of "The Magic Bottle" found at the end of this chapter. Have the children make their own Magic Bottles by gluing tissue paper over glass jars. If you feel it would be unsafe for the children to work with glass, have them decorate plastic bottles or containers. Let the children know what they will be storing in their Magic Bottles and encourage them to draw pictures and write messages for this purpose. If necessary, group facilitators can help the children write messages to place in the bottles.

If the children are storing messages or drawings for people they have said goodbye to then group facilitators must make it clear that the messages will not necessarily be delivered to the recipients.

Do you remember that in the story, the villagers used their Magic Bottle for all kinds of messages? We are going to draw pictures or write messages for people that we have said goodbye to. Think about what you would say if you could really see that person. Sometimes you might be able to send these messages or pictures to people in the mail or give them to people who live near you. Some of you will not be able to deliver the messages because the person you are drawing for is dead or you do not know where they are. You can keep those messages and good thoughts in your Magic Bottle.

After the children have written or drawn messages to place in their bottles invite them back to the group to share some of their work. Group facilitators should encourage the children to continue using their Magic Bottles at home.

The Magic Bottle⁴

Aaron was a young boy who lived many years ago, in a small village. In the short time he had lived, Aaron had seen a lot. His village had experienced more than its share of fighting, pain, and sickness.

One night, Aaron awoke from his sleep to hear the strangest noise, creeping and crawling through the cracks in his house. He was frightened and called out, but no one answered. Aaron curled up, alone in his bed, and in time he fell asleep again.

The next morning, when the sun's warmth and light shone through his window, Aaron slowly stretched and climbed out of his bed. He shivered as he remembered the noise of the night before. Aaron went to talk to his father about the noise, but his father had left for the day. Aaron tried to tell his mother about the noise, but she was too busy. Aaron looked everywhere for his grandmother, to see if she had heard the noise, but she was nowhere to be seen.

Aaron went into the village to find out what others thought of the noise. He shouted into the crowds of people bustling about. Some of them patted him on the head, others just looked at him, but no one stopped to talk about the noise.

Aaron was frightened and confused. He knew he had been woken by the creeping, crawling noise and that it was unlike anything he had ever heard before. But though he looked all through the village, he could not find a single person who would talk with him about the noise.

Aaron walked to the edge of the village and into the forest around. The sun was now high in the sky and its rays danced through the trees onto the forest floor. As Aaron walked, he thought about the noise and he watched the sun as it danced and played on the needles and leaves beneath his feet. Suddenly out of the corner of his eye, Aaron noticed a spot where the sun's dance never stopped. The leaves around this place were the deepest, darkest, warmest green Aaron had ever seen and the needles lying on the forest floor seemed to move in time to the music of the sun.

Aaron walked closer and closer to the dancing spot. As he drew near, he saw that something was lying among the leaves and needles on the forest floor. He bent down and gently moved his hand about. His hand brushed against a smooth surface. As his fingers tightened around the object on the ground, the warmth of the hearth fire and his grandmother's hugs spread over him. Aaron pulled his arm up and looked at the object. In his hand, Aaron found a beautiful bottle that held the promise of magic.

The colour of the bottle Aaron had found was breath taking and was like nothing Aaron had ever seen before. The smooth sides were intricately decorated with images of life, death and love. A cork stopper filled the wide mouth of the bottle. The beauty of the magical bottle was such that whenever anyone saw it, they would stop what they were doing and be still.

Suddenly, Aaron had an idea. He ran home, got a pencil and scribbled frantically on a piece of paper. He carefully rolled the paper up and placed it inside the bottle he had found. He took the bottle into the heart of the village and placed it down gently in the middle of the village square. Then he waited.

Slowly, the hustle and bustle in the centre of the village stopped, as people came closer to look at the bottle. Soon the square filled with people of all ages, coming from all parts of the village to see the bottle. Near the front of the crowd a voice called, "There's something inside". A village elder stepped out from the crowd and moved closer to the bottle. The cork stopper was pried from the top and the

⁴ This story was written by Bridget Revell, M.S.W. and was originally published in *Self Discovery Through Inner Play: A Manual of Guidelines for Going Inward with Creative Imagery Exercises and Experiential World Exploration* by Mark Barnes and Bridget Revell.

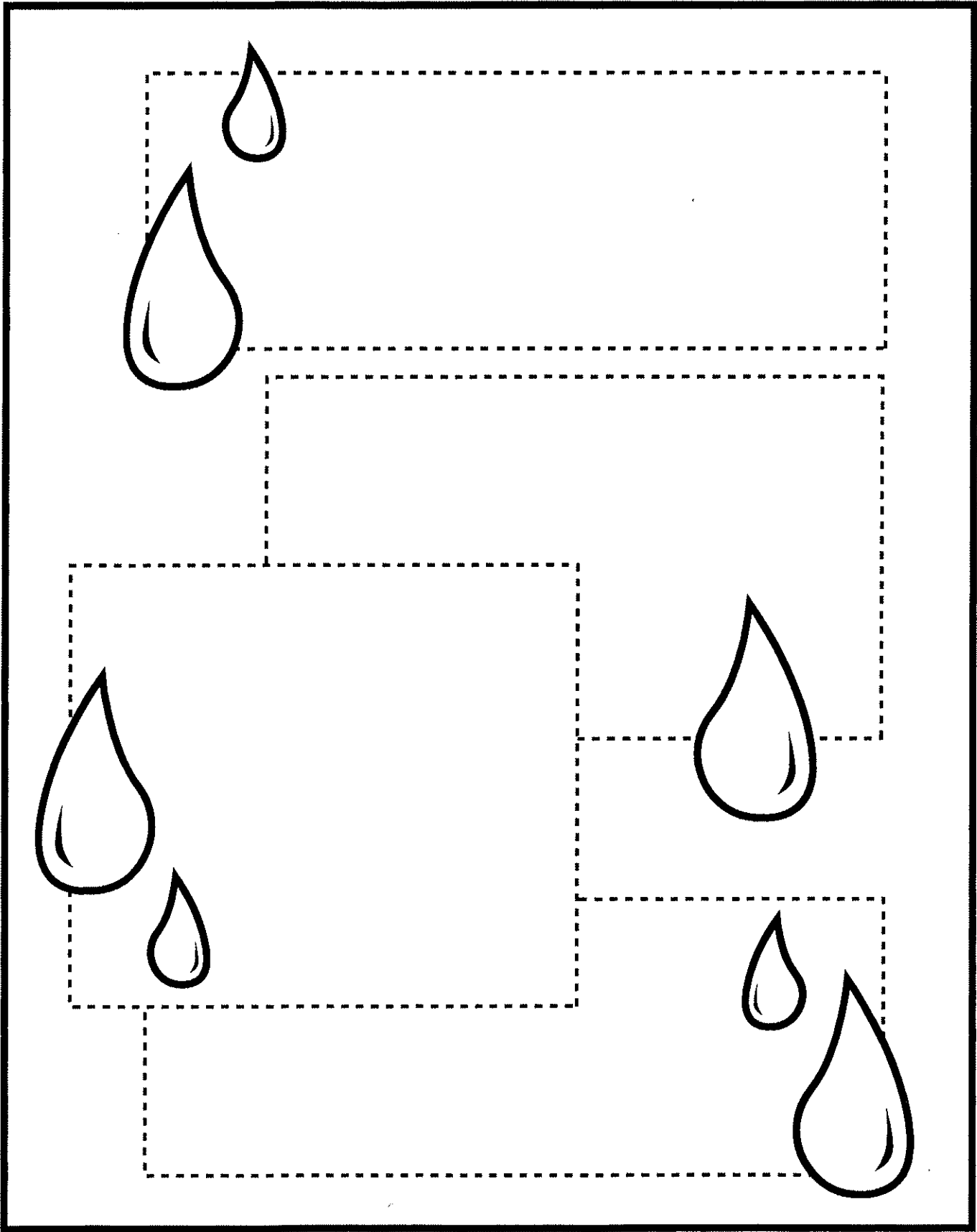
piece of paper Aaron had written on was pulled from the bottle. "What does it say?", "What is it?" called the crowd. The village elder read what was written on the paper, "Who heard the noise last night? What was it? Where did it come from?". All around people started talking about what they had heard the night before. Aaron moved from group to group listening to what people said and learning the answers to his questions about the noise.

After talk of the noise had quieted, the elders of the village gathered around the bottle. One by one, they gently held it. They marvelled at the bottle's beauty and each of them was touched by the promises it held within. The elders drew closer and talked in hushed voices about the magic of the bottle, the way the bottle had drawn the village together and how the bottle had allowed the question of one small boy to be spoken. After some time, the elders turned to the gathered villagers. One of the elders stepped forward, holding the bottle high, and said "There are times when each of us must speak and be listened to. This bottle will remain at the heart of our village to grant a voice to villagers, young and old, for today, tomorrow and generations to come. In this way, the voice that is promised to each of us can always be heard."

The elders of the village built a small wooden box and lined it with soft black velvet. They placed the box in the centre of the village square and this became the home for the beautiful magical bottle. The bottle has been used for years to give a voice to the villagers; to ask questions, to share wisdom, to speak of love, to announce the birth of a child and to say goodbye to those who are no longer in the village. When something must be said, a villager will go to the box and open it. They gently lift out the bottle, pry the cork from the bottle's mouth, drop a slip of paper inside and leave the bottle on the top of the box. When the bottle appears, the hustle and bustle of the village stops, as the villagers draw near to marvel at the beauty of the bottle and to hear the message that is found inside.

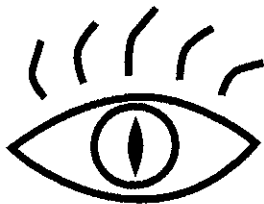
To this day, the beautiful magical bottle sits in its small velvet lined box, and, on days when the sky is clear, you can see the rays of the sun dancing and playing on the lid of the box, announcing to all that the magic of the bottle is resting inside.

WHAT ARE THE TEARS SAYING?



REMEMBERING WITH OUR SENSES

I REMEMBER SEEING....



I REMEMBER FEELING....



I REMEMBER HEARING....



I REMEMBER SMELLING....



I REMEMBER TASTING....



SESSION 6 – HOMEWORK SHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please draw a picture for this group. You can draw a picture of *someone new in your life, someone you have just met, a new place you have visited or something else you have said hello to.*

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

Playing *with* RAINBOWS™

The Playing with RAINBOWS GROUP SESSIONS 7-12



SESSION 7 - DREAMS

Objectives:

- 1) To provide the children with an opportunity to talk about dreams and nightmares.
- 2) To assist the children in developing coping strategies for dealing with nightmares.

Preparation:

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - Dream Activities
 - Story Creation - Have your story summary from Session 6 available.
 - Music and materials for relaxation
 - Snacks
- 3) The activities listed below are designed to work on different aspects of children's dreams. It is hoped that you have some knowledge of the types of dreams that the children struggle with from your initial group screening. This information will help you select an activity which will best meet the children's needs.

Welcoming the Children

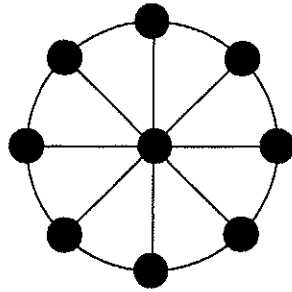
Greet the children as they arrive and direct them to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

Creating the Circle

In this session, the children will create the large circle for group members to sit inside, the small circles to mark their places, the central shared circle and lines to join the shared circle with the large outside circle. Have the children create the outer circle, the circles to represent their places and the shared central circle in the same way that they did in previous sessions. After these have been laid out, the children will create lines to join the central circle to the outside circle. The instructions that follow could be used if the circles were being made out of ribbons and fabric.

Today we are going to join our shared circle to the places we sit in. Everyone choose a ribbon. Good. Now, let's start connecting the circles. Stephen, you go first. Walk to the shared circle in the middle. Lay down one end of your ribbon. Take the other end of the ribbon to your place. Great. Who wants to go next? (Each child and the group facilitators should take a turn until the shared circle has been linked to everyone's places on the outside circle).

Once the circles have been created and the lines laid down, have the children collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down. If necessary, remind the children that they do not always need to sit in the same spot. Remember that the children can store their Comfort Objects in the central circle when they are involved in activities.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Allow all the children an opportunity to contribute. See if the children have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the last group.

Homework Review

In previous sessions, homework has been reviewed after the topic of the day has been introduced. Given that the assigned homework is not directly related to this session's topic, it is suggested that it be reviewed at this point in the session. Have the children share their pictures with the group. If some children have not brought pictures, invite them to talk about something or someone they have said hello to. A brief discussion of things and people that the children have said hello to can be facilitated.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. You may wish to introduce the children to a general body relaxation that they can use in the future if they are having difficulty sleeping at night. As noted in earlier sessions if you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities.

You may wish to show the children a rag doll and demonstrate how floppy the arms and legs are before you start this visualization. This may help some children understand what you are describing.

Today I would like everyone to get comfortable sitting or lying down. Wiggle in your spot until you feel comfortable. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. We are going to practice relaxing our bodies and pretending we are rag dolls. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Breathe in slowly and out gently. Think about your feet. Pretend your feet are really heavy. They are so heavy they are going to fall through the floor. Keep breathing in slowly and out gently. Now think about your legs. Make your legs get heavy and floppy. OK. Keep breathing slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth. Think about your arms and your hands. They are floppy and heavy. If someone picked up your hand it would flop back to the floor, it is so heavy. Keep breathing in slowly and out gently. Now think about your head and your neck. They are so heavy. Your head is sinking. Let your head sink deeper and deeper. Keep breathing in and out. Your whole body feels so heavy and floppy. Keep breathing slowly, in and out, in and out. When you are ready, slowly wake up your body, open your eyes and sit up.

Remember to give your directions slowly, pausing often and giving the children time to follow your directions. If you breathe slowly in and out yourself as you are giving the instructions it will help to ensure that you are not speaking too quickly.

If the children are fidgeting or giggling, this may be a sign that the visualization is not being effective. In this case you may need to simplify the exercise you are using.

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce "Dreams " as the topic of the day.

Today we are going to talk about dreams. Who knows what a dream is? (Give the children a chance to discuss answers to this question). People have different kinds of dreams. What kinds of dreams do you have? (Allow the children to discuss their dreams. During this discussion they may talk about pleasant and frightening dreams. If the two types of dreams are not raised by the children, you can introduce them yourself.) Some of the children I talk to say that they have sparkling dreams about happy things and these dreams make them feel good. Do you ever have dreams like that? (Let the children answer and describe their dreams.) Children I talk to also say that they have dreams with no sparkles, dreams that are scary or sad. Do you ever have dreams like that? (Give the children a chance to answer and describe their dreams.) Most people have both these kinds of dreams, sparkling happy, exciting dreams and sad or scary dreams with no sparkles. We are going to be talking about all kinds of dreams today.

If any children say that they do not have dreams or cannot remember dreams then normalize this. Let the children know that everyone has dreams but that sometimes they are too difficult to remember. The children who cannot remember dreams can still participate in the session's activities. Have the children make up a dream that they might have or ask them to work on a dream that a doll or puppet in the room might have.

Dream Activities

Lead the children through the activity you have chosen for this session.

Discussion

This session's topic may not require in-depth discussion of any particular issues. You may wish to spend some time at this point in the session talking about ways the children can cope when they wake up from a scary or sad dream (i.e. calling a caregiver, hugging a stuffed animal, singing a favourite song, thinking about a happy place). You could also discuss ways that the children can use images from happy dreams (i.e. make a picture in their head of the best part of the dream, thinking about hugging people in the dream).

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for "Story Time".

The children will continue working on their stories in the two groups that have been used in earlier sessions. In this session, the children will continue to develop the plot for their story. By the end of this session, a conflict or problem should have been introduced into the story. If the children have not yet included a problem or conflict in their story, focus on developing this during this session. If a problem or conflict has been added, have the children clarify and expand on the problem.

Read the children the story that was written following the last session. This should include the introductory material and the ideas that were added by the children line by line in Session 6. If a problem has not yet been introduced, end your reading with a question or half sentence that will encourage the children to create a conflict within the story: *Everything was fine until one day the wolf had a very big problem...* or *The wolf was usually happy and content but one day something sad or scary happened....*

Once a problem has been introduced into the story, help the children flush it out by exploring it in depth. Have the children talk about where the characters are, who else is with them, what they are doing, how they are feeling, what else is going on, why the problem started etc. Solutions to the problem will be explored in Session 8. You can explore the problem through discussion or drawing. You could have each child draw a picture of a crucial moment in the story and continue to develop the story using the ideas in the pictures. You could have the children work on a joint picture of a crucial moment in the story and incorporate their ideas into the story. Each child could be assigned part of the story to draw a picture about and the ideas in their pictures can be worked into the story.

If the children appear to be having difficulty developing the story further, group facilitators can assist them through asking questions: *How did the wolf feel? What did the wolf wish would happen? Who did the wolf want to talk about? What did the wolf need?*

Before ending this portion of the Story Creation, review the material that was added in this session.

In order to have both groups finish their work at the same time, it is useful if the group facilitators agree on a time frame for Story Creation. If there is time left after the children have worked on the story, have them dramatize parts of the story using feelings masks.

Let's use the feelings masks to act out your story. Remember that you said the wolf did not have anything to eat. How do you think he felt then? (Allow the children to provide answers.) Those are good ideas. John why don't you pick a feelings mask and show us how you think the wolf would act when he couldn't find any food. (After one child has acted out a scene choose another part of the story to work on and have another child select a feelings mask to use as they act out that part of the story.)

Following this session, review the story that the children have created. If necessary, rewrite the story to incorporate the ideas that were discussed by the children in today's session. Have the story end in a way that will encourage the children to think of resolutions during the next session: *One day things got a little better... or The wolf did not know what to do next. He sat and thought and sat and thought and then suddenly he had an idea...*

Relaxing and Review

The relaxation below is based on the song "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"². You can use this visualization to create a positive image for the children. As noted earlier, if you have difficulty creating your own relaxation exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities³.

Play some soft, soothing music during the visualization. You will also want to have a recording of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" available for the last part of the exercise.

Take your Comfort Object and find a spot in the room to lie down or sit against the wall. Close your eyes if you want to. Move around, shake out your arms and your legs and then relax to get comfortable. Listen to the music. Breathe in slowly through your nose and out through your mouth. In and out, in and out. Imagine that it is summer time and we are all camping out in a tent. It's warm so you decide to sleep outside of the tent, looking at the sky. The sky is filled with lots and lots of stars. Some are big, some are small, some are silver and some are gold. Some stars are twinkling and some stars are winking. Pick one star nearest to you. Reach out. Gently, gently touch the star. When you hold it you are not afraid of anything. (At this point, the group facilitator should play or sing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. When the music has finished, continue with the visualization) Now it is time for you to put your star back in the sky. That way it will be there for you every day, whenever you need it. Are all the stars back in the sky? OK. Put your hands over your head and slowly stretch your body. Stretch from the tips of your fingers down to your toes. Then let go like a floppy doll. Open your eyes and slowly sit up.

Invite the children back to the circle and give them a chance to describe the stars that they saw in the visualization. Encourage the children to close their eyes and have them put up their hands when they can see their star again. Let the children know that they can imagine that star and reach out to touch it any time they want.

Tell the children that the session is almost over and that it will soon be snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

If you will be having a Caregivers' Session before your next children's group, let the children know that. Briefly review what you will talk about and ask their permission if you are planning to share any of their work with the caregivers.

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to draw a picture of a good dream for the next session.

² The directions for this visualisation were provided by Chitra Sekhar.
³ Suggested titles can be found in "Bibliography and Resources".

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. After this, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds these or in the central circle.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

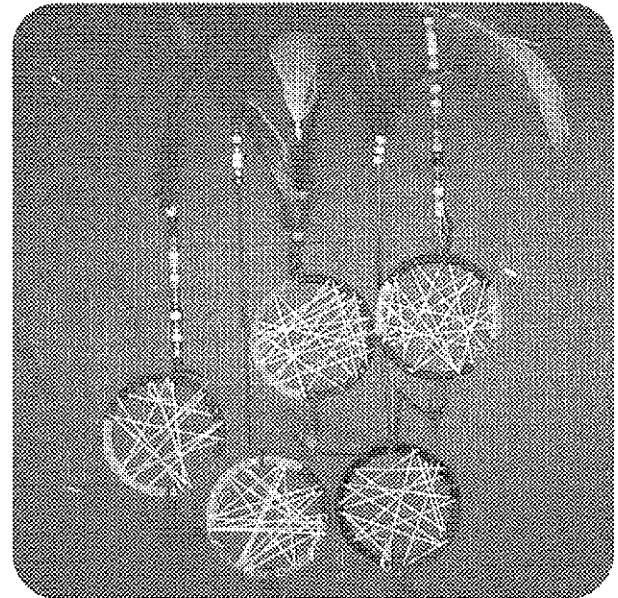
Dream Activities

Drawing the Dream

Have the children draw a picture of a dream that they have had. When they have completed their pictures have them come back and share them with the group.

Dream Catchers⁴

Some Native American cultures make use of dream catchers. These are circular web like structures which often have feathers hanging at the bottom of the circle. The myth that accompanies the dream catchers says that bad dreams will be trapped in the web later melting in the sun of the new day, while good dreams will travel down the feathers so that the dreamer can have them again.



Materials required to make the dream catchers - Metal rings or wooden embroidery frames, fuzzy or glittering pipe cleaners, strips of leather, wool or plastic thread for weaving the centre of dream catcher, ordinary beads, a variety of different coloured feathers and glow in the dark beads. Using glow in the dark star beads for this exercise will allow you to connect it to the "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" relaxation exercise at the end of the session.

The following steps are involved in making a dream catcher. Depending on the age of the children in the group, you may choose to complete some steps prior to the session or you may choose to have group facilitators and volunteers provide assistance to children during the session. Wrap the metal ring with the pipe cleaners (Leather strips can be used but it is very expensive and may not be cost effective). Weave the wool or plastic thread through the centre of the ring to make a net, incorporating some glow in the dark beads as you weave. Thread several beads onto a piece of leather strip and attach the feathers to the end of the strip. Then attach the leather strip to the dream catcher ring.

After the dream catchers have been made, invite the children back to the circle. Tell them about the purpose of dream catchers and design a ritual to activate the magic in their dream catchers. (Blowing on the dream catcher, Holding it over their heads and saying a special word, Hugging their dream catcher etc.) Each group can create its own ritual which may involve telling the dream catcher what bad dreams to catch and what good dreams to pass down the feathers. This part of the exercise will allow the children to talk about their dreams and nightmares.

⁴ Chitra Sekhar provided the directions for this exercise. For a good description of the history and origins of the Dream Catcher and more detailed directions for making them go to <http://www.nativeweb.org>. Visit the Native Tech portion of this web site and search for topics related to Dream Catchers.

Getting Rid of Bad Dreams

This activity is based on the book, *How to get Rid of Bad Dreams* by Nancy Hazbry and Roy Condy, which takes a humorous look at bad dreams and creates funny solutions to frightening situations. While the humour may help the children look at their bad dreams with less fear, there is a danger that the children will feel you are making light of their dreams. As a result it is important to use this activity carefully. Depending on the imaginative abilities of the children in the group, this activity may be difficult for four and five year olds.

Introduce and read the book *How to Get Rid of Bad Dreams* to the children. Make it clear that although the book creates funny endings for some bad dreams, you are aware that these dreams can be overwhelming.

*Today we are going to read a book called **How To Get Rid of Bad Dreams**. This book talks about funny ways to end some scary bad dreams. You may have some dreams are so bad and so scary we can't make funny endings. After we read the book, we are going to take turns making funny endings for some of your bad dreams.*

When you have finished reading the story, have the children draw or act out funny endings for bad dreams. If they cannot find funny endings for their own bad dreams, the children may choose to make up a dream and make a funny ending for it or make up a new funny ending for one of the dreams in the book.

Dream Magic

This activity is based on the book *Jessica and the Wolf* by Ted Lobby in which parents help a young girl deal with a frightening wolf in her dreams by creating a magic wand and a magic phrase to chase the wolf away. The parents also have Jessica choose a companion to provide her with support as she battles the wolf. While the story is a wonderful introduction to the activities suggested below, it would be possible to complete the activity without first reading the story.

Have the children make magic wands and create magic phrases that they can use to chase away monsters or change scary situations in their dreams. When the children have finished making their wands and phrases, have them come back to the circle. Give each child a chance to stand in the centre of the circle and demonstrate how they will use her or his magic wand and phrase during a dream. Practising during the session may help the children actually integrate these actions into their dreams.

You may also wish to have the children pick a person, a puppet, a doll, or a stuffed animal to support them during their dream. Depending on the time available, you could have the children draw the source of support and share their work with the group or hold a discussion about potential sources of support during a dream.

Meeting the Monster

In this activity, the children are asked to imagine that they are going to meet and talk to a scary monster, animal, or person from their dreams. This activity is based on the premise that when confronted, scary images from dreams often lose their power and may provide important messages to the dreamer. Have the children build or draw enclosures or cages to contain the monster or person from their dream. Next have the child draw or sculpt the monster or person in the dream and put them in the enclosure. When the monster is in the enclosure, direct the children to have a conversation with the monster. Direct the children to ask one or two questions such as: Why have you come to scare me? What do you want? If I stop running away, can we talk? If you could talk to me, what would you say? What is good about you? How can I get you to stop scaring me? What would you like to tell me? How can I help you? How can you help me?⁵. Encourage the children to talk out loud to the monster. When the children have finished the discussion, have them come back and tell the group what they learned.

Building a Safe Place

This activity is designed for children who are having frightening dreams including threatening situations or people. Have the children build safe places for themselves in a shoe box. Give the children a wide variety of materials to work with such as cotton balls, fabric, magazine pictures, popsicle sticks, paper, markers, cardboard, string, ribbons, etc. When the children have finished building their safe places have them come back to the circle and share their work with the group. You may then want to have the children imagine a scene from their dream and then imagine their safe place to reinforce the comforting role of the safe place. Encourage the children to keep their safe places near their beds and suggest to them that they can escape to their safe places whenever their dreams become too scary. Suggestions made to children while awake are sometimes integrated into later dreams. You may want to let the children know that sometimes, although their safe place is always there for them, there are times when it will be very hard to find while they are asleep.

Keep your safe place near your bed. Then when you have a bad dream, you can imagine that you are running or flying to your safe place. If a monster is chasing you or there is too much fighting in your dream then try and remember your safe place. You cannot get hurt in your safe place. Sometimes you may not be able to find your safe place in your dream, but you know that when you wake up it will always be there, near your bed. As soon as you wake up from a bad dream remember your safe place and this will make the scary feelings get a little bit smaller.

Ending the Dream⁶

Many times we wake before our dreams are over. Have the children draw or act out endings for their dreams. If their dreams end in ways that they do not like, have them draw or act out an alternate ending.

Dream Chest

The children are involved in making a Dream Chest to hold positive, comforting images from their dreams. The children can make Dream Chests by decorating shoe boxes or by decorating treasure chest shaped boxes that can be found in craft stores. After the dream chests have been completed, have the children draw or make lists of positive images from their dreams, people they are happy to see in their dreams, things that make them feel good in their dreams etc.

⁵ Some of these questions are taken from activities in the book *Nightmare Help: a guide for parents and teachers* by Anne Sayre Wiseman.

⁶ This activity is based on an idea discussed by Mark Barnes in a workshop titled *Exploring the Play Therapy Journey*.

Encourage the children to keep the Dream Chests near their bed and go through the pictures before they fall asleep. Suggest to them that this may help bring some positive images into their dreams. Let them know they will still have bad dreams but if they look carefully they may find something from the Dream Chest even in their bad dreams. Comments made when the children are awake may have an impact on their later dreams. You can also suggest that when they wake from a bad dream, the children can go through the pictures in their Dream Chest to remind them of things that help them feel good.

This activity may be useful for children who dream of friends or family members who have died, who are still living in the child's country or origin or whose whereabouts are unknown. By storing the images in the Dream Chest, the child can hold onto their positive memories. You can further expand this activity by having the children act out scenes from their chest or having them hold imaginary conversations with the people whose pictures are in the Dream Chest.

An Imaginary Child

If the children created the profile of an Imaginary Child in the third session, they can use this profile as the basis of a dream activity. Have each child in the group make up a scary dream and a happy dream for the Imaginary Child to have. Then have the children share their ideas with the group by drawing the dreams or putting on a puppet play about the dreams. As the children share these dreams talk about ways to manage and cope with bad dreams and encourage the children to hold on to the positive images from the happy dreams.

SESSION 7 – HOMEWORK SHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please draw a picture for this group. You can draw a picture of a *good dream you have had* or a *good dream you would like to have one day*.

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 8 – ANXIETY AND NOT REMEMBERING

Objectives:

- 1) To provide the children with an opportunity to discuss their fears and anxieties.
- 2) To help the children develop strategies for coping with situations that promote fear and anxiety.

Preparation:

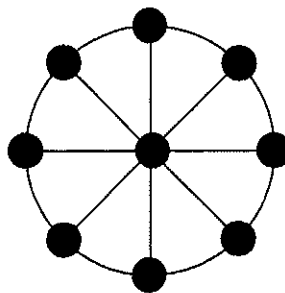
- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - Anxiety and Not Remembering Activities
 - Story Creation — Have your story summary from Session 7 available.
 - Music and materials for relaxation
 - Snacks

Welcoming the Children

Greet the children when they come in and direct them to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

Creating the Circle

In this session, the children will create the large circle for group members to sit inside, the small circles to mark their places around the larger circle, the central shared circle and lines to join the shared circle with the large outside circle using the same method they did in Session 7. Once the circles have been created and the lines laid down, have the children collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down. If necessary, remind the children that they do not always need to sit in the same spot.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Allow all the children an opportunity to contribute. See if the children have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the last group.

Homework Review

Have the children share their homework pictures with the group. If some children have not brought pictures, invite them to talk about or make up a good dream. A brief discussion of the positive images in the children's dreams can follow.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. You may choose to lead the children through an exercise that allows them to experience their bodies moving from being tense to being relaxed. As noted in earlier sessions if you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities¹.

Make sure the children have their Comfort Objects with them. Show the children a picture of an armadillo (you could use a stuffed animal or puppet if you have one available). Talk about how, when frightened, an armadillo curls up into a little ball. Have the children pretend they are scared armadillos curled up in a ball and then lead them through an exercise in which they gradually relax.

I want you to pretend you are armadillos who have been scared by a thunderstorm. Curl up tight to keep yourself safe. Pretend there is rain and thunder and lightening. Pull your legs in tight and curl your arms around them. OK, is everyone curled up? Now the storm is over so the armadillos can begin to relax. Lift up your head slowly and look around. The rain has stopped so you can start to uncurl. Uncurl your arms and let them fall gently to the floor. Uncurl your legs and let them relax on the floor. Lie down on the floor and let your body get heavy. Let your eyes close and relax. Practice slow breathing, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Breathe in and out. Slowly in and gently out. Let your arms and legs feel heavy against the floor. Now the sun is shining on the armadillos. They feel warm and sleepy. When you feel ready, slowly wake up your body, open your eyes and sit up. (You may want to let the armadillos crawl slowly around the circle a few times before settling down in one spot.)

Remember to give your directions slowly, pausing often and giving the children time to concentrate on the things they are imagining. If you breathe slowly in and out yourself as you are giving the instructions it will help to ensure that you are not speaking too quickly.

If the children are fidgeting or giggling, this is a sign that the visualization is not being effective. In this case you may need to simplify the exercise you are using. If the children are fidgeting or giggling, this may be a sign that the visualization is not being effective. In this case you may need to simplify the exercise you are using.

¹ For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources".

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce “Anxiety and Not Remembering” as the topic of the day.

Who can tell me what the armadillo was feeling in the thunderstorm? (Give the children time to come up with some answers. Focus on the feelings that will be part of today’s topic - i.e. scared, worried, frightened.) Can you think of any other words for that feeling? (Help the children come up with a variety of words to describe anxiety and fear.) We are going to be talking about these feelings today. What kinds of things make you feel worried or scared? (Try and get a number of examples from different children in the group.) Another thing we are going to talk about today is what we can do to help ourselves feel better when we are feeling frightened. What do you do when you feel scared? (Give the children a chance to create a list of a variety of coping strategies and then introduce the idea of not remembering). Sometimes when things are really scary people do not want to remember what has happened and sometimes even when people try really hard to remember something scary they can’t. Sometimes it helps people to feel better when they forget a scary thing. Does this happen to any of you? (Give the children a chance to provide examples. This is a difficult concept for some children. It may help if you provide an example of an adult who has difficulty remembering the moment of a car accident.)

Anxiety and Not Remembering Activities

Lead the children through the activities you have chosen for this session. A list of possible activities can be found at the end of this chapter.

Discussion

The discussion which you hold as a follow-up to this session's topic will depend on the issues covered during the activities. You may wish to discuss the following:

- Fears connected to the conflict in the country of origin – Remind the children that they no longer face these fears and help them devise strategies for coping with fears related to the safety of people who are still facing the conflict.
- Fears about living in Canada, – Help the children outline ways to help cope with particular fears.
- Sources of support – Help the children identify adults who can help them in difficult situations.

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for “Story Time”.

The children will continue working on their stories in the two groups that have been used in earlier sessions. In this session, the children will begin discussing solutions for the problems in the story. Read the children the story they have created so far. Since the children have heard the beginning of the story several times you may want to quickly summarize it rather than reading it (*You remember our story is about a wolf who lives in a cave in the side of a green grassy hill. Does anyone remember what problem he is having?*). After you have outlined the problem in the story ask the children to think about what will happen next, how things will get better, or how the problem will be solved. You can have children work in groups of two to develop solutions and then act these out for the larger group. Individual children can be asked to draw a picture of how the problem will be solved. You can hold a group brainstorming session to solicit solutions for the problem. In any of these cases, the group will have to be brought together to agree upon a final solution. The problem does not need to be completely solved by the end of this session but you do want to have the beginnings of a solution agreed upon.

Before ending this portion of the Story Creation, review the solution that the children are working on.

In order to have both groups finish this activity at the same time, it is useful if leaders agree on a time frame for Story Creation. If there is time left after the children have agreed upon the beginning of the solution, have the children act out the part of the story that they were working on in this session. Assign the children different roles from the story and guide them through a dramatization.

Following this session, review the story that the children have created. If necessary, rewrite the story to incorporate the ideas that were discussed by the children. By the end of Session 9 (the next session) the major conflicts and problems in the story should be resolved. Determine if there are any particular areas that the children will need to work on in their next session.

Relaxing and Review

It is suggested that you focus on safety during this relaxation exercise. As noted earlier, if you have difficulty creating your own relaxation exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities².

Start by playing the soft and soothing music you have selected for this exercise and then lead the children through the exercise.

Everyone find a place and get comfortable. Move around until you have found a comfortable position. Start breathing slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth. Imagine that you are lying on a great big fluffy cloud. You are gently floating through the air on your cloud. Keep breathing in slowly and out gently. Imagine that your cloud is soft and comfortable. What a wonderful place to be. Your cloud is totally safe. No one but you is allowed on your cloud. Nothing can hurt you or bother you on the cloud. Keep breathing in slowly and out gently as you imagine the cloud. Let's pretend you were going to decorate the cloud. What colour will you make your safe cloud? (Remember to pause after each question you ask to give the children a chance to imagine the answer.) Let's pretend you were going to take a book to your safe cloud. What book would you take? Let's pretend you were going to take some toys to your safe cloud. What toys would you take? Maybe you need some food and drinks on your safe cloud. What food and drinks do you want up there? Remember to keep breathing in slowly and out gently. Imagine your cloud, with your books and toys and food and drinks. It is so comfortable and safe. When you are ready, say goodbye to your cloud, open your eyes and join us in the circle.

² Suggested titles can be found in “Bibliography and Resources”.

SESSION 8 – ANXIETY AND NOT REMEMBERING

When the children have come back to the circle, invite them all to describe their cloud. Encourage the children to close their eyes and imagine the cloud again. Remind them that when they feel frightened they can always imagine the safe cloud which is just for them.

Tell the children that the session is almost over and that it will soon be snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to draw a picture of something that makes them feel angry.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. After this, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds these or in the central circle.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

Anxiety and Not Remembering Activities

Things That Scare or Worry Me

Have the children draw pictures of things that worry or scare them. Invite the children to share their pictures with the group. As the children talk about their pictures, have the group discuss ways to manage the feelings of fear and anxiety.

People and Things That Help Me Feel Safe

Ask the children to draw pictures of people and things that help them feel safe. This could also be done as a collage by having the children cut pictures out of magazines. When the children have finished their work have them bring it back and show it to other group members.

My Body Feels Scared

The purpose of this exercise is to help the children recognize the feelings in their bodies that are connected to fear and anxiety. Ask the children to list some frightening situations. Have the children imagine that they are in some of these situations. Ask the children to focus on their bodies and to describe any feelings or changes in their bodies when they are feeling afraid. This could also be done by giving the children an outline of a body and asking them to use a variety of colours to show how their body feels scared. The exercise can be followed by a discussion of the benefits of deep breathing and relaxing as ways to cope with bodily responses to fear and anxiety.

Masks

Have the children create two sided masks. On one side they are to make a mask which shows someone feeling fearful. On the other side, have the children make a mask which shows someone feeling safe and comfortable.

When the children have finished making their masks, involve them in some drama. Ask each child to dramatize a situation which makes them feel scared. If they need to they can ask other children or group facilitators to participate in their drama. Have the group discuss ways that the child could cope with that situation. Have the child choose one way of coping with the frightening situation and act this out using the second side of the mask.

Scared Animals

Ask each child to choose an animal to work with. Have the children imagine a situation which would make that animal feel worried or frightened. Have the children explore what the animal would do when it feels scared (i.e. run, hide, curl into a ball etc.). Next have the children consider ways that the animal could cope with the scary situation. The children could explore these issues through art (i.e. drawing, working with magazine pictures or working with clay). The children could also use drama or puppets to examine the animals' fears. Have the children share their work with the other group members. Follow up with a group discussion linking the animals' fears and coping strategies to the children's fears and coping strategies.

Fears Box

Have the children work together to decorate the outside of a box with comforting, soothing symbols. They can do this by drawing or cutting out pictures from magazines or greeting cards. When the children have finished decorating the box, ask them to think of things that scare or worry them and write these down on small pieces of paper. If the children are unable to write, have them whisper their ideas to a group facilitator who can write them down. Place the pieces of paper in the fears box where they will be symbolically contained by the positive images. Next pull out and read the slips of paper one by one. Discuss each frightening situation, considering how a child could cope with the situation. When one situation has been thoroughly discussed another one can be pulled from the fears box. If group facilitators are aware of some frightening issues which are common to several group members, they may wish to consider adding these to the box.

Building a Safe Place

This activity was originally described in Session 7. If it was not used for that session, it can be adapted for this session. Have the children build safe places for themselves in a shoe box. Give the children a wide variety of materials to work with such as cotton balls, fabric, magazine pictures, popsicle sticks, paper, markers, cardboard, string, ribbons, etc. When the children have finished building their safe places have them come back to the circle and share their work with the group. Talk with the children about what aspects of their safe place they can build in their day to day life. (For example, one child put a picture of her family beside her bed in her safe place. She was encouraged to get a family picture to put beside her bed in her room.) Ask the children about prayers or family rituals that they use to help themselves feel safe. You may then want to have the children imagine a frightening situation and then imagine that they are in their safe place to reinforce the comforting role of the safe place. Encourage the children to keep their safe places in their rooms and suggest that they can go and look at their safe place or imagine they are in it when they feel afraid.

Forgotten Things

Find an old bag or box to use in this exercise. Talk with the children about the kinds of things that we want to forget or do forget. Let the children know that sometimes our brains forget things because it would be too frightening or too sad to remember. Let the children know that in these cases our brains are smart to forget and will remember again when it is safe.

Ask the children to draw pictures of things that they wish to forget or things that they have forgotten and place them in the bag. While it may seem paradoxical to ask children to draw things they have "forgotten", they may be aware of things that they cannot remember because others talk about them. Once the pictures are in the bag, pull them out one by one and discuss them. Allow the child who drew the picture to describe it. Ask other group members if they have had any similar experiences and talk with them about how they handled the situation and how they handle remembering the situation. The questions or comments made by group facilitators will depend on the content of the children's pictures. You may wish to discuss the feelings that would arise if the child remembered the things in her or his picture. The group could discuss ways to cope with the situation depicted in a child's picture. In some instances, group facilitators may be able to help the children find something positive in the thing they want to forget. At the end of the discussion place the pictures back in the bag where they will be "forgotten". Tell the children that they are welcome to talk about or remember something they drew in future sessions. Let them know that they can approach a group facilitator if they want to do this. Have the bag and the pictures available in your future sessions. In your final session ask the children if they want to take any of the pictures from the bag home.

An Imaginary Child

If the children created the profile of an Imaginary Child in the third session, you can use this to explore their anxieties. Based on the profile the children created, one of the group facilitators should put on a brief puppet play which focuses on the Imaginary Child experiencing a variety of symptoms of anxiety (tummy ache, wetting bed, wanting to stay near mother all the time). You may want to include some situations which promote anxiety in the puppet play (the child's father being stopped by a policeman, someone coming to the door at night). Have the puppet interact with the children in the group, asking them why the Imaginary Child might be worrying and getting some ideas for how she or he could cope with these worries.

SESSION 8 – HOMEWORK SHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please draw a picture for this group.

You can draw *something that makes you feel angry*.

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 9 - COPING SKILLS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Objectives:

- 1) To help the children discover ways to cope with difficult situations that they face in their day to day life.
- 2) To provide the children with some basic skills to resolve conflicts.

Preparation:

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - Coping Skills and Conflict Resolution Activities
 - Story Creation — Have your story summary from Session 8 available.
 - Music and materials for relaxation
 - Snacks
- 3) Children in a Playing with Rainbows group and their families may have been victims of racism. If this is the case, you may choose to focus this session on coping with and managing issues resulting from racism. Plan activities and discussions that will allow you to address the children's concerns about this issue.

Welcoming the Children

As the children arrive, greet them. Direct the children to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

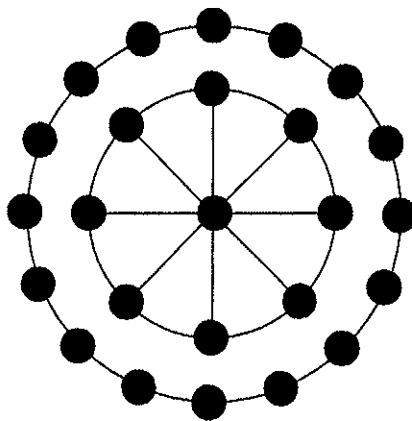
Creating the Circle

In this session, the children will create the large circle for group members to sit inside, the small circles to mark their places, the central shared circle and lines to join the shared circle with the large outside circle using the same method they did in Session 7 and 8. When this is completed, the children will create another set of small circles to represent the people who support and help them.

The instructions that follow are written assuming that ribbons and fabric are being used to create the circles. Have a number of small fabric circles available. In order to ensure that you have enough, there should be at least two or three circles for every group member.

Today we are going to make a new set of circles for the people who help you when you have a problem, the people who hug you when you feel sad and the people who help to keep you safe and comfortable. These are helping people circles. Let's make a list of all these people. Who helps you when you have a problem? (Help the children create a list of people who support and help them. This list can include people they know personally such as their caregivers or teachers and may include more general groups of people such as fire-fighters or doctors. Group facilitators can ask a variety of questions to generate this list.). Now I want you to pick one circle for each person on this list. Nadia, which circle would you like to use for your grandmother. (If there are older children in the group, the names of the people who are represented by the circle could be drawn or painted onto the circles using markers or fabric paint. If the children in the group are too young to write names on the circles, this can be done by the group facilitators or the circles can be left blank. Continue to have the children choose circles to represent each person on the list). Now we are going to lay helping people circles down. Everyone find a place on the large group circle. OK now take three giant steps backwards and then put down a helping person circle. If you have another helping people circle to put down, take two baby steps sideways and put it down. (Continue these instructions until all the helping people circles have been laid down. The helping people circles should form a circle around the large group circle. Then invite the children to sit down in the large group circle.)

When all the circles and lines have been laid down, have the children collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down. It should no longer be necessary to remind the children that they do not always need to sit in the same spot unless a problem arises. Remember that the children can store their Comfort Objects in the central circle when they are involved in activities.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Allow all the children an opportunity to contribute. See if the children have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the last group.

¹ For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources".

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. As noted earlier if you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities.

Show the children some pictures of tall trees before starting this exercise. You may want to select pictures of trees that can be found in the children's countries of origin as well as trees that can be found in Canada. The children will imagine that they are trees as you lead them through this exercise.

Today we are going to pretend to be trees. Everyone find a place in the room to stand. Close your eyes if you want to. Start breathing slowly. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Breathe slowly in and out, in and out. Now plant your feet firmly on the ground. Imagine that you are a tree and your trunk is growing right into the ground. Your roots are digging down through the carpet into the ground. Put your arms out to be branches. Keep breathing in and out slowly. Imagine that the sun is shining, making your leaves warm and keeping your branches warm. A small gentle breeze is blowing. You start to sway gently back and forth but your roots hold you tight in the ground. Remember to breathe slowly, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Imagine that your hands are flowers on a tree. Uncurl your fingers and let the flowers feel the warm sun. Keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. When you feel ready, say goodbye to the tree. Open your eyes, bend down, touch your toes, jump up in the air and then come to sit down in the circle. (After this exercise have the children talk a bit about their experience of being a tree. They could talk about the kind of tree they were, the colour flowers that were on the end of the branches, what it felt like when the wind was blowing etc.)

Remember to give your directions slowly, pausing often and giving the children time to focus on the experience of pretending to be a tree. If you breathe slowly in and out yourself, as you are giving the instructions, it will help to ensure that you are not speaking too quickly.

If the children are fidgeting or giggling, this may be a sign that the visualization is not being effective. In this case you may need to simplify the exercise you are using.

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce "Coping Skills and Conflict Resolution" as the topics of the day.

Today we are going to talk about things we can do when we have a problem. We are going to talk about the different kinds of problems children have. What kinds of problems do you think we should talk about? (By allowing children to answer this question, group facilitators may get some ideas of areas that should be focused on later in the session). Those are good ideas and we might talk about some of those problems today. We might also talk about what happens when you have a fight with friends, what to do if you are lost, what to do when you feel angry or sad or scared. Is there anything else you think we should talk about? (This gives children another chance to introduce topics that are relevant to them.)

Homework Review

For homework, we asked you to draw a picture of something that makes you feel angry. Does anyone have a picture they would like to show us? (Give the children an opportunity to share their pictures. If some children have not brought pictures give them an opportunity to talk about situations that make them feel angry. When each child shares her or his homework, ask the other group members if they have had any similar experiences. Take some time to talk about how they felt in that situation. Give the group members a chance to talk about ways to handle the situation described by each child.) Sonja says that she gets angry when her Mom won't let her watch T.V. How do the rest of you feel when your

Mom says you can't watch T.V.? What do you think Sonja can do with her angry feelings? (Help the children think of ways to express their anger that will not get them in trouble. Keep in mind that different homes and different cultures will have different guidelines regarding acceptable ways to express anger.) Can anyone think of something Sonja can do instead of watching T.V.? (Remember that the children are not able to directly change other people's behaviour. As a result it is best to help them come up with solutions to problems that they can carry out on their own. Later in this session, the idea of negotiating solutions to problems can be discussed).

Coping Skills and Conflict Resolution Activities

Lead the children through the activities you have chosen for this session. Possible activities are listed at the end of this chapter.

Discussion

Use the discussion time in this session to review the skills that the children have learned. For example, you might choose to review:

- How to express angry feelings
- Who to ask for help
- How to ask for help
- How to help people understand what you want

The discussion time could also be used to discuss particular issues associated with racism that have been faced by the children or their families.

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for "Story Time".

The children will continue working on their stories in the two groups that have been used in earlier sessions. By the end of the session, the children should have developed solutions for the major problems in the story and most of the loose ends in the story should have been wrapped up. Prior to the session, group facilitators should review the stories to determine what issues still need to be resolved.

Review with the children the problems or conflicts that existed in the story and the solutions that they have outlined so far. Then have the children work on outstanding issues. Group facilitators can present the children with a number of questions which need to be answered in order to wrap up the loose ends of the story. Lead the children through a brainstorming and discussion session to help them come up with ways to manage the remaining problems. Make sure that all the children have an opportunity to make suggestions. During this process of sharing ideas and negotiating, the children will have a chance to practice some of the skills that they learned earlier in this session. When the discussion is over, review with the children the questions that were asked and the solutions that the group agreed to.

In order to have both groups finish this activity at the same time, it is useful if the group facilitators agree on a time frame for Story Creation. If there is time left after the outstanding issues have been discussed, have the children act out or draw pictures of the scenes that they discussed during this session.

Before Session 10, group facilitators should review and rewrite the story that the children have created, incorporating the ideas that were agreed upon during this session. In Session 10, the children will work on the ending for their story.

Relaxing and Review

It is suggested that you focus on tension and relaxation during this exercise. As noted previously, if you have difficulty creating your own relaxation exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities².

Start by playing the background music that you have selected and then lead the children through the exercise.

Everyone find a place in the room. Stand up and put your arms out. Spin around to make sure you have enough space. OK. Now clench your hands really tight and make fists. Good. Now let them go. Relax your hands. Shake them until they get all floppy. Great. Now take your hands and put them together. Push one hand against the other as hard as you can. Push, push. Good, now relax your arms. Shake them out to make sure they are all floppy. Great. Find a place to lie down. Put your arms above your head and stretch from your fingers to your toes. Stretch, stretch. Great, now relax your whole body. Wiggle about until you are all floppy. Great, now close your eyes gently and try some deep breathing. Breathe in slowly through your nose and out gently from your mouth. Breathe in and out. Let your body relax and get heavy. Think about something wonderful, something that helps you feel cozy and comfortable. Keep breathing in slowly and out gently as you think about the wonderful thing. (Give the children a while to focus on the images they have created.) OK keep breathing slowly in and out, in and out. When you feel ready, open your eyes, sit up and come to join us in the circle.

When the children have come back to the circle, give them a chance to talk about the "wonderful thing" that they imagined. Whenever possible, talk with the children about ways to use their "wonderful things" at difficult times (i.e. hug their teddy bear when they are sad, talk to their mother when they have a problem, relax in their bedroom when they are upset etc.)

Tell the children that the session is almost over and that it will soon be snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

MAKE SURE - that you let the children know there will be three more group sessions after this meeting.

After today we have three more group meetings together and then the group will be over. Next week we will start talking about what we would like to do on our last day together.

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to draw a picture of something that makes them feel good.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. After this, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds these or in the central circle.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

² Suggested titles can be found in "Bibliography and Resources".

Coping Skills and Conflict Resolution Activities

Difficult Feelings

Have each child identify a feeling that is hard for her or him to deal with. Group facilitators can help the children do this by drawing several feelings faces (i.e. angry, scared, sad) on a piece of board. Leave a blank face in case the children want to identify another feeling that is difficult for them.

Today we are going to talk about handling difficult feelings. Different people find different feelings hard to deal with. One girl I knew didn't know what to do with her angry feelings. A boy I knew said it was hard to feel sad because people told him that boys shouldn't cry. I have four different feelings faces on this board: angry, scared, sad and a blank one. I have the blank one here because sometimes children think of a new feeling that is hard for them. I want each of you to pick a feeling that is hard for you to have. Jeremy, what feeling is difficult for you? (Continue around the circle until each child has identified a difficult feeling.)

Ask the children to draw a picture of an animal who is having the feeling that they chose. When the children have finished their pictures have them come back and share them with the group. After each child has described her or his picture, have the group talk about things that make them have the feeling represented in the picture and ways to cope with that feeling.

Puppet Plays or Drama

Divide the children into groups of two or three. Give each group a situation to work on. The situations could involve things such as: being called names at school, racism, handling a bully at school, conflict with brothers or sisters, wanting to go on a sleepover, frightening situations, trying to get a Nike shoes or a Gap shirt, hearing about bombing in their country of origin, arguing with caregivers about going to heritage language class etc. Try to include situations that are relevant to the children in your group. Ask the children to make up a short puppet play or drama about the situation. Four and five year old children will probably need assistance from a group facilitator to make a coherent story. The group facilitator should help them develop a story by asking questions. *What puppets do we need? What is going to happen? What would the mother do next?* Group facilitators should try not to influence the content of the story.

When the children are ready, have them come back and show their puppet plays or dramas to the rest of the group. Have the whole group talk about different ways to deal with each situation. During the discussion, group facilitators should encourage the children to explore ways to cope with the feelings that they would experience in these situations.

As an alternate to the above activity, have the group facilitators put on puppet plays about difficult situations. Interrupt the play frequently and have the facilitators' puppets seek input from the children in the audience, about how to solve their problems or manage the difficult situation.

Working on Problems

Ask each child to draw a picture of a problem. If the children have limited drawing skills, have them cut out magazine pictures of problems. If you are planning to use magazine pictures, group facilitators may need to go through magazines and select a wide variety of pictures that are perceived as depicting problems and present these to the children to sort through. When the children have finished drawing or selecting their pictures have them come back and show the picture to the group. Ask the child who has drawn or chosen the picture to come up with a solution for the problem. Then give the rest of the group a chance to make up alternate solutions. Group facilitators should try and encourage

the children to talk about the feelings involved in the problem situation and ways to cope with those feelings. You may wish to outline the problem solving steps for the children before beginning this exercise and use them as the problems are discussed.

The Problem Game

For this game you will need music and a soft ball or bean bag. Start the game by playing the music and passing the ball or bean bag around the circle. Stop the music. The person who is holding the ball or bean bag when the music stops must describe a problem or conflict. Group facilitators can ask questions to help the children come up with ideas: *Can you think of something that is a problem for children? What do children fight with other children about?* When the problem has been outlined, continue the music and passing the bean bag or ball. Stop the music again. The person who is now holding the bean bag or ball must say how she or he would feel if she or he had the problem described earlier. When the feelings have been labelled, start the music again and continue passing the bean bag or ball around the circle. Stop the music a third time. Have the person who is holding the ball or bean bag come up with a solution for the problem. Group facilitators may need to help the children develop solutions. Continue the game by repeating the process of describing a problem, identifying the feelings and developing a solution for the problem. If it appears appropriate the music can be stopped several times so that group members can come up with several solutions for each problem before moving on to a new problem.

When People Argue and Fight

The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate some beginning negotiation skills (i.e. exploring what each person in a conflict wants and reaching a compromise). This must be kept at a very elementary level given the age of the children in Playing with Rainbows groups. The younger children in the group may have difficulty examining a problem from the perspective of another person. This activity can be used to introduce the children to some ways of managing conflicts but it is expected, given their ages, that they will have difficulty actually employing the skills in real life situations when emotions are running high (e.g. a peer is pulling a toy out of their hands) or when the child is in conflict with a more powerful adult who is rightfully taking charge (e.g. the child does not want to go to bed on time). Due to this limitation it is suggested that group facilitators also discuss ways to manage the feelings that arise in conflict situations and other coping strategies such as approaching an adult for support.

Have the children describe a number of conflict situations, things they fight or argue about (conflict with siblings, conflict with a peer over a toy, conflict with a parent over wanting another cookie etc.). This can be done by asking the children specific questions: *What do you fight with your friends about? What do you argue with your brothers and sisters about? When does your grandmother get mad at you?*

Divide the children into two groups to work on a particular conflict. Assign each group one role in the conflict - for example one group is the brother in the conflict and the other group is the sister in the conflict. Have each group decide what they want and what they need. It is likely that group facilitators will need to be very involved in this process, asking questions such as: *Pretend you are the brother who is fighting about T.V. What do you want? What would make you happy? or Pretend you are the mother who is making supper when the girl wants a cookie. What do you want? Why don't you want her to eat a cookie? What do you think would happen if she ate a cookie?* Write the children's answers down on a piece of paper.

With both groups watching, have the group facilitators read out the information from the first part of the exercise. Have the children brainstorm solutions to the conflict incorporating the wants and needs that were outlined. Again, group facilitators will need to be involved in helping the children through this process by commenting and asking questions: *What do you think we can do? The girl really wants the cookie but her mother does not want her to spoil her supper.* Group facilitators may need to make some suggestions regarding how the conflict could be settled and then have the children elaborate on the proposed solution. *If the cookie was put aside on a special plate until the girl finished her supper, would that work?* Encourage the children to discuss ways to manage their feelings when conflicts arise and ways to obtain support if they cannot solve the problem on their own. When the problem has been solved, group facilitators can put on a small puppet play demonstrating the solution.

The Problem Solving Steps

Teach the children 5 problem solving steps:

- 1) Define the problem — What is the problem?
- 2) What can I do? What are my choices?
- 3) Think carefully about my choices. Which are good ideas? Which are not good ideas?
- 4) Make a choice — decide what I am going to do about the problem.
- 5) Evaluate the chosen solution. How did I do?

To help the children remember the steps you can associate one step with each finger on their hand. Review the steps several times. Work through a couple of example problems using the steps. The youngest children in the group may have difficulty understanding and remembering these steps. It is suggested that you only teach the children the problem solving steps if you think they will be able to make use of them on a day to day basis.

SESSION 9 – HOMEWORK SHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please draw a picture for this group.

You can draw *something that makes you feel good*.

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 10 – STRESS MANAGEMENT

Objectives:

- 1) To discuss positive and negative ways of relieving stress.
- 2) To provide the children with some skills to manage stress.
- 3) To practice some stress reduction skills.

Preparation:

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - Stress Management Activities
 - Story Creation — Have your story summary from Session 9 available.
 - Music and materials for relaxation
 - Snacks

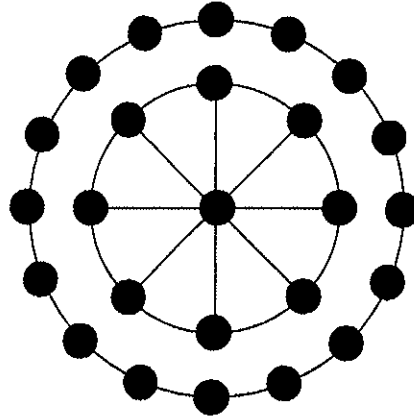
Welcoming the Children

As the children arrive, greet them. Ask the children to go to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

Creating the Circle

Have the children create or lay down the large group circle, the small circles to mark their places, the central shared circle, the lines connecting the circles and the circles representing the people who help and support them as they did in Session 9.

When all the circles and lines have been laid down, have the children collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down. It should no longer be necessary to remind the children that they do not always need to sit in the same spot unless a problem arises. Remember that the children can store their Comfort Objects in the central circle when they are involved in activities.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Allow all the children an opportunity to contribute. See if the children have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the last group.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. As noted in earlier sessions if you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities.

Have the children sit in a close circle with their legs stretched out so that their toes are touching in the centre of the circle. You will need to give the children some time to get into this circle and settle down. You may wish to encourage them to get rid of some nervous energy by gently tapping toes to say hello.

I want you all to sit in a circle and put your legs out straight. Now wriggle into the middle of the circle until your toes are touching. Let's have our toes say "hello". Gently tap your toes against someone else's to say "hello". Let's all say "hello" together, remember to tap gently, 1, 2, 3, "Hello" (Group facilitators should have the children say the word hello as they tap toes). (Soften your voice as you give instructions for the children to say a quieter "hello"). Let's say "hello" a little softer, 1, 2, 3, tap gently "Hello". (Whisper the next set of instructions) OK now let's say "hello" so softly that almost no one can hear. Ready, 1, 2, 3, tap very softly "Hello". Great, now we are going to practice singing together. First close your eyes and practice breathing deeply. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. In slowly and out slowly. (If possible choose a meditative chant from one of the children's country of origin. Teach this to the children, starting at a normal volume and then encouraging them to get softer. If you are unable to locate a meditative chant, have the children sing a soft, relaxing song or lullaby that is easy to learn or already familiar to them. Depending on the nature of the children in the group you may want to have them put their arms around each other and gently sway as they sing. Try to continue singing until everyone appears absorbed in the song. Then tell the children you are going to sing the song one more time a little softer and then stop. When the song is over let the children continue breathing deeply for a few seconds before they come back to the group.)

¹ For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources"

If the children are fidgeting or giggling they may not be able to handle the physical contact. In this case you can have the children move apart and then rock, hugging a teddy bear, a puppet or their own knees as they sing. When the children come back to the circle you can ask them to name or sing any other gentle soft songs they know. Remind the children that they can sing these songs to themselves if they are worried or upset at home.

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce "Stress Management" as the topic of the day.

Today we are going to talk about "stress". Stress is an adult word that big people use a lot. Has any one ever heard it before? Does anyone know what stress means? Stress is kind of like worrying. Sometimes kids feel stress when they know that there has been a bomb in the country they used to live in and they don't know if everyone is OK. Sometimes children feel stress when they have to go to a new school and they don't know anyone. Some families feel stress when they don't know if they have enough money. (Try to provide examples that the children will be able to relate to. Pause briefly between examples so that the children have an opportunity to elaborate on the examples you are providing or to acknowledge that they have experienced something similar.) Can you think of anything that makes you feel stress or worry? (Give the children an opportunity to share their worries.)

Homework Review

For homework, we asked you to draw a picture of something that makes you feel good. Sometimes when we feel stress or worry, it is a good idea to remember the things that make us feel good. Does anyone have a picture they want to show us. (Give the children an opportunity to share their pictures. If some children have not brought pictures give them an opportunity to talk about things that make them feel good. Whenever possible re-enforce ways that the children can use the things that make them feel good as ways of coping with stress.)

Stress Management Activities

Lead the children through the activities you have chosen for this session. A variety of possible activities are listed at the end of this chapter.

Discussion

Use the discussion time in this session to review the coping strategies that the children have learned. You may want to ask them to imagine some specific stressful situations (fight with best friend, test at school, mother not coming home on time) and then talk about the skills they would use to handle these situations.

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for "Story Time".

The children will continue working on their stories in the two groups that have been used in earlier sessions. The story should be completed by the end of this session. Read or summarize the story that has been created to date. Since the children have heard the story many times you may wish to have them tell the story with you by asking them questions: Who remembers how our story begins? What happens first? Where does the wolf go when he gets hurt? This will also help the children practice telling the story for the last session. Ask the children if anything else needs to happen before the story ends.

After the children's suggestions for the story ending have been integrated into the story, have them work together on a large picture showing where the characters would be at the end of the story. The children may need direction from the group facilitator to assist them in working on this joint picture. Group facilitators may choose to draw outlines for the picture. It may help the process if each child works on one specific part of the large picture. You may choose to include a variety of materials in the picture such as magazine pictures, children's drawings etc. Try and make sure that all the characters from the story are represented in the big picture.

In order to have both groups finish this activity at the same time, it is useful if leaders agree on a time frame for Story Creation. If there is time left after the big picture has been drawn, have the children pretend to be characters in the picture. When the children are pretending to be the characters ask them to act like the character would in the final scene. Ask them to speak for the character and tell the others what the character would have to say at the end of the story. Group facilitators can help the children come up with words for the characters by asking questions: *What would the wolf say now that he is back at home? What did the wolf learn in the story? Pretend he is telling us about that. If the wolf could make a wish now, what would it be?*

Group facilitators should have the completed story available for the children in Session 11.

Relaxing and Review

During this session, involve the children in a relaxation technique that they can use at home. As noted previously, if you have difficulty creating your own relaxation exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities².

Start by playing the background music that you have selected for this session and then lead the children through the exercise. This example is written assuming that the children have made pillows as their Comfort Objects.

Can every one get their Comfort Pillows and then come back to the circle? Today we are going to practice a way to relax that you can use at home. You might want to try this when you are feeling a lot of stress or you are feeling really worried. Do you all have your Comfort Pillows? Great. Now sit down or lie down so that you are comfortable. Find a way to hold your Comfort Pillow so that you can gently stroke it. Close your eyes and start breathing deeply. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Listen to the music and keep breathing slowly and deeply. Gently, gently stroke your Comfort Pillow. Keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Let yourself relax. Think about happy places, happy times, happy people. Keep breathing in slowly and out slowly. Gently, gently hug your Comfort Pillow as you listen to the music. Keep breathing in slowly and out gently. In through your nose and out through your mouth. When you are ready, give your Comfort Pillow a last squeeze, open your eyes and come back to the circle.

When the children have come back to the circle, give them an opportunity to talk about the happy things, happy places or happy people that they thought about. Remind them that they can always go inside their heads and think about these things when they are feeling stressed or worried.

Tell the children that the session is almost over and that it will soon be snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

² Suggested titles can be found in "Bibliography and Resources".

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

Remind the children that the group will be ending after two more group sessions.

After today we have two more group meetings. We will have one meeting next week and then the meeting after that will be our last one. In our last meeting we are going to show each other the stories that we have been working on all these weeks. Is there anything else you would like to do in our last meeting? (Give the children a chance to share their ideas. If you are open to having a celebration involving food then let the children know this.) Sometimes for our last group we have a celebration to say goodbye to each other. Sometimes we have some food at our celebration. Do you have any ideas about the kind of food you would like to have? (If it seems appropriate you may want to have food from the children's countries of origin as well as food they first ate when they came to Canada at the celebration. Keep track of the ideas the children share so that they can be reviewed at the next meeting. Make it clear that you may not be able to follow through with all their ideas.) Thanks for your ideas. We may not be able to do all those things or have all that food but we will plan our goodbye celebration next week.

Before Session 11, review the children's ideas. Determine which are practical and which are not, keeping in mind any specific activities that group facilitators have planned. When considering the food that you may have available in the final group session, you must think about any allergies that the children have as well as cultural or religious restrictions on what they are allowed to eat. If the children are thinking of bringing food that is eaten in their country of origin from their homes, consider the practicality of this (i.e. Can the children's parents afford the time or money required to provide this food to the group?)

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to draw a picture of a safe person, a safe place or something that makes them feel safe.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. After this, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds these or in the central circle.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Talk to the caregivers about the celebration the group is planning for the last session so that they are prepared for their children's questions or comments about this. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

Stress Management Activities

Moving With Music

Make use of music to help the children become aware of how their bodies feel when they are relaxed. Have a variety of quick, active music and some soft soothing music available. Play a selection of the quick active music and have the children dance. After a while stop them and encourage them to talk about how their body feels. Group facilitators can help the children with this discussion by having the children focus on particular body parts - i.e. the heart, flushed face, tired legs etc. Next play a selection of soothing, relaxing music. Have the children move slowly in time to this music. It may help if group facilitators move with the children, modelling first the fast dancing and then the slow relaxed dancing. When working with the slow music you may want to have the children end up sitting or lying down. After the soft, relaxing music has been played, have the children talk about how their body feels now. Compare this to how it felt following the faster dance. You can repeat this activity with several selections of music.

For an alternative to the above activity, have the children draw as they listen to the music. Encourage them to scribble, make dots or draw quickly in time to the fast music. When the soft music is playing, encourage the children to participate in "quiet drawing", gently scribbling on the page with light strokes. It is best to use crayons or pencil crayons for this activity since they respond to harder and lighter touches more obviously than markers do and because markers may get damaged by the faster drawing. You can repeat this activity with different selections of music. To introduce variations, you can give the children different drawing materials (i.e. chalk, crayons, markers) or different types of paper when you change to a new piece of fast music.

Scribble Pictures³

Give the children large pieces of paper. Have them close their eyes and make a scribble on the paper. (Violet Oaklander (1978) recommends having the children close their eyes and make imaginary scribbles in the air prior to actually drawing on the paper.) Next have the children look at their scribble, turning the paper around and moving it until they see a picture they can make out of their scribble. Once the children have seen their picture, have them complete it. When the children have finished, they can share their work with the group, making up a story about the picture if they choose. Let the children know that this is an activity they can use to relieve stress at home.

Stress Relieving Centres

Set up four or five "centres" around the room. At each centre, the children are allowed to engage in activities which they could use at home to relieve stress. For example, have pillows and books at one centre, drawing materials and paper at another centre, playdough at third centre, cutting and pasting activities at a fourth and soft music and teddy bears at a fifth. Divide the children into groups and assign each group to a centre. Group facilitators should move around and make sure that the children are using the materials in a relaxing way, providing direction where necessary. After 5-10 minutes at the centre (this depends on the age of the children and the time available in the session) have the children move to new centres. Continue this process until all the children have spent time at each centre. Follow up with a discussion about how the various activities felt, which ones felt relaxing, which activities might help if they were feeling worried or stressed, and which activities they could use at home.

³ This activity is described IN Violet Oaklander (1978) *Windows to Our Children: a gestalt therapy approach to children and adolescents*

Colours and Stress

Introduce this activity by talking about the fact that some animals (chameleons, octopuses, and cuttle fish) change colour when they are feeling stress or worry. You can also talk about the fact that cats and dogs react to stress by raising the fur on their backs. Have books available to help the children understand the colour changes you are talking about. Next provide each child with some paper and colouring materials (crayons, markers, coloured paper and glue). Ask them to use the colours to show what colours they would be if they were feeling worried or stressed. Have the children share their work with the group. You can expand this activity by having the children consider particular stressful or worrying situations (i.e. fear the army will come to take away family members, fear that mother won't come home from work, worry about a test at school, getting lost in a store) and having them use the colours to show how they would feel in that particular situation. You can also ask the children to select a set of colours that correspond to their relaxed state.

Soothing Senses

The purpose of this activity is to have the children identify things that will help them cope with stress. Provide them with the sheet at the end of this chapter and have them complete it by drawing pictures in the spaces provided. When they are finished their work, have the children share it with the group. After all the children have shown their work to the group, hold a brief discussion about the way to use the things they drew to help them with worried or stressed feelings at home.

Meditation

If there is a group facilitator or volunteer who is familiar with meditation have that person lead the child through a meditative exercise. You may choose to use a meditation that makes use of incense or candles. Talk with the children about how they can adapt this exercise for use at home. If you do complete a meditation, you may wish to skip or shorten the relaxation at the end of the session. You could replace this relaxation with a quiet song or game which uses limited physical activity ("We are going on a lion hunt" or "See the bunnies sleeping").

SOOTHING SENSES

People whose touches help me feel good and relaxed:



Things to look at that help me feel good and relaxed:



Sounds that help me feel good and relaxed:



Smells that help me feel good and relaxed:



Things I can touch that help me feel good and relaxed:



PLAYING WITH RAINBOWS™ MANUAL

SESSION 10 – HOMEWORK SHEET

Name: _____

Our next group meeting is on: _____

Please draw a picture for this group.

Draw a picture of a *safe place, a safe person or something that makes you feel safe.*

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 11 – SAFETY

Objectives

- 1) To teach the children some safety skills
- 2) To assist the children in identifying safe places and safe people in their lives.

Preparation

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - Safety Activities
 - Story Creation – Have the story including ideas from Session 10 available.
 - Music and materials for relaxation
 - Snacks

Welcoming the Children

Greet the children as they arrive. Invite them to go to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

Creating the Circle

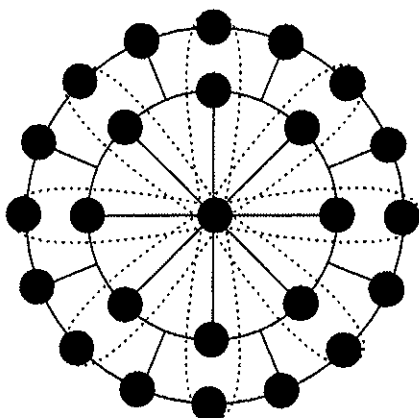
Have the children create or lay down the large group circle, the small circles to mark their places, the central shared circle, the lines to join the shared circle with the larger outside circle and the circles to represent the people who help and support them as they did in Sessions 9 and 10.

In this session, the children are going to add the final step to the circles that have been created by connecting the large group circle to the "helping people" circles. The circles can be connected by using lines or petal shapes.¹ The directions that follow could be used if the children were using fabric and ribbons to create their circles. Group facilitators would have a variety of pieces of fabric cut into petal or leaf shapes available.

Today we are going to join our large group circle to the outside helping people circles. It is important for us to stay connected to the people that help us. Come and choose a piece of fabric to use (Show the children the pre-cut pieces of fabric and have each child come and select a piece to use.) Now go and lay your piece of fabric down so that it is touching our group circle and it is touching one of the helping people circles. When you are done, go and get your Comfort Object and then come to sit down.

¹ Refer to the diagram in "Getting Ready for the Getting Ready For Your Playing With Rainbows Group".

When all the circles and lines have been laid down, have the children collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit down. It should no longer be necessary to remind the children that they do not always need to sit in the same spot. Remember that the children can store their Comfort Objects in the central circle when they are involved in activities.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have selected to use in the group. Allow all the children an opportunity to contribute. See if the children have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the previous session.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. As noted earlier, if you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities².

Today's relaxation will focus on images of cocoons and butterflies. You may want to show the children some pictures of these things or read the story *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle before you begin the exercise. Give each child a piece of fabric or blanket they can wrap around themselves during this exercise. Play some gentle music as you speak.

I want everyone choose a blanket from this pile and then go and find a place to get comfortable. Move around in your spot until you find a comfortable position. OK, let's start breathing deeply. In through your nose and out through your mouth. In slowly and out gently. In and out. In and out. Lie down on your tummy and crawl around slowly like a caterpillar. Move around the room, pretend you are looking for a nice leaf to eat or a nice flower to rest on. (Give the children some time to move slowly around the room. It is suggested that you play soft and quiet music to encourage the children to move slowly). Slowly crawl back to the place where you left your blanket. Take your blanket and wrap it around your body. Pretend you are a caterpillar in a cocoon. You are snuggled up safely inside your cocoon. This is a safe, happy, comfortable place to be. Feel how good and safe you feel. Keep breathing in slowly and out gently. You feel something changing. Your beautiful wings have grown and you are ready to fly out of your cocoon. Uncurl your body slowly. Shrug off the cocoon you made out of the blanket.

² For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources"

Stretch your legs and arms. Stand up when you are ready. Stretch out your arms like the beautiful wings of a butterfly. Practice flying slowly around the room. (Give the children a chance to move around the room. It is suggested that you have relatively soft, slow music playing so that the children do not become too active during this part of the exercise). Great, take one last flight around the room and then come back to the circle. (After the exercise, you may want to talk to the children about how it felt to be a caterpillar or a butterfly. If some of the children enjoyed the experience, remind them that they can use blankets at home to repeat it.)

Some children may find it difficult to move slowly during this exercise. Group facilitators can support them by moving slowly beside them or whispering directions to individual children. It may also help the children stay calm if they stay a fair distance apart during the exercise.

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce "Safety" as the topic of the day.

Today we are going to talk about "Safety". Does anyone know what "safe" means? (Give the children a chance to answer. If the children are unable to define the word or appear unsure of their definition then provide them with a definition and ask them questions to make sure the concept is clear). Safe means that you do not get hurt. A safe place is a place where your body does not get hurt and your feelings do not get hurt. A safe person is a person who does not hurt you or your feelings. Can you think of any safe places? (Give the children a chance to list some safe places. If they are not able to come up with any examples, list some specific places and ask them if they are safe. Have the children explain their answers to the group.) Is this group room a safe place? (If the children say it is safe, ask them how they know it is safe. If they say it is not safe ask them why it is not safe.) Is school a safe place? Can you think of any places that are not safe? (Give the children a chance to list some unsafe places. Listen carefully to their answers as they may provide you with material to work on later in the session.) How about people, can you think of any safe people? (Again give the children an opportunity to name safe people. If they are unable to come up with any examples ask them about specific individuals i.e. group leaders and categories of people i.e. teachers, doctors, fire-fighters.) Can you think of any people who are not safe? (Allow the children to talk about people who they feel are not safe. If you do not understand their answers then ask questions to help the children explain what they mean.) Today we are going to talk about safe places, safe people and things we can do to try and stay safe.

Homework Review

For homework, we asked you to draw a picture of a safe place, a safe person or something that makes you feel safe. Who would like to show us their picture? (Give the children an opportunity to share their pictures. During your discussion, find out if other children find the same place, person or thing safe. Talk about how other children might be able to use the thing that has been drawn to help themselves feel safe. If some children have not brought pictures give them an opportunity to talk about the places, people or things that make them feel safe.)

Safety Activities

Lead the children through the activities you have chosen for this session. A list of possible activities can be found at the end of this chapter.

Discussion

Much of the discussion related to Safety may have taken place when you introduced the topic, as you reviewed the children's homework and during the Safety Activities. Depending on what you have already addressed you may wish to have a group discussion to review the safety skills that the children have learned or to address outstanding issues that have arisen during the session.

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for "Story Time".

The children will continue working on their stories in the two groups that have been used in earlier sessions. In this session, the children are going to decide how to share their story with the other half of the group and then practice doing this.

Talk with the children about the different ways they could share their story with the other group members. They could choose to tell it, act it out or present it in a puppet play. In many instances, it may be necessary for group facilitators to make this choice for the children prior to the session using their knowledge of the children, the children's skills, the stories they have created and the materials that are available. If the children are going to use drama or puppets, group facilitators may need to take an active role in the presentation by functioning as narrator or director. This possibility should be considered before the session. If the group facilitators feel that they need to take an active role in presenting the children's story they should come to this session prepared to do this. For example, group facilitators should think in advance about the way the story will be presented and the roles the children will play in doing this. Since it is unlikely that the children will have the time to make elaborate puppets or costumes, group facilitators should think about what costumes, props and ready made puppets are available or can be easily made.

After a way for the children to present the story has been chosen, work with them to practice their presentation. This may involve assigning roles to the children, picking costumes, making props or drawing scenery. The large group pictures that were drawn in earlier sessions to represent the beginning and end of the story may be used as part of the children's presentations.

In order to have both groups finish this activity at the same time, it is useful if group facilitators agree on a time frame for Story Creation. The children can continue preparing for and practising their presentation until this time is up.

Relaxing and Review

During this session, involve the children in a relaxation technique that they can use at home. As noted previously, if you have difficulty creating your own relaxation exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities³.

Give each child a bowl containing a material, like sand, that they can sift through their hands and run through their fingers. Make sure that you choose a material that is culturally appropriate, that will not demean a sacred material and will not be perceived as unduly wasteful. Start by playing the background music that you have selected for this session and then lead the children through the exercise.

Does everyone have a bowl? Great. Let's start by breathing deeply. In through your nose and out through your mouth. In slowly and out gently. In and out. In and out. Put your hands in the bowl and feel the sand. Move your fingers around in the sand. Close your eyes. Keep breathing deeply, in and out, in and out. Focus on the way the sand feels. Move your fingers around in the sand. Pick up some sand and let it fall from one hand to the other. Keep breathing in slowly and out gently. Take one finger and swirl it around slowly in the sand. Feel the sand. Listen to the music as you move the sand. Keep breathing in and out as you let the sand go from one hand to the other. Breathe in and out, in and out. When you are ready, pull your hands out of the sand and open your eyes. (Pause frequently during this exercise and give the children time to feel and explore the sand. Let the children become absorbed in the sand and the music. Only give the next direction when the children appear to be becoming restless.)

Tell the children that the session is almost over and that it will soon be snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

Remind the children that your next meeting will be the last group session. Review your plans for the last session. If the children are required to bring anything for your goodbye celebration, include this on the homework sheet.

If you are having the final Caregivers' Session after this group meeting, let the children know this. Provide them with a brief overview of what you will discuss. Ask their permission if you are planning to share any of their work during the meeting with the caregivers.

If you have decided to use homework in your group let the children know what their assignment is. Ask the children to draw a picture of something they liked about the group.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. Group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have chosen for the group. After this, the children should put their Comfort Objects back in the container that holds these or in the central circle.

When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Give the caregivers the Homework Sheet and explain it to them briefly. Answer any questions the caregivers might have.

³ Suggested titles can be found in "Bibliography and Resources"

Safety Activities

The Safety Game⁴

Prior to this activity, group facilitators should create flash cards which outline a variety of challenging or unsafe situations (e.g. You are lost in the grocery store. You are at home alone and someone knocks on the door. You are walking home from school and someone offers you a ride home.) Divide the room into two sections. Place a red traffic signal in one section and a green traffic signal in the other section. Read a scenario from a flash card to a child in the group and ask them to describe a safe way to deal with the situation. Have the rest of the children listen to the answer. If they think the answer is right they go to the side of the room marked by the green light. If they think the answer is wrong they go to the side of the room marked by the red light. Once the children have chosen a side of the room, discuss the answer that was given and see if there are other possible solutions. Continue this process, giving each child a chance to consider a scenario. You may wish to include situations that were mentioned by the children earlier in the session.

Phoning for Help

The purpose of this exercise is to give the children the skills they need to make an emergency phone call. Discuss the kinds of situations in which the children may need to place emergency phone calls. Provide the children with the emergency number. Make sure that the number will work for all the children. If 911 is not available in your area, determine if the children can access emergency help by contacting the operator. Children are able to remember to dial 911 or 0 but will have a hard time remembering an entire seven digit phone number. Teach the children what to say when they place an emergency call. Keep this simple. It is suggested you teach the children the following lines:

Hello my name is _____. I am six years old and I have a problem.

If the children are able to remember these three lines, the person on the other end will have enough information to begin asking the child questions. It is important that the child state her or his age in order to ensure that the operator does not think that a prank call is being received.

After you have taught the children how to place the calls, give each child a chance to practice. Have the children select different reasons for calling for help. You can have the children use puppets to practice if you wish. Have a group facilitator play the role of the operator. The children who are not making the practice call can give the "operator" ideas about what to say and what questions to ask. This will help group facilitators understand the kind of help that the children feel they need.

What Should We Do?

In this exercise, group facilitators put on a number of puppet plays outlining difficult situations. The puppets turn to the audience, the children, for suggestions on how to handle the situation. Encourage the children to interact directly with the puppets. The children may need some help finding a solution for each situation. If there is an adult who is not involved in the puppet play, they can help the children generate solutions by asking questions (*What should that little boy do? Is he safe? What does he need to be safe? Who could he get help from?*) These questions can also be asked by a group facilitator involved in the puppet play if she or he moves out of the role she or he is using the puppet for.

⁴This game was originally outlined by Chitra Sekhar as an activity in a group for pre-school children who have witnessed domestic violence

Children Deserve To Be Safe

Have the children make signs or posters related to safety. This can be done in a number of ways. You could have the children make two sided signs. On one side they can draw a picture showing how children feel if they are not safe and on the other side they can draw a picture of how children feel when they are safe. Another option is to have the children make signs or posters that show adults what children need to feel safe. Children could also make a sign or a poster depicting the things that make children feel unsafe and then put a line through these to show that these things should not happen. This last concept can be explained to children by showing them a No Smoking sign.

People Who Can Help Me

Review the sheet found at the end of this chapter with the children. Have them provide examples of people who might be found in each square so that you are sure they understand what each category refers to. It may be appropriate to change the headings for the squares so that they are applicable to the children in your group. For example if some children do not go to school this category could be changed. While there may be overlap between the Home and Family squares, they were both included in case significant family members do not live with the children. If this situation does not apply to the children in your group you may want to adjust these titles. Other titles that could be included would be: Neighbourhood, Temple, Mosque, Church, Synagogue or Friends.

Have the children work on the sheet at the end of this chapter. When they are finished, have them share their work with the group. Discuss how children can approach adults when they need help. The children can be led through some role plays to practice these skills.

Safety Cards

This activity is designed for children who have some reading and writing skills. Give the children wallet size pieces of cardboard to work on. Have each child write their first name and draw a picture of her or himself on one side of the card. On the other side the children can make a list of safe places and emergency phone numbers. If possible, keep the children's cards and have them laminated before the next session. Talk with the children about where they can keep their cards so that they will be accessible. You may also want to discuss the kinds of situations the children might need their cards for and talk about other ways to manage these situations.

Safety Mandalas⁵

You can begin this exercise by providing each child with a flower-like mandala design, having the children create their own design using a Spirograph or provide them with the sheet found at the end of this session. Have the children write their names or draw their pictures in the very centre of the design. Have the children draw pictures of or write the names of safe people and safe places in the petals of the design. The children can include people and places they know as well as community resources such as police and fire fighters on their designs.

Safety Shields⁶

Give the children a small piece of paper shaped like a shield. Have them draw their picture on one side of the shield. On the other side have them list or draw pictures of the safe people and places in their lives. The shields can then be made into necklaces for the children to hang around their necks.

^{5,6} Instructions for these activities were provided by Chitra Sekhar.

PLAYING WITH RAINBOWS™ MANUAL

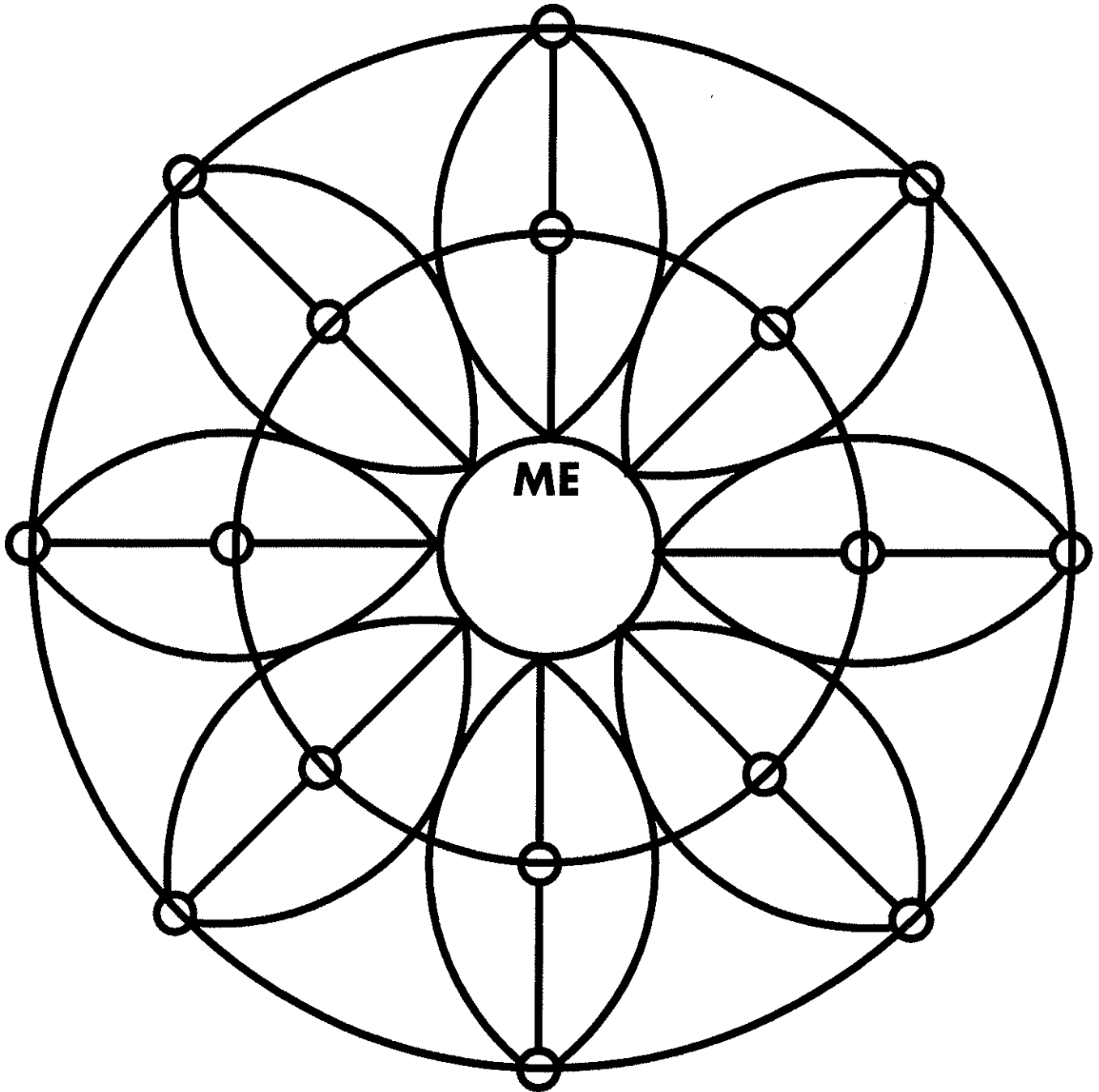
THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP ME

(Draw pictures or write down the names of the people who can help you)

<p>At Home</p>	<p>In My Family</p>
<p>At School</p>	<p>In the Community</p>

SAFETY MANDALA

Draw or write about safe people and safe places in the petals of the flower.



Name: _____

Our last group meeting is on: _____

Please draw a picture for this group.

Draw a picture of *something you liked about the group*.

**Our next meeting is our last meeting and we are going to have a
Goodbye Celebration.**

Please bring: _____

If you have any questions call: _____

Thanks,

SESSION 12 – SELF ESTEEM AND CLOSURE

Objectives:

- 1) To help each child emphasize the positive aspects of her or himself.
- 2) To review the group experience.
- 3) To provide the children with a positive closure experience.

Preparation:

The order of the activities in this session has been altered slightly so that the stated objectives can be accomplished.

- 1) Select the exercises you will be using in the group.
- 2) Make sure you have the materials required for each portion of the group:
 - Creating the Circle
 - Check In
 - Centering
 - Self-esteem Activity
 - Story Creation - Have available the materials that the children need to present their stories.
 - Goodbye Activity
 - Music and materials for relaxation
 - Snacks
- 3) Remember that saying goodbye can be difficult both for the children and the adults in the group. Do not make promises that you cannot keep. Do not tell the children you will see them again unless this is true.

Welcoming the Children

Greet the children as they arrive. Invite them to go to the circle area where they can play quietly until everyone has arrived.

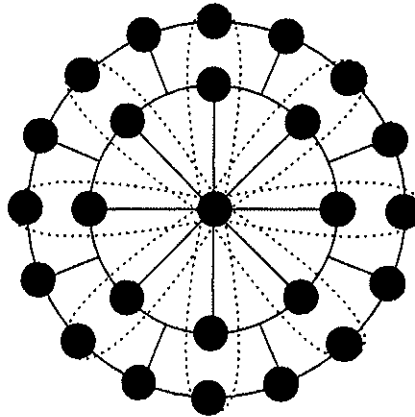
Creating the Circle

In this session, the children will repeat all the steps for the Circle Creation that they have learnt during the group. Have the children create or lay down the large group circle, the small circles to mark their places, the central shared circle, the lines to join the central shared circle with the large outside circle, the circles to represent the people who help and support them and the lines connecting the large group circle to the "helping people" circles as they did in Session 11.

When all the circles and lines have been laid down group facilitators may choose to review the steps in the Circle Creation. Group facilitators can use this discussion to remind the children that this is their last group.

Look at our circles and lines. Remember in our first group we made the big circle that the whole group sits inside. Then we made the circles to show where we each sit. Next we made the circle in the centre for our shared ideas and the time we spent together and then we made lines to join the shared circle with the big group circle. After that we made the "helping people" circles and then we joined those to our big group circle. (Group facilitators should point out the different circles and lines as you identify them or ask the children in the group to point them out.) Today we are saying goodbye to each other and the group. After today we won't need the big group circle to sit in or the little circles to mark our places and we won't have any more shared ideas and time, but you all still have "helping people" that you can talk to.

After Circle Creation has been reviewed with the children, have them collect their Comfort Objects and come to sit in the circle. Remember that the children can store their Comfort Objects in the central circle when they are involved in activities.



Circle Time

Check In

Lead the children through the Check In activity you have used throughout the group. Allow all the children an opportunity to contribute. See if the children have any questions they want to ask or comments they want to make about the previous session. Ask the children if they have anything they want to say about this being the final session.

Centering

Lead the children through a brief centering exercise. In keeping with this session's topic of Self-Esteem, you may choose to have the visualization focus on the children's positive attributes. Given that this is the last session and the children will be saying goodbye to each other, it is suggested that the exercise be kept brief, so the children can focus on each other and the group, rather than focusing inwards. As noted in earlier sessions if you have difficulty creating your own centering exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities¹.

¹ For specific titles refer to "Bibliography and Resources".

Before the visualization begins have each child identify something that they are good at. This could include sports, helping others, school work, singing, crafts, etc. Group leaders can help the children identify positive traits by asking questions: *What do you do well at home? What do you do well at school? What makes you a good friend? When do people say “good job” to you? What can you do that makes your mother smile? Etc.*

Everyone find a place to sit down or lie down. Wriggle around until you feel comfortable. Close your eyes and practice breathing deeply. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. In and out. In deeply and out slowly. Imagine that you are doing something that you are good at. There are friends and family watching you and they are smiling at you. Keep breathing in deeply and out slowly. Look at everyone’s smiles. What a great feeling. It makes you smile too. Keep breathing in deeply and out slowly. When you feel ready, open your eyes, stand up and pretend you are doing the thing that you are good at. Everyone keep on pretending. (Group facilitators can move among the children and give them suggestions for how to act out the thing they are good at. Group facilitators should also take this opportunity to provide each child with positive reinforcement. You may choose to praise the child’s acting skills, reinforce the importance of the skill they are imitating or talk positively about the thing that the child is imitating. For example: Sara you are doing such a good job of pretending to skip. What a good actor you are; Andrew, it is great that you know how to put your brothers and sisters to bed. What a great help you are for your Grandmother; Fatima, it looks like you are pretending to play soccer. Soccer is a great way to have fun. When group facilitators have spoken to each child, have the children come back to the circle.). OK everyone, it’s time to come back and sit in our circle.

Remember to give your directions slowly, pausing to let the children create the images you are describing. Breathing slowly as you speak will help you to maintain an appropriate pace.

Topic and Activity of the Day

Introduce “Self-Esteem and Closure” as the topics of the day.

Today we are going to talk about what makes us special and things we are good at. We are also going to say Goodbye to each other and the group.

Self-Esteem Activity

Lead the children through the activity you have chosen for this session. A number of possible activities are listed at the end of this chapter.

² Suggested titles can be found in “Bibliography and Resources”.

Story Creation

Bring the children back to the circle for “Story Time”.

In this session, the children will tell or perform their stories for each other. You may choose to have the caregivers attend this part of the session. If caregivers are invited to attend the story performances, it is suggested that this portion of the session take place after the discussion and goodbye activity.

Discussion

During this session, use the discussion period to review the children’s experience in the group. You can begin by reviewing their homework pictures.

Homework Review

For homework, we asked you to draw a picture of something you liked in the group. Who would like to show us their picture? (Give the children an opportunity to share their pictures. If some children have not brought pictures give them an opportunity to talk about something they liked in the group.)

After the children have reviewed their pictures, facilitate a discussion about the group.

Let’s talk a bit about what we have done in our group. Remember in the first session we started getting to know each other. Does anyone remember what activity we did? (Give the children a chance to answer. If they do not remember, provide the answer). Our second session was about Feelings. What do you remember about that group? (Give the children a chance to answer. If no one mentions the main activity for the session, then continue with the next question.) Does anyone remember the activity we did? (Give the children a chance to answer. If they do not remember, provide the answer. Continue with a brief review of each session.)

After you have reviewed the topics and activities for the last eleven sessions, have the children talk about what they felt was the best thing in the group, the worst thing in the group and the things that you should change if you have another group in the future.

Goodbye Activity

Lead the children through the Goodbye Activity you have selected for this group. If you are planning to use food as part of your Goodbye Activity, you may wish to have the activity follow “Relaxing and Review”. Possible activities are listed at the end of this chapter.

Relaxing and Review

Since this is the last session, it is suggested that you choose a relaxation exercise that allows the children to interact with or be aware of each other. It is suggested that you not use an exercise which requires them to close their eyes since this would prevent contact with other group members. As noted previously, if you have difficulty creating your own relaxation exercise and do not wish to use the one outlined here, a variety of books are available which provide instructions for relaxation activities².

The children and group facilitators should sit in a circle so that they can put their arms around each other or hold hands. If there are children who are not comfortable with this level of physical contact, they can sit close to, but not touch the people beside them. It may be easier if group facilitators or volunteers sit beside these children. Play the background music you have selected for this session and then lead the children through the exercise. Remember to ensure that the images you select will not be frightening for the children.

Let's start by breathing deeply. OK. Let's start moving gently together. (Group leaders can help the group sway slowly together). Let's pretend we are clouds moving back and forth across the sky. We drift back and forth, to and fro, to and fro. (Stay silent and let the group keep moving). Now, let's pretend we are the leaves on a tree being blown by the wind. We move slowly to and fro as the wind gently touches us. Back and forth, to and fro, back and forth. (Stay silent as the children keep moving.) Now let's pretend we are the waves in the ocean. We roll back and forth over the beach. Back and forth, to and fro, back and forth. (Remain silent for a while as the children keep moving. Start speaking again as the music draws to a close) It is almost time for us to stop moving together and go back to our places on the circle. Let's move back and forth, back and forth two more times, one, two, stop. Great, now stand up, shake your arms and your legs and then go back to your places in the circle.

Remember to speak slowly as you lead the children through this exercise. Pause to allow the children to focus on the music and the movement of the group. Breathing slowly as you speak will help you maintain an appropriate pace.

Tell the children that the session is almost over and that it will soon be snack time. Ask them if they have any questions or comments they would like to share.

If you are having the final Caregivers' Session after this group meeting, let the children know this. Provide them with a brief overview of what you will discuss. Ask their permission if you are planning to share any of their work during the meeting with the caregivers.

Have the children rate this session using their fingers as outlined in Session 1. Make note of the ratings.

Ask the children what they liked and didn't like in the group. Keep notes of their comments.

Snack and Social Time

Give the children their snack and allow them to freely interact with each other. If you have chosen to use food as part of your goodbye ceremony, you may want to present the snack more ceremoniously than usual, for example you could eat by candle light, play music in the background or have special decorations around the food table. If the children have brought food to share, have them describe the food and then pass it to other group members.

While the children are eating, group facilitators can encourage appropriate interactions or support children who are alone.

After snack time is over, call the children back to the circle and give them any pictures, materials or objects that they will be taking home with them. Remind them that they can take their Comfort Objects home with them. Talk about the fact that these can serve as a reminder of the group as well as a source of comfort during hard times.

Goodbye

Call the children back to the circle. Have them complete the Goodbye Activity you have used in all your group sessions.

Group facilitators and volunteers can use the time when the children are waiting for their caregivers to say individual goodbyes to the children. When the children's caregivers arrive, help the children gather their things. Make sure that each adult involved in the group has had a chance to say goodbye to each child. Answer any questions that the child's caregivers may have.

Self Esteem Activities

Mirror, Mirror³

Give each child a decorated box with a mirror stuck on the inside bottom of the box. Ask the children to open the box and then say something special about the person they see in the box. Other group members and group facilitators can also be given an opportunity to say something special about each child. Write the child's and group's comments inside the lid of the box. If the children have difficulty reading and time allows, group facilitators may choose to draw simple pictures or symbols inside the lid of the box to reflect the positive comments of the group.

Drawing Me

Provide the children with small hand held mirrors or have a number of large mirrors available in the room. Have each child look in the mirror and note the colour of her/his hair, eyes, and clothing before drawing a picture of her or himself. When the pictures are completed, have the children share their work with the group. If time allows, give group members an opportunity to name the special things about each child. Group facilitators can note these on the back of the picture using words, pictures or symbols.

All About Me

Have the children complete the sheet found at the end of this chapter. The children can use colours rather than writing in words in the places where appropriate. Group facilitators may need to help children think of or write in their answers. When they have finished, have the children share their work with the group.

Giving Awards

Introduce this activity by talking about how people are given awards or prizes for things that they are good at. Give each child a set of stickers or ribbons. They should have one sticker or ribbon for each group member. The children should take turns walking around the inside of the circle. As each child walks around the circle, she or he should stop in front of each person in the group. That person says something nice about the child and places a sticker or a ribbon on her or him. Let each child have turn walking around the inside of the circle. Group facilitators may need to help the children find nice things to say about each other. Children can include comments about each other's clothing, smiles or skills. You may choose to have the children place the stickers or ribbons on a piece of paper instead of directly on each other.

Special Me⁴

During this activity, the children will be working with cards which have their picture on the inside. Prior to the session, group facilitators should make a card for each child and place the child's photograph inside the card.

³ These activities are used by Chitra Sekhar in groups for pre-school children who have witnessed domestic violence.

Have the children sit in the circle. Give each child a set of stickers. They should have one sticker for each member of the group. Tell the children you are going to hand them each a card, but that they must not look inside until you tell them to. Hand each child the card with her or his picture inside. Tell the children that there is a picture of a special person inside each card, count to three and have all the children open their cards. Go around the circle and have each child say one nice thing about her or himself. Then have each child walk around the circle with a group facilitator or volunteer. The child will stop in front of each group member. The group member should say something nice about the child and place a sticker on the front of the child's card. The group facilitator or volunteer can write the group member's comment inside the card. Continue this process until all the children have received stickers and comments from each other. You may wish to give the children a chance to decorate their cards. They could include a piece of fabric from the group circle or a feather from the Talking Stick as part of the decorations on their card.

Self-Esteem Circle⁴

Give each child a copy of the sheet found at the end of this section. Have the children write their names or draw their pictures in the very centre of the design. Have the children write down or draw pictures of their strengths and skills on the lines connecting the centre circle to the first ring of circles. In the space between the first ring of circles and the second ring of circles have the children list the names or draw pictures of the people who care for and support them. The children can then colour in the design, adding other lines to turn the picture into a flower if they choose.

Goodbye Activities

Goodbye Pictures

In this activity, the children are going to contribute to each other's pictures. Give each child and group facilitator or volunteer a piece of paper and one crayon or marker. Make sure that everyone has a different colour crayon or marker. Ask each person to draw something on her or his paper. Then have the children pass the pictures to the next person in the circle and have that person add something to the picture. Continue passing the pictures around the circle until all the children and group facilitators have added something to the picture. If the children are able to, have them write their first name on the back of the page in the colour they are using to draw so that they will know who has contributed what to their picture.

Today we are going to work on pictures together to say goodbye to each other. I want each of you to come and get a marker and a piece of paper. We are all going to draw a little bit on each other's papers. Start by drawing something on your piece of paper. OK., now pass your paper to the person on your right. Great. Now everyone draw a little bit on the new page you have. Wonderful, let's pass the papers around again. (Continue to have the papers passed until each person has their original picture back). Now you have a picture that everyone in the group has added something to. This will help you remember each other after our group is over.

Joint Picture

Have all the children, volunteers and group facilitators create a picture on a large piece of paper. When the picture is completed, have each child choose a section of the picture that she/he would like to take home. You may wish to have the group facilitators or volunteers write the first names of all group members on the back of the piece of the picture that each child has selected. Consider giving the children frames or plastic sheets to preserve their pictures in.

⁴ These activities are used by Chitra Sekhar in groups for pre-school children who have witnessed domestic violence.
⁵ This activity was designed by Chitra Sekhar.

Handprints

Give each child and adult in the group a piece of paper and a marker or crayon. Make sure that each person has a different colour marker. Talk with the children about the way people say goodbye to each other. Introduce the idea of waving goodbye. Then let the children know that they are going to draw waving hands for each other. Have everyone trace their hand on their piece of paper and put a mark on the paper so that they know it is theirs. Then have the children pass the paper to the next person in the circle and have that person trace their hand on the piece of paper. Continue to pass the paper until everyone's hand has been traced "waving" on each piece of paper. If the children are able, they can write their first names in their hand prints.

Today is our last group together and we are going to say goodbye to each other. What do people do when they are saying goodbye? (Allow the children to provide answers. This may be a difficult question for them to answer so you may need to ask more specific questions.) What do you do when you are saying goodbye to your Mom before school? What do you do when you are saying goodbye to a friend after you have played together? What do you do when you are saying goodbye to us at the end of the group? (If the idea has not been introduced talk to the children about waving goodbye and then introduce the activity.) One way people say goodbye is by waving. Let's all wave goodbye. Today we are going to make pictures of waving hands. I want everyone to get a piece of paper and marker. Great. Put a mark on the paper so that you know it is yours. Now trace your hand on the paper. Is everyone done? That is a hand waving goodbye. Now, pass the paper to your neighbour. Does everyone have someone else's paper? Good now trace your hand on this new piece of paper. (Continue with these instructions until everyone's hands are traced on each piece of paper. If the children are going to write their names in their hands, add this to the instructions.)

Planting Flowers

In this exercise, the children are going to decorate clay pots and then plant seeds or seedlings in them. Give each child a clay pot and one colour paint to work with. Have the children make a mark on the bottom of the pot so that they know it is theirs. Talk with them about the fact that this is the last group and group members are going to be saying goodbye to each other. Let the children know that one way they can say goodbye to the other children in the group is by helping each other decorate their plant pots. Then have the children pass their pot to the next person in the circle and have that person begin decorating the sides of the pot. Continue to pass the pots around until everyone has had a chance to add some decoration to all the other group member's pots. When everyone has contributed to each pot, have the children plant a seed or seedling in the pot. Talk with the children about the fact that the seed or seedling will grow and change after they leave the group. Link this to the fact that the children learned new things and changed a little during the group and will continue to grow and change after they leave the group.

Making Wishes

Have a magic wand available for the children to use. One at a time, have the children sit in the middle of the circle. When a child is sitting in the circle, pass the magic wand around the outside circle. When a child receives the magic wand, have her or him say goodbye to the child in the centre and make a wish for this child. Group facilitators may have to help the children come up with ideas for wishes. As you introduce the activity, make it clear that sometimes wishes come true and sometimes they do not.

Magic Bottle

If the Magic Bottle was not used as an exercise in Session 6, it can be used in this session. Read the children the Magic Bottle story found at the end of Session 6. Have each child make themselves a magic bottle. They can do this by gluing tissue paper on glass jars. You can have the children decorate plastic containers if you feel glass is not safe. It is suggested that group facilitators also participate in this exercise, so that they can give goodbye messages to the children and the children have an opportunity to say goodbye to the group facilitators. After the "Magic Bottles" have been decorated, give each child several pieces of paper with their first name written on one side. The children should have one piece of paper for each group member. Ask them to write messages or draw pictures to say goodbye to the other group members on the blank side of the paper and then put the papers in the other children's Magic Bottles. Talk with group members about the fact that they can review the pictures and messages in the bottle and think about the group after it is over.

Goodbye Rainbow

Using the story framework found in Session 2, write a story about a child who has to say goodbye to her or his friends. In the story, have the child who is going to say goodbye, go for a walk and then see a rainbow. Have the child in the story, associate each colour in the rainbow with one of the friends she or he is going to have to say goodbye to. After the story is over, let the children know they are going to be making Goodbye Rainbows. Give each child and adult in the group several pieces of fabric of the same colour. Each person should have enough pieces of fabric or ribbon for all the other group members. Have the children walk around the room and collect pieces of fabric from other group members. Tell the children to say "goodbye" as they exchange pieces of fabric. By the end of the exercise the children should have one piece of fabric from each of the other people in the group. You may want to have a list showing the children all the different colours of fabric they should have collected. If the children are able, they can tie the pieces of fabric together as they collect them. When they are finished the children will have a long multi-coloured stream of fabric that can be stored in a film container. Teach the children to wrap the "rainbow" around their hand so that it holds their hand. Let them know that they can do this in the future when they want to think about the group. If the children are not able to tie the strips of fabric together, they can collect them individually in a film canister. Show the children how to wrap the individual pieces of fabric around their hand to "hold their hand". The pieces of fabric could also be glued onto a large piece of paper or fabric to make a quilt. If the children are able to read, you may want to give them pieces of paper listing group members' first names and the colour of fabric associated with that person to take home.

Saying Goodbye with the Talking Stick

Pass the Talking Stick around the group. Each child should take a turn and name something that she or he enjoyed in the group, say goodbye to group members and choose a feather from the Talking Stick to take home.

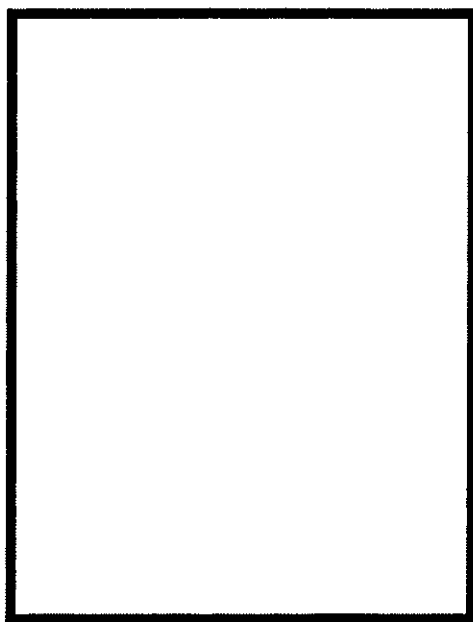
Goodbye Ceremony

Plan a goodbye ceremony for group members to participate in. Ensure that the ceremony you plan is culturally appropriate. You may wish to integrate rituals from the children's countries of origin where appropriate. Some examples of goodbye ceremonies follow:

Have the children make candle holders. When the holders have been completed, invite the children back to the circle and give them each a candle. Play some gentle music in the background during this exercise. Light the candles and dim the lights. Have one lit candle in the centre of the circle. Go around the circle and have each child say goodbye to the group and/or to the individual members of the group and blow out their candle. Keep going around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say goodbye. You may want to expand this exercise by having each child answer a question (e.g. name one thing they enjoyed in the group, one thing they learned in the group, or one thing they will miss about the group) before they say goodbye and blow out their candle. When all the individual candles have been blown out, talk with the children about the fact that although you are saying goodbye, you all will have memories of the group that will stay alive, just like the candle that is still burning in the middle of the circle.

Have each child decorate a special box for her or himself. With soft, soothing music playing in the background, have the children clean up the group circles. Invite each child to take a part of the circles (a ribbon, some sand, some paper) and place it in their box. When the circle has been taken up, invite the children to share snack and socialize.

ALL ABOUT ME



ME

My name is _____

My hair is _____

My eyes are _____

I am _____ years old

I used to live in _____

I like to _____

My favourite colour is _____

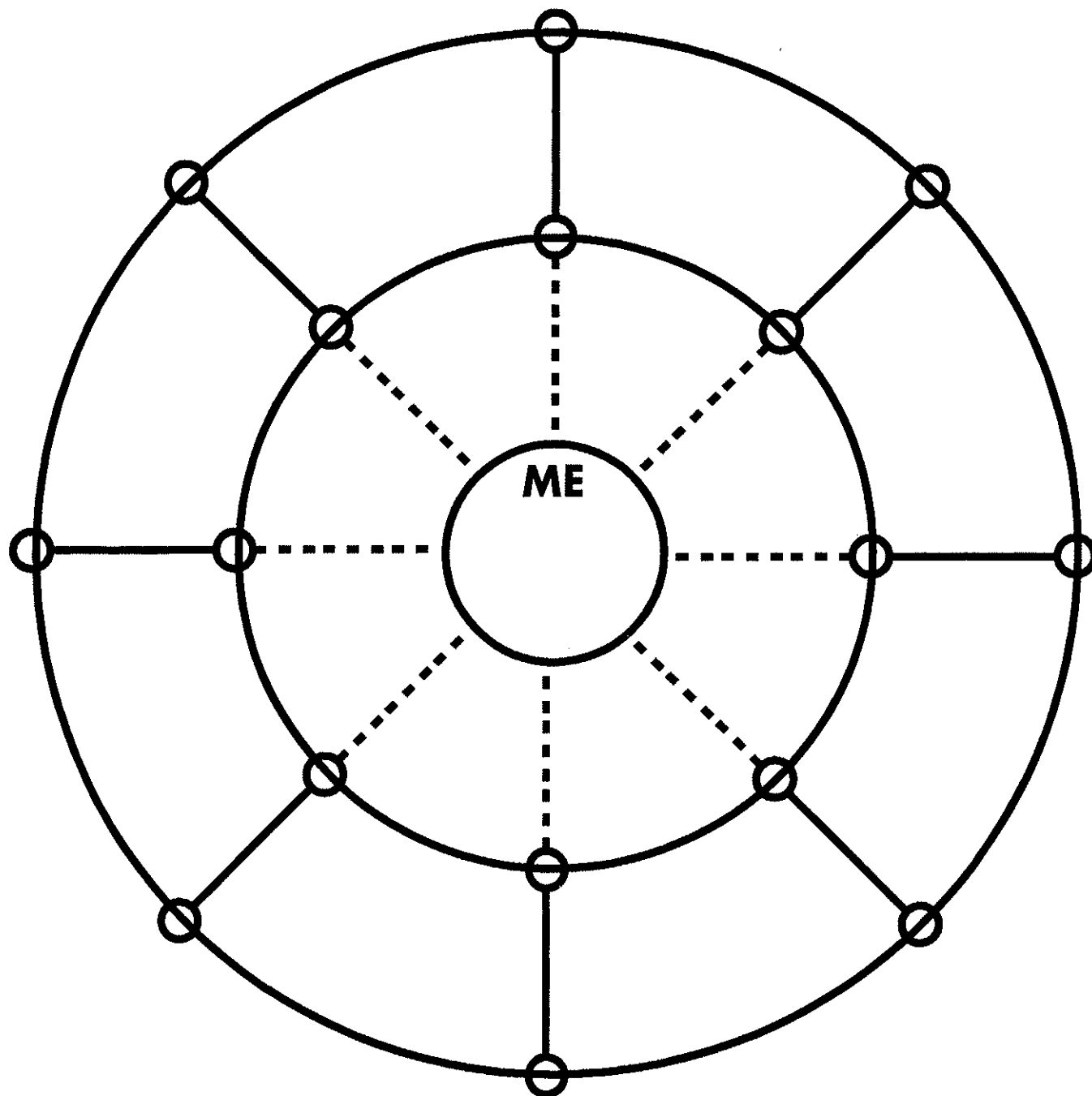
I am good at _____

My friends like me because _____

SELF ESTEEM CIRCLE

--- Draw or write about things you are good at or things that make you special on the dotted lines.

— Draw or write about people who care about you and look after you.



Playing *with* RAINBOWS™

Caregiver sessions, MANAGING PROBLEMS, **Evaluation & RESOURCES**



SESSIONS FOR CAREGIVERS

This chapter will provide some general guidelines for running the Caregivers' Sessions and then provide suggestions for the content of the three Caregivers' Sessions. Group facilitators should alter the content of these sessions to suit the caregivers they are working with. While suggested content for three sessions is outlined, the number of caregivers' sessions may vary depending on the needs, interest and availability of those involved.

Group facilitators must respect the caregivers who participate in the group. Group facilitators should maintain respect for the religion and culture of the caregivers. In addition, it is important for group facilitators to respect the current goals of the caregivers, as well as the manner in which the caregivers have coped with the family's past experiences. Group facilitators should listen carefully to and respond directly to the concerns that are articulated by the caregivers. In the same way that counsellors offer unconditional acceptance to the children they work with, this should be offered to the children's caregivers. Group facilitators should welcome the caregivers into the group as they are.

Group facilitators must recognize that when caregivers participate in a counselling or support program, they put themselves in a vulnerable position. Participating in counselling is often seen as an admission that one is unable to cope on one's own. People frequently feel ashamed of their need for help. This can be true of anyone seeking counselling.

The vulnerability that is an inherent part of seeking counselling may well be heightened for the caregivers of the children in the Playing with Rainbows group. Not only do they need to cope with their feelings about participating in counselling, a practice that may be frowned upon or misunderstood in their country of origin, but these individuals must also cope with a variety of other factors which will only serve to increase their feelings of vulnerability. These other factors may include language difficulties as well as struggles to understand and participate in the culture of their new country.

Furthermore, caregivers may have difficulty trusting outsiders and/or professionals due to their past experiences. During the war and migration journey, caregivers may have been hurt or betrayed in different ways. This may have involved others involved in the conflict, professionals and institutions such as the police, teachers, doctors, religious officials, or their own friends and family. These experiences can make it very difficult for caregivers to put their faith in unknown service providers.

Finally, caregivers may feel very vulnerable when they attend the Caregivers' Sessions because they have had their own traumatic experiences and they may feel a need to maintain control over their memories and emotions. They may feel that they will not be able to maintain control over their emotions if they are asked to talk about their children's experiences.

In the same way that counsellors offer unconditional acceptance to the children they work with, this should be offered to the children's caregivers.

It is suggested that group facilitators meet with cultural representatives from the regions where the caregivers used to live. Find out what issues caregivers may be struggling with, what factors may serve to increase their vulnerability, and how counselling is perceived in the caregivers' countries of origin.

It is essential that group facilitators do everything possible to help caregivers feel safe and secure in the Caregivers' Sessions. It is suggested that group facilitators meet with cultural representatives¹ from the regions where the caregivers used to live. Find out what issues caregivers may be struggling with, what factors may serve to increase their vulnerability, and how counselling is perceived in the caregivers' countries of origin. Talk with the cultural representatives about ways to make it easier for caregivers to participate in sessions.

If at all possible try to hold the Caregivers' Sessions in a place that is comfortable, safe and familiar.

Make use of cultural interpreters in the Caregivers' Sessions if this will be beneficial. Remember that discussions and activities will take longer if cultural interpreters are involved.

Two safety issues related to group composition should be considered. Group facilitators must ensure that participants do not feel intimidated or threatened by others in the group. Every attempt should be made to ensure that individuals from opposing groups in the same conflict are not part of the same group. If there are both men and women operating as the children's caregivers who wish to participate in Caregivers' Sessions, this should be facilitated. However, it is essential to take into account the relative roles played by men and women in the caregivers' cultures and to ensure that participation of both sexes will not be intimidating for anyone. If there are concerns about the ability of all caregivers to freely participate in a mixed group, strong consideration should be given to offering two sets of sessions, one for female caregivers and one for male caregivers.

Structure the Caregivers' Sessions in a way that will be most comfortable for those participating. Some individuals will find it easiest to take part in a fairly formal lecture type situation. Others may find it easier to be part of a more casual group discussion. Some individuals would choose to be in a situation where they are only required to listen to the information that is being provided, while others will welcome the opportunity to talk about their own experiences. For some people, food and drinks help to create a relaxing environment. Speak with the caregivers and with cultural representatives from the caregivers' countries of origins to determine which format would be most familiar and comfortable for the caregivers in your group.

There are a number of things that group facilitators can do to make it easier, more comfortable and rewarding for caregivers to participate in the Caregivers' Sessions:

- **Make it as easy as possible for Caregivers to attend sessions.** Hold the sessions at a time that is convenient for them. Provide childcare or help the caregivers make childcare arrangements if at all possible. Consider if there are any ways that you can help the caregivers get to and from the sessions (e.g. providing bus tickets).
- **Look for, recognize and comment on the caregivers' strengths.** For example, if the caregiver has allowed their child to participate in the group, they are clearly interested in their child's well-being. You may need to be subtle in your comments about the caregivers' strengths. Strong praise can be overwhelming for some people.

¹ A cultural representative may be a professional or another member of the caregiver's cultural group.

- **Facilitate discussions and activities that caregivers can easily take part in.** For example, if you were to have the caregivers complete a drawing task, it would be much easier for them to scribble with colours than it would be for them to create a drawing, since creating a drawing might awaken numerous anxieties about their ability to draw.
- **Keep the focus of the sessions on the children.** You can encourage the caregivers to stay focused on their children by asking them what they think their child would say about a particular topic. Another way of maintaining focus on the children is to share their words and work with their caregivers. Caregivers often come to their sessions hoping to find out what their child did in session. Let the children know what you will be saying and what work you will be sharing in advance so that the limits of confidentiality are respected.
- **Listen very carefully to what the caregivers are saying.** Keep the focus of the conversation where they put it. For example, if caregivers are concerned about their children being teased at school, discuss this issue. Find ways to integrate the material you wish to cover in your discussion. People are much more willing to listen and participate if they feel that they are being listened to and their needs are being addressed.
- **Provide lots of opportunities for caregivers to take control of the sessions.** For example, invite them to introduce topics that they wish to discuss. It is suggested that you continue to provide these openings even if they are not used on the first few occasions. Make it clear that caregivers can interrupt you and ask you questions at any time. You may want to make use of a "Question Box"². Have a small box available at the front of the room. Let participants know that they can write down questions, in any language, and put them in the box at any time. Let them know that if they think of questions between sessions, they can write them down and bring them to the next meeting. Make it clear that caregivers can write down the question in any language they wish and that you will arrange to have the question interpreted. Using the Question Box may be easier for some caregivers than having to speak in front of the group.
- **Remind caregivers that the material they share in the group will be kept confidential.**

² This suggestion is based on the work of Mark Barnes who makes use of "Question Boxes" in children's groups and in professional presentations.

Caregivers' Session 1

The suggestions for the Caregivers' Sessions that follow include both lecture style and group discussion activities. In some groups, it may be appropriate to have the caregivers try out an activity from the children's group. Group facilitators will need to decide which material will be appropriate for the group they are working with.

It is suggested that the first Caregivers' Session take place between the first and second children's group. At this point, the children will have attended one group, which may serve to reduce the caregivers' anxiety about the process. Since the children have attended one group, the caregivers may have some specific issues they wish to have addressed. In addition, if the children have completed the first session, group facilitators can make use of some of the material that has been created by the children, e.g. the list of group rules. Caregivers often benefit from and enjoy seeing the work that their children have completed during group sessions. Bring some examples of the children's work to each of the Caregivers' Sessions and share it with the caregivers when this is possible and appropriate.

Prior to each of the Caregivers' Sessions, let the children in the Playing with Rainbows group know that you will be meeting with their caregivers. Give the children a brief overview of the kinds of things that you will be discussing. Ask the children if there are any particular issues they would like you to raise with their caregivers. If you are planning to take examples of the children's work to the Caregivers' Sessions, let the children know this. If they state that they do not want their work shared, you must respect this.

Introductions

- Group facilitators and interpreters who are participating in the Caregivers' Sessions should introduce themselves.
- Caregivers should be told the names of any volunteers or interpreters who will be participating in the children's sessions. In most cases, it is recommended that these individuals not participate in the Caregivers' Sessions in order to minimize the number of "professionals" or "outsiders" that the caregivers must cope with.
- Have the caregivers introduce themselves. In some instances, you may wish to ask the caregivers to share some information about themselves (i.e. the number and ages of children they care for, achievements of the children they care for, things that the children have done that make them proud, a positive thing that has happened in the family recently, their country of origin. Etc.). However, in other instances, the caregivers may be reluctant to share information and it may be best to limit introductions to sharing names.

Group Rules

Talk with the caregivers about the need for rules in the children's group. Ask the caregivers to guess what rules the children may have outlined for the group or show the caregivers the list of rules created by the children. Talk with the caregivers about which of the rules will also apply in their group (One person talks at a time; No physically hurting others; No hurting others with words; Permission to pass; Confidentiality). Emphasize that material shared in the caregivers' and children's sessions will remain confidential. The limits of confidentiality should be reviewed briefly and group facilitators should acknowledge their obligation to report their concerns about child abuse. If a Talking Stick is being used in the children's group, you could show this to the caregivers and ask them to try using it during this session.

Opportunity for Caregivers to Introduce Topics

Ask the caregivers if there are any particular issues they wish to discuss, questions they have or comments they want to make. Show them the Question Box and tell them how it is used.

Discussion of the Impact of War and Migration on Children

Briefly discuss the impact of war and migration on young children.

- Make it clear that different children react in different ways and that children who experience war and migration can go on to live happy, productive lives.
- Let the caregivers know that some children who were too young to remember the conflict may still have been affected by the migration journey or may be trying to understand the stories they hear about the conflict from others.

You must present this information gently and with great respect for the caregivers who are attending the session. Discuss the following issues and very briefly outline how they could contribute to future difficulties if they are not resolved. Make it clear that the Playing with Rainbows group is designed to address the issues that you are outlining. The italics show the type of brief message you may wish to present.

Fear

Children who have lived in a war may have felt very scared. Sometimes they have nightmares about the war or feel scared when they see things that remind them of the war. When they learn new ways to cope with their scared feelings, they are free to keep growing and exploring the world around them.

Difficulty communicating and expressing emotions

When children live in a war and move to a new country, they have all kinds of different feelings. Sometimes they don't tell other people what they are feeling because they don't want anyone to worry about them. If children don't tell anyone about their feelings, sometimes their feelings make problems for them. Some children who don't tell people about their angry feelings, get into lots of fights at school. Participating in a Playing with Rainbows group gives children a chance to practice talking about their feelings and find ways to cope with these feelings.

Grief

When children have moved to a new country after living in a war, they have had to say goodbye to lots of different things, like their home, their friends and other people in their family. Sometimes they know people who have died. Some children spend a lot of time thinking about the things they left behind. If they spend too much time thinking about these things, they might have a hard time at school or they might not make new friends.

Violence as a problem solver

Some children who have lived in a war think that hurting people is a good way to deal with problems. These children often have lots of fights and get in trouble at school. The Playing with Rainbows group will help them to learn new ways to solve problems.

Difficulty trusting

Many people who have lived in a war and come to a new country have been hurt or betrayed by other people. Some children have a hard time deciding who they can trust in their new country. If they don't trust anyone they can have a hard time making new friends. Some children don't like to ask for help at school because they are scared to trust the teacher.

Academic difficulties

Some children who have lived in war or have come to a new country have a hard time learning at school. It is difficult for some children because they are trying to learn in a new language. Some children have a hard time because they are thinking about the war, their family and their friends in the country they left behind.

Depending on the nature of the group, you may seek the caregivers' input as you are discussing these issues or ask them which issues they feel their children may be struggling with.

How Caregivers Can Support Their Children on a Day to Day Basis

Provide the caregivers with concrete things they can do to help their children on a day to day basis. Remind them that they are already helping their children by allowing them to participate in the Playing with Rainbows group and by coming to Caregivers' Sessions. Examples of things that Caregivers can do to support their children might include: giving the children a chance to talk about their feelings, their problems with friends or their problems at school; selecting someone who can help the children with their homework ; encouraging their child to participate in extra-curricular activities. (Since these activities are often costly, group facilitators should provide caregivers with a list of low-cost, subsidized or free activities and services.)

Purpose of the Playing with Rainbows Group

Briefly explain the purpose of the Playing with Rainbows group to the caregivers. You may wish to begin this discussion by inviting the caregivers to talk about why they think a group like the Playing with Rainbows group is needed for their children. Since, the purpose of each session will be discussed during the Caregivers' Sessions, comments at this point can be limited.

During the group, we are going to work with the children and talk with them about some of their feelings, some of the things they have experienced and try to help them develop new ways of coping with problems. We hope that after the children have done their work in the group, they will be able to concentrate in school, make new friends and feel more comfortable.

You can also take this opportunity to briefly explain how art and play activities help children. Choose an activity that you will be using in the group, describe it to the caregivers and explain to them why it might help the children.

Sometimes people ask us why we do so much drawing, puppetry and storytelling in the group. You all know that children have a hard time sitting still. In the group we give them things to do. This helps them talk about their feelings and work on their problems. One of the things we do in the group is have the children make up stories together. This helps them be creative and learn to tell stories which can help them in school. When the children make up the story together, they get a chance to practice getting along with each other. Most stories have problems in them. When the children talk about the problems in their stories and how to fix them, it gives them a chance to learn about solving problems.

Review Children's Group Sessions 1-4

Review the topics of the first four sessions with the caregivers. Help them understand why these topics have been chosen and how working on these areas will be helpful for the children. You can also briefly review the activities that may take place in these groups. Examples of the issues that you might address are provided below.

Session 1 - Getting to Know Each Other

This group meeting gives the children a chance to meet each other, to find out where everyone is from, to learn the group rules and to find out more about the group.

Session 2 - Feelings

In this group, the children get a chance to practice talking about their feelings and they learn some appropriate ways of expressing their feelings. Outline the importance of the children learning to express their feelings. Remind the caregivers that if the children do not learn to share their feelings, their feelings can cause problems for them. You can provide some examples of problems such as aggression, crying spells in school, and hiding at school due to fear.

Session 3 - Pre-migration and Migration

In this group, the children talk about their journey to Canada. This gives the children a chance to talk about the things they had to leave behind and the things that they gained by coming to Canada. Suggest to the caregivers that some children spend too much time thinking about what they left behind and that this can cause problems for them such as refusing to make new friends, difficulty concentrating and living with deep sadness. Some children believe they have to think about these things all the time or they will forget them. If the children are given a chance to talk about these things and are helped to find ways to capture their memories, they often feel freer to focus on the present.

Session 4 - Families

Many children's families change as a result of the war or migration and many of the children spend a lot of time thinking about this. Talking about families, helps the children explore these changes and this may allow them to start focusing on other issues. In this session, the children have a chance to think about the supportive people in their family. By identifying these people, the children will have a resource to turn to in the future. During this session, the children may talk about the type of family they would like to have in the future, this helps them to remember that there are good things to look forward to.

How Caregivers Can Support Children's Participation In The Playing with Rainbows Group

Talk with the caregivers about ways they can facilitate their child's participation in the group. You may want to discuss the following things:

- Bringing the children on time
- Letting people know if their child must be absent
- Respecting confidentiality but letting the children talk about their time in the group if they choose
- Setting aside a time and encouraging the children to complete their homework.
- Allowing the children to talk about issues related to the war or migration if they raise these between sessions. Since these issues are being discussed in the group, the children may feel a need to talk about them at home as well. It helps if the children are given the message that it is OK to talk about these things.
- Raising concerns about the group or their child with group facilitators

Issues For The Next Caregivers' Session

Ask the caregivers if there are any particular issues they wish to discuss in the next session. Remind them that if they think of questions or comments before the next meeting, they are welcome to call you or write them down for the Question Box.

Informal Group Gathering

End the meeting by asking if there are any questions or comments that the caregivers would like to share. Allow the caregivers to interact with each other. This also gives caregivers an opportunity to approach group facilitators with individual concerns. This may be an appropriate time to offer drinks and a snack.

Caregivers' Session 2

The second Caregivers' Session should take place around the time of the children's sixth or seventh group session.

Review Introductions

Have group facilitators and caregivers introduce themselves again. If it appears that the caregivers are feeling comfortable, you may ask them to share some information about themselves as part of this introduction. It is suggested that you ask them to talk about something positive that has happened recently, since this is not likely to feel very intrusive and should not trigger their own emotional issues.

Review Questions

Check the Question Box to determine if there are any issues that should be addressed in this session. Ask the caregivers if they have any questions about your last Caregivers' Session. Provide the caregivers with an opportunity to talk about how their children are reacting to the group and to ask any questions they may have about the Playing with Rainbows group. If there is anything that caregivers can be doing to facilitate the children's participation in the Playing with Rainbows group, review this now.

Review Children's Group Sessions 5-8

Review the topics of sessions five to eight with the caregivers. Help them understand why these topics have been chosen and how working on these areas will be helpful for the children. You can also briefly review the activities that may take place in these groups. If you feel the caregivers can handle it, have them participate in one of the activities that the children will be completing. In general, it is suggested that you have the caregivers complete the activity "as you think your child would". This may lessen the fear that would be inherent in their own self-disclosure. Examples of the issues that you might address are provided below.

Session 5 - The Concept and Phenomenon of War

In this session, the children talk about war, why war happens and their feelings about war. Many children who have lived in a war are confused and have a lot of questions about war. If these questions are not answered, they may keep thinking about the questions as they grow up. By talking about war in the group, we can help the children answer some of their questions. This may allow them to shift their attention to their current situation, school and making friends.

Session 6 - Goodbyes and Hellos

In this session, the children talk about the people and things they have said goodbye to, as well as the people and things they are saying hello to. Children who have lived through war and moved to a new country have left many things behind. Often the children miss their home, their country, their friends and the community and have not had a chance to say goodbye. If they have not had a chance to say goodbye to these things they may spend a lot of time thinking about them. In the group we give the children a chance to say goodbye to these things which then allows them to say hello to their new country.

Session 7 - Dreams

All children have nightmares and bad dreams. In this session, we help the children learn ways to deal with these dreams.

Session 8 - Anxiety and Not Remembering

Many children who have lived in a war and moved to a new country have a lot of things to worry about. For some of these children, they spend so much time worrying that they have a hard time having fun, making friends or learning in school. In this group the children talk about the things they are worried about and learn how to cope with their worries. When really scary or difficult things happen, some children can't remember them. In this group the children learn that it is OK not to remember some scary things.

Discussion About Behavioural Concerns

Facilitate a discussion about common behavioural concerns and options for managing these. If you feel the caregivers will choose to participate, you can ask them to raise issues that are a concern for them and review ways to handle these. If this will be too difficult for the caregivers, discuss some general behavioural challenges. Take into account particular issues that families may be facing as a result of their migration (e.g. children not wanting to attend language school or conflicts over clothes). You may be able to make the conversation useful for the caregivers by reviewing the concerns they discussed during the screening process. Throughout this discussion, group facilitators should be aware of the impact of cultural differences on behavioural concerns and ways of managing these.

Issues For The Next Caregivers' Session

Ask the caregivers if there are any particular issues they wish to discuss in the next session. Remind them that if they think of questions or comments before the next meeting, they are welcome to call you or write them down for the Question Box.

Informal Group Gathering

End the meeting by asking if there are any questions or comments that the caregivers would like to share.

If you are considering having caregivers contribute food to the last children's session, take this opportunity to assess if this is a viable option for them.

Allow the caregivers to interact with each other. This also gives caregivers an opportunity to approach group facilitators with individual concerns. This may be an appropriate time to offer drinks and a snack.

Caregivers' Session 3

Think carefully about when you wish to have this session. If it is held after the final group meeting for the children, it provides you with an opportunity to review and discuss all the sessions in the Playing with Rainbows group. However, some caregivers may not understand the point of attending a final session after the children's program has ended. If you feel this will be an issue, have the third Caregivers' Session prior to the twelfth children's group.

Review Introductions

Have group facilitators and caregivers introduce themselves again. If it appears that the caregivers are feeling comfortable, you may ask them to share some information about themselves as part of this introduction. You may want to ask the caregivers to talk about how they feel their child has enjoyed and responded to the Playing with Rainbows group.

Review Questions

Check the Question Box to determine if there are any issues that should be addressed in this session. Ask the caregivers if they have any questions about the previous Caregivers' Session. Provide the caregivers with an opportunity to talk about how their children have reacted to the sessions and to ask any questions they may have about the Playing with Rainbows group.

Review Children's Group Sessions 9 - 12

Review the topics of sessions nine to twelve with the caregivers. Help them understand why these topics were chosen and how working on these areas can be helpful for the children. You can also briefly review the activities that take place in these groups. If you feel the caregivers can handle it, have them participate in one of the activities that the children complete during these sessions. In general, it is suggested that you have the caregivers complete the activity "as you think your child would". This can lessen the fear that would be inherent in their own self-disclosure. Examples of the issues that you might address during your discussion are provided below.

Session 9 - Coping Skills and Conflict Resolution

The purpose of this session is to help the children learn ways of coping with feelings and solving problems. This can help the children manage their lives and get along with others in the future.

Session 10 - Stress Management

In this session, the children learn some skills for managing stress. They can use these skills to cope when they think about the war and the things they left behind in their country of origin. They can also use these skills to cope with stress in the future (e.g. exams, meeting new people).

Session 11 - Safety

During this session, the children learn some skills for keeping themselves safe in the country they have migrated to. By identifying safe people and safe places the children become aware of places and people they can turn to if they have a problem in the future.

Session 12 - Self-esteem and Closure

It is important for children to recognize that they are special, valuable people who have something to contribute to the world. This session is designed to remind the children of that fact. This session also gives the children a chance to say goodbye to the adults and children they met during the Playing with Rainbows group.

Discussion of Support Services

Help the caregivers identify the individuals and agencies that are available to help and support them following the group. These services might include immigration and settlement services, food banks, recreational services, medical services, parent-child resource centres, counselling services, tutoring resources etc. Prepare a list of any resources that may be of interest to the caregivers. If you feel that the caregivers might be interested, talk with them about ways that they can continue to use each other for support, individually or as a group.

Offer caregivers the option of attending individual exit interviews with you to discuss their child's participation in the group and any ongoing concerns that they have. Let them know that they can call to arrange this at any time. If you will be available for ongoing consultation, make the caregivers aware of this.

Informal Group Gathering

End the meeting by asking if there are any questions or comments that the caregivers would like to share.

Allow the caregivers to interact with each other. This also gives caregivers an opportunity to approach group facilitators with individual concerns. This may be an appropriate time to offer drinks and a snack.

This section of the manual is designed to help group facilitators manage common problems in the group. Some basic information about limit setting will be reviewed. A framework for assessing and handling challenging moments will be outlined. Finally some specific problems that frequently emerge in children's groups will be considered.

Therapeutic Limit Setting

The material in this section is based on the work of Garry Landreth (1991) which is found in *Play Therapy: The Art of Relationship*.

Children need and deserve limits or rules to follow. Limits assure the physical and emotional safety of the children in the group, as well as protecting the group room and equipment. When children know what is acceptable, what is unacceptable, and what the consequences of their behaviour will be, they are able to make clear choices about how to behave.

In general, limits should be kept to a minimum. The issues that must be addressed in the children's group are listed in Session 1:

- One person talks at a time
- No physically hurting others (hitting, kicking, biting etc.)
- No hurting others with words (swearing, name calling)
- Time outs can be used when children need a break
- Permission to pass
- Confidentiality

Over the course of the group, it may become apparent that other limits are necessary. If so these can be explained to the children at the time.

In order to ensure that things run smoothly in the group, it is essential that all group facilitators and volunteers agree upon the limits that have been set, and understand what the consequences are if the children do not follow the limits. This will ensure that the children are responded to consistently which makes the environment safe and predictable for group members. It is also important to ensure that the limits and consequences you have outlined will be supported by the group or agency that is sponsoring the children's group.

Make sure that the limits you set are enforceable. An example of an unenforceable limit would be: If you hit another child, you will have to go home. This cannot be enforced if the child's caregiver is not available to take her or him home. When limits are set that are unenforceable, the group facilitators are undermined if the limit is violated and they cannot follow through with the stated consequence. When the group leaders are undermined, the children may lose respect for the other limits that are set and may begin to challenge all the limits.

When talking with the children about limits, use a calm matter of fact tone. Ensure that you are clear about your expectations. For example, saying "Let's not throw the paint, OK?" implies that the child can decide if it is OK or not.

Total limits are easier to understand than conditional limits. For example it is better to say "Play wrestling is not allowed" than to say "You can play wrestle as long as you do not hurt each other."

When setting limits, try to use language that puts responsibility for following the limit on the child and which avoids placing the child in direct conflict with a group facilitator. For example: "I don't like it when you spit" puts the child in a position of deciding whether or not to please the group facilitator while "This room is not for spitting in" does not create the same personal tension.

Garry Landreth (1991, p. 222-226) has outlined some specific steps for therapeutic limit setting **(ACT)**:

1) "Acknowledge the child's feelings, wishes and wants."

You are so angry, you want to break that toy.

You are feeling sad and you want to leave the room.

When you are really excited you want to throw the sand.

2) "Communicate the limit."

The toys are not for breaking,

There are ten minutes left in the group and then it will be time to leave.

The sand is not for throwing.

3) "Target acceptable alternatives."

You could yell about your angry feelings.

You can go and sit in the Cozy Corner if you need some time alone.

You can jump up and down and clap your hands to show us your excited feelings.

In urgent cases where someone may be hurt or property may be damaged, you should begin by clearly stating the limit and then include the other two steps. For example "The chair is not for throwing. You look like you are so angry you want to throw something. You could rip up this paper instead."

4) "State the final choice."

If the child does not comply with the limit after it has been clearly communicated two or three times, the group facilitator must state the final choice that the child is making. Make it clear that by choosing not to comply, she or he is choosing her or his consequence. "If you choose to throw the sand again, you choose to leave the sandbox". In instances involving physical or verbal aggression against other children, it is not appropriate to allow the children a few chances to break the limit. In these cases, the consequence should be put in place immediately. "When you chose to hit Sara, you chose to come and sit by me".

Challenging Moments

Group facilitators will face a number of challenging moments over the course of the group. What these are will depend both on the children in the group and on the facilitators leading the group. Different facilitators will find different things challenging.

Thinking and planning in advance will help group facilitators manage challenging situations. Spend some time thinking about difficult situations that may arise in the group and how you will handle these. For example, what would you do if a child tried to run away? How will you handle it if the children in the group begin to glorify violence as a way of solving problems? Anticipate issues that may be difficult for you to handle personally and how you will manage these. For example, how will you respond if a child speaks with intense hatred about a rival group in the conflict in her or his country of origin? Has anyone died in your family recently? Will it be difficult for you to listen to the children talk about the deaths of their family members? How will you manage your emotions? What type of support will you need if you find that you are being triggered by group sessions? Group facilitators and volunteers should discuss these issues prior to the group. In addition, when group facilitators and volunteers find that they are being emotionally affected by the group, they must discuss this during their review of individual sessions.

When a difficult situation has arisen in the group, it is suggested that this be discussed among the group facilitators and volunteers after the session. Time should be spent reviewing how the situation was handled and identifying ways to manage the problem if it arises again in the future.

R.E.S.C.U.E.

This plan for handling challenging moments may help group facilitators explore and come to understand the situations they are facing in the group. It may be possible for an individual facilitator to work through this plan in her or his head during the session. However, it is likely that this will be difficult since there will be many children and tasks that require the group facilitator's attention. As a result, group facilitators may choose to make use of this framework individually between sessions or as a group in their discussions following sessions.

In the example that follows, group facilitators are struggling to understand why a young girl goes to the Cozy Corner whenever the group is involved in a visualization exercise.

Relax and stop the spinning

Emotionally charged situations often leave us feeling wound up. Take a deep breath and try to step beyond the swirling feelings.

Group facilitators took several deep breaths before they began to discuss Jenna's refusal to participate in visualization exercises.

Evaluate what you are thinking and feeling

The best place to start exploring the situation is your own thoughts and feelings since these are easily accessible. What is going on? What are you thinking? What do you want to do? It is important to be completely honest during this stage even though challenging moments can sometimes arouse feelings that we wish we didn't have.

Group facilitators talked about their feelings and what they wanted to do about the situation. The feelings listed included: helplessness, not knowing how to help Jenna, feeling shut out, and frustration. The things that group facilitators wanted to do about the situation were: letting Jenna sit out of all visualizations or having her sit with the group even if she was not participating.

See and sense where your feelings are coming from

The feelings that are generated by the children's behaviour often hold a clue as to the message contained within that behaviour.

The group facilitators agreed that their frustration sprang from feeling helpless and feeling as though Jenna was unwilling to participate because she did not trust them.

Child's needs and feelings

Based on your own feelings, evaluate what messages the child may be sending, what the child might be feeling and what the child might need.

It was decided that if group facilitators felt that Jenna did not trust them, this might be the case. It was also suggested that perhaps the group facilitators felt helpless because Jenna also felt helpless.

Understand the opportunity

Look at your options, decide what you can do and use the opportunity that is available to you to make changes.

It was agreed that a group facilitator would talk to Jenna about the visualization to see if the exercises made her uncomfortable and why this was the case.

Embark again

Implement the actions that were suggested by this exploration and see what happens.

When a group facilitator talked to Jenna, she said that she did not like closing her eyes. She said that when she closed her eyes the only thing she could see was her dead baby brother's body and she did not like seeing that. Jenna was invited to participate in visualizations with her eyes opened. It was suggested that she could draw what she was imagining as the visualization progressed.

Coping with Particular Challenges

A number of strategies for managing particular challenges are outlined below. Remember that when difficult situations arise, the physical and emotional safety of all group members and group facilitators must be a primary concern.

Addressing immediate safety concerns

Make every effort to ensure that the children and adults involved in the Playing with Rainbows group remain safe. If an immediate safety concern (suicide, violence, abuse) arises, it is essential that you contact the appropriate authorities (physician, emergency room, police, child welfare agency) at once.

Remember that when difficult situations arise, the physical and emotional safety of all group members and group facilitators must be a primary concern.

Difficulty separating from caregivers

- Facilitate an appropriate goodbye between the child and her or his caregiver. If caregivers sneak out without saying goodbye, it can reinforce the child's fear that she or he may be abandoned at any time.
- Encourage the child's caregiver to leave a small security object with the child. This might be a piece of clothing, keys, a piece of jewellery, or a photo.
- Have the caregiver clearly explain when they will return to pick up the child. Set a timer to mark the caregiver's return. It is important to ensure that the caregiver will return at the specified time.
- Have the caregiver wait outside the group room. Allow the child to check that the caregiver is still there as many times as necessary. Ensure that the caregiver will remain available throughout the session. It is not recommended that caregivers be allowed to remain in the group room since this may interrupt the group process, can interfere with confidentiality and does not give the child the chance to learn that she or he is able to function without their caregiver present.

Child is repeatedly late for session

It is difficult for a child to fit in and become part of the group if she or he frequently misses a portion of the session. Speak with the child's caregiver to determine if there is a reason for the lateness and to determine if there is anything you can do to support the child or caregiver. Make use of an interpreter if this will allow for a more complete conversation. During the conversation, try to explain the reasons that timely attendance in the group is beneficial for the child and for the rest of the group. If the child continues to be late and misses a significant portion of each session, it may be determined that the group program is not the best way to provide assistance to this child and her or his family.

Child frequently misses sessions

It is not unusual for children to miss a couple of group sessions due to illness, transportation difficulties or family issues. However, if a child is consistently missing group sessions, she or he will have difficulty fitting in and interacting with the group. Given that the group topics are sequential and tend to build on knowledge or discussions in earlier sessions, it is important that attendance be regular.

If a child is regularly missing group sessions, it is suggested that a group facilitator speak with the child's caregiver to determine why the child has been unable to attend. It is important to determine if the child is refusing to attend, if the caregiver has forgotten sessions or if the caregiver has been unable to bring the child to the group. For example: Is there a transportation difficulty? Has the child been ill? Is the caregiver having difficulty finding child care for other children? Involve an interpreter in this discussion, if this will be beneficial.

If the child is refusing to attend sessions, make an effort to understand the child's concerns. Review your notes from the last sessions that the child attended to see if any particularly difficult topics were broached or if the child appeared to be experiencing any distress. Ask the caregiver if the child has shared any concerns with her or him. Try to find out what the child has said about her or his last few sessions. If these strategies do not help you understand why the child does not want to attend sessions, try to meet with the child and her or his caregiver. If necessary, have this meeting at the child's house. Ask the child: why she or he does not want to come to sessions; what would have to be different for her or him to come to sessions; what she or he liked about sessions; what she or he did not like about sessions; what she or he would like the group or group members to start doing; and what she or he would like the group or group members to stop doing. If the child's concern becomes apparent, develop a strategy for dealing with this. Review your plan with the child. Ensure that a group facilitator is available when the child arrives for the session to implement the plan.

If the caregiver has been forgetting sessions, it is suggested that a group facilitator or volunteer telephone to remind the caregiver of upcoming sessions. If the family does not have a phone, consider the possibility of sending a reminder home with the child from school (This would only be possible if group facilitators have written consent to speak with school personnel.) If there are other reasons that the caregiver has been unable to bring the child to sessions, try to determine if there are ways that support can be provided by group facilitators.

If group facilitators are not able to develop a plan which assists the child in attending sessions regularly, consideration should be given to asking the child to leave this group and participate in a future program when circumstances permit. The action taken by group facilitators will depend to a great degree on when the child begins to miss sessions. For example, if a child were to miss the first three sessions, group facilitators may decide that the child should not attend the remainder of the sessions. However, if a child has attended the first seven sessions and then misses the next three, it might still be appropriate for the her or him to attend the final two sessions, since a relationship with the other children and group facilitators will already have developed.

If a child has attended a number of sessions and for some reason is unable to attend any further sessions, try to facilitate a goodbye for group members. This could involve the child drawing a picture for the group and the group drawing a picture for the child. In some instances, it might be appropriate to invite the child back for the final session to view the group's stories and share snack. This will depend on the nature of the child's relationship with other group members.

Aggression

- A particular consequence for aggression should be outlined and implemented with each instance of aggression. For example, a child can be asked to sit on a Time Out Chair. A group facilitator or volunteer may need to be available to ensure that the child follows through with the consequence. If a Time Out Chair is to be used, it is suggested that it be placed a fair distance from where the group activity takes place.
- If a child has demonstrated a tendency towards frequent aggression, group facilitators may wish to have the child stay beside one of them for a portion of the group.
- Find out if the child shows a tendency to be aggressive in other situations. If the child's caregivers feel that they need help with this problem provide them with information about resources and support services that might be of some assistance.
- If a child exhibits repeated and frequent aggression and does not respond to consistent limits or other attempts to manage this behaviour, consideration may need to be given to asking the child to leave the group permanently. This decision must take into account the needs of the child in question as well as the safety of the other children in the group.

Hurting feelings (name calling, teasing, racism)

- A particular consequence for name calling, teasing and racism should be outlined and must be implemented with each instance. The consequence could be sitting on a Time Out Chair or going to the Cozy Corner for a period of time.
- You may wish to encourage a child to apologize for name calling, teasing or racism. However, if you do this, accept that the apology may not be genuine.

- If you find out that the child has experienced similar difficulties in other situations and the child's caregivers say that they would like some help in this area, provide them with information about resources and support services that could assist them in addressing the problem.
- If a child continually participates in name calling, teasing or racism and does not respond to consistent limit setting, you may need to consider removing the child from the group. When making this decision, you should take into account the needs of the child in question as well as the emotional well-being of the other children in the group.

Breaking toys

- If toys are broken accidentally, reassure the child that you are not angry and that accidents happen. Have the child assist you in repairing or throwing away the toy.
- If a child deliberately breaks a toy, you may choose to have the child sit on a Time Out Chair. An alternate response would be to involve the child in some minor work (i.e. collecting the snack cups, collecting the crayons or markers) as a way of contributing to the group and compensating for her or his actions.
- If a child breaks toys or destroys materials frequently, she or he may require the one-on-one support of a group facilitator or volunteer.

Wanting to take toys or materials home

Children often want to take toys and materials home, especially when the materials are new to them or they have a history of poverty and deprivation. Children should not be permitted to take toys or materials home. If this is allowed you run the risk of losing materials that are vital to the group and of the children perceiving that you are playing favorites because some children take things home while others do not.

When children ask to take materials home, let them know that the materials stay in the play room and will be available for them to use in their next session. If the child continues to repeat the request, empathize with her or his desire, but continue to affirm the limit. If a child is attached to a particular toy group, facilitators can set this aside in a "safe place" and present it to the child at the beginning of the next session. This would only be appropriate if it does not lead to conflict with the other children.

Dealing with loyalties to opposing groups in a conflict

While attempts may have been made, through the screening process, to avoid having members who were on opposite sides of a conflict in one Playing with Rainbows group, this may not have been possible. Furthermore, you may find that children from different regions, involved in separate conflicts may still see each other as coming from opposing groups due to religious or cultural identities.

- If there are children in the group who are members of opposing groups in a conflict, be alert to situations that may inflame their loyalties (e.g. discussion of the conflict). These situations may lead to name calling or aggression which must be managed in the same way as any other instance of aggression or name calling.

- When the group is to be divided into two, consider separating children who may perceive each other as coming from opposing groups in a conflict.
- Be alert to children being threatened or feeling unsafe if members of opposing groups are participating in the play program. Any actions which lead to another child in the group feeling threatened or unsafe must be dealt with.

Non-participation

Children should have the right to refuse to participate in group activities or contribute to group discussions. Knowing that they have this right will help them feel safe. Ideally, if a child is choosing not to participate, she or he can stay with group members, listen to their conversations and observe their interactions. If the child does not want to stay with the group, she or he should be allowed to go and spend time in the Cozy Corner. However, children should not be permitted to pursue other activities. For example, a child should not be painting while other group members are involved in a relaxation exercise. If a child wishes to pursue another activity, it will be necessary for a group facilitator or volunteer to stay with the child in the Cozy Corner.

- If a child is refusing to participate in all aspects of the group, it is possible that she or he is feeling unsafe. Work with the child and her or his caregivers to try and understand what is distressing the child and then ameliorate this situation. Consider allowing the child to bring a comfort object from home to the group.
- If a child is refusing to participate in a particular activity try to understand why. It is likely that the child feels uncomfortable or unsafe. What is it about this particular activity that is disconcerting to the child? What does the child imagine will happen if she or he does participate? Try to find ways for the child to complete the activity comfortably.

Isolation

- If a child is isolating her or himself during the group, try to understand this behaviour. Is the child isolated throughout the group or only during particular portions of the group? Could this be connected to language or cultural issues? Once you have developed a hypothesis about the reasons for the child's isolation, try to develop a relevant solution.
- Have a group facilitator or volunteer work closely with the child and try to encourage her or his participation.
- Plan activities that involve the children working in groups of two to facilitate the child's interaction with other group members.

Silliness

- If all group members appear to be becoming silly, take time for a "Silly Shake". You may choose to sing the song "Shake My Sillies Out"¹ or just play some fast music and encourage the children to dance and shake the sillies out of their bodies. After the dancing, you may wish to play some slower music and lead the children through a few deep breaths.
- If one particular child appears to be getting silly, have a group facilitator move to support that child. Initially, attempts should be made to have the child continue to participate in the group with some adult support. If the silliness continues to escalate then give the child the option of moving to the Cozy Corner. A group facilitator may need to support the child in the Cozy Corner by reading a story or leading the child through some deep breathing.

Extreme emotions (sadness, fear, anger)

Children who are experiencing extreme emotion may require one-on-one support from a group facilitator. If necessary, remove the child from the group and if possible go to the Cozy Corner. Provide comfort to the child in a way that allows her or him to explore her or his emotions and concerns but does not communicate an expectation that the child should start to "feel better". As long as it is safe to do so, allow the child to express her or his feelings. Provide her or him with some strategies for expressing her or his emotions. Listen to what the child is saying and empathize. If the child is asking for assistance in coping with a particular situation, group facilitators should work with the child to develop some strategies.

Dealing with issues that are beyond the group facilitators' comfort level or expertise

At times, group facilitators may be confronted with issues that they feel unsure about or unable to handle. What these issues are will depend on the facilitator's knowledge and previous experience working with children, working in a counselling capacity or working with individuals who have experienced war and migration. In these situations, gather as much information as possible about your concern and SEEK OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE. The person who you turn to for assistance will depend on the nature of your concern but could include a cultural representative, a community worker, a counsellor, a social worker, a psychologist, a doctor, a psychiatrist or someone from a specific ethnic, religious or cultural group. If you are concerned, continue to seek help until your concerns have been addressed. As noted in "Getting Ready For The Your Playing with Rainbows Group", it is suggested that you identify these resources prior to beginning the group.

¹ This song can be found on the Raffi CD *More Singable Songs for the Very Young*.

EVALUATION OF PLAYING WITH RAINBOWS GROUPS

This chapter will describe a process for evaluating Playing with Rainbows groups that should be undertaken by group facilitators.

Two main components of the evaluation will be outlined:

- Observation of Group Process
- Assessment of Caregiver and Child Satisfaction with the Playing with Rainbows group

Observation of group process

Children's Sessions

Following each session with the children, during debriefing¹, group facilitators should discuss and make notes of the following:

- the number of children present
- the activities that were used in the group, how the children reacted to them, who participated and who did not, any problems that were encountered, any barriers to participation
- themes, comments or issues that were raised by the children
- the interactions between the children and group facilitators
- the interactions among the children
- changes observed in the children
- any problems that arose in the group (conflict, discipline issues, silliness etc.)
- children's evaluation of the session using their fingers as described in "Session 1"
- children's comments regarding activities they liked and did not like in the session
- events in the session - specific anecdotes can be recorded.

A "Children's Session Review Sheet" on which this information can be recorded is found at the end of this chapter.

At the end of the twelve sessions, group facilitators should collect, review and summarize the information contained on the "Children's Session Review Sheets". A final report on the group and its process should be created based on the information that has been collected. Recommendations for changes in future groups should be clearly noted.

Group facilitators may choose to make use of "thumbnail sketches" to assist them in assessing changes in the children. A "thumbnail sketch" of each child could be created prior to and upon completion of the Playing with Rainbows group. Comparison of these may help group facilitators understand the impact that the Playing with Rainbows group has had on each child.

¹ Other issues that should be discussed during debriefing are outlined in the "Taking Care of Yourself After Group Sessions" section of the chapter titled "Group Facilitators' Self Care".

Group facilitators may find it helpful to obtain observational reports from other adults involved with the children (caregivers, teachers, baby sitters, day care personnel). By speaking with these individuals prior to and following the Playing with Rainbows group, group facilitators can be made aware of any behavioural changes that have been experienced by the children. Ensure that you have appropriate consent prior to speaking with these people.

Caregivers' Sessions

Following each of the Caregivers' Sessions, group facilitators should meet to discuss the session and make notes of the following:

- the number of caregivers present
- a summary of the topics discussed
- issues or concerns that were raised by the caregivers
- any problems that arose in the group (arguments, conflicts, minimal participation)
- events in the session - specific anecdotes can be recorded.

A "Caregivers' Session Review Sheet" which can be used to record this information can be found at the end of this chapter.

Following the three Caregivers' Sessions, the information contained on the "Caregivers' Session Review Sheet" should be collected and a report reviewing the meetings with the children's caregivers should be written. Wherever possible, recommendations for future sessions with caregivers should be clearly noted.

Client Satisfaction

Where possible, a final interview should be held with the children who have participated in the group and their caregivers. This will provide an opportunity for Group Facilitators to:

- Provide caregivers with an overview of their child's participation in the group.
- Make recommendations about additional services that may be available and beneficial for the child or family (food banks, individual counselling, extra-curricular activities, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, tutoring etc.)
- Answer any questions that the child or caregivers may have.
- Interview the caregivers and the child about their experiences in the group.

Information from the exit interviews should be recorded on the "Exit Interview With The Child" and the "Exit Interview With Caregivers" forms found at the end of this chapter.

If it will not be possible to hold an interview following the completion of the group, group facilitators should consider asking the children and caregivers to complete the Exit Interview questionnaires in the final sessions.

Once as many exit interviews as possible have been completed, group facilitators should write a report, providing an overview of the comments made by the children and their caregivers. Any specific recommendations for ways that future groups could be run differently should be included.



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CHILDREN'S SESSION REVIEW SHEET

Session # _____ Topic: _____

Number of children present (Include a list of first names): _____

Group Activities (List the activities used, the children's reactions to the activities and any problems that arose:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____

Issues raised by the children (List themes, comments or issues raised by the children):

If there is any anecdotal information, please attach a separate sheet.



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CHILDREN'S SESSION REVIEW SHEET

Group interactions (How did the children interact with group facilitators? How did the children interact with each other? Make notes about specific children where necessary):

Changes observed in the children (Note any changes in the children's behaviour, use of materials, level of participation, etc.):

Problems (Make note of any problems that arose during the group, i.e. conflict, aggression, behaviour problems, silliness, etc. You may want to note when the problem arose and how you managed it):

Children's evaluation of the session using their fingers (Note how each child rated the sessions 1-5):

Children's comments regarding activities that they liked and did not like in the session:



Session # _____

Topics discussed (Include a list of the topics introduced by group facilitators and any group activities that were used. Also outline caregivers' responses to the topics and activities):

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EXIT INTERVIEW WITH THE CHILD

Name _____ Age _____

On a scale of 1-5, how much did you like this group? (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest?)

On a scale of 1-5, how much did you like these activities? (1 being the lowest and 6 being the highest):

_____ Arts and Crafts

_____ Puppets

_____ Painting and drawing

_____ Stories

_____ Saying goodbye and saying hello ceremonies

_____ Deep breathing and relaxation

What was your favorite thing in the group? _____

What didn't you like in the group? _____

Do we need to change anything in the group to make it better? _____

What did you learn in the group to do when you are sad or scared or mad? _____

Would you like to come to another group like this one some other time? _____

Is there anything else you think we should know about having a group like this? _____



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EXIT INTERVIEW WITH THE CAREGIVERS

Name of Parents/Caregivers _____ Name of child _____

What did your child like about the group? _____

What did your child not like about the group? _____

Has your child talked to you, friends or relatives about the group? If so, what kinds of things did she/he say?

Have you noticed any changes in the child's behaviour in the following areas:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep disturbances | <input type="checkbox"/> Nightmares and night terrors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedwetting | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hyper-vigilant | <input type="checkbox"/> Clingy/separation anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inability to concentrate | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor attention span |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abusive to parents and siblings | <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talks about the past all the time | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches and other physical symptoms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Never mentions the past |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties at school | <input type="checkbox"/> Regressive behaviour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor peer relationships |

Are there any changes needed in the group?

Time _____

Place _____

Facilities _____

Content _____

Approach _____

Any other _____



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EXIT INTERVIEW WITH THE CAREGIVERS

What did you like about the caregivers' session?

What did you not like about the caregivers' session?

Are there any changes needed in the caregivers' group?

Is there anything else you would like us to help you with?

Will you recommend this group to anyone else?

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(In this book, a young bear says goodbye to his house when the family moves)

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(This book tells the story of all the things a caterpillar eats before going into a cocoon and transforming into a butterfly.)

Curtis, Jamie Lee (1998). *Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day*. U.S.A.: Joanna Cotler Books.
(An exploration of a variety of emotions)

Godwin, Patricia (1993). *I Feel Orange Today*. Toronto: Annick Press.
(A whimsical book which explores emotions through colour.)

Hazbry, Nancy and Roy Condy (1983). *How to Get Rid of Bad Dreams*. New York: Scholastic Inc.
(A book which helps you find "funny ways to make bad dreams and scary monsters disappear").

Hazen, Barbara Shook (1985). *Why Are People Different: A Book About Prejudice*. New York, A Golden Book.
(This is a story about a young black boy who is having trouble fitting into his new school and thinks it is because he is "different". In the book, his grandmother helps him come to understand that "being different shouldn't make any difference" and that "it's getting to know people that really counts".)

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(This book was produced in conjunction with UNICEF to celebrate UNICEF's 50th anniversary. It contains profiles of children from over 30 countries. The book is based on interviews with young people from all walks of life and reveals their diverse cultural backgrounds and universal similarities. This book has been followed by a book titled "Children Just Like Me: Celebrations" which explores festivals, carnivals and feast days around the world.)

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(Parents help a young girl cope with her bad dream about a wolf.)

McCloskey, Robert (1980). *One Morning in Maine*. Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books Canada Limited.
(This book tells the story of the day a young girl loses her first tooth. Since she and her family have a variety of experiences during the day, it can be used to talk about a number of different emotions.)

Munsch, Robert (1995). *From Far Away*. Willowdale, Ontario: Firefly Books Ltd.
(This book tells the story of a young girl who moves from the war in Lebanon to Canada.)

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(This book is the story of a little girl who has many different feelings after her father dies. With the loving guidance of her grandmother, Elizabeth assembles a patchwork quilt made of fabrics from her family's old clothes and belongings. They talk about and remember Elizabeth's father as they work on the quilt together.)

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(In this book, a group of children find a dead bird. They work together to plan a goodbye ceremony for the bird.)

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(A touching story that explores a young boy's memories of his grandfather. During the book, the boy learns that his grandfather died some time ago, but that his mother did not tell him because she thought he would not remember his grandfather.)

Resources

In addition to the national organizations contained within this list of resources, it should be remembered that each local community contains its own wealth of resources. It is suggested that group facilitators contact community organizations who provide settlement services as well as church, mosque, synagogue or community groups who work with refugee communities or specific ethno-cultural groups to obtain information about useful local resources.

While all attempts have been made to ensure that this list is up to date at the time of printing, it should be recognized that addresses and phone numbers of some organizations may have changed over time.

The Association for Play Therapy	2100 N. Winery Ave., Suite 104, Fresno, CA, USA 93703 Tel. (209) 252-2278
Association Quebecoise des avocates et avocates en droit de l'immigration	Maison du Barreau, 445 Boul. St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H2Y 3T8 Tel. (514) 954-3471
The Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy	2 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4W 3E2 Tel. 1-800-361-3951
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture	194 Jarvis Street, 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2B7 Tel. (416) 363-1066
Canadian Council for Refugees	6839 Drolet Street, #302, Montreal, Quebec. K2S 2T1.
Canadian Ethnocultural Council	1100-251 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario Tel. (613) 230-3867
Canadian Red Cross	737-13 Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta T2R 1J1
Centre d'accueil et référence pour immigrants, CARl	1179 Boul. Decarie, Ville St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H4L 3M8 Tel. (514) 748-2007
Community Network for Survivors of Torture in Alberta	Box 61020 Kensington, Calgary, Alberta T2N NS6 Tel. (403) 283-3643
Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre	Box 22095, Bayers Road, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3L 4T7 Tel. (902) 443-2937
International Indigenous Trauma Counselling Services	Ste. 5-458 Queens Avenue, London, Ontario N6B 1X9 Tel. (519) 433-0772
International Settlement Canada (INSCAN), Research Resource Division for Refugees	1125 Colonel By Drive, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6 Tel. (613) 788-3676
Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	#101-10010-107A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5H 4H8 Tel. (403) 424-7709
Network Committee to Assist Survivors, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa-Carleton Branch	1355 Bank Street, #402, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8K7 Tel. (613) 737-7791
Newfoundland Legal Aid Commission	21 Church Hill Street, St. Johns, Newfoundland A1C 3Z8 Tel. (709) 753-7860

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Play Therapy International	11 E - 900 Greenbank Road, Suite 527, Nepean (Ottawa), Ontario, Canada K2J 4P6 Tel. (613) 634-3125
Quaker Committee for Refugees	60 Lowther Street, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1G6 Tel. (416) 964-9669
Regina Chapter Immigrant Woman of Saskatchewan	2248 Lorne Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 2M8
Reseau d'intervention aupres des personnes ayant subi la violence organisees	120 rue Duluth E., Montreal, Quebec H2W 1H1 Tel. (514) 843-4356
Resource Centre for Refugee Studies, York University	322 York Lanes, 4700 Keele St., Toronto, M3J 1P3. Tel. (416) 736-5663.
Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture	#3-3664 E. Hastings, Vancouver, British Columbia V5K 2A9 Tel. (604) 299-3539
Victoria Coalition for Survivors of Torture	Box 8742, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 3S3 Tel. (604) 383-1422
YMCA Cross Cultural Services	25 Frederick St. Loc. 300, Kitchener, Ontario N2H 6M6 Tel. (519) 579-9622
Wesley Urban Ministries	210 Napier Street, Hamilton, Ontario L8R 1S7 Tel. (905) 526-8865
UNICEF Alberta	1022-17th Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2T 0A5 Tel. (403) 245-0323 Fax. (403) 228-3881
UNICEF British Columbia	536 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1E9 Tel. (604) 874-3666 Fax. (604) 874-5411
UNICEF Canada	443 Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto, Ontario M4S 2L8 Tel. (416) 482-4444 Fax (416) 482-8035
UNICEF Manitoba	160 Stafford Street, Winnipeg, MB R3M 2V8 Tel. (204) 477-4600 Fax (204) 477-4040
UNICEF New Brunswick	51 Canterbury Street, Saint John, New Brunswick E2L 2C6 Tel. (506) 634-1911 Fax (506) 652-7583
UNICEF Newfoundland	354 Water Street, 2nd Floor, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5V5 Tel. (709) 726-2430 Fax (709) 722-0223
UNICEF Ontario	333 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1L7 Tel. (416) 487-4153 Fax (416) 487-8875
UNICEF Prince Edward Island	161 St. Peters Road, Suite 42, Sherwood, PE C1A 5P6 Tel. (902) 894-8771 Fax (902) 894-8771

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

UNICEF Quebec

4474, rue St-Denis, Montreal, Quebec H2J 2L1
Tel. (514) 288-5134 Fax (514) 288-7243

UNICEF Saskatchewan

314-220 3rd Avenue South, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 1M1 Tel. (306) 242-4922

A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bridget Revell, M.S.W. is recognized as a Child Psychotherapist, Play Therapist and Supervisor with the Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy, The Association for Play Therapy Inc. (based in the United States) and The International Board of Examiners of Certified Play Therapists. She has worked in a number of children's treatment programs in Ontario, Canada and has a valuable background working with children who have been traumatized through sexual abuse and exposure to violence as well as working with these children's families. In 1994, Bridget received the Monica Herbert award presented by the Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy in appreciation of "outstanding contribution to Play Therapy and your community". She served as a board member and as president (1990-1993) of the Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy. Bridget has shared her knowledge and experience in the field of Play Therapy through writing and providing training in a wide variety of workshops and conferences offered throughout North America.

