

Keeping Children Safe: *A Program to Help Children Cope with Community Violence*

Manual For Teachers and Professionals
Working with Elementary School Children



Based on research conducted at the
Department of Psychology, University of Miami
with the assistance of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools

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Keeping Children Safe: *A Program to Help Children Cope with Community Violence*

For Professionals Working with Elementary School Children



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Copies of this manual may be obtained from the internet at: www.keepingchildrensafe.com

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



<i>General Background Information</i>	Page
Keeping Children Safe: Introduction	1
• Describes the purpose and goals of the manual	
• How to use this manual	
Children’s Reactions to Community Violence	3
• Reactions to violence exposure, including posttraumatic stress symptoms	
• Includes a measure to identify children’s reactions	
Identifying Children At Risk for Problems	9
• Identifying children having difficulty coping with distressing events	
 <i>Keeping Safe Activities (Core topics are highlighted in Red)</i>	
Introduction to the Activities	13
• Describes how to use the activities and their suggested sequence	
• Helpful guidelines for teachers and counselors are provided	
★ Topic 1 – Communication Skills: How Are Children Feeling?	17
• Discussion about feelings	
• Handout: Faces and My Neighborhood	
★ Topic 2 – Working with Others: Group Collage	21
• Class Rules	
• Group Collage	
★ Topic 3 – Keeping Safe: Safety Skills I	23
• Learn Safety Rules	
• Handout: Safety Skills	
★ Topic 4 – Keeping Safe: Safety Skills II	29
• Reviews importance of safety and how to identify reliable adults	
• Safety Hand Exercise	
★ Topic 5 – How Do I Cope?	31
• Coping with things that happen in the neighborhood and school	
• Identifying good and bad coping skills	
• Handouts: Coping Questionnaire and How Can I Cope	

Continued...



★ Topic 6 – Feeling Nervous? Use Relaxation.....	35
• Discussion on relaxation techniques	
• Handout: Relaxation Techniques	
★ Topic 7 – Coping With Angry Feelings: Conflict Reduction I.....	39
• Discussion on events that lead to different feelings	
• Handout: Stop Sign	
★ Topic 8 – Coping With Angry Feelings: Conflict Reduction II.....	43
• Coping with unpleasant feelings	
• Role plays to practice skills	
• Handout: Conflict Reduction	
★ Topic 9 – Teasing & Bullying: Ways To Cope.....	49
• Discussion on what is teasing and bullying	
• Strategies for coping with teasing	
• Handout: Feelings	
★ Topic 10 – Positive Activities: Reducing Exposure To Violence.....	53
• Discussion on TV viewing habits	
• Handout: Things I do Everyday	
★ Topic 11 – Parental Monitoring.....	55
• Discussion of Parental Monitoring	
• Teaching children how to help their parents monitor them	
• Handout: Parental Monitoring	

Additional Information

When Problems Persist: Identifying And Getting Help For Children.....	58
• What to do when new events occur	
• When and how to refer children for assistance	
Other Resources for Children and Families.....	59
• Websites	
• Documents and Films	
• Catalogues	
Bibliography: References and Recommended Readings.....	60

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE: INTRODUCTION

Violence is a widespread problem in many communities. Children are often witnesses to or victims of violence in their schools and neighborhoods. As a result, many children experience chronic fear for their safety and the safety of their loved ones. On a daily basis, many children must learn to adapt to living in an unsafe or dangerous environment.



Keeping Children Safe Project Goals:

Research has shown that exposure to community violence such as robberies, attacks, or other crimes can result in increased signs of stress, fear, and anxiety in children. However, more information is needed about which children are most at risk for experiencing severe stress in response to community violence. The current project addressed this concern. Specifically, the main goals were:

- To evaluate the functioning of elementary school children following experiences of either witnessing or being a victim of community violence.
- To identify the factors that predict which children are most likely to be affected by exposure to community violence, in order to focus the efforts of future interventions.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of a school-based intervention program for alleviating stress and promoting positive coping among children affected by community violence.

The classroom interviews and questionnaires:

The first phase of *Keeping Children Safe* included 260 third, fourth, and fifth graders from three elementary schools in Miami-Dade County. The children were about evenly divided by sex and grade, and represented the major ethnic groups in Miami-Dade County (Hispanic, Black, Anglo). The schools were located in moderate to high crime neighborhoods.

During the 2001 school year, children were interviewed about their exposure to community violence events, and were asked about their posttraumatic stress (PTS) symptoms, coping skills, and perceptions of school and neighborhood safety. Children completed other questionnaires about feelings, reactions, and everyday activities, and teachers and parents provided additional information. Children who lived in high crime areas reported feeling less safe and having more exposure to community violence (witness and victim). Exposure to violence predicted more PTS symptoms. Children who used fewer negative coping strategies, and those with fewer stressful life events, reported fewer PTS symptoms than children who used negative coping strategies or had more life stressors.

This manual is based in large part on analyses of the information collected from this project phase. Other resources (see Bibliography) provided additional information and activities.

The intervention:

The second phase of *Keeping Children Safe* involved evaluating an intervention in several elementary schools during the following year. Classrooms were randomly assigned to intervention or “usual activities.” Intervention classrooms completed core activities, and occasionally additional topics. Analyses revealed that children who participated in the program reduced their use of negative coping skills as a result. All children reported decreases in PTS symptoms over time, and a general increase in social support. For more information see www.keepingchildrensafe.com

How to Use the Manual (also see pages 13 – 15 for more details):

This manual was designed for teachers and mental health professionals working with school children who may have been exposed to community violence. Some activities were developed to *prevent* children from becoming involved in unsafe situations.

- We recommend that adults read through the manual *before* trying the activities out with children. Detailed instructions are provided on pages 13 – 15.
- Although the activities were designed for children between 8 – 12 years of age, they may be modified for use with younger or older youth.
- Children vary in their interest and attention span. Although the activities were designed to be fun and completed within a typical class period (about 30 minutes), teachers and counselors should use their judgment in pacing the activities. Consider breaking activities into smaller segments for difficult to manage children or those with short attention spans.
- The activities are intended to elicit class discussion and interaction. Teachers and counselors are encouraged to use rewards, incentives, or “class rules” to implement the activities smoothly, especially in classes with children who may be difficult to manage or have short attention spans. (See pages 14 – 15 for suggestions.)
- The activities work best when the group size does not exceed 10-15 students per adult; for larger groups or hard to manage children, the presence of 2 adults is advised.

CHILDREN'S REACTIONS TO COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

(Adapted from: the Helping Children Prepare for and Cope with Natural Disasters Manual, 1996)

The importance of asking children how they feel:

Our *Keeping Children Safe* project examined the effects of children's exposure to community violence. Children were interviewed and completed questionnaires about their thoughts and feelings. Some children who felt scared or upset mentioned that they had not told anyone about their feelings. Most children seemed to welcome the opportunity to share their feelings with an interested adult. Our experiences highlighted the importance of *asking children themselves to talk about their thoughts and feelings in a safe and supportive manner*.



How to measure children's thoughts and feelings:

One of the questionnaires used in the *Keeping Children Safe* project is the Reaction Index, that measures children's symptoms of posttraumatic stress (PTS). This widely-used measure (the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - Reaction Index for Children or PTSD-RI) was developed by Frederick, Pynoos, and Nader (1992). A modified version of the questionnaire is included in this section.

Many children experience some PTS symptoms following exposure to community violence. The main symptoms include:

Re-experiencing the violent event during play, dreams, or flashbacks. For example, a child may:

- Repeatedly act-out what happened in the event when playing
- Have many distressing dreams about the event
- Be distressed when exposed to events that remind the child of the violence or at the anniversary of the violent event
- Act or feel as if the violent event is happening again

Avoidance of reminders of the event or a **general numbness** to feelings or emotions. For example, a child may:

- Avoid all activities that remind him/her of the event
- Be unable to remember parts of the event
- Withdraw from other people
- Have difficulty feeling positive emotions

Increased physical arousal. For example, a child may:

- Have increased difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Be more irritable than usual
- Have more difficulty concentrating than usual
- Startle more easily

Behavioral and Emotional Reactions of School Children:

In addition to the feelings and thoughts listed above, children may experience a wide variety of other behavioral and emotional symptoms following exposure to violence.

Fears and Worries

- Fears or worries that something bad will happen to them or to a family member
- Fears or worries that they will be left alone or separated from family members
- Fears of the dark or worries about being alone
- Fear that they caused some part of the violent event to occur



Depressive Symptoms

- Crying or sadness
- Withdrawal from others
- Changes in appetite
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities

School Difficulties

- Problems concentrating in school
- Declines in academic performance
- Refusal to attend school

Somatic or Physical Symptoms

- Stomachaches
- Headaches
- Nausea (sick feelings)

Regressive Behavior

- Irritability or whining
- Clinging behavior
- Bedwetting
- Thumb-sucking

Behavioral Difficulties

- Aggressive behavior at home or school
- Angry outbursts
- Hyperactive or silly behavior

How common are these reactions?

All of the above are common reactions children have after witnessing or being a victim of violence. Symptoms of PTS, as well as fears and worries, are especially common reactions to traumatic events such as exposure to violence. Children who have been the victim of a traumatic event that involves personal violence may also become hyper-vigilant about their surroundings, and may startle very easily.

Many children exhibit *some* of these reactions for a short period of time. In most cases, these reactions will improve over time. However, in some cases, children's symptoms may not improve, or their symptoms may interfere with their everyday functioning. For example, a child who cannot concentrate in school, and who isn't sleeping well, may fall behind in schoolwork and develop poor grades. Alternatively, children who withdraw from others, or who become more irritable and aggressive may develop problems in their relationships with friends or family members.

Thus, when children's symptoms and reactions interfere with their everyday functioning, or persist for a long time (one month or more), it is a reason for concern. Please see the next section in the manual for information on how to identify children who may be at risk for long-term stress reactions. Also see the section on "When Problems Persist," on page 58.

Children's Stress Symptoms

This questionnaire is modified from the Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Reaction Index for Children developed by Frederick, Pynoos, and Nader (1992). The Interference Question is from the Anxiety Disorder Interview Schedule for Children, developed by Silverman & Albano (1996).

Event: _____ How long ago did this occur? _____

Event: _____ How long ago did this occur? _____

Event: _____ How long ago did this occur? _____

Instructions : The questions below ask about your thoughts and feelings about the event (above) that was most distressing to you. Answer each question by placing a check mark under the word that describes your thoughts and feelings about the event **during the past few weeks**. Please be sure to answer all questions.

	NONE of the time	SOME of the time	MOST of the time
1. Do you get scared, afraid or upset when you think about the event?	_____	_____	_____
2. Do you go over in your mind what happened?	_____	_____	_____
3. Do thoughts about the event come back to you even when you don't want them to?	_____	_____	_____
4. Do you have dreams about the event, or have other bad dreams?	_____	_____	_____
5. Do things sometimes make you think the event might happen again?	_____	_____	_____
6. Do you feel good about the things you liked to do before the event -- like playing with friends, sports, or school activities?	_____	_____	_____
7. Do you feel more alone inside, as if other people really don't understand how you feel about what happened?	_____	_____	_____
8. Have you felt so scared, upset, or sad that you couldn't even talk or cry?	_____	_____	_____
9. Do you startle easily or feel more jumpy or nervous than before the event?	_____	_____	_____
10. Do you have trouble falling or staying asleep?	_____	_____	_____
11. Do thoughts or feelings about what happened get in the way of remembering things, like what you learned in school or at home?	_____	_____	_____
12. Is it as easy for you to pay attention (concentrate) as before the event?	_____	_____	_____

13. Do you want to stay away from things that make you remember what happened to you? _____
14. When something reminds you about the event, do you get tense or upset? _____
15. Since the event are you doing things that you had once stopped doing? (such as sleeping with someone, wetting the bed, biting your nails, sucking your thumb) _____
16. Do you have more stomachaches, headaches, or other sick feelings since the event than you did before? _____
17. Do you do things now that you wouldn't do before? (like getting into fights, disobeying more, doing dangerous things when you play) _____

? Are there any things that you worry about since the event happened? If so, what? _____

? Are there any things that you are more afraid of since the event happened? If so, what? _____

Interference Question:

Ok, I want to know how much you feel this event has messed things up in your life.

That is, how much has it messed things up with friends, in school or at home? Meaning, how much does it stop you from doing things you would like to do with your friends, at school, or at home?

NONE SOME A LOT

General Scoring Guidelines

? Assign a numerical value to each response for items #1 - 5, 7 - 11, and 13 - 17 as follows:

None of the time = 0 Some of the time = 2 Most of the time = 4

? Questions 6 and 12 should be reverse coded. For these questions,

None of the time = 4 Some of the time = 2 Most of the time = 0

? Next, add the 17 items you have coded. Use these guidelines as a general rule:

Total < 16 = Doubtful to Mild Stress Levels

Total 16 – 32 = Moderate Stress Levels

Total > 32 = Moderate to High Stress Levels

The Interference Question is not included in the scoring, but it is used to judge the overall impact of the distress on the child's life (low, medium, high).

Note that the following items on the questionnaire represent different PTS symptoms:

Re-experiencing Items = 2, 3, 4, 5

Avoidance/Numbing Items = 6, 7, 8, 13

Hyperarousal Items = 9, 10, 11, 12

Other Stress Symptoms:

Regressive Behavior Item = 15

Somatic Complaints Item = 16

Behavioral Problems Item = 17

General Distress Items = 1, 14

The last two questions (without numbers) are intended to help understand some of children's fears and worries related to the event that happened.

IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AT RISK FOR PROBLEMS

(Adapted from: the Helping Children Prepare for and Cope with Natural Disasters Manual, 1996)

Identifying children at risk: Issues to consider

The following information is intended to guide educators in identifying elementary-school children who may have ongoing emotional or behavioral difficulties following exposure to community violence. Because children's emotional well-being is not always obvious from their behavior, it is important to spend time with them discussing their experiences and feelings. During these interactions, it may be possible to obtain information about the areas listed below, and thus identify children who may require closer monitoring or individual attention.

When determining if a child is having a "serious" problem, it is important to consider how the child acted *before* the violent event (if it is a single incident). For example, if a child is usually shy or withdrawn, then this type of behavior after the event would not be unusual. Children who react in ways that are very different from their usual manner, or who are much more extreme and persistent in their usual behavior, should be monitored closely.

In addition, it is important to be familiar with children's typical reactions following a traumatic event (see pages 3 - 5) in order to judge whether or not children's reactions are problematic. You can use the test on pages 6 - 7 to identify how a child is reacting to an event. General scoring guidelines are on page 8. If a child reports many stress symptoms, or reports that the event or symptoms are interfering in his/her everyday activities, the child may need more support or attention from a concerned parent or school counselor.

Identifying children at risk: What to look for

The *Keeping Children Safe* team identified signs or indicators that could be used to identify the children who may be at risk for difficulties following exposure to community violence. These signs or indicators are listed below in the following categories: Event-related experiences, psychological issues, and behavioral issues.

Because each child's situation is unique, it is not possible to generate exact rules dictating how many signs are necessary to predict ongoing difficulties. However, based on the guidelines provided below, if you are concerned about a child, notify the school counselor or school psychologist. With their assistance, a plan can be developed to address the situation in school, to notify a parent, and/or to refer the child and family to a mental health professional in the community.

I. Event-Related Experiences:

Children who experience any of the following may be likely to have ongoing difficulties:

- Physical harm to themselves or to a friend or family member
- Threats to their physical safety or the safety of others during the event
- Perceptions that their life is in danger during the event
- Considerable life disruption after the event
- Lost or stolen belongings and possessions
- Feeling very upset during and after the event

II. Psychological Issues:

Post Traumatic Stress

One way to evaluate children's distress following a traumatic event is to measure symptoms of posttraumatic stress (PTS) with an interview or questionnaire (like the one on pages 6 – 7). Children who report many symptoms of PTS after the event are likely to experience PTS many months after the event. Children who report moderate to high levels of PTS, or who report moderate to high levels of interference with daily activities, should be carefully monitored.

The main symptoms of PTS were described on pages 3 – 4. Briefly, they are:

- ***Re-experiencing*** the event during play, dreams, or flashbacks.
- ***Avoidance*** of reminders of the event or ***general numbness*** to emotions.
- ***Increased*** symptoms of ***physical arousal***.

Problems Coping

Children who use negative ways of coping with stress such as denial, passivity, avoidance, or blaming self and others may have more difficulty dealing with stress reactions. In addition, these negative coping strategies may lead to more problems. Examples of poor coping include the following statements:

- “I wished the bad things had never happened” (Denial, wishful thinking)
- “I didn’t do anything because the bad things can’t be fixed” (Resignation)
- “I tried to forget it all the time” (Avoidance)
- “I blame myself for causing what happened” (Self-criticism)
- “I yell, scream, or get mad” (Blame others)

Presence of Other Stressful Life Events

Children who experienced other major stressful events in recent weeks or months - such as their parents getting separated or divorced, a parent losing his/her job, a family member becoming ill, or the birth of a new sibling - may be more vulnerable to stress reactions.

Limited Social Support

Children who have low or limited social support from family members, friends, classmates and/or teachers may also have difficulty handling stress reactions. This includes children who:

- Feel alone
- Don't have anyone to share feelings with
- Don't have anyone to spend time with
- Don't get to spend time with their friends because of the event

Girls

Girls are more likely than boys to report symptoms of posttraumatic stress such as being nervous, having stomachaches, fearing another event, or feeling alone.

III. Behavioral Issues:

The information in this section was adapted from several sources that describe children's reactions to traumatic events, including the manual on *Helping Children Prepare for and Cope with Natural Disasters* (by La Greca, Vernberg, Silverman, Vogel, & Prinstein, 1994).

If children have any of the following problems soon after the event, they may be at risk for persistent difficulties:

- Frequent aggressive outbursts
- Large decline in academic performance
- Withdrawal from social activities and play with other children
- Frequent complaints of nausea, headaches, stomachaches
- Persistent avoidance of being alone
- Dangerous risk-taking behavior
- Continued preoccupation with the traumatic event
- Persistent refusal to attend school

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE: INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTIVITIES

(Adapted from: the Helping Children Prepare for and Cope with Natural Disasters Manual, 1996)

The main elements within the activities:

Many types of activities have been used to help children adapt successfully following a traumatic event, such as exposure to violence. The *Keeping Children Safe* program focuses on three key components that have been useful in many other interventions:

- **Exposure to and discussion** of trauma-related events
- Promoting **positive coping and problem-solving skills**
- Strengthening children's **friendships and social support**

I. Exposure to and discussion of trauma-related events.

Repeated presentation of trauma-related material can reduce children's emotional distress following upsetting events. That is, children need an opportunity to talk about their experiences *in a safe, accepting environment* in order to recover from the event and put it in perspective. The activities in this manual are designed to provide opportunities for children to discuss their experiences, guided by class rules that ensure respect for children's opinions. Because individual children are likely to respond differently to various techniques of expression, the activities use a range of methods including both verbal and nonverbal expression, and varying modalities (drawings, stories).

II. Promoting positive coping and problem-solving skills.

Helping children to develop positive coping strategies and problem-solving skills can improve their stress levels following an event. The activities in this manual encourage children to develop positive, realistic methods of coping with their feelings and increasing their sense of control and safety. Children are also encouraged to identify specific coping strategies for different types of situations, and to develop strategies for "**keeping safe.**"

III. Strengthening children's friendships and social support.

Children with strong emotional support from others are able to cope with and adjust to stressful situations. In particular, children's relationships with peers can decrease feelings of isolation; peers can also model how to react to and cope with difficult life events. In our *Keeping Children Safe* project, we found that children who reported having more social support from classmates had significantly lower stress reactions (compared to children with less classmate support). Thus, it may be helpful for children to develop supportive relationships with their classmates and teachers. The activities in this manual encourage children to work cooperatively in small groups, to enhance their peer support.

Guidelines for small group activities:

To encourage classmates to develop supportive relationships, we suggest using the following strategies during the classroom activities:

- **Form small groups of 4 to 6 children.**
- **Mix up usual clusters of children.** Expose children to others who may be potential friends. It is best if the teacher (or counselor) puts together the activity groups, rather than letting the children choose their own teams. This will keep certain children from being excluded by their peers.
- **Give shy or unpopular children the opportunity to be a group leader.** This encourages their interaction with the rest of the children.
- **Try not to mix boys and girls within the small groups.** Most children at this age (8 – 12 years) are likely to form a close friendship with someone of the same sex.
- If you have a **challenging class**, some activities may work better when conducted for the whole class than in small groups.

Selecting activities: Core and supplementary lessons:

The program was designed with a set of Core activities (marked in **RED** on the Table of Contents). Core activities are ones that are an essential part of the *Keeping Children Safe* Program. They include: Communication Skills, Keeping Safe, “How do I cope?”, Feeling Nervous, and Parental Monitoring. We strongly advise that all of these activities be used. The additional lessons listed in the Table of Contents can enhance the core activities. The activities are in a suggested sequence, although teachers and counselors may change this sequence if it seems appropriate. Topic 1 (Communication Skills) is an introductory lesson that sets the stage for later topics and might be helpful to use first, regardless of how the remaining topics are sequenced.

Suggestions for group rules:

It is important to establish group rules *before* each activity. This will allow children to show respect towards their peers and to feel comfortable when participating in each activity. The following group rules should be established:

- **Show respect for the thoughts and feelings of others.** This includes listening attentively to others and letting others talk. Things to avoid include laughing at or teasing other children, or saying that someone’s thoughts are wrong or silly.
- **Share your thoughts and experiences with others.** By discussing feelings and thoughts, children can find ways to make themselves feel better, and can learn that their experiences are common reactions that are shared with others.

Using behavioral incentives:

The use of incentives may be helpful to keep children on-task and focused during the activities. Incentives may help children follow the activities and abide by group rules (i.e., staying in your seat, raising your hand before speaking, and respecting others' thoughts and ideas). Some useful incentives include: pencils, erasers, stickers, treats and classroom privileges.

When to use the activities:

The activities can be used anytime during the school year, and can become a part of a science or health class module. The activities build on each other, so that the initial lessons focus on children's perceptions of safety and ways to keep safe. Later lessons focus on coping strategies and problem solving. Although the lessons are in a suggested sequence, they can be used as independent modules, depending on the needs and interests of the teachers and students. For example, the lessons on **teasing** or **resolving conflict** may be especially appropriate if incidents of teasing or conflict have recently arisen in the school or classroom.

Additional guidelines when implementing the activities:

- The activities were designed to be used with elementary school children. However, teachers and counselors are encouraged to adapt the material and the pacing of the material to children's age and cognitive level. For example, younger children may need more help and instruction to complete the activities than older children.
- The activities were designed as independent units and thus there may be some repetitive material within them. It is suggested that each activity begin with a review.
- The activities were designed to decrease distress and enhance positive outcomes. In the event that the discussion of trauma-related material causes a child to become distressed, the teacher should notify the school counselor or school psychologist immediately so that the child may receive additional assistance.
- There are 11 topics covered in this manual. Each topic includes symbols to identify the nature of the task:



Review Reminder = to review prior material

Note to Teacher = instructions for teachers or counselors

Teacher Says = wording that a teacher or counselor may use

Guidelines for leading a discussion with children:

Ask the children to evaluate their own feelings. It is important to ask children how they are doing rather than relying on the reports of parents or on their behavior. Some children do not express their feelings to protect the adults around them. Children need the opportunity to discuss their feelings knowing that they will be accepted and supported.

Do not require participation. Do not require all children to participate in the discussion. Some children may not feel comfortable sharing their feelings in a group or may not be ready to discuss certain topics. Children can benefit from just listening to others' comments.

Use open-ended questions. The best types of questions to use are "open ended" – meaning that they cannot be answered by only a "yes" or a "no." Helpful questions begin with "What?" "How?" "Which?" or "When?"

Be a good listener. It is better to listen to and promote children's expressions of feelings rather than controlling the discussion yourself.

Acknowledge and normalize children's statements. When children express their feelings, it will be helpful to acknowledge their statements by making comments such as: "*It sounds like you were very angry*" or "*That part made you feel sad.*" It is also important to help normalize children's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors with comments like: "*Lots of kids who go through a similar event feel that way*" or "*It's o.k. to feel angry about that.*"

Express your own feelings outside of the classroom. If you were also affected by a traumatic event, it will help to express your feelings to a trusted friend or family member before you discuss the event with children. This will allow you to listen more effectively.



★ **Topic 1 Communication Skills: How Are Children Feeling?**

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To help children identify and express their feelings.
2. To help children identify situations that make them feel safe/unsafe.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

This activity can be used at the beginning of the school year or anytime thereafter.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE

Approximately 35 – 45 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers or counselors with the whole classroom or with small groups of children.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Faces Handout
- My Neighborhood Handout

PROCEDURES

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND IDENTIFYING FEELINGS

(approximately 10-15 minutes)



Note to Teacher:

Have a discussion with the children about the different types of feelings. Also, talk to the children about how children may experience different feelings about things that happen in their neighborhood or school. Let them know that different children may have various feelings about the same situation. Explain that there are more feelings than happy, sad and mad. Ask the children to volunteer examples of other feelings they have (e.g., how they feel when teased by a friend, when in trouble with a teacher, or when they received an award at school).

Distribute the “Faces Handout” (adapted from an unknown source) and ask students to give examples of times when they have felt like one of the faces on the chart.

PART 2: IDENTIFYING FEELINGS ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD (approximately 15 minutes)

Note to Teacher:



Distribute the handout, “My Neighborhood.” Have children identify things they like best and least about their neighborhood

This is a good icebreaker for children. It allows them the opportunity to express their feelings.

PART 3: ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION OF FEELINGS AND CUES (approximately 10-15 minutes)

Note to Teacher:



This last section is important to help children understand the connection between how they feel and why they feel this way. It will help them understand how their body provides them with cues as to how they are feeling.

Ask the children to discuss how they can detect that they are feeling a certain way. Talk with them about the cues that we get from our bodies. (i.e., feeling hot, racing heart, clenched fists or teeth).

Have a discussion with the students about how they can detect what someone else is feeling. Talk about the importance of nonverbal cues (i.e., facial expressions, gestures, how someone stands) and listening to what the other person is saying.

Talk to the students about the importance of talking with an adult about how they feel. Let them know that adults can help them come up with ideas for feeling better or they can make suggestions for how to resolve problems.

HANDOUT: FACES



HANDOUT: MY NEIGHBORHOOD

1. What do you like **BEST** about your neighborhood?

2. Draw a face that shows how you **FEEL**.

3. What do you like **LEAST** about your neighborhood?

4. Draw a face that shows how you **FEEL**.

★ **Topic 2 Working with Others: Group Collage**

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To involve students in developing classroom rules so that they are invested in them.
2. To encourage group cohesiveness through a group project requiring cooperative effort.
3. To strengthen social support among the children by encouraging them to work cooperatively in a large group.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

Anytime, but may be good prior to the (next) lesson on safety issues.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE

Approximately 45-60 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers with their entire classroom.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Large Poster board or mural paper
- Markers or Crayons
- Old Magazines to be cut up
- Several pairs of Scissors

PROCEDURES

- **Review previous week activity**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: DEVELOPING CLASS RULES

(approximately 5-10 minutes)



Note to Teacher:

Discuss the importance of making rules to ensure that everyone remains safe and gets along well in the classroom. Tell the class that they will be helping to come up with their Class Rules so that they are rules that everyone agrees on and everyone agrees to follow. Have the class come up with 5 - 10 clear rules and print them on the board.

PART 2: GROUP COLLAGE AND WORKING TOGETHER

(approximately 30-45 minutes)



Note to Teacher:

Explain to the class that these rules are going to be posted in the classroom, so they should make them look really nice.

Continue with the theme of *“keeping safe,”* informing children that they will be decorating the area of the paper around the class rules by either drawing pictures or cutting out pictures or words from magazines that reflect the theme of *“keeping safe.”*

Break the class into groups of 4 - 5 students each. Instruct each group to create an illustration or drawing that depicts the rule they were assigned. Each group will work on creating an illustration for that particular rule.

Once the groups have developed an illustration for each rule, they should reconvene as a whole class and the teacher can direct each group to place their illustration on a poster board.

★ **Topic 3 Keeping Safe: Safety Skills I**

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To help children **keep safe** by identifying potentially dangerous situations and developing strategies for avoiding these types of situations.
2. To provide children with specific guidelines for safety and violence prevention.
3. To strengthen socially supportive relationships among the children by encouraging them to work cooperatively in small groups.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

Any time during the school year. This can follow the Communication activity.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE

Approximately 45 minutes

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers or counselors with the whole classroom or with a small group of children.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pencil for each child
- Teacher Instruction Sheet of Do's and Don'ts
- Safety Handout
- Treats or special privileges for the winning teams

PROCEDURES

- ➔ **Review previous week activity**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND GROUP RULES

(approximately 5 minutes)

? **Introduce the activity.**

Teacher Says:



“Today we will have the opportunity to think about and develop a list of ways to stay safe. Each of you has an important part in making sure that you stay safe, both at school and in the neighborhood.”

? **Introduce the rules for the activity.**

Teacher Says:



“Before we start, I would like to review some important group rules:”

Show respect for the thoughts and feelings of others. This includes listening attentively to others and letting others talk. Things to avoid include laughing at or teasing other children, or saying that someone’s thoughts are wrong or silly.

Share your thoughts and experiences with others. By discussing feelings and thoughts, the children can find ways to make themselves feel better, and can learn that their experiences are common reactions that are shared by others.

PART 2: SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY: DEVELOPING SAFETY RULES

(approximately 40 minutes)

? **Introduce the idea of “keeping safe.” Begin the activity by telling the children:**

Teacher Says:



“Each of you is a very important person, and we wouldn’t want anything bad to happen to anyone in our class. Sometimes, though, bad things do happen in our neighborhood or school and we need to know what to do to keep ourselves safe.”

“What does the word safe mean?” (Make sure they understand the concept of not getting hurt, either by injury or by another person.)

Note to teacher:



Provide the following examples to start a discussion. Read each scenario, and then have the class discuss whether the child in the story was safe, and if not, what the child could have done differently to be safer.

Scenario 1: Ralph is walking home from school when it begins to rain. A man in a car pulls over to the sidewalk and asks Ralph if he would like a ride home so that he doesn’t get wet. Ralph says, “Sure, thanks mister” and gets into the car with the man. Was Ralph being safe? Why not? What could happen to him? What else could he have done that would have been safer for him?

Scenario 2: *Maria was walking to the store with her big sister when they saw someone breaking into someone else's house. Maria stopped on the sidewalk and watched while talking to her sister about what they were seeing. When the burglar came out of the house, Maria and her sister ran down the street. Were Maria and her sister being safe? What might they have done differently that would have been safer?*

After discussing these examples, say to the children:

Teacher Says:



“We have just talked about a few ideas of what kids like you can do to keep safe in the neighborhood and at school. It is very important that we all know what to do when something happens that might put us or someone else in danger. Today, I want all of you to help make a list of ways to stay safe so that we all do our best to keep from getting hurt.”

? **Divide the children into small groups.**

Teacher Says:



“We are now going to divide into small groups to complete the next activity.” (Small group instructions are outlined on pages 14 - 15).

? **Explain the small group activity.**

Teacher Says:



“Your job is to come up with as many safety rules as you can. We will see which group comes up with the most things. I want ideas in two different categories:

- 1) First, I want you to come up with the Do's and Don'ts of how to keep safe at school.
- 2) Second, I want you to come up with the Do's and Don'ts of how to keep safe in the neighborhood.”

“Let's see which team can come up with the most things in each category and the most things overall. The winning team in each way will get special recognition (or a treat or privilege).”

? **Ask the groups to list the safety rules that they already know.**

Note to Teacher:



This activity requires cooperation among the students and if the class size is large or children are difficult to manage, it can be done as a “whole class” activity rather than in small groups.

Pass out the “Safety Skills” handout to each group member. One child is responsible for the “at school-do's” piece, another for the “at-school don'ts” piece, another for the “in my neighborhood-do's” piece, and the last child is responsible for the “in my neighborhood-don'ts” piece. Only the child in charge of his or her piece is allowed to write “safety rules” for that category, although teammates should help each other with

suggestions of things to list in each category. Allow approximately 15 minutes for this part.

It is very important to circulate from group to group to make sure that the children are cooperating and that they follow the rules about each team member having a specific list to write. Teammates can give each other suggestions for the different categories, but cannot write for another person.

? **Have a captain for each team announce items from their list.**

Note to Teacher:



Appoint a “team captain” for each team. The captain is the only team member allowed to speak for the group during this step of the activity, and should not be one of the students who recorded the team’s responses. Going from team to team, ask the captain to tell one item from a category on their team's list. Keep a running list on the board, and keep going until all of the unique responses have been listed. If the children’s responses have more to do with injury prevention rather than violence-exposure prevention, add a few more safety rules at the end relating to avoiding potentially violent situations. Be sure that the children have included the Do’s and Don’ts listed on the teacher instruction sheet.

Group each teams’ handouts. Use these to decide which teams came up with the most ideas for each category, and the best overall ideas for “**Keeping Safe.**”

HANDOUT: SAFETY SKILLS



**To stay safe in my
neighborhood:**

DO

**To stay safe in my
neighborhood:**

DON'T



To stay safe at school:

DO

To stay safe at school:

DON'T

TEACHER INSTRUCTION SHEET: SAFETY DO'S AND DON'TS

Instructions: Here are some safety Do's and Don'ts that will be helpful to highlight in discussions with the children for this activity.



DO

Take a buddy when walking outside
 Know the way home
 Stay away from strangers
 Tell your parents:
 Where you are going
 How you will get there
 Who will be going with you
 When you will be back
 Tell an adult if you see or hear
 something dangerous or illegal

DON'T

Walk alone
 Go down dark streets or alleys
 Go anywhere with strangers
 Take things from strangers

 Go near the dangerous situation
 Play with knives or guns

★ **Topic 4 Keeping Safe: Safety Skills II**

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To review the importance of safety at school and in the neighborhood.
2. To help children identify adults who can help them keep safe.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

Any time during the school year. This activity should follow the Keeping Safe: Safety Skills Part I.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE

Approximately 20 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers or counselors with the whole classroom or with a small group of children.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pencil for each child
- Blank sheet of paper for drawing a “safety hand”
- Safety Skills Handout from previous activity

PROCEDURES

- ➔ **Review previous week activity and safety “Do’s” and “Dont’s.”**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: CLASS DISCUSSION ON SAFETY

(approximately 15-20 minutes)

- **Discuss the importance of safety at school and in the neighborhood.**

Teacher Says:



“Why is it important to keep safe? “Who can tell me some examples of how to keep safe in the neighborhood? What are some examples of how to keep safe at school?”



Note to Teacher:

Emphasize that by following the guidelines that were developed in the previous class activity, children can have some control over whether they are safe in their neighborhood and at school.

? **Use the following scenarios to review safety skills:**

***Scenario 1:** Jessica and Rosa were playing on the school playground when they saw a boy being threatened and then chased by a gang. Jessica and Rosa were scared because they did not want the boy to get hurt. What do you think they should have done? What could they have done to stay safe?*

(Elicit answers about telling an adult, telling someone in a position of authority, not so much a friend)

***Scenario 2:** Jose and his brother Carlos were going down the street to see if their friend could come outside to play. On their way, they saw a gun laying on the ground. Jose bent down to pick up the gun, but Carlos said, “No Jose! Don’t touch the gun. You could get hurt or hurt someone else. Guns are dangerous.” Who was doing the right thing in this situation? What else should Jose and Carlos have done?*

(Elicit answers about telling an adult, calling the police to remove the gun safely)

? **Have the children draw their own “Safety Hand”**

(From Creative Therapy with Children and Adolescents by A. M. Hobday and K. Ollier).

Teacher Says:



“It is important to talk with an adult when you feel unsafe. We are going to identify some adults that would be helpful and that would help you keep safe. It is important to identify more than one adult in case you can’t find one -- you can always try to reach the other. (Encourage children to think of adults that they would talk to if they were feeling upset or unsafe.)



Note to Teacher:

Pass out blank sheets of paper and have the children trace their hand on this sheet. Explain that this is their safety hand, and each of their fingers will be a reminder of different adults that they can contact if they ever need to talk to someone. Have the children turn the hand sideways and, on each finger, write the name of a different adult that they would feel comfortable talking to. Allow 5 minutes for this. Once they have done this, encourage children to look at their own hand and at the hand on the paper and to try to remember which adult goes with which finger. Explain that this will help them to remember who they can call or talk to if they are feeling unsafe.

Here are some adults you might want to encourage children to consider:

Parents, Policeman, Teacher, School Counselor, Big brother, and Grandparents.

★ **Topic 5 How Do I Cope?**

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To help children identify positive strategies for coping with events that happen in school or the neighborhood.
2. To help children differentiate between positive and negative coping strategies.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

This activity can be used anytime during the year, and is designed to follow the “Keeping Safe: Safety Skills” activity.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE

Approximately 30-45 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers or counselors with the whole classroom or with small groups of children.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Coping Questionnaire
- Handout on Using Coping Strategies

PROCEDURES

- ➔ **Review previous week activity**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND COPING QUESTIONNAIRE

(approximately 15 minutes)

- ? **Introduce the idea of coping and distribute coping questionnaire**

Teacher Says:



“We have discussed some ways to keep safe in your neighborhood or school. Today we will learn some ways to cope with different events, especially events that might involve something bad happening in your neighborhood or school. (Write the word “cope” on the board and ask the students what it means.)



Note to Teacher:

Distribute the “Coping Questionnaire” and ask students to fill it out by circling the “ways they cope” with things that happen. Read the instructions to the children and tell them that there are no right or wrong answers.

Read the questions aloud and ask them to use another sheet of paper to help keep their answers private. Remind them that these are their thoughts and feelings and they do not need to share with others.

PART 2: DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING

(approximately 15-25 minutes)

? **Have a discussion with the students about the different ways of coping:**

Teacher Says:



“Some ways of coping are more helpful than others. For example, some helpful ways to cope with stressful events include: seeking support from others, solving a problem, trying to remain calm, and trying to look at the positive side of things.”

“Some ways of coping might not help a difficult situation. These include yelling, getting angry, and blaming others.”

“Now, I want each of you to look for the positive items on the scale. Which ones are helpful? (# 3, 6, 9, 11). Did anyone circle these? What are some ways that you have used these positive coping skills?”

“Now, let’s review the not so helpful items on the scale. Why might it not be a good idea to “yell, scream or get mad?” Why might it not be a good idea to “keep to yourself,” or to “not tell anyone?”

? **Remind children about some of the safety skills rules they discussed in the prior lesson.**

Teacher Says:



“Now we are going to complete another handout: “How Can I Cope?”

Think about something helpful you can do to cope when something bad happens. Write this down on the handout.”

HANDOUT:

HOW I COPE WITH THINGS THAT HAPPEN

This questionnaire is adapted from the Kidcope questionnaire, Spirito (1988), and is reprinted with permission from Dr. Anthony Spirito.

Instructions: Here is a list of things that kids sometimes do to solve problems or feel better when bad things happen. I want you to think about something bad that has happened in your neighborhood or school. For each statement, circle yes or no to answer whether or not you did that to help solve the problem or feel better about what happened.

	Did you do this?	
	Yes	No
1. I stayed by myself.	Yes	No
2. I kept quiet about the bad thing that happened.	Yes	No
3. I tried to see the good side of things.	Yes	No
4. I blamed myself for causing the bad thing that happened.	Yes	No
5. I blamed someone else for causing the bad thing that happened.	Yes	No
6. I tried to fix the bad thing by doing something or talking to someone.	Yes	No
7. I wished the bad thing had never happened.	Yes	No
8. I yelled, screamed, or got mad.	Yes	No
9. I tried to calm myself down.	Yes	No
10. I didn't do anything because the bad thing couldn't be fixed.	Yes	No
11. I tried to feel better by spending time with others like my family, grownups, or friends.	Yes	No



HANDOUT: HOW CAN I COPE?

When something bad happens in my neighborhood or school:

- **Whom can I talk to?**

- **Whom are the people I can ask for help? (Remind them about the safety hand)**

- **What can I do to solve the problem?**

★ **Topic 6 Feeling Nervous? Use Relaxation**

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To help children use relaxation to reduce feelings of nervousness and stress.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

This can be used anytime during the school year or after a distressing event. This activity lends itself to practice and repetition.

Sometimes children have a difficult time relaxing or sleeping after they have been exposed to an upsetting event. Teaching children how to relax will help them feel more competent in coping with stressful situations. Children can be taught that relaxation is a skill that can be used in many settings, such as school and home. These skills can help children relax when they are upset, stressed, or when they are having a difficult time falling asleep.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE

Approximately 20-35 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers or counselors with small groups of children (4 - 6).
Parents also can use the activities with their children at home.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Teacher Instruction Sheets
- Child Handout

PROCEDURES

- **Review previous week activity**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND LEARNING TO RELAX (approximately 10 minutes)

- ? **Review with the children how to tell if they are feeling tense or stressed.**

Teacher Says:

“Our bodies give us cues when we are tense. Some of these physical cues include: sweaty hands, racing heart, butterflies in our stomach, feeling confused, and not being able to think clearly. Can any of you give me other examples that might also indicate when you are feeling stressed?”

Teacher Says:

“It is important to find ways to relax. I am going to talk to you about the turtle technique which is something you can do to help yourself relax.”

Turtle Technique

(Borrowed from unknown source)

Lead a discussion with the children about what turtles do when they feel scared. Tell them that turtles go into their shells to calm down. Let the children know that they can also create their own shell to help them relax when they are feeling mad, scared or stressed. Inform children that they can create their own shell by doing any of the following: putting their head down, going to a quiet corner or a separate room, or just closing their eyes. Let the children know that while they are in their shell, they can relax using any of the techniques suggested below. Discuss the relaxation examples below and ask children for other examples they may have used on their own.

Relaxation Techniques to Use:

1. *Take a couple of deep breaths*
2. *Count to ten*
3. *Use positive self-talk (I'm OK; I feel good; I'm in a safe place)*
4. *Use imagery (think of positive mental images)*

PART 2: PRACTICING RELAXATION

(approximately 10 minutes)

Have children create their own shell in the classroom by putting their head down and closing their eyes. Once the children have found a comfortable position, guide them through the relaxation exercise included in the handout.

PART 3: DISCUSSING HOW TO RELAX

(approximately 10 minutes)

? After completing the relaxation exercise, have a group discussion.

Use the following questions as a guide:

1. What were you feeling and thinking when you did this activity?
2. How do you feel now?
3. How does this feeling differ from when you first started the activity?
4. How might you use this activity when you are at home or with friends?

TEACHER INSTRUCTION SHEET 1:

PLACE FOR RELAXATION

Directions:

- 1) Tell the children that you are going to guide them through an imagery exercise. Let them know it is important for them to find a comfortable position that will help them feel relaxed.
- 2) Read the following script:

Today, we are going to think about a place where we can feel safe and relaxed.

I would like you to place your head on your desk.

Close your eyes, take 3 deep breaths and exhale slowly.

Imagine a place you love. This can be a favorite place or a place you wish to visit.

Where are you? Are you on a beach? Near water? In the mountains?

What does your place look like? Is it sunny or dark? Are there flowers or trees? Is there grass, snow, sand, or water?

Are you by yourself or with others? Who are the other people with you?

What are you doing while you are there? Are you basking in the sun? Water-skiing? Reading a book? Playing with a ball?

What is the weather like? Is it warm? Chilly? Breezy? Raining?

What does it smell like? Ocean air? Spring flowers? A crisp winter's day?

What do you like most about this place? Just think about it; don't say it aloud.

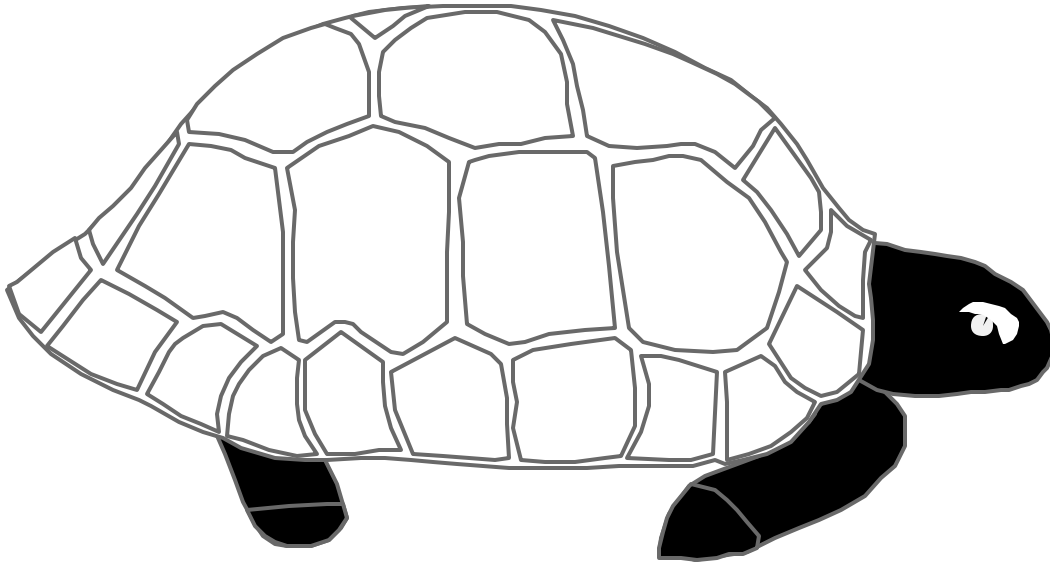
This is your place for relaxation. Engrave this picture in your mind. When you are feeling stressed, angry, or sad, think of your place for relaxation. Allow yourself to become relaxed.

When I count down from 10, I want you to open your eyes. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Open your eyes.

Process the activity by having a class discussion using the follow-up questions.

CHILD HANDOUT: RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Instructions: Color in the turtle below.



When you want to relax, pretend that you are going into your shell, just like this turtle. Then you can do any of these things to help yourself relax:

1. Take some deep breaths
2. Count to 10
3. Tell yourself good things (I'm OK; I feel good; I'm in a safe place)
4. Think of happy thoughts and pictures

★ **Topic 7 Coping with Angry Feelings: Conflict Reduction I**

(Adapted from: the Helping Children Prepare for and Cope with Natural Disasters Manual, 1996)

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To help children identify ways to cope with their feelings of irritability, sadness, or anger.
2. To learn how to respond appropriately to displays of anger or upset from others.
3. To teach the children methods of avoiding and halting potential fights or disputes with other children.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

Any time during the year. This activity may follow the lesson, “How Do I Cope?” especially if children bring up anger as a way of dealing with stress.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE

Approximately 25-30 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers or counselors with the whole classroom or with a small group of children.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Large sheet of poster board to record the best ideas from the class
- Stop Sign Handout

PROCEDURES

- ➔ **Review previous week activity**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND DRAWING STOP SIGNS

(approximately 10-15 minutes)

- ? **Introduce the activity.**

Teacher Says:



“Today we are going to think and talk about events that happen that may lead to different feelings, and what to do when those feelings are not so good.”

? **Teach the children a way to remember good strategies to use.**

Teacher Says:



“An easy way to remember what you can do is to first think of a STOP SIGN...”



Note to Teacher:

Give each student the STOP SIGN handout and teach them the following phrase: “Stop—Think—Act”



S = Stop

T = Think about what else you can do

O = Other activity

P = Praise self



Note to Teacher:

In addition, a drawing of a large stop sign could be made on a poster board to be put up in the classroom as a reminder to the children to “stop, think, and then act.”

PART 2: CLASS DISCUSSION

(approximately 15 minutes)

? **Discuss how different types of events can lead to different feelings.**

Teacher Says:



“There are things that happen that make people feel good, and other things that make people feel bad. Give me some examples of how you would feel if you won a race (happy, proud, excited, etc.). Now, I’d like some examples of how you might feel if you were yelled at by an adult (bad, angry, upset, sad)?”



Note to Teacher:

Write some of the children’s ideas about this topic on the board.

? **Discuss ways children can make themselves feel better when they feel bad.**

Teacher Says:



“There are different things you can do when you feel angry, upset, or sad, and also when someone else acts angry, or upset, or mean towards you. Some of these things to do are better than others. We will be talking about this more later. Some examples of good things to do include:” (Write these things on the blackboard under the heading “Things that usually make things better.”)

- Talk to others about how you feel
- Do something to solve the problem
- Relax yourself
- Do something fun
- Ask for help to solve the problem

? **Discuss things that may make them feel worse.**

Teacher Says:



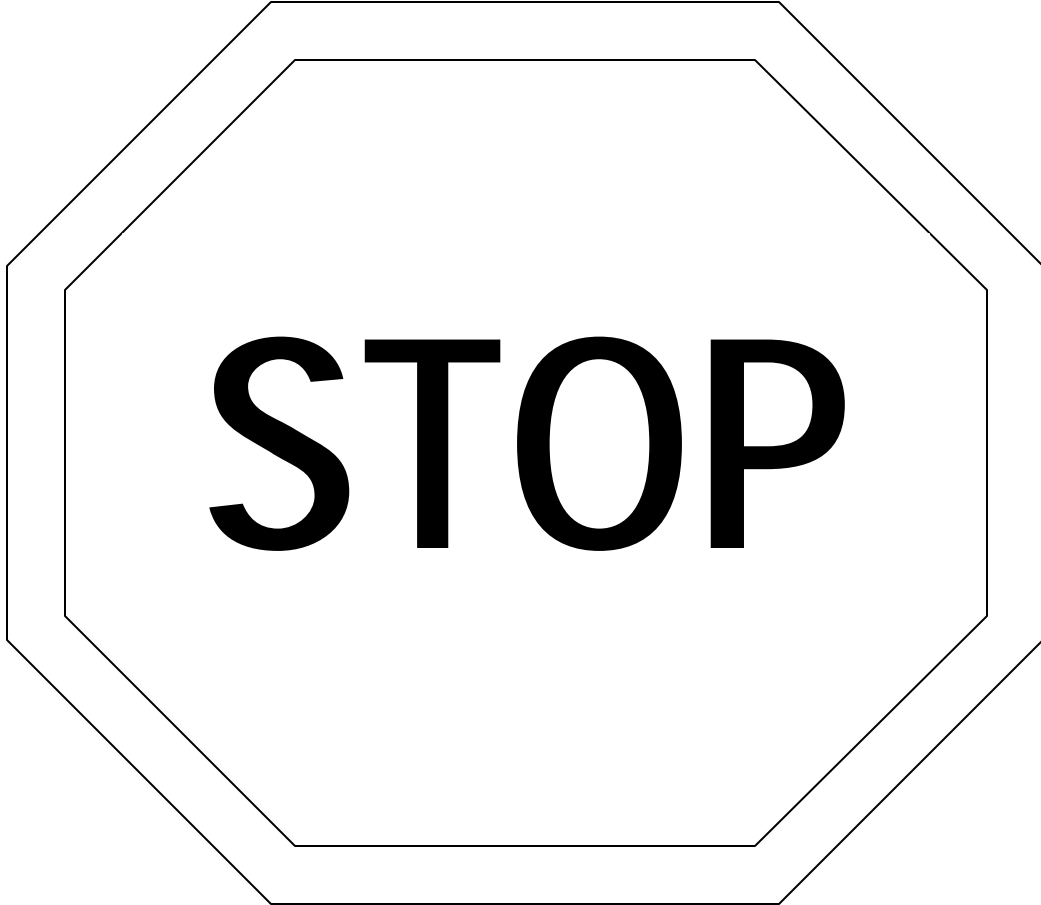
“Things that usually make things worse for you include.....” (Write these on the blackboard):

- Hitting
- Yelling
- Keeping your thoughts and feelings inside
- Blaming others for things that happen
- Acting without thinking

? **Summarize today’s activities and inform the children that Part II of this exercise will be completed on another day.**

Handout: Stop Sign

Instructions: Color in the Stop Sign and then fill in the meaning of each letter in the word STOP.



S =

T =

O =

P =

★ **Topic 8 Coping with Angry Feelings: Conflict Reduction II**

(Adapted from: the Helping Children Prepare for and Cope with Natural Disasters Manual, 1996)

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To help children identify strategies to cope with their feelings of irritability, sadness, or anger.
2. To learn how to respond to displays of anger or upset from others.
3. To teach children ways to avoid and halt fights or disputes with others.
4. To strengthen supportive relationships among the children by encouraging them to work cooperatively in small groups.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

Any time during the year. This activity may follow the “Coping” lesson, especially if children bring up anger as a way of dealing with stress.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE

Approximately 25-30 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers or counselors with the whole class or with a small group of children.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Handouts on Conflict
- Large sheet of poster board to record the best ideas from the class

PROCEDURES

- **Review previous week activity and “Stop” Procedure**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND GROUP RULES

(approximately 5 minutes)

? **Introduce the rules for the activity.**

Teacher Says:



“Show respect for the thoughts and feelings of others.” This includes listening attentively to others and letting others talk. Things to avoid include laughing at or teasing other children, or saying that someone’s thoughts are wrong or silly.

“Share your thoughts and experiences with others.” By discussing feelings and thoughts, the children can find ways to make themselves feel better, and can learn that their experiences are common reactions that are shared by others.

PART 2: SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY: HANDLING ANGRY FEELINGS

(approximately 15-20 minutes)

? **Divide the class into small groups, as indicated in the introduction (pages 14-15).**

Teacher Says:



“For the first part of this activity, we need to divide up into teams. Once I tell you what team you are on, you will need to sit together.”

Note to Teacher:



Announce the composition of the groups, and have each group or “team” sit together.

? **Explain the small group activity.**

Note to Teacher:



Tell the children that each team has the following task:

Teacher Says:



“To make things get better, think of ways to help yourself and others when some of the bad feelings or behaviors we talked about happen. Take some time to think of things you can do when you feel angry, tired, upset, or sad. Also think of things you can do when others act that way. We’ll see which group can come up with the most ideas. I want ideas in 4 different categories:

The categories are:

Things kids can do when they feel angry.

Things kids can do when they feel sad or upset.

Things kids can do when someone else acts angry with them.

Things kids can do when someone else acts upset or sad.

Let’s see which team can come up with the best ideas. Help your teammates come up with ideas.”

? **Ask groups to list strategies to help them to feel better.**



Note to Teacher:

Pass out the recording form. Each child in the group is responsible for one of the sections.

Teacher Says:



“Each of you has a piece of paper with 4 statements. Each person in your group will complete one statement. Help your teammates come up with ideas to write down. However, only you are allowed to write on the section of the paper you were assigned (this emphasizes the importance of teamwork). You will have approximately 15 minutes for this part.”



Note to Teacher:

It is very important to circulate from group to group to make sure that the children are cooperating and following the rules about each team member having a specific list to write. Teammates can give each other suggestions for the different categories, but should not write for another person.

? **Have a captain for each team announce items from their list.**



Note to Teacher:

Identify a “team captain” for each team. The captain is the only team member allowed to speak for the group during this step of the activity. Going from team to team, ask the captain to tell one item from their team’s list for one of their categories. Keep a running list on the blackboard, and keep going until all of the unique responses have been listed.

? **Make a final list of ideas to display in the classroom.**



Note to Teacher:

Collect the final lists from each group. These can be used to select the best ideas in each category. Place the best ideas on the large sheet of poster board. Teachers and counselors can use these “best ideas” when conflicts or hurt feelings show up in the classroom. It is important to do this, because children will need to be reminded to use these strategies when the occasion arises.

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING IS AN OPTIONAL ACTIVITY THAT MAY BE CONTINUED NOW OR COMPLETED IN ANOTHER SESSION.

PART 3: ROLE PLAYS TO PRACTICE SKILLS

(approximately 15 minutes)

? **Introduce the idea of role plays.**

Teacher Says:



“Some class members are now going to act out different situations that may happen at school or in their neighborhood. You can use some of the strategies we already discussed in these situations. You may want to use your ‘STOP’ strategies when acting out the role plays.”

? **Select some children to “act out” the situations in front of the class.**



Note To Teacher:

Read the situation out loud and have children decide how to resolve the conflict. Encourage children to use the positive strategies discussed earlier.

Teacher Says:



Situation 1: *“Three children are on the playground at recess. Two of the children get into a fight over who gets to play with the ball. The third child observes this happening. What should the third child do?”*

Situation 2: *“Four children are walking home from school. Two children start calling the one with glasses “four eyes.” The fourth kid is walking nearby.”*

? **Discuss each role play.**



Note To Teacher:

Have the children discuss the outcomes of the situations and offer suggestions for alternative resolution strategies. Discuss the importance of putting these strategies into action so that the school and neighborhood can be a safer place.

HANDOUT: CONFLICT REDUCTION

Things kids can do when they feel angry:

Things kids can do when they feel sad or upset:

HANDOUT: CONFLICT REDUCTION

Things kids can do when someone else acts angry with them:

Things kids can do when someone else acts upset or sad:

★ **Topic 9 Teasing & Bullying: Ways to Cope**

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To help children express their feelings about teasing and bullying.
2. To help students develop strategies for coping with teasing and bullying.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

This activity can be used at any time during the school year.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE

Approximately 30 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers or counselors with the whole class or with a small group of children.

MATERIALS NEEDED


- Feelings Handout

PROCEDURES

- ➔ **Review previous week activity**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: DISCUSSION ABOUT TEASING (approximately 10 minutes)

Teacher Says:

-  “What is teasing? What is bullying?”
- “What are some examples of teasing and bullying?”
(create a list on the board)
- “What do people feel when they are teased and bullied?”
- “Why do you think that students tease each other?”

Note to Teacher:

Be sensitive to these forms of bullying when children give their examples:

- Physical aggression—physical harm or destroying property.
- Social aggression—rumors, racial slurs, or exclusion from a group.
- Verbal aggression—name-calling, teasing, or threatening.
- Intimidation—phone calls, dirty tricks, or taking possessions.

- Written aggression—threatening notes or graffiti.
- Sexual harassment—comments or actions of a sexual nature, which make the recipient uncomfortable.
- Racial and cultural (ethnic) harassment—comments or actions containing racial or ethnic overtones (direct or indirect) that make the recipient uncomfortable.



Note to Teacher:

Have children complete the Feeling's Handout (next page) before doing Part 2.

PART 2: STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH TEASING

(approximately 10-15 minutes)



Note to Teacher:

Below are several ideas you might want to try with the class to teach them strategies to cope with bullying:

- Create classroom rules against bullying and teasing.
- Talk to students about seeking support from an adult.
- Review prior strategies from the “*Keeping Safe*” lesson.
- Review the self-calming techniques such as deep breathing, imagery, and positive self-talk. (See Activity #5 on Relaxation)
- Teach students how to make assertive statements to the bully.
- Teach students how to walk away from the situation and how to avoid places where bullying may occur.

The following are specific suggestions to help children cope with bullies:

- Tell an adult.
- Walk away.
- Keep calm.
- Stay with a buddy.
- Be assertive (e.g. say: “Leave me alone”).
- Ignore them and practice positive self-statements (e.g., “Those kids are just trying to be mean.” “I know what they say isn’t true.” “I don’t need to spend time with them.”).

HANDOUT: FEELINGS

1. Draw or write how you feel when you are teased.

2. Draw or write some things you can do to cope when you are teased?

★ **Topic 10 Positive Activities: Reducing Exposure to Violence**

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

1. To reduce children's exposure to violence on TV and in other media.
2. To help children identify interests, hobbies, and activities they enjoy that are not aggressive.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY

This activity can be used at any time during the school year.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE

Approximately 30 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY

Teachers or counselors with the whole class or with a small group of children.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- TV Viewing Questionnaire

PROCEDURES

- **Review previous week activity**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: DISCUSSION OF TV VIEWING

(approximately 15 minutes)



Note To Teacher:

Have children complete handout. Ask about their TV viewing.
Discuss TV/ media. Real vs. not real. Is it good to watch violent shows?

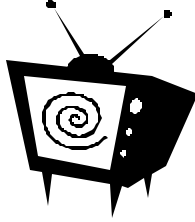
PART 2: ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES TO TV WATCHING

(approximately 10 minutes)



Note To Teacher:

Discuss alternative activities (i.e., reading, playing board games, playing sports, riding bike, listening to music, volunteer work).
Tell students to discuss what they see on TV with a trusted adult.



HANDOUT: THINGS I DO EVERYDAY

Circle how many minutes a day you usually do different things.

On a regular school day, I...

	<u>0 Mins</u>	<u>1-30 Mins</u>	<u>31-60 Mins</u>	<u>1-2 hours</u>	<u>2-4 hours</u>
1. Watch TV or videos	1	2	3	4	5
2. Read for fun	1	2	3	4	5
3. Listen to music	1	2	3	4	5
4. Do my homework	1	2	3	4	5
5. Play video games	1	2	3	4	5
6. Do things with my family	1	2	3	4	5
7. Play with my friends	1	2	3	4	5
8. Do chores	1	2	3	4	5
9. Play sports or ride a bike	1	2	3	4	5
10. Work or play on a computer	1	2	3	4	5

TV and Movies

- What is your favorite TV show? _____
- What is your favorite movie or video? _____
- What is your favorite video game? _____
- What TV or cable shows did you watch yesterday? (List All).

★ **Topic 11 Parental Monitoring**

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS _____

1. To help children understand why it is important that their parents (or caring adult) know about their activities.

WHEN TO USE THE ACTIVITY _____

Any time during the school year.

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE _____

Approximately 30-45 minutes.

WHO SHOULD USE THE ACTIVITY _____

Teachers or counselors with the whole class or with a small group of children.

MATERIALS NEEDED _____

- Parental Monitoring Handout
- Blank sheet of paper for each student

PROCEDURES _____

- ◆ **Review previous week activity**
(approximately 5 minutes)

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND UNDERSTANDING PARENTS (approximately 5 minutes)



Note to Teacher:

Discuss with the children why their parents (or caring adult) keep track of their activities.

Include the following reasons on the list:

- Parents want to make sure you are safe
- Parents want to know how to reach you if necessary

PART 2: PARENTAL MONITORING (approximately 5 minutes)



Note To Teacher:

Discuss what they can do to help their parents (or caring adult) monitor them. Be sure to include the following suggestions:

- Tell your parents what time you will be home from school.
- Tell your parents who you will be playing with and where you will be.
- Leave a note for your parents if they are not at home and you go out.
- Make sure you have your parents' phone numbers (home, work, cell, pager) with you in case you need to reach them.
- Tell your parents about your activities everyday.

PART 3: CHILDREN CREATE SKITS OF HOW TO HELP THEIR PARENTS MONITOR THEM

(approximately 15 minutes)

Teacher Says:



“We are going to divide up into groups of 4 - 5 students. Each group will create a skit that will show how you can let your parents know: **where** you will be, **who** you will be with, **how** you can be reached, and **when** you will return home. You have about 5 - 10 minutes to come up with a skit. Then each group will take a turn showing everyone else their skit.”

PART 4: CHILD ACTIVITY

(approximately 10 minutes)



Note To Teacher:

Give each child a sheet of paper. Ask them to fold it in 1/2, horizontally. On the top half, tell children to draw a picture of the parent (or caring adult) who watches over them at home. On the bottom, ask the children to write down the things that they should do to help their parent (or caring adult) keep track of them. They can add the four things below.

Draw a clock that shows what time you come home.	Friends I play with after school: 1. 2. 3.
How to call my parents by phone: Work# Home# Cell#	How my parents can call me when I'm with friends: 1. 2. 3.

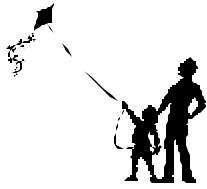
PART 5: REVIEW THE PARENTAL MONITORING HANDOUT

(approximately 5 minutes)



Note to Teacher:

Review the “Parental Monitoring” handout with the children and tell them to discuss it with their parents.



HANDOUT: PARENTAL MONITORING

➤ *What Is Parental Monitoring?*

Parental monitoring means setting guidelines and limitations for your child when he/she is away from home or with other children. It will help you keep in control of your child's whereabouts.

Key points in monitoring your child:

- Know *where* your child is
- Know *who* your child is with
- Know *what* activities your child is involved in
- Know *how* your child will get around

➤ *Why is Parental Monitoring Important?*

Children who are monitored are *less* likely to engage in risky behaviors such as fighting, aggressive behavior, and other types of misconduct (e.g., skipping school, staying out late). Monitoring your children also lets them know that you care about them.

★ ***When Problems Persist: Identifying and Getting Help for Children***

What to do when distressing events occur in a school or neighborhood:

Even in relatively “safe” communities in the US today, children may be witnesses or victims of crime or violence. It is important to remember that these events occur on a regular basis for many children. Children who encounter violence in the community or school may be at higher risk for stress reactions, or can develop problems that interfere with their school performance. Children who are affected by such distressing events need to be closely monitored to see how they are doing, and possibly referred to a counselor for extra help and support.

When to refer kids:

Children may need help from a counselor when they are having *severe or persistent stress reactions*. (See the section on Identifying Children At Risk on pages 9-11). Children also may need help if their stress is *interfering with everyday activities*, such as completing their schoolwork or getting along with friends and family members. In these cases, it may be very helpful to refer the child to the school counselor and to contact the child’s family members, so that the child can receive proper assistance.

How to refer children for additional help:

If a child is having severe or persistent problems, or difficulties in everyday functioning, here are some resources that can offer guidance and provide children with emotional and behavioral support:

- ❖ School counselor or psychologist
- ❖ Local Mental Health Agency
- ❖ Community Mental Health Clinic
- ❖ County Psychological Association
- ❖ Florida Youth and Family Services (305-377-5005)
- ❖ Switchboard of Miami- Crisis Hotline (305-358-HELP)
- ❖ State Psychological Association (Florida, 850-656-2222)
- ❖ American Psychological Association
1-800-964-2000 (for referrals in your area)

★ *Other Resources for Children and Families*

WEBSITES

Keeping Children Safe

www.keepingchildrensafe.com

American Psychological Association

www.helping.apa.org/therapy/traumaticstress.html

www.apa.org/kidtvviol.html

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

www.aa-cap.org/publications/factfam/disaster.htm

Center for Mental Health Services- A guide for parents and teachers

www.mentalhealth.org/schoolsviolence.parents.html

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

www.ncptsd.org

National Institute of Mental Health

www.nimh.gov/publicat/violence.cfm

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

www.safeyouth.org

DOCUMENTS AND FILMS

Mentoring in Schools

Guide for establishing mentoring interventions. This guide is part of the Department of Education's *Creating Safe and Drug-free Schools: An Action Guide*. Department of Education (1-800-624-0100)

www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/actguid/mentor.html

Working It Out: A Survival Guide For Kids

This video presents solutions for personal safety including anger management, peer pressure and how to cope with bullies.

The Personal Safety Series, P.O. Box 8531, Essex, VT 05451

CATALOGUES

Childsworld Childs Play: A Guidance Channel Company

This company produces play therapy games and books for working with children.

Childsworld ChildsPlay (1-800-962-1141)

135 Dupont Street

Plainview, NY 11803-0760

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