

Group Services for Children Affected by Domestic Violence

An Interactive 12-Week Group Curriculum for 8 to 12-Year-Old Children

Prepared by *Northnode, Inc.*

and a Collaborative of Children's Services Providers

For the Massachusetts Department of Social Services
Domestic Violence Unit

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Clinical Services for Children
Affected by Domestic Violence

A 12-Week Group
for 8 to 12-Year-Old Children

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Rules of Our Group
Iceberg for Feelings
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Introduction

In June 2001, the Domestic Violence Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services enlisted Northnode, Inc. and nine DSS-funded agencies/collaboratives that provide clinical services to children affected by adult domestic violence to work together to evaluate the impact of group services for children.^{1/} Working collaboratively, and with key assistance from the University of Massachusetts Medical School, the group undertook the following activities:

- Selected five outcomes that we agreed were desirable and achievable in their work with children who witness domestic violence^{2/};
- Developed a curriculum for a 12-week therapeutic group for children between 8 and 12 years that addressed all of the chosen outcomes; and
- Developed and administered a set of instruments that we used to test the extent to which the children achieved the sought-after benefits.

As a result of these efforts, statistically significant improvements were found in all of the outcome areas, in caretakers' perceptions of their children's achievement of behavioral goals, and in group facilitators' ratings of children's improvement in the five skill areas emphasized in the curriculum.

This curriculum was developed collaboratively and built on materials provided by several of the participating agencies as well as materials from *Group Treatment for Children Who Witness Woman Abuse, A Manual for Practitioners*, developed by (and used with the permission of) the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, Ontario, Canada.

Feel free to use this curriculum, adapting it to suit the particular needs of your groups. We would be interested to hear how it works for you, to learn about any changes you may make, and most especially to hear how the children who participate benefit from the group services you are offering.

For more information (including possible training in the use of the curriculum and/or in conducting an evaluation of your group services), please contact Northnode at 617.522.8755 or email us at indra@northnode.org.

^{1/} The nine participating groups are: Berkshire County Kids' Place; Brockton Family and Community Resources; Caritas Holy Family Hospital, Family Safety Project; COVE Project of Women's Crisis Center of Greater Newburyport; HarborCOV and Massachusetts General Hospital; South Shore Women's Center; The Family Center and The Guidance Center; the Worcester Youth Guidance Center; and the YWCA of Western Massachusetts.

^{2/} The outcomes chosen were as follows: increased pro-social behavior, increased ability to identify/express feelings, increased conflict resolution skills, increased recognition of and decreased tolerance for abuse, and increased safety skills.

Session One

Welcome to the Group

Note: Mothers/caretakers will be invited to participate in the first part of this opening session (until and through the snack). The purpose of including mothers is to: 1) engage them in the process of providing services for their children; 2) give them a real sense of how the group will work for and with their children; and 3) demonstrate, for the children, that their mothers support their participation in the group.

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goals

1. To set a safe and welcoming tone for the group.
2. To give children permission to talk about violence in their families if they want to.
3. To establish group norms for participants.

Expected Outcomes

1. Children will feel comfortable with group leaders and other children.
2. Children will understand the structure of the group.
3. Children will understand, in general, the issues to be taken up in the group.
4. The secret of violence in families will begin to be broken.

Outline

- I Welcome everyone to the group
 - A) Leader(s) introduce themselves.
 - B) Children are asked to introduce themselves by name.
 - C) Leaders note that moms will be sitting in for the first part of this first session so that they will have an idea of what kinds of things the children will be working on and so we can all be sure that moms have given their permission for kids to take part in the group.
 - D) Leader asks moms to signify that they do give permission for their kid(s) to take part in the group.
 - E) Leaders say a few words about the group:
 - 1) Many children, just like the children in this group, have experienced domestic violence. Violence in families is a big problem, big enough to need special groups like this one that can share information and help children who have experienced this type of violence.
 - 2) We will meet every week at this time for 12 weeks. Each session will last 1¼ hours and in each session we will have activities and a snack.
 - 3) Children can join in activities or not—though we hope you will join in with us, it will always be up to you.
 - 4) There will be a check-in and check-out in every session.

- F) Each child is given an opportunity to say why s/he has come to this group and how she or he is doing right now.

II Snack

Moms leave as soon as snack is done, unless they are planning to stay for the whole session.

III Big Puzzle Exercise

- A) Leaders prepare a big puzzle from cardboard, making sure there is a piece for each participant and for the leaders. Each child receives a piece of the puzzle on which they are asked to write their name and something they are good at. Everyone puts the puzzle together.
- B) Mothers are invited to add another thing their child is good at (mothers should be primed for this to insure they do not hesitate to name something.)

IV Group Norms and Rules

- A) Put the following rules on a flip chart:
- 1) No physical or verbal abuse or coercion.
 - 2) Respect for the opinions, feelings and personal space of others.
 - 3) Confidentiality (unless safety is a question).
- B) Explain each rule, inviting and giving examples of how each would work.
- C) Invite children to add rules if they want to.
- D) Hand out "Rules of Our Group" and read them together.
- E) Ask each child to sign his or her copy.

V Check-out

- A) Explain that check-out will happen at the end of each group. Children can talk or not.
- B) Each child is invited to say what they liked or did not like about the group.
- C) Each child is invited to say anything else they feel like saying.
- D) We will start next week with a check-in.
- Explain that the check-in will happen at the beginning of each session. It gives children a chance to talk about how their past week has been and how they are feeling. If children want to talk about a problem they are having, they can do this during the check-in and group leaders (and perhaps other children) will try to help figure out how the problem could be solved. It is okay to decide not to say anything during the check-in.

Materials

- Cardboard puzzle
- Magic Markers
- Rules of Our Group (Attached)

Note: After the close of this session, a group leader completes a Participant Rating Sheet for each child.

Session Two

Feelings

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goal

To introduce and begin to explore feelings.

Outcomes

1. Children will have an increased ability to identify feelings.
2. Children will understand that feelings are okay.
3. Children will have an increased ability to differentiate between having feelings and acting on them.
4. Children will have an increased ability to express feelings.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject for this session saying that, in general, the group will be working on feelings, what they are, how we can tell what we are feeling, and how we can act with our feelings.

II Snack

III Defining Feelings

- A) Feeling Quiz activity. A leader asks the following:
 - 1) See if you can guess what I am thinking of. Here are some clues:
 - (a) Everyone in the whole world has them.
 - (b) They can make your body feel tense and tight, or loose and floppy, or jittery.
 - (c) They make people laugh.
 - (d) They make people cry.
 - (e) Some of them are comfortable and some are uncomfortable.
 - (f) They help us understand ourselves.
 - (g) We can share them with others or keep them to ourselves.
 - 2) If you guessed feelings, you are right.
- B) Kinds of Feelings
Generate lists of feelings and the kinds of circumstances that give rise to them. Have these on a flip chart and insert the words that children offer. Ask children to fill in the blanks:

- 1) I feel _____ when I get a gift.
- 2) I feel _____ when I have a delicious meal.
- 3) I feel _____ when my teacher yells at me.
- 4) I feel _____ when I have nothing interesting to do.
- 5) I feel _____ when my friend gets something that I wanted for myself.
- 6) I feel _____ when the adults in my house are yelling at each other.
- 7) I feel _____ when my mom gets hit.
- 8) I feel _____ when I get hit.
- 9)
- 10)

IV Sharing and Not Sharing Feelings

Iceberg activity

- A) Draw a picture of an iceberg on a flip chart, noticing that about 90% of the ice is under water. Relate this to feelings, noting that sometimes we only show a small amount of our feelings. Share some stories that are examples of this.
- 1) One evening a child watched as his parents got into a huge fight. He showed his anger and screamed at them to stop. On the inside he was feeling very scared and sad.
 - 2) On the way to school a child saw an ambulance roar down the street and stop at the house of her friend. She watched from a distance as the ambulance workers went inside and came out with a member of the friend's family on a stretcher. They put the person in the ambulance and drove away. The child continued to school and spent the day in school (as she was supposed to do) trying to concentrate on school stuff and acting as if everything was okay. But inside she was worried and sad to think that a family member of a friend might be really sick.
- B) Invite children to give other examples of sharing and not sharing feelings.

V Check-out

Materials

Feelings Flip Chart

- (a) I feel _____ when I get a gift.
- (b) I feel _____ when I have a delicious meal.
- (c) I feel _____ when my teacher yells at me.
- (d) I feel _____ when I have nothing interesting to do.
- (e) I feel _____ when my friend gets something that I wanted for myself.
- (f) I feel _____ when the adults in my house are yelling at each other.
- (g) I feel _____ when my mom gets hit.
- (h) I feel _____ when I get hit.
- (i)
- (j)

Iceberg for Iceberging Feelings (Attached)

Session Three

Defining Abuse

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goals

1. To help children name and explore the prevalence of violence not only in their worlds but in society at large.
2. To give children an understanding of the kinds of behavior that are abusive.
3. To set the stage for decreasing children's tolerance for abuse.

Outcomes

1. Children will know that violence includes physical action.
2. Children will know that violence includes verbal action.
3. Children will understand that violence includes acts that affect our mental or emotional state.
4. Children will know that physical abuse includes hitting, kicking, shoving, and strangling.
5. Children will know that verbal abuse includes name calling and accusatory and demeaning language.
6. Children will know that abuse includes throwing things at people.
7. Children will know that abuse includes harming animals.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One, emphasizing that children can choose whether or not to speak at this time.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject for this session saying that, in general, the group will be looking at violence in our communities, what we mean when we use the word "abuse," and looking at the kinds of behavior that are abusive.

II Snack

III Where Do We See Violence in Our Communities?

Invite children to call out the places where violence happens (without judging whether this is a good thing or not a good thing). Put their answers on a flip chart. Here are some answers to look for:

- A) Movies
- B) Schoolyard
- C) The street
- D) At home
- E) TV
- F) Music lyrics
- G)
- H)

IV Violence Can Cause Outside and/or Inside Hurt

- A) One group leader is invited to lie on the floor on a big piece of paper. The other group leader uses a magic marker to trace her body. This body tracing will be used in subsequent groups.
- B) Invite children to name kinds of violence and say whether that kind of violence can cause inside hurt, outside hurt, or both inside and outside. A group leader can start this off with an example or two. Write these on the body.

V What Kinds of Behavior are Abusive?

- A) Put the following definition of abuse on a flip chart and invite someone to read it:
Abuse is any behavior that physically and/or emotionally hurts another person and that is not an accident. Abuse is any behavior that places another person in fear of being physically and/or emotionally hurt.
- B) Explain that we will now see if we can agree on what kinds of behavior equal abuse. Leaders have made two big signs, one saying "YES" and one saying "NO." Hang these signs in two different parts of the room. Call out the following kinds of violent behavior asking the question, "Is this an example of abusive behavior?" Children who think that behavior is a form of abuse will go and stand under the YES sign and those who do not think that behavior is a form of abuse will stand under the NO sign. The leaders can invite children to say why they did or did not think the behavior constitutes abuse. If it seems appropriate based on how children respond, a leader could invite the children to move to the other sign if they want to. Here are some examples of behavior that might or might not be abusive:
 - 1) A 15-year-old boy locks his five-year-old sister in her bedroom while he goes out to meet his friends, even though he is supposed to be babysitting her.
 - 2) A ten-year-old girl shoves another 10-year-old girl who shoves her back in just the same way she was shoved. Then they separate. They are about the same size.
 - 3) A man throws a cup full of coffee at his wife.
 - 4) A child throws a small stuffed teddy bear at his older sister because he is angry with her.
 - 5) A man tells his wife over and over again that she is stupid, that she is a bad mother, and that all of their kids' problems in school are her fault.

- 6) An eight-year-old kid threatens to tell a lie about his sister that he knows will probably get her into trouble with their mother.
- 7) A husband tells his wife that unless she does exactly what he says, he will smack her.

VI Relaxation Exercise

Observing that talking about violence and abuse can affect how we feel, making us tense or worried, invite children to participate in the following exercise that can help them feel a little more relaxed. The exercise is drawn from *Life on the Edge* by Drs. Ofra Ayalon and Muli Lahad, (translated here by Dr. Ilana Amrani-Cohen). It is designed to help children develop skills for adjusting to stress due to security dangers and threats of war. It can be done in a playful way.

For the arms and shoulder muscles: Think of yourself as if you are a lazy cat, stretching slowly. Stretch your arms forward, then up above your head, then raise your shoulders and let your hands fall slowly to your sides.

For your shoulders and neck muscles: You are now a tortoise, stretching on a rock, calm and peaceful. Suddenly the tortoise feels danger. It sticks its head deep inside its armor. Try to pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down towards your shoulders as much and as forcefully as you can. The danger has passed! You can now get out of the armor and continue to enjoy the sun on your rock.

For the face muscles: Stretch your face from ear to ear in a big smile. Imagine that on your nose is a fly. Try to remove the fly without using your hands, by moving your nose and your face muscles. The fly has flown away and your face can rest again.

For the belly muscles: A little elephant is approaching and in a moment will step on your belly. Prepare your belly for the pressure of the little elephant. Stretch your belly muscles as hard as you can. The elephant has left and the belly can now be relaxed.

For the leg muscles: Imagine you are stepping with your bare feet in mud. Try to reach your foot as deep as you can into the mud. Now, push your feet with your calves until you succeed in getting out of the mud without slipping. The feet are now relaxed and the feeling is pleasant.

VII Check-out

Materials

- Big sheet of paper for body tracing

- Markers
- "YES" and "NO" Signs

Session Four

A Movie about Abuse

Note: This movie can have a strong impact on children. They may become agitated while watching it and may remain emotionally vulnerable long after the group session is over. Steps that should be taken to ensure children's emotional safety while watching the movie and later at home include the following:

1. Inform parents about the content of the movie and the children's potential reaction. If at all possible, give parents an opportunity to screen the movie ahead of time (in a parent's group if you are offering one). It is not recommended that parents and children see the movie together as this could inhibit free expression of feelings and thoughts that the movie triggers.
2. Pay special attention to children's emotional state at check-in and give them the time and attention they need to process any especially loaded issues before they watch the movie.
3. Be familiar with the movie before you show it to the children. During the movie, watch the children's reactions and, if necessary, give them verbal affirmation and support for their feelings. You might even stop the movie for a brief discussion if this seems appropriate.
4. In the discussion following the movie, allow each child to express feelings and thoughts that the movie provoked.

In addition to acknowledging the existence of violence in their homes, some children who see the movie compare the violence they have experienced to the violence experienced by others in their group. Ironically, by realizing that "it can be worse," children can feel better about themselves and their families. This may be especially pointed when children who witnessed violence between their parents compare their circumstances to those of children who were themselves abused. In these instances, the child who was also abused may conclude that even in the group environment where the secret of family violence can be shared, she or he is nonetheless different in having still another shameful secret to share. If this is a significant concern, given the make-up of the group, this issue will need to be addressed in a way that makes children who have been abused feel as safe and supported as possible.

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goals

1. To show that domestic violence happens in many families.
2. To reinforce the definitions of abuse offered in Session Three.
3. To introduce the idea that abuse is not okay.

Outcomes (same as in previous session)

1. Children will know that violence includes physical action.
2. Children will know that violence includes verbal action.

3. Children will understand that violence includes acts that affect our mental or emotional state.
4. Children will know that physical abuse includes hitting, kicking, shoving, and strangling.
5. Children will know that verbal abuse includes name calling and accusatory and demeaning language.
6. Children will know that abuse includes throwing things at people.
7. Children will know that abuse includes harming animals.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One, emphasizing that children can choose whether or not to speak at this time.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject for this session saying that, in general, the group will be looking at what it is like to live in a home where violence happens and noting that, after snack, we will all watch a movie together.

II Snack

III Introduction to Movie

- A) Bring out the body tracing from Session Three. Tell children that the movie will show how difficult inside and outside feelings can be.
- B) Recall the cat exercise from Session Three, noting that when we have strong feelings there are things we can do. If parts of this movie make children uncomfortable they can:
 - 1) Talk about their feeling with a group leader or later on with a person they trust.
 - 2) Lie down and rest like the cats we pretended to be in Session Three.
 - 3) Take a break (with permission) and leave the room.

IV *It's Not Always Happy in my House* (33minutes)

V Discussion of the Movie

Invite children to share the thoughts that came up for them during the movie. The leaders can start this off by saying a few things about what they felt as they watched the movie.

Materials

- Video: *It's Not Always Happy in My House*

- VCR, television

Session Five

Responsibility for Abuse

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goal

To reinforce the principle that victims and children do not cause domestic violence.

Outcomes

1. Children will understand that power differences are often a factor in domestic violence.
2. Children will understand the people make choices about how they will behave and that being abusive is a choice.
3. Children will understand that their behavior does not cause or justify abuse.
4. Children will understand that their mothers' behavior does not cause or justify abuse.
5. Children will understand that abuse is wrong.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One, emphasizing the children can choose whether or not to speak at this time.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject for this session saying that, in general, the group will be looking at how abuse in families has to do with how much power people have and what choices they make about how they use their power.

II Snack

III Power Between People is Not Always Equal

Leaders will create (role play) configurations that show differences in power and invite children to say, in this configuration, is one more powerful than the other? If so, who?

- A) Group leader and a small child.
- B) Sleeping person and standing person.
- C) One person using crutches and another person not using crutches.
- D) One person with lots of money (play money can be used) and another with empty pockets.
- E) Big kid and little kid.
- F) Big boy and smaller girl.

IV Who is Responsible for Abuse?

- A) Put up the definition of abuse from Session Three. Note that by definition a person who is abusive is a person with greater power. Group leader will suggest that, in a conflict between two people where abuse happens, if one person has more power than the other, then that person is responsible, even if the less powerful person did something not very good.
- B) Responsibility Quiz. A leader will offer some scenarios (below), each time asking "Is there abuse here?" and "Who is responsible?" Invite children to reach an answer together by talking about the scenario. When they come to the right answer, group leaders clap their hands and say "You are Right.....You are Right" like rappers. Invite the group to join in.
- 1) Dinner is taking longer than usual because Mom got home late from work. Dad gets mad and starts screaming at Mom that she is a lousy wife and mother and a rotten cook also. [Is this abuse? Who is responsible?]
 - 2) José comes home from school with his report card, which has lots of F's on it. His father hits the roof, grabs José by the shoulder, drags him towards his room, and shoves him inside, slamming the door behind him. [Is this abuse? Who is responsible?]
 - 3) A bunch of teenagers are surrounding a younger boy in the park, calling him names and threatening to take his watch. Although the younger boy is pretty big, he is outnumbered and it looks like he will get beaten if he does not hand over the watch. [Is this abuse? Who is responsible?]
 - 4) A man comes home in a really bad mood. His wife says (with a bit of an attitude), "Hey, what's your problem...we've all had a hard day." He smashes her into the wall. [Is this abuse? Who is responsible?]

V Check-out

Session Six

Safety Planning

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goals

1. To introduce the possibility that children can take steps toward safety when violence happens in their homes.
2. To have each child develop a personal safety plan.
3. To reinforce the principle that children are not the cause of domestic violence.
4. To reinforce the right of children to be safe.
5. To develop safety plans with and for children.
6. To practice calling for help.

Outcomes

1. Children will be able to identify one safe adult to whom they can turn if they feel unsafe.
2. Children can identify one phone number to call for help feeling safe.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One, emphasizing that children can choose whether or not to speak at this time.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject for this session saying that the group will be talking about how to be safe when abuse is happening and making personal protection plans.

II Snack

III Making a Personal Protection Planning Card

A personal protection planning card has two sides and looks like this:

Side One:

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

My Personal Protection Plan:

Side Two:

I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE
EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER: 911

- A) Talk as a group about the parts of a safety plan/personal protection plan: where a child might go when violence erupts, who s/he might call, and so forth.
- B) Hand out 911 stickers.
- C) Help each child articulate what her or his personal protection plan could contain.
- D) On one side have children write their names and addresses. In the space provided have them (and help them, as needed) write a personal safety plan that they have talked about with others in the group.
- E) On the other side, invite them to draw a picture of what the words "I have the right to be safe" mean to them. Children can put their 911 stickers in this space if they want to.
- F) Leaders will keep these and get them laminated to be returned to the children at the next session.

IV Practicing A Safety Call

- A) Explain what a 911 call does.
- B) Explain how to make a 911 call.
 - 1) Find a safe place to call.
 - 2) Dial 911.
 - 3) When you get through say:
 - (a) My name is _____.
 - (b) I need help.
 - (c) Send the police.
 - (d) Someone (or _____) is hurting my mom.
 - (e) My address is _____.
 - (f) My phone number is _____.
- C) A group leader can do this first and model a 911 call, emphasizing the following elements:
 - 1) The child should speak as loudly as it feels safe to speak.
 - 2) The child should emphasize that help is needed right away.
- D) Note that, even if the child cannot say a word, the phone number from which the child is calling and the address will be transmitted to the police so that the police will have information about where the call is coming from.
- E) Try to get each child to practice making the call.

V Check-out

Materials

- 911 stickers
- Cards for personal protection plan
- Toy telephone or cell phone

Session Seven

Family Changes

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goal

To explore the ways that domestic violence can bring about changes in families, some positive and some very difficult.

Outcome

Children will have an increased understanding of the typical consequences of domestic violence.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One, emphasizing that children can choose whether or not to speak at this time.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject for this session saying that the group will be looking at some of the changes that can happen in families where there is abuse and looking at how some of these changes are positive, some feel very difficult, and some may seem to be negative but might really be positive.

II Snack

III Draw a Family

Bring out paper, pencils, markers, etc. and invite children to draw a picture of a family. Invite those who want to, to describe their drawings.

IV Statement Bucket Exercise

A) Pass around a bucket with statements (see below) rolled up on pieces of paper inside. Children choose a piece of paper and read the statement, finishing it in their own way. Invite discussion among the children. Statements can include the following:

- 1) I wish my family didn't
- 2) I wish my family would
- 3) When I get home from school
- 4) Being a kid can be really cool because kids get to
- 5) One thing that makes being a kid hard is
- 6) If I could go anywhere I wanted to, I would
- 7) When I get yelled at, I
- 8) A really neat surprise I once had was when

- 9) A really unhappy surprise I once had was when
- 10) I feel really great when
- 11) I feel really lousy when

V What Kinds of Changes Can Domestic Violence Bring?

Leaders make a list of some of the changes that often take place in families where there is domestic violence and invite children to explore whether each change is positive, negative, or not clear in the moment? Changes listed can include the following:

- A) Police can be called to our house.
- B) Mom and the kids can move out.
- C) Dad might leave home.
- D) We might have to go to a shelter.
- E) Children might have to change schools.
- F) I might not know what to expect each day when I get home.
- G) Mom and kids might feel safer.
- H) I might not be able to have my friends over.
- I) DSS might move us kids out of the house.

VI A Story About Change

This is adapted from a story from ancient China (a Taoist story) that, as it goes along, children can join:

Once there was a wise woman who lived in China. One day, for no reason, her horse ran away. It was the only horse she and her family had. Her son was very upset and said, "What bad luck." "Good luck...bad luck...who knows," she said very calmly.

About a week later the horse returned and with it came a beautiful and strong stallion. The son was totally happy and said, "What good luck!" "Good luck...bad luck...who knows," said the mother.

The household was richer because it now had two horses and the son loved to ride the stallion. One day, though, he fell off the horse and broke his leg. "What bad luck," he moaned. "Good luck...bad luck...who knows," said the mother. [Instead of just reading what the mother said, a leader might ask, "What do you think the mother said?"]

About a week later, a group of people from another village started a fight with the people from this woman's village and all of the villagers who were able to were called to defend the village. But because the son was injured he could not join the battle and, in this way, was able to avoid being injured or killed. Good luck...bad luck? What do you think?

Truly good luck can turn to bad luck and bad luck to good luck. Who truly knows what the future holds?

VII Check-out

Materials

- Drawing materials
- Bucket with statements written and rolled up inside

Session Eight

Substance Abuse

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goals

1. To educate children about substance abuse in general and its connection to domestic violence.
2. To reinforce the idea that substance abuse does not cause domestic violence, though it can make domestic violence worse.
3. To teach that substance abuse is an illness and that recovery is possible.

Outcomes

1. Children will understand that substance is an illness.
2. Children will understand that substance abuse does not cause domestic violence.
3. Children will understand that they are not responsible for other people's substance abuse problems.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One, emphasizing that children can choose whether or not to speak at this time.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject for this session saying that the group will be looking at substance abuse, what causes it, and how it can affect children and families. We will look at the kinds of things that can happen in families where there is substance abuse.

II Snack

III The Elephant in the Living Room

- A) Bring in a simple line drawing of an elephant and post it for children to see.
Leader asks the children:
 - 1) Who can move like an elephant (and gets children moving in imitation of elephants).
 - 2) If an elephant were in this room, how big would it be?
- B) Invite children to draw an elephant, showing it in relation to a person of their size. Ask what it would be like if there were an elephant in the living room but everyone was pretending it was not there. Note how alcoholism/substance abuse is like this. Most everyone in the family knows it is there but pretends it is not and doesn't talk about it.

IV What is Alcoholism? What is Substance Abuse?

- A) Key points to make:
- 1) Alcoholism and drug addiction are illnesses, just like asthma or heart problems.
 - 2) People who study diseases like alcoholism and addiction do not understand what causes it, but we know a lot about how it works.
 - 3) People who have alcoholism or are addicted to drugs cannot easily stop using these substances, even though they are harmful and even when they seem to want to stop.
 - 4) But they can stop with a lot of help.
 - 5) Abusing alcohol and other drugs not only hurts the person with the illness but that person's behavior can hurt those around him or her.
- B) Invite children to share their experiences with substance abuse, especially how it affects them in their daily lives.
- C) Add these points:
- 1) You cannot cause a person to become an alcoholic or an addict.
 - 2) Having a parent who has alcoholism or drug addiction does not mean that you will automatically get these illnesses.
 - 3) You also cannot control the drinking or drug use of a person with alcoholism or addiction.
- D) Note the connections between substance abuse and domestic violence:
- 1) Domestic violence is not caused by substance abuse, though people who have alcoholism or drug addiction may be more abusive when they are drunk or high.
 - 2) Just because the drinking or drug use stops this does not guarantee that the abuse will stop.
 - 3) Keeping yourself safe when your parents or other family members are drinking or using drugs is the most important thing you can do.
- E) Ask: Whose responsibility is alcoholism and drug addiction? Reinforce that it is not theirs.

V Read Story: *I Wish Daddy Didn't Drink So Much*

Invite children to talk about what feelings came up as the story was being read.

VI Check-out

Materials

- Elephant picture
- Paper and drawing materials for children to use
- *I Wish Daddy Didn't Drink So Much*, Judith Vigna. An Albert Whitman Prairie Book

Session Nine

Getting Along with One Another Solving Conflicts without Violence

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goals

1. To explore the relationship between anger and conflict.
2. To illustrate and practice nonviolent ways to resolve conflicts.

Outcomes

1. Children will be able to identify one or more strategies for responding to conflict.
2. Children understand that there is an element of choice in conflict situations.
3. Children understand the concept of compromise.
4. Children can identify conflict situations in which compromise is a choice for resolution.
5. Children are more likely to choose compromise as a way of resolving a conflict.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One, emphasizing that children can choose whether or not to speak at this time.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject for this session saying that we will be looking at getting along with one another and resolving conflicts with others without using violence.

II Snack

III The Thermometer

- A) Put up big sheet with a drawing of a thermometer showing degrees of anger (see materials) with space to one side of the thermometer.
- B) What Does Anger Look Like? Put out magazines and scissors and invite children to find and cut out pictures of angry faces. Help them match the intensity of the anger shown with the degrees of anger on the thermometer and invite them to paste the face next to the right spot on the sheet.
- C) What Does Anger Sound Like? Invite children to make sounds that match the different degrees of anger shown on the thermometer sheet.

IV Offer this Definition of Anger

Anger is a feeling that usually arises when things are not going the way you want. It is a signal that something is wrong.

V What We Do When We are Angry

Ask children and make a list of the things we do when we are angry: yell, cry, hit, sulk, talk to someone, reflect on what happened, and so forth.

VI Offer this Way of Thinking about Conflict:

Conflict usually happens between people. A conflict can be a disagreement that does not feel okay. It can be a situation where someone says something or does something that you think is not right. Conflict can happen when two people have different opinions and one person feels that his or her opinion is the right one.

When conflicts happen, there are lots of things you can do. Group leader can invite or offer examples, such as the following:

- A) You can do nothing and see if the conflict goes away by itself.
- B) You can try to convince the other person to change her or his opinion.
- C) You can strike out at the person.
- D) You can try to see whether there is a way to compromise with the person so that you both feel okay about what happened.

VII Some Conflicts on which to Work

Offer the following scenarios with options for solving the conflict. Invite children to say which ones they think would be most likely to actually resolve the conflict without violence:

- A) You borrowed your friend's bike and accidentally broke it. Your friend finds out that her bike is broken when she comes to pick it up. Should you:
 - 1) Tell her you had an accident and you will get her bike fixed?
 - 2) Say that the bike was broken when you got it from her?
 - 3) Ask her to help you fix it?
- B) Your neighbors have complained to your mom saying that the television is blasting all afternoon and they cannot even have a conversation it is so loud. What they are saying is true. Should you:
 - 1) Tell your mom that you don't know what they're talking about?
 - 2) Tell your mom you will lower it and, when she is gone, turn it way up just to get back at them for getting you into trouble?
 - 3) Tell your mom you will lower it and let your neighbors know that you're sorry for disturbing them?
- C) A fight breaks out at school. Should you:
 - 1) Round up all your friends and tell them something exciting is going on?
 - 2) Find a teacher or other adult as quick as you can?
 - 3) Take bets on who will win?

- D) Some of your friends are smoking cigarettes. They are making fun of you because you are not. You are not really interested in smoking. Should you:
- 1) Ask one of them for a cigarette, just to get along?
 - 2) Tell them they are jerks for smoking cigarettes?
 - 3) Not listen to them and walk away?
- E) Lots of kids in your class do not like the teacher and constantly call her bad names when she is not around. You think she is a pretty good teacher. They think you are a wimp because you do not join in. Should you:
- 1) Join in calling her names, just to get along?
 - 2) Tell them to shut up because you really like her?
 - 3) Suggest that there could be two different opinions about this teacher?
 - 4) Try to ignore them?

Materials

- Thermometer
- Magazines, scissors, and paste or glue sticks

Session Ten

Sexual Abuse

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goals

1. To educate children about sexual abuse.
2. To teach children safety skills related to inappropriate touching and other forms of sexual abuse.

Outcomes

1. Children will have an increased awareness of personal space, for themselves and others.
2. Children will have an increased awareness of their right to be safe from unwanted touching.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One, emphasizing that children can choose whether or not to speak at this time.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject saying that in this session we will look at how each of us has a right to our own personal space and how each of us can try to be safe in our own space.

II Snack

III Personal Space Exercise

- A) Personal space is the space around your body. When someone comes into our personal space we usually know it.
- B) Ask children to stand and extend their arms out from their bodies. Their personal space is as far as their arms can reach.
- C) A leader should move close to a child and invite the child and others to talk about noticing the leader moving into their personal space. Invite children to say how it feels.
- D) Invite children to name people who can move into their personal space without making them feel bad or unsafe

IV A Sexual Abuse Story

- A) Possible books to read:
 - 1) *What's Wrong with Bottoms*

- 2) *My Body is Mine*
- B) After reading the story, invite children to talk about any questions they have or any issues that came up for them.

V Okay and Not Okay Behavior

- A) Make three signs and put them up in a row in the room: "Okay," "Not Okay," "It Depends." Call out the following behaviors and invite children to stand under the sign that matches their view of the behavior. Discuss children's responses, inviting them to move to other positions if that is appropriate.

Okay Not Okay It Depends

- 1) Shaking someone's hand.
 - 2) Giving a friend a "high five."
 - 3) Touching someone's backside.
 - 4) Holding your grandparent's hand when crossing the street.
 - 5) Holding hands with a friend.
 - 6) Touching a person's breasts.
 - 7) Having your shoulders rubbed.
- B) Remind children of the power exercise from Session Five. Bring out the body tracing in which the genital and breast areas have been covered as if the body has a bathing suit on. Point out that just as people cover these parts of their bodies at the beach, these areas are private. Children should expect that, except where a doctor or nurse or similar person is providing health or medical care for them, these areas should not be exposed or touched by others.

VI Safety Issues

- A) Invite children to think of a person they trust whom they could talk to if they were touched in a way that did not feel okay or safe.
- B) Have children take out their Personal Protection Plans. Note that they can use these if their personal space is being violated in ways that make them uncomfortable.

Materials

- Books:
 - o *What's Wrong with Bottoms*, Jenny Hessel. New Zealand: Random House, 1993.
 - o *My Body is Mine, My Feelings are Mine: a Storybook about Body Safety for Young Children* (with an adult guide book). Susan Hoke and Bruce Van Patter. King of Prussia, PA: Center for Applied Psychology, 1995.
- Signs: Okay, Not Okay, It Depends
- Body tracing

Session Eleven

Children's Rights

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goals

1. To educate children about basic rights that they have as children.
2. To support children to feel that they have rights that deserve to be respected.

Outcomes

Children will be able to identify two or more rights that they have.

Outline

I. Check-in

- A) Group leader re-explains the purpose of check-in as set out in Session One, emphasizing that children can choose whether or not to speak at this time.
- B) Each child is invited to check in.
- C) Group leader introduces the subject for this session saying that all of us, adults as well as children, have basic rights that deserve to be respected by all members of our communities.

II. Snack

III. Group Appreciation

- A) Introduce this exercise by inviting children to think about their time in this group and about the other kids. Invite them to think about something that each child has contributed to the group, or one thing they liked about another kid.
- B) Leader begins by naming one of the children and saying something about that child that the leader really appreciates. Then others in the group are invited to add things they appreciate about that child.
- C) Continue around the room until each child has heard something that the leaders appreciate about him or her and some things that others have added.

IV. Rights in a Bucket

- A) The following children's rights are written on pieces of paper that are rolled up and placed in a bucket. Invite children to pick a piece of paper, read the right, and see if she or he can give an example of this right.
 - 1) Children have a right to be children.
 - 2) Children have a right to have fun.
 - 3) Children have a right to have feelings and ideas and to express them.
 - 4) Children have a right to ask for what they need.

- 5) Children have a right to some secrets.
 - 6) Children have a right to privacy.
 - 7) Children have a right to make choices.
 - 8) Children have a right to be respected.
 - 9) Children have a right to be accepted for who they are.
 - 10) Children have a right to be cared for.
 - 11) Children have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect.
 - 12) Children have a right to be believed.
 - 13) Children have a right to be happy.
- B) Self-Appreciation
Invite children to say something they like about themselves.

Materials

Bucket with statements written and rolled up inside

Session Twelve

Closing

Note: Caretakers will be invited to join the group toward the end to participate in the closing ritual and snack, which for this session is at the end.

Goals/Expected Outcomes

Goals

1. To bring a sense of closure to the group.
2. To help children experience an ending in a positive way.

Outcome

Children will have a positive feeling about their participation in the group.

Outline

I Check-in

- A) Leaders talk about endings in general and the ending of this group in particular, about how there can be feelings of sadness and also feelings of appreciation for the good times during the group.
- B) Invite each child to say whatever she or he feels like saying about the group and/or about its coming to an end.

II Invite moms to join the group.

III Photos

- A) Using a Polaroid camera, take a photograph of each mom and child. While the photo is developing, a leader should say something about that child's participation in and contribution to the group.
- B) When the photo has developed, place it in a prepared paper mat or frame and give it to the child.

Materials

- Polaroid camera and film
- Ready-made frames or mattes

Note: After the close of this session, a group leader completes a Participant Rating Sheet for each child.

Rules of Our Group

1. Only one person speaks at a time.
2. We pay attention to the person speaking. We do not interrupt.
3. Things people say in the group stay in the group. We keep every person's words confidential.
4. We respect one another and talk in ways that make others feel good rather than bad.
5. Every member of the group has the right to speak or not speak, draw or not draw, take part in group activities or not take part in them.
6. If I choose not to talk or do an activity, I will sit quietly and pay attention to others in the group

7. _____

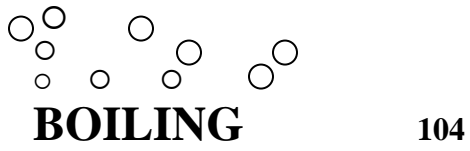
8. _____

I agree to these rules.

(Sign your name here)

(Date)





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