

# **CHANGES PROGRAM** **MANUAL**

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## **CHANGES**

### **Program Philosophy**

Life is a series of emotional adjustments for children. As children go through life, they will undoubtedly go through both joyous and difficult times, both of which are natural and to be expected. As parents and educators, we have the responsibility to help children through this journey called life, by giving them opportunities to learn coping skills which they can carry forth into their adult lives. The philosophy of the Changes program is that children have a right to access programs and services when they are experiencing emotional upsets. They have a right to safe and nurturing environments, which are respectful of their feelings, thoughts and emotions. This is a group for children to help them deal with temporary loss and separation issues: to assist children to learn effective coping strategies when a parent is absent temporarily from their home due to work-related reasons.

### **Introduction**

Families are at times faced with situation when a loved one is separated from the family for weeks or months at a time due to work related reasons. Before, during and after a parent's temporary absence, families may undergo changes regarding such things as: routines, everyday activities, the ways in which special occasions are celebrated, and emotions. Children may worry about what will happen to them (i.e. Will my remaining parent leave too? Who will look after me? Will the parent that left have enough to eat, be safe, and come back to me?).

It can be difficult for families to adjust to such changes and difficult emotions. One of the ways to support a child coping with feelings of loss and fear is to allow them the ability to share their hopes and fears in a safe and non-judgemental place. This allows children to be prepared emotionally for periodic parental absences, and also assist them with the transition upon the parent's return home.

The program objective is to facilitate and assist in the development of individual skills related to problem solving, feelings identification, handling intense emotions, and self-esteem.

We have created a child skills group for children to help them deal with such separation issues.

Through fun activities, discussions and crafts, this group is intended to help children learn skills

related to problem solving, identifying their feelings, handling feelings, and feeling good about themselves. While sensitive issues may arise, the focus will be on encouraging children to see the positives in their lives, and to recognize the strengths in their own abilities and within their own families.

### **Program Rationale**

Typically loss is not acknowledged within society or it is minimized. There is often an unspoken expectation to carry on as though the loss never occurred, in an attempt to get life 'back to normal' again. Having things back to the 'old' way offers a sense of comfort and familiarity, and a haven or reprieve from difficult and sometimes tumultuous emotions. It is also difficult to see others feeling sad, and the immediate reaction of the bystander or caregiver is to provide only brief comfort in an attempt to make the feelings 'go away' so that the person feels better quickly. These behaviours can lead the children to believe that expressing feelings is 'wrong' or a sign of 'weakness'. The result may be that of isolation and a sense that 'something is wrong with me if I show that something is bothering me'.

Emotional isolation can also occur because of the structure of society today. It is not uncommon for families to live far apart from relatives, and this is particularly prevalent among military families, albeit not exclusively. Therefore, when there is a change in family structure, all family members must compensate for that loss or that missing person, often without the support of extended family or friends. This can put tremendous burdens on the remaining caregiver/ parent, as he/she tries to assume the role of single parent doing 'double duty' responsibilities.

Time constraints for caregivers become paramount as they try to keep the household running smoothly, and they may even delegate responsibilities to the children as a means of achieving or maintaining this stability. "Busyness" can be positive, although a difficulty can arise when a child has unmet emotional needs and does not have a safe way to express them.

A child may not feel comfortable in expressing his/her feelings to the remaining parent, for fear of upsetting that parent, or of adding additional burden or strain to that parent's and to the rest of their family's lives. Stress, fear, sadness, anxiety or confusion may end up being repressed (i.e.

withdrawal, physical symptoms) or expressed in inappropriate outward ways (bullying, anger management problems, etc.). This can all translate into lowered self esteem, lowered academic performance, behaviour difficulties in the school, and difficulties making or keeping friends. For all of these reasons, schools and community groups have a vested interest in providing children with the opportunities to enhance their emotional well being.

### **Children's Emotions and Behaviors Associated with Deployment**

Children who experience separation from a parent may experience a wide range of emotions (sadness, fear, anger, loneliness, acceptance, etc.). These feelings may fluctuate depending upon such factors as: the child's temperament, how the parent(s) react to the temporary loss, what 'preparation' information is given to the child regarding the upcoming or existing absence, strength of the family's support network, and the child's current sense of security.

Children have the potential to manage temporary loss of a parent quite efficiently, and may develop healthy resilience to initial 'shock' associated with a big change in routine. From a positive standpoint, temporary loss and change is not necessarily a negative experience.

Children learn that change is a necessary part of life. Periodic familiarity with loss, and forums (such as the Changes group) in which to air their feelings and meet with others in similar situations, can make it a positive experience. Groups assist children in developing healthy coping mechanisms to manage uncomfortable feelings, moving a child toward maturity and self-assurance. Self-esteem is a crucial component of a child's emotional development and helping a child to recognize their feelings and have their concerns validated is a positive step toward fostering a healthy sense of self.

Anger is a common emotion experienced by children who are upset with life changes. Anger is often not a 'stand alone' emotion; other emotions may be the underlying cause for a child's expressions of anger. Fear, uncertainty, loneliness, rejection, embarrassment, and confusions may manifest themselves into what others identify as anger. Therefore, it is often important to recognize that a child may be undergoing other emotional struggles but display them as anger.

There may be anger at the other parent for not 'being there' during everyday or special events, with a sense that the parent preferred to be absent rather than with the family. This sense of

abandonment contributes to low self-esteem and a feeling of not being worthy of the privilege of having their parent with them. Jealousy of other children, who have this perceived advantage, may exist, with the child longing for a return to their previous family configuration.

Children may also develop anger toward the remaining parent who 'went along with' the plan to have the other parent absent. This contributes to a great sense of powerlessness and loss of control of what is happening to them and their family. Anger may be expressed in different ways such that a child's behaviour changes: anger may be held inward through withdrawal or physical ailments, or expressed outward in aggressive ways.

The child's family now appears 'different' than other two parent families. This raises the issue of a potential shaken sense of belonging with peers because of their perceived difference. Some children may feel ashamed or embarrassed that their parent 'went away', because of a perception that they may not be a good enough reason for the parent to stay present within the family home. They may be worried that others will not want them around because their family configuration is now 'different'.

Uncertainty is another common emotion: one that contributes to a child's sense of insecurity. It refers to a sense of vulnerability regarding what will happen if their present parent dies, or goes away, and what would happen then (i.e. the child). The child may secretly wonder who would take care of them if their remaining parent became absent also. These insecurities may also be related to an inner fear that their parent may not return, or will forget about them, not care about them enough to return, or not care about them as much upon their return. By providing reassurances to their child and even outlining a back-up plan as to who can provide care for them in the unlikely event that they (the remaining parent becomes ill), the parent can alleviate some of these concerns. Allowing the child to have access to friends and family can help them to retain a feeling of belongingness and a sense that everything will be okay for them and their family.

The absent parent can also alleviate a child's concerns by keeping in touch. Just because a parent may be absent, doesn't mean that they don't want to know anything about the child. In

fact, the contrary is true, as the communication becomes a strong connector between parent and child. Letting both parents know about daily events can help parents and children feel secure in their relationship, and stay emotionally connected. It also helps the child to know that they still have two parents that care about them, and that they are perhaps not as alone in the world as they may have originally thought.

There may be an upset that their family must now 'go it alone' and carry on with their everyday lives, without the additional support of two parents. Many children like the comfort of familiarity, and along with an absent parent is an uncertainty and confusion about how things may change within their family. There may, in fact, be a change in roles whereby children are expected to take on a greater number of chores, with greater expectations of responsibility within the family. Some parents encourage their children to assume a greater number of household roles, in an effort to relieve some of the burden of tasks that must be done on a daily basis. This is an opportunity for children to see themselves as important contributors within the family.

Due to children having to assume multiple roles, children may fear that they will lose time with their friends or the ability to partake in activities that they enjoy. A downside is that they may therefore become disconnected from an important source of support. They may feel that they are 'different' because expectations are higher for them in comparison to other families, and this may lead to a sense of resentment toward either the present or absent parent.

The child, of course, may miss his/her parent, and have a heightened sense uncertainty as to where to turn if they need someone to talk to, a 'support system' or 'support network'. When a person's support network changes, they must have opportunities to make or retain current friends, and even to connect with other children who may be experiencing similar types of changes to their family configuration.

The Changes group may allow children the opportunity to be with other such children, potentially reducing any sense of isolation. Their experiences and feelings can be normalized within such a setting, as children discover that their possible mix of emotions is acceptable and not unusual. They may also see that other children may have very different perceptions to the

experience of an absent parent, which promotes exposure to varied opinions and feelings, and which can, in and of itself, foster a sense of empathy. These experiences can serve as an additional foundation for skill development whereby children can be taught, through the group process, how to reach out to others who may be going through difficult times.

When a parent is absent for a temporary period of time, like parents in all other families, they continue to experience regular special events such as birthdays, Easter, and Christmas. Family traditions may change. For example, they may not visit the same relatives at Christmas, they may celebrate a birthday party in a less (or more) extravagant way, or the family may spend more time alone during these periods. This is another adjustment that children learn to accept as a normal part of making changes in their lives. While change within this context can be unsettling, it can also open a child to new situations, new people, and a new set of experiences.

When children learn that they can journey through potentially painful or confusing situations and make positive adjustments, they can begin to feel a renewed sense of confidence in themselves. They discover that they have the ability to master, or take control of their feelings, and ‘come out on the other side’, finding happiness and self confidence where they once saw only fear and uncertainty.

A root cause of fear is the sense of not knowing what is expected of them, so having some of the answers to the ‘unanswered questions’ can go a long way toward alleviating this uncomfortable feeling. Despite inevitable role changes within some families, children develop a sense of power when they are consulted through the process of change. Who is going to empty the dishwasher, help shovel the walk, help make supper, etc. now that their parent is away? Allowing the child to have her voice heard regarding choosing tasks encourages a sense of commitment and increases the likelihood of participation within the realm of household responsibilities. A parent must remember that for the smooth functioning of the household, it is okay to have their child assume chores, even ones that the child prefers not to do, as long as they are within their level of capability. Children learn that although changes are occurring around them, they play a role in re-establishing a sense of balance and order within their lives.

Children may not be aware of their wide range of emotions, and they may be unaware of how to deal with their emotions in a positive manner. That is where the facilitator's role comes into play. The facilitator is in a unique position to be able to teach or guide the child toward more effective expression of his/her feelings, through the activities of the group.

### **Goals**

- Create a safe, nurturing environment that allows children to express their feelings
- Teach children to identify and understand their feelings
- Support the notion that expressing feelings is normal and healthy
- Normalize children's experiences and feelings
- Promote, enhance and maintain self-esteem
- Teach children about strategies that allow them to release their feelings and embrace the positives in their lives
- Teach coping, communication and stress management skills
- Prevent children from choosing ineffective ways of coping with stress;
- Allow children to connect with other children that may be experiencing similar issues, thereby potentially expanding their support network
- Identify to group leaders specific children who may be experiencing difficulties beyond the needs of the group, hence a liaison for community-based referrals
- Release the stress on caregivers, allowing them the comfort of knowing that some of their child's emotional needs are being addressed, thereby providing them with a sense that they are not alone in dealing with the complicated issues of loss
- Make children aware that there are people within the community that are there to help, if they need assistance, and that it is acceptable to ask for help
- Allow children to recognize that transitions and changes are a normal part of life

### **Recruitment**

Regardless of what community group you may be, initially it is advisable to assess the needs of the target population, to determine the feasibility of taking on this endeavour. This can be done through discussions with local mental health agencies, parent and child groups, community organizations, social service organizations, schools, libraries or any other agency that may have developed an awareness of these issues as prevalent concerns affecting a community. As this

group targets families who have parents away on temporary absences; town halls, local military family resource units, and employment agencies can also provide insight into community needs. School personnel that choose to implement the Changes group are in a unique and advantageous position to recruit members. Students attending the school are an available target pool that group members can be drawn from. Assessing needs within the school community can be done by means of a survey sent in a parent newsletter, inquiring about parent/ child interest. This can be followed up with a registration letter sent home identifying more specific information as to the purpose, location, dates and times. Other community groups may consider advertising in local newspapers, community group newsletter, request permission of the local schools to give notices to be sent home, and by means of posters and web sites. Contacts established during the assessment phase can also be utilized to help ‘get the word out’ to the community as to the upcoming group.

### **Structure of Course Content**

**Icebreaker:** Each session begins with a ‘warm up’ activity. This is essentially a fun activity or word game that allows children and group facilitators to get to know one another or reacquaint themselves with their peers. It allows participants to become comfortable again with being in the group each week. The icebreaker does not necessarily have to connect with the theme of that particular group session, as the purpose is primarily that of acquaintance, re-acquaintance, and reconnection.

**Theme:** The core component of each individual session, focuses on a particular theme or issue. The topic may be explored by means of a variety of strategies, including discussions, a storybook, overheads, or fun craft or activity. It is always important to discuss any activities within the context of the theme, so that children and facilitators can share in the experience of connecting feelings with an event. For example, facilitators may read a storybook with the underlying message, and then facilitate discussion or a follow-up activity based on the character’s feelings or experiences. Follow-up would also incorporate inquiring about group participants’ feelings or experiences around particular events.

It is important, when running a group, to avoid the pressure of having to accomplish all of the tasks outlined within the session curricula. Each group is different, with varying needs, and may spend more or less time on a particular issue than anticipated by the facilitator. In the event of having less time available, it is important that the facilitator embrace ‘teachable moments of opportunity’ by focusing on the participants’ discussions and trying to help them to connect and share similarities and differences in experiences and feelings. The activity, per se, is a framework to promote discussions, and such discussions not the follow-up activities, are to form the core of the group sessions. For instance, if participants are running out of time when drawing a picture of how their body feels when they are feeling stress/ anger (i.e. physiological signs), the facilitator shall refocus the activity from one of completing the task, toward sharing what each member has learned about themselves and how their body reacts to stress/ anger.

When faced with the situation of an activity not being meaningful to the participants, if they do not seem to grasp the activity or do not seem interested, it will be important to redirect attention to that theme in a different way, or move on to an alternate activity. For example, if a group is not at all interested in drawing, they should be allowed the opportunity to make a collage, or if they do not want to write, they may be allowed, instead, to pair up and have a conversation about the issue. Keep in mind that learning can be a very individual thing, and that while one participant may grasp information by doing, such as acting out a skit (kinaesthetic learner), others may do better with writing activities or overheads (visual learner), or by hearing a story (auditory learner).

Also keep in mind the age and ability level of the participants. For instance, writing activities may pose a difficulty for some, in which case the activity may be varied/ modified. Participants who finish an individualized activity earlier than others should have other fun activities to choose from, such as fun books, pictures or crosswords related to the theme. This can also be an opportunity for facilitators to take time with individuals to discuss the issues or feelings at hand. Participants may also be invited into other small groups/ pairs, to help or share ideas with other participants.

**Wrap-Up & Summary:** Within this phase, as summary of issues discussed/ worked on during the session is done, with the participation of the group members. This helps them to clarify what they have learned, and repetition of the concept allows them to remember the issues more clearly. At this stage, the students are learning to transition into another stage: that of session completion. This stage implicitly gives permission for students to begin to reflect on what has been learned and to shift their focus back into their regular lives. Transitioning activities can be as simple as asking group members, “What was one thing that stayed in your mind the most from today’s session?” or asking, “If you were to go home and tell your parents/ siblings about today’s session, what would you want to tell them?” It can be as short as a poem/ positive affirmation that students can carry into their lives for the following week. Be sure to end each session on a positive, upbeat tone that offers a sense of hope and happiness for the week.

### **Time Lines**

The framework of this course is the delivery of the content over a six-hour time span. The recommended shortest time span per session is 45 minutes (for 8 sessions), which fits well with schools that attempt to incorporate the group into the student’s lunch hour. Alternate suggestions include: one hour for six sessions, or a maximum of 1.5 hours for eight sessions (with a brief break within each 1.5 hour session). Anything beyond 1.5 hour sessions is not recommended, as this may lose the interest of the participants, and the attention span of the participants may not lend itself to adequate focusing on what is being facilitated within the group. Anything less than four sessions is also not recommended, as the writer’s experiences have indicated that ‘cramming sessions’ are not conducive to adhering to the group’s goals. Groups that start and end too quickly do not allow participants to establish connections between the participants. They do not allow for adequate reflection time, which is crucial toward learning/ integrating skills and new perspectives into the children’s everyday lives. Hence transfer of new skills and information may be inhibited.

### **Creating a ‘Safe’ and Nurturing Environment**

At the start of the group sessions and throughout the program, establish a foundation of respect for all opinions and feelings. This can be done using a variety of strategies, listed below. Use of these strategies helps establish guidelines as to acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. Here

healthy boundaries are being established, and effective communication skills are taught incidentally to the group members. These skills are a component of effective coping mechanisms and can be transferred to other settings and aspects of participants' lives. Facilitators serving as role models of effective and respectful communication encourage participants to release their feelings in a positive and constructive way.

Being in a group setting can make an individual feel vulnerable, and it may take time for students to feel comfortable in 'opening up' and sharing their experiences and thoughts. Particularly at the beginning of the sessions, facilitators may allow participants to 'pass' if they do not feel comfortable sharing within the group. At the same time, you want to encourage as much participation as possible, to foster a sense of belonging within the group. It is a fine balance, tuning in to the needs of the emotional child and the needs of the group so that it is a positive experience for everyone.

The facilitator does not have to be an expert to be able to tune into a child's needs. This can be accomplished by adopting basic communication skills strategies. These include such strategies as:

- (i) Active Listening skills
- (ii) Reflecting on what is being said
- (iii) 'Positive Scan' technique (tuning in to individual strengths)
- (iv) 'I messages'

### ***Active Listening Skills***

This refers to listening attentively and clearly hearing what the other person is saying. This strategy is used when you want to express your empathy and interest in what the other person is saying, and also when you are trying to encourage and explore the message that they are trying to get across. If the facilitator does not truly understand the message, it may make her feel uncomfortable and uncertain as to how to respond. Clearly tuning into the sender's message helps you to gain clarity into what the participant is communicating. It encourages the participant to elaborate on her own thoughts and ideas, thereby providing an element of insight for the facilitator.

To listen attentively, you use positive attending behaviours, the skill components being: eye contact, facing the person, nodding understanding, being aware of receptive and unreceptive body language (e.g. arms crossed in front of you denotes non-receptiveness), avoiding interrupting, remaining calm, and showing interest in your facial expression. You listen for content and the feeling being expressed.

### ***Reflecting Back***

This communication strategy goes hand-in-hand with active listening. It refers to paraphrasing and summarizing what you have heard the other person saying. You may ask open-ended questions when asking for clarity of the message. If you do not understand the message or information, you may want to use such beginning statements as, “I think you’re saying ...”, “Do you mean that ...”, “What I hear you saying is ...”, “It sounds as though ...”, “You seem to be feeling ...”, etc.

### ***Positive Scan***

This refers to noticing small, positive efforts by group members. Positive attention becomes a ‘reward’ for the child, as it may increase their comfort level in the group and the likelihood toward participating. Complimenting/ praising participants must be sincere, clear and specific, and has a potential for enhancing a child’s self esteem, which is one of the program’s goals. Examples include such statements as, “I appreciate you having shared that ...”, “I really like that idea”, “You’ve put a lot of effort into that”, “It’s not easy having shared such thoughts with the group, so I think you’ve taken a really big step in doing so”, etc.

### ***‘I Messages’***

This refers to reframing statements so that the receiver is willing and open to listening to the sender. It is a strategy that is used which tells the participants your feelings. It avoids placing any blame onto the other person, allows you to be specific about what you want, and allows you to pass along a clear message. The formula used here is: “I feel \_\_\_ when \_\_\_ because \_\_\_. I would like you to \_\_\_ “, or “When \_\_\_, I feel \_\_\_ because \_\_\_ and I need you to \_\_\_”.

Here is an example of two communication styles to illustrate the power and effectiveness of the “I Message”: “Stop talking; I can’t hear myself think!” does not specify feelings, the effect of

the other person's behaviour, and does not give validation for what the other person may want. A more effective message, using the "I Message" formula is: "I feel frustrated when others talk when I am talking because it interrupts the group. I would like you to please not interrupt when I am talking, as I will give you a chance to speak when I am done".

### ***Establishing Group Rules/ Guidelines***

Establishing group rules/ guidelines is an ideal way to set the tone of having a peaceful and respectful group environment. In order to maximize the likelihood of participants adhering to the rules, have all participants be involved in determining group rules/ guidelines. Within the drafting of these rules, facilitators must take the lead in ensuring that basic courteous principles are included, such as: no interrupting, no swearing, accepting others' opinions and feelings, and confidentiality. It is a good idea for facilitators to have group members sign the bottom of the group's 'Rules/ Guidelines' poster, so that it presents as a 'contract', hence the greater likelihood of compliance. Have the rules/ guidelines posted in a visible location during each group session, and they can be used as a reference for facilitators to remind group members during times when the rules are being breached.

It is important to discuss and clarify participants' understanding of 'confidentiality', ensuring that they are aware that what information is shared within the group is to remain within the group. Indicate that it is acceptable to tell others about the course content and what they have learned, but not the stories and feelings that are shared by other group participants; initiate a discussion of why this is so crucial (i.e. so that group members trust other group members and feel comfortable about sharing their feelings). Facilitators are also to indicate to group members that there is an occasion when they, as facilitators, are required by law to breach the 'confidentiality' rule. This is when they feel that a group member may intentionally hurt himself/ herself or others, or damage property, or when there is a threat of participants being hurt or abused in some way by someone else.

### **Meeting Place**

It is important to create an environment that is conducive to exploring thoughts, ideas and feelings. It must allow sufficient room to partake in crafts, games and other hands-on activities.

Simultaneously, the meeting place must also be separate from other public happenings, in order to respect confidentiality and increase the likelihood of participants feeling comfortable to share any concerns and ideas.

When meeting place is being considered, one must take into account accessibility, physical safety of the participants, and other physical issues such as lighting and general comfort. The target group must be taken into consideration, and of course should be of somewhat close geographical proximity to the participants. This can be near a bus route, or within a community that is close to a location frequented by participants. The meeting place may be in a church basement, school setting, community gathering place, or any other space that allows participants sufficient room to move around and partake in physical and/ or hands-on activities, and crafts.

To add an element of comfort and a more informal atmosphere, seating may consist of floor mats or couches, but should also have flat surfaces or tables for hands-on, fine motor activities such as writing, drawing, or doing crafts. An informal, relaxed atmosphere is a good idea particularly if the group is run during school times (such as a lunch hour), when children have spent a great deal of their time in a structured classroom setting already during the day.

The noon hour recess is typically a time for physical activity and having fun on the playground. This potentially invigorates and provides renewal to the child who is then expected to settle and refocus for the afternoon portion of the school day. If this time period is, however, replaced by attending a group, the potential exists that the child may long to have some of that free time to express herself/ himself in a physical way. The group must take into account that children need a break from the structured routine activities of school, and allow children opportunities to do so. An environment that allows children to have fun, be physical and be creative in a relaxed setting is more likely to reap the results of having children wanting to attend the group and retaining their interest.

If the group is established in a school, then it will be mindful to stay tuned to participants' attention span, and vary activities accordingly. Within each session, 'Alternate Activities' are

outlined, as a back-up means of dealing with group inattentiveness and individual group areas of interest.

### **Target Population**

Children of all ages may experience a variety of emotions associated with their parent being absent from the family home. The Changes group is intended to take this into account, being geared toward various age groups. Development of this manual has been geared toward the elementary school population, particularly Grades One to Six (ages six to eight or nine to eleven). This is meant as a guideline, and elementary schools that have different grade groupings may want to take that into consideration when initiating the groups.

Reasons for separating the age groups is that reading and writing abilities are different, as Grade One children are beginning the process of learning how to print, and Grade Three children have had greater experience in developing this skill, and are beginning to learn cursive writing strategies. The older age groups have more likely mastered these concepts, and may feel bored and 'held back' if placed in a group with younger peers. In addition, there can be large differences in attention span and levels of understanding of concepts and ideas, between the age groupings. Sessions have been developed with the two age groupings in mind, depending upon which ages are represented within the group at hand. Themes are similar in nature between the age groups, but session material is presented in a different way.

Initial assessment during the recruitment phase is a good place to start to determine ability levels so that when the group is run, ability levels are somewhat compatible amongst the group members. Of course, there may be some variation. For instance, a child may be of similar age and maturity level to her peers but who may have some delays regarding writing ability. This can be managed by group leaders by giving group participants choices within activities, for instance a choice of doing a craft, drawing a picture, writing a story, or doing a role play- based on the same theme.

## Course Content

### Week One- Introduction and Relationship Development

**Objective:** Children will understand the need to belong to a group that has the same family similarities as their own.

**Theme Relationship Development:** Relationships are developed and enhanced by learning to manage conflict, solve problems, communicate effectively and maintain and improve their commitment to one another as persons. In meeting with students of similar backgrounds, relationships can be formed and enhanced by sharing their stories, feelings and needs.

#### 1. Introduction

Icebreaker - 'Name Tent' (Seeing Red, p. 16);

- Distribute to each person an 8.5x11” piece of paper, folded length-wise in thirds, to form a ‘name tent’. Ask group members to use their markers to write and decorate their first names on the front of their tents.
- On their name tents, they should draw two pictures of something about themselves to share with the group.
- Go around the circle and have each person talk about the drawings on his/ her name tent.
- Stand the name tents on the table so everyone can see. Have group leaders participate as well.

#### 2. Learning Activity

- Name and identify some group rules and objectives that will help to make us feel that this is a group that we feel safe and secure to share our fears, feelings and hopes.

**Materials:** notebook for each student, pear and apple shapes, chart paper, white paper, markers

**Group Rules** (Seeing Red, p. 16):

- Ask the group if they have ever been in a group like this one before. Remind them that school is one place where they learn as a group, and that many groups have rules.
- Ask what the purpose of having rules is (it is so that everyone feels safe and comfortable and that they are able to learn).
- Have the group brainstorm rules for how they want to treat one another in the group.
- Write the rules on a sheet of paper and have all group members sign the paper as their commitment to these rules. Be sure that the rules are posted each week during the meetings.
  - Include: No put downs/ insults; No swearing; Take turns talking; Confidentiality; Ask students what this means. Let them know that they can tell other people what they are learning in the class, but not private things that other people have said in the group; what is said in the group stays in the group.
  - Ask students when they think this rule CAN be broken (This rule can be broken by an adult only if they feel that a child is being hurt, physically or sexually, or if there is a concern that the child is going to hurt him/herself).

### Group Objectives

- Discuss the purpose of the group, according to the participants' perceptions and what they have been told. Clarify with group members any misconceptions.
- Use '*Rotten Apple/ Perfect Pear tree*' **Activity** to determine fears and hopes regarding the group.
- Give each child an apple/ pear cut out. On the apple they are to write their fears of the group and on the pear they are to write their hopes for the group. When they are done, the Instructor gathers the fruit and puts them on the tree, reviewing each one and alleviating any expressed concerns. Younger children may draw pictures on the apples/pears.
- Give each child a special little notebook where they can keep tasks they completed, journal about thoughts and feelings, list strategies they have learned.

### 3. Closing Activity

**Facilitator reads the following verse, and discusses the hidden meanings within.**

**Encouraging the group members to present their own thoughts does this. '*Biography in 5 Short Chapters*' (Seeing Red, p.23);**

I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I fall in  
I am lost... I am helpless.  
It isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend I don't see it.  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I'm in the same place,  
But, it isn't my fault.  
It still takes a long time to get out.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there.  
I still fall in... it's a habit.  
My eyes are open.  
I know where I am.  
It is my fault,  
I get out immediately.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.

I walk down the street.

#### **Hidden meanings:**

**Verse One-** A person goes through life as usual, and may either gradually or suddenly encounter situations that are unexpected, or not the way that a person feels things 'should' be, or not the way that the person wants things to be. The result is that the person may feel alone, confused and helpless, with no hope that things will ever get better.

**Verse Two-** A situation happens that the person thinks, “I sort of remember this situation or feeling, but if I ignore the situation or my feelings, then it will all go away and things will feel better again”. However, the situation still happens and they still feel the uncomfortable feelings; the person is learning that some situations/ feelings in life keep happening even when we don’t want them to, and that the strategy of ignoring the situation doesn’t mean it will go away. Despite realizing all of this, it is still a hard thing to go through, and knowing all of this doesn’t make things easier.

**Verse Three-** The situation or feelings arise again, and you almost expect it, but it is still difficult, and maybe you react the same way that you always did but you still didn’t feel any better and things still didn’t turn out any better. You start to think, “maybe I could think of this in a different way, or do something different so that this situation won’t be so bad”.

**Verse Four-** The situation presents itself again. However, this time, it feels more familiar to me and therefore not as scary, and I know that things will in time get better or at least feel better. Therefore, I won’t make the same mistakes of ignoring, getting angry, upset or feeling that things are hopeless. Instead, I will realize that life is full of changes, and that despite situations being difficult and scary, I know that I can get through them, and that things will eventually be better.

## **Week Two – About My Family**

**Objective:** Children will understand that all families are different in one way or another. Identify the people who make up their family and the other support people that are available to them as part of who they are.

**Theme Families:** The world is made up of many different kinds of families. Some families have moms and dads, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins. Families are brought together through birth, love or by law. Although changes can occur in a family, it is still a family. Sometimes a parent who leaves can leave a family feeling sad, angry, fearful, or anxious. Time will heal the feelings that family members have and once again love, care and support will be provided.

### **1. Introduction**

Icebreaker – “Memory Test”

- Before handing out the name tents from the previous week, challenge the group to remember everyone’s name, what they drew and what was said about themselves from their name tents.

General Review – review of the group rules and last week’s discussion.

### **2. Learning Activity**

- Identifying what happens to our family when a parent is deployed or temporarily away

**Materials:** family pictures, paper plates, circle shapes (Appendix 1), string

- Observe the pictures of the various families. Discuss how these families are made up and why they might be made up in this way.
- Relate these family pictures to our own family, reflecting on similarities and differences.
- Discuss what happens to our family when a parent is deployed. Record the responses on the chart paper.
- Discuss what feelings we have about the parent who is deployed and the rest of the family and record these on chart paper.
- Discuss other people who may need to support us when we have a parent who is away.
- Create a mobile with your name at the center of the plate and circles for the other people who are part of you extended family. The circles might include names of friends, neighbours, special people, people I admire, etc. Attach the circles so that students recognize they are an extension of themselves. For older students have them draw a large circle in their Journal and put the names of people in the circle. The use of a circle represents people who you can trust and with whom you can build a relationship.

### **3. Closing Activities**

- Have each child share whom they included on their mobile.
- ‘What Was Good About Today’s Activity’: students are to identify one thing that has been positive about their day so far.

## **Week Three – Identifying My Feelings**

**Objective:** Children will realize that feelings are a natural part of who we are; they are not ‘good or bad’. It is important to identify how we feel and talk about it.

**Theme Feelings:** All feelings are normal and they are a part of who we are. At times our feelings can change quickly from one to the other and this may cause us some confusion. Feelings and the thoughts we have are not the same. Feelings come from the heart and thoughts come from our head. We are not in control of the feelings we have but we are in control of how we express our feelings. Feelings may be hard to identify and put into words.

### **1. Introduction**

Icebreaker – ‘Balloon Pairs Bounce’

- Each pair of students will have a balloon. They must keep their balloon in the air without letting it drop to the ground. Students must not let go of their partner’s hand while trying to keep the balloon up in the air. Students whose balloons hit the ground must sit out while others try to keep their balloons in the air.

General Review – review of the group rules and last week’s discussion.

### **2. Learning Activity**

- Identifying our feelings when parents are deployed

**Materials:** balloons, markers, people’s faces from various magazines, chart paper, Appendix 2 sheet “I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_.”

- Look at the faces of the people in some magazines, discuss what we think the feelings of those people might be and why they might feel that way.
- Relate this to some of the feelings that we have and do we share some of the same feelings as the people in the magazines.
- Discuss the feelings we have when we know that one of our parents will be away for a long period of time. Record the responses on the chart paper.
- Discuss why we would feel the way we do; new roles and responsibilities, fear of losing our parent, for own safety, routines are different, anger at both parents.
- Discuss ways that we might let people know how we feel using the following statements, “I feel (tell how you feel) when you (tell what the person did to make you feel that way).”
- Role-play some scenarios using the above statement.
- Glue or write the above statement in the Journal.

### 3. Closing Activities

- Using the balloons from the Icebreaker, draw faces on the balloons that depict various feelings. Children should have their own balloon. Children may even write the feeling under the face.
- Play the ‘Balloon Bounce’ game once again. Each child tries to keep the balloons in the air, by stating the feeling that is depicted on the balloon.
- ‘What Was Good About Today’ Activity: students are to identify one thing that has been positive about their day so far.

## Week Four – Fear and Worry

**Objective:** Children will verbalize their fears and worries so as to separate the real from the imagined. Discover strategies that will help them cope with fear and worry.

**Theme Fear and Worry:** Anxiety is most commonly experienced as fear or worry. Whether anxiety is a problem or not is determined by the degree of anxiety (how severe it is), the age appropriateness of the fear and the amount of interference that is caused by the fear and worry. Severe fear and worry can impact children’s health and happiness, and their ability to complete everyday activities. Children of deployed parents often worry that something bad will happen to himself or herself or to Mom or Dad whenever they are apart. Other children may develop social fears becoming extremely shy, withdrawn and/or worrying a great deal about what others think of them.

### 1. Introduction

Icebreaker – “Simon in a Bind” p. 60 Energizer

- Everyone must stand in a circle and link arms.
- When “Simon says” everyone in the group does the command that is asked for such as “Raise your elbows.” When the command is not preceded by “Simon says” the command is ignored.

General Review – review of the group rules and last week’s discussion.

### 2. Learning Activity

- Identifying what are our fears and worries when a parent is deployed.

**Materials:** Journal, beads, string, key chain rings

- Draw a picture of something that makes us fearful or worried; discuss the pictures and what about the picture makes us feel the way we do. Some feelings may include: fear of abandonment, for our own safety and the safety of the deployed parent, change in family structure, change and the unknown, loneliness, etc.
- Discuss how fears and worries can be real and imaginary. Sort out various fears that could be imaginary and those that could be real by listing a variety of fears on a chart paper.
- Discuss some ways that we could deal with our fears and worries. List these on a chart paper. Some ways might include, talking to a parent, other family member, or teacher, drawing a picture about the fear or worry, writing about it in a journal, etc.
- List some strategies to help us deal with fear and worry in our Journal.
- Younger students can create a “worry” bracelet putting a bead for every person that would support them in times of fear or worry. The idea is to touch the bead and think of that person when we are worried or fearful. Older students can create a key chain.

### **3. Closing Activities**

- Have each child share which strategy they think that they would find the most useful.
- ‘What Was Good About Today’ Activity: students are to identify one thing that has been positive about their day so far.

## **Week Five – About Anger (Anger Management Part One)**

**Objectives:** Children will understand that anger is normal, how to recognize when they are feeling this intense emotion, and to be aware of positive and negative ways of handling anger.

**Theme Anger:** Children who feel inadequate to cope with a situation such as the deployment of a parent or don't know what the reality of the situation requires them to do can become frustrated and then very angry. In order for an adult to help a child effectively cope and manage his anger, one must be able to identify the underlying purpose and the goal of the negative behavior.

### **1. Introduction**

Icebreaker - “Many Words of Anger”

- Have students sit in a circle and take turns brainstorming words that refer to feeling angry, and write them on a the large angry face. Examples include: livid, cranky, irate, furious, raving, mean, cross, sore, seething, grouchy, irritated, incensed, upset, enraged, annoyed, displeased, fierce, infuriated, belligerent, fuming, sullen, offended, bitter, sulky.
- Next have each student visualize a situation that makes them angry, and then take turns demonstrating something that they feel like doing and saying when they are angry. Examples include: showing angry facial expressions, stomping feet, yelling, pretending to use their fists

## 2. Learning Activity

- Defining anger, identifying positive and negative responses, and identifying when you are feeling angry

**Materials:** chart paper with a large angry face, body outline sheet (Appendix 3), chart paper

- Group discussions to address some of the following issues/ questions:

(Note that Facilitators can discuss any or all of the following concepts depending on the age level of the children).

### **‘What is anger???’**

- Discuss the meaning of anger as an action or feeling;
  - Is anger good or bad?
  - it affects some people or all
  - Who gets angry more- parents or kids?
  - indicates control/ no control
  - if expressed, people will like/ dislike you
  - is something that is easy/ hard to change/ that you are able to change

### **Types of Anger and Ways of Handling Anger: Outward/Inward Anger & Clean/ Dirty Anger.**

- Discuss 2 ways to express anger, and ask students if they know what Inward and Outward Anger is:

INWARD- thinking mean things about yourself or others, or getting a stomach ache from worrying, or thinking about what you can do to make things better.

OUTWARD- yelling or saying mean things to others, hitting someone or breaking something, talking to someone calmly, or doing an activity you enjoy to get your mind off the situation, such as reading, listening to music, or running outside.

- Use chart paper to summarize.
- Discuss the meanings of ‘clean’ and ‘dirty’ anger.

CLEAN- positive reactions and DIRTY- negative reactions.

- Discuss that ‘INWARD, DIRTY’ ANGER consequences can lead to physical problems such as stomach aches, headaches, inability to concentrate and OUTWARD DIRTY anger is others not wanting to be around you/ not trusting you, loss of friends, things being broken or others getting hurt.

### **Abuse**

- Ask for a definition of ‘abuse’ (i.e. power or control tactics that frighten people; it can be physical, verbal, sexual, emotional or to property or animals. Abuse can be learned and unlearned, and it is NOT O.K. for ANYONE to use abuse as a way to handle anger. Abuse is behaviour, NOT an emotion). Ask students what sorts of things are said when people use abuse, violent or destructive ways to handle anger. Ask what abusive behaviours are shown. Discuss consequences of abusive behaviours.

**Anger Rules;** (Volcano in My Tummy, p. 26):

- Rules: It’s OK to feel angry BUT:

Don't hurt others; don't hurt yourself; don't hurt property; DO talk about it. Ask such things as: why not? What are some consequences of breaking these rules, in everyday life? Who can you talk to about it?

### **Physiological signs 'What Does Your Anger Feel Like?' Activity sheet;**

- Discuss the importance of physiological signs (i.e. body signs); Tell students that in order to be able to control their anger, they must not only know what makes them mad but also how their body reacts when they are angry).
- Discuss physiological signs, such as brows turning downward, feeling warm inside, fists clenching, tightened chest, etc.). Have students close their eyes and think of a scene that makes them/ has made them angry, and to allow themselves to feel those feelings. Have them pay attention to how their body is feeling, including the order that their body is feeling it.
- Have younger students create a puppet with the body outline and older students can glue the body outline in their Journal and list the physiological signs of anger.

### **3. Closing Activity**

**'Secret Pass' Activity** (Seeing Red, p.35);

- Have the group stand in a circle with their hands behind them. Have one person be in the middle. The students in the circle must pass an object around the circle and the person in the middle tries to guess who is holding the object. When the middle person correctly guesses who has the object, that person changes places with the person on the outside circle.

## **Week Six - Anger Control (Anger Management Part Two)**

**Objectives:** Teach and reinforce positive and effective ways that children can use to manage their angry feelings.

**Theme Anger Management:** Reactions to anger really aren't immediate, even if it may appear that way. When someone's anger is out of control, there are actually a lot of feelings prior to reaching that boiling point. People don't stop to examine their feelings before they lose control. People can be taught how to express their anger in a controlled, healthy way. People need to be taught about what anger is, what activates their anger, how to become aware of their own feelings of anger, and how to manage their anger.

### **1. Introduction**

Icebreaker - 'The Many Faces of Anger' (The ASSIST Program)

• Have students take turns completing the anger-related statement posed by the Facilitator. Be sure to stress that there are no right or wrong answers, as student perceptions are important here. Questions are posed in such a way as to avoiding asking about personal situations but focus on hypothetical situations and opinions, thereby maintaining a non-threatening tone. The purpose is to ease the students back into the concept of anger. Questions may include:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| The colour of anger is ...             | Anger can be 'bad' when ...               |
| Two sounds that anger can have are ... | I can tell when someone is angry when ... |
| Anger can help a person by ...         | Anger can hurt a person when ...          |

Anger can be 'good' when ...	Some people hide their anger by ...
Some people show their anger by ...	When someone is angry; it is a good idea to..
After a person loses their temper ...	A person can 'get over' feeling angry by ...

## 2. Learning Activity

- Identifying anger management strategies that will work when we are angry with either the deployed parent, remaining parent or siblings.

**Materials:** small baby food jars, tissue paper, markers, glue, Journal

- Read and discuss with the students a book about anger '*The Penguin Who Lost Her Cool*' OR '*When Sophie Gets Angry, Very Very Angry*') and
- Have students learn and recite the 'calming verse':  
"When you feel mad, don't play the fool... Take slow, deep breaths, and keep your cool.  
When you feel mad, don't play the fool... Count to ten, and keep your cool".
- Choose one or two anger management strategies to share with students. You may want to share all the strategies with the older students.
  - a. 'Grudge Jar'** (Volcano in My Tummy, p. 64);
    - Ask if anyone has ever heard of a Grudge Jar before. Explain that a "Grudge Jar" is used when a child feels angry about something or someone. They can write their anger out on a piece of paper, fold it and put it in the jar. At the end of the day the papers are destroyed and they are not shared with anyone.
    - Discuss with the students how the "Grudge Jar" allows students to get angry thoughts and feelings out, and that it can be used at home or at school. Explain that this strategy is used because bottled anger can become explosive and bad for a person's health. It allows students to have their feelings heard without interrupting the group and without others knowing their frustrations, and allows them to express their anger without holding it inside
    - Create a "Grudge Jar" to take home.
  - b. 'Time-Outs'**
    - Discuss with the students what the universal hand signal for time out it is and the reason for its use. (i.e. it is a 'safety strategy'; it stops abuse but doesn't solve the initial problem; it is useful for controlling anger and for giving us time and space to think about safe ways of resolving problems. It is NOT a form of punishment)
    - Discuss with students "How could 'time out' help when someone is angry at home or at school? What could the angry person do during his 'time out' to handle his feelings in a healthy way?"
    - Record these strategies on the board or chart paper.
    - Discuss with students the appropriate use of a 'time out' place when they feel like breaking the anger rules, how students should express their anger: "I am mad, and I am going to take a time out."
    - Tell students that once a time out has been chosen they are welcome to rejoin the group when they no longer feel angry enough to break the anger rules and they can discuss ways to solve the problem that caused the anger.
  - c. 'Self Talk/ Calming' Strategies**
    - Discuss the following with older students:

**What is ‘self talk’?**

**Who can use this strategy?**

**Is this strategy more effective for children and/ or adults?**

**When would you use this as an anger management strategy?**

**Why would a person use this strategy?**

- Have students brainstorm different ‘self talk’ strategies and list them in their Journal

### **3. Closing Activity**

- ‘What Was Good About Today’ Activity: students are to identify one thing that has been positive about their day so far.

## **Week Seven – Withdrawal and Support**

**Objective:** have students verbalize reasons for their withdrawal from various situations. Discover people, places and things that will help them to find the support they need in times of withdrawal.

**Theme Withdrawal and Support:** When a parent is deployed, children may experience withdrawal from family and friends, listlessness, decreased activity, preoccupations with the parent who is deployed. Children may feel that there is not enough support from an adult during the deployment phase. They may not want to burden their parent with their feelings and therefore may withdraw from various situations.

### **1. Introduction**

Icebreaker – “Double Bubble” p. 55 Energizer

- Have pairs of students decide on they will move together, when the teams are moving call out “Double Bubble” and the pair must join with another pair and decide how they will move together. Continue to play until all pairs are joined as one team.

General Review – review of the group rules and last week’s discussion.

### **2. Learning Activity –**

- Identifying why we may withdraw when a parent is deployed, find ways to support ourselves in times of deployment.

**Material:** chart paper, cube activity sheet, story about a child who is fearful/worried

- Discuss what may cause us to withdraw, list these situations on a chart paper. Some ideas may be not being able to talk to someone, fear or worry, feeling alone, feeling that the situation is a silly one and they shouldn’t feel the way that they do, etc.
- Discuss ways that we can deal with our withdrawal: talking about it with a parent, another family member, a teacher or adult that you can trust; self-talk about what is making you withdraw, etc.
- Listen to a story(chosen by the facilitator) about a child who was fearful, worried and would possibly go into withdrawal, discuss what the child in the story did so that her fears and worries were not magnified.

- Discuss and list on chart, the people who could be possible supports for us when our feelings are leading us to withdrawal.
- On a cube, draw pictures of people who would be able to support them in their times of need.

### **3. Closing Activities**

- Have children share one or two people that would support them.
- ‘What Was Good About Today’ Activity: students are to identify one thing that has been positive about their day so far.

## **Week Eight - Effective Communication**

**Objective:** Teach children to express/ communicate their feelings in a positive and constructive manner.

**Theme Effective Communication:** People who have effective communication skills are aware of and able to manage their own emotions, strengths, and weaknesses in face-to-face relations. Not only are they able to manage their own emotions, but they also better understand and positively handle the emotions of others in personal communications, empathize with others, are aware of the needs of others and understand the issues that would determine their feelings and behaviors. When dealing with people in social situations they are able to manage their own behaviors. Good communicators can align their goals to the goals of others during collaborative activities and they handle conflict effectively by working out win-win solutions, using effective communication and persuasive strategies and listening well.

### **1. Introduction**

Icebreaker - ‘Coloured marker’

- All students are to pick a marker with a colour according to how they are feeling. They are then to share why they chose that marker.

### **2. Learning Activity**

- Identify various ‘I’ messages and how they can be used to effectively communicate our feelings.

**Materials:** chart paper, Appendix 4

- Discuss whether stating what makes you angry is good or bad, and why (It is healthy because it allows you to know how you are feeling, helps you to understand where your thoughts are coming from, helps you take time to figure out what to do about your feelings, and also helps other people understand how you are feeling and understand what you want/ need).
- Observe the “I Messages” formula on the board or chart paper.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ I would like \_\_\_\_\_.

- Discuss what kind of information should be conveyed in an “I” statement, such as: how you feel, what triggers that feeling and what you want to happen or change.
- Facilitator demonstrates the difference between “I” statements and “you” statements.
- Role-play some ‘I’ messages by using various scenarios where one student demonstrates a “blaming” message while another demonstrates an appropriate ‘I’ message. Eg Someone is standing in front of the TV when the other person is trying to watch. An example of a blaming or a ‘you’ statement is: “You’re always in my way! Get out! I’m sick and tired of you standing there!” Demonstrate responding with a ‘blaming/ you’ statement the first time to show how an argument can escalate. The “I Message” approach can include a statement such as: “I feel angry when you stand in front of the TV because I can’t see. I would like you to please move out of the way”; OR “When you stand in front of the TV, I feel angry because I can’t see. Therefore, I need you to please move out of the way”.
- Give each student an ‘I’ message formula and have them practice with another student.
- Share the ‘I’ message scenarios
- Older students can play a game of “**Anger Management Trivial Pursuit**”  
Have two groups that stand in two lines. Read a question to each person, and when that person answers the question correctly, they earn a point for their team. When all questions are complete, the winners are the ones with the most points.

### 3. Closing Activity

- ‘*One Truth, One Lie*’ (Seeing Red, p. 16);  
Each group member, one at a time, tells two things about him/herself, one that is true and one that is false. (E.g. “I have two sisters” or “I like hot dogs”). As each person presents their statements, the other group members try to guess which one of the statements was false. The person then reveals the truth, and then it is the next person’s turn.

## Week Nine - Caring and Sharing (Celebration Session)

**Objective:** This final session is intended as a closure, to ease the transition from participation within the Changes group toward having children resume their regular activities apart from the group. The session is a celebration of the children’s accomplishments within the group; parents are invited to attend the session, in order to allow the children to share their wisdom, practice their public speaking skills, and foster a sense of pride in the time and efforts they have put toward the group.

### 1. Introduction

The Facilitator welcomes each parent into the room, and spends a few minutes talking about the purpose for this final session. The purpose is explained as being an opportunity to allow the children to share the things they have done in the group. Invite the parents and children to help themselves to the refreshments and snacks provided, at any time during the session.

#### *‘Golden Apple Tree’;*

Hand out two yellow apple cut outs whereby each child and their parent are to write on the apple any things that they/ their child has learned from the group or what they/ their child liked about

the group. Then the Facilitator gathers these and attaches them to a picture of a tree trunk that has been drawn on the board. These are reviewed aloud, both individually and anonymously.

## **2. What We Learned**

The Facilitator asks participants to volunteer to explain about the Journal that each person has been keeping and the purpose for them (Purpose can be clarified and summarized by the Facilitator as: a concrete way for parents and kids to see what they have done over the past several weeks. The Journal allows participants to visually see and remember the things they have learned and we as a group have talked about. In the Journal are the words of things that we have explored and talked about, such as ‘who is in our family’, ‘who do we feel we can trust’, ‘what are some of our feelings and emotions’, ‘what do we like about ourselves and our family’, ‘what are some good ways I can handle my anger and frustrations’, ‘why do I feel worried, and what can I do about it’, ‘how can I tell others when things are bothering me or when I would like things to be different’.

## **3. Closing Activity**

During the last few minutes, the Facilitator may again remind the parents and children to help themselves to the food and drinks provided, along with a reminder that there are only 10 minutes left in the group. They may use the remaining few minutes to chat amongst themselves.

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