

# Hope Groups

FOR DISPLACED PEOPLE AND  
UKRAINIANS IMPACTED BY WAR

## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE



**WWO**  
WORLD WITHOUT ORPHANS



**PARENTING**  
FOR LIFELONG HEALTH

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Hope Groups sessions were developed by experts on trauma-informed care from multiple countries and by trainers in local contexts. Susan Hillis (PEPFAR, WWO, Oxford), Nicole Baldonado (WWO), and Lyudmyla Bryn (Children's Mission) wrote the sessions, with contributions from Ruby Johnson (LAMB International, WWO) and cultural adaptations by Oksana Boichenko, Olha Medvediva, Yulia Vlasiuk, Yulia Smolyar, Irina Sen, Michelle Pratt, and Evgenia Taradaika.

The sessions were created in a collaboration of the following organizations:



World Without Orphans Global (WWO), alongside World Without Orphans Europe, calls and equips national leaders to collaborate to solve their own country's orphaned and vulnerable children's crisis.

Viva is an international charity dedicated to changing children's lives to fulfill their God-given potential. It builds and supports networks that unite grassroots churches and organizations to support children. Viva's work alleviates the adverse conditions many children face, providing them with new opportunities and bringing hope to contexts of fear. Partner networks are able to leverage Viva resources and expertise to provide an effective, long-term response to the holistic needs of vulnerable children in their communities and to impact on local government priorities and provisions.

The sessions that follow are an adaptation of the original Hope Groups for Displaced People and Ukrainians Impacted by War, which have been evaluated using a pre-/post-analysis with support from the University of Oxford in collaboration with WWO, Children's Mission, and Ukraine Without Orphans. Results show significant increases in positive parenting, playful parenting, and abilities to cope with stress, and reductions in physical and emotional abuse.

Designed and illustrated by Leah de Jager.

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## SESSION 1

# FINDING STABILITY - OUR EVERYDAY TOOLS

### Illustration 1

The types of change that create transition cycles:



Physical transition



Life stages



Unexpected sudden changes

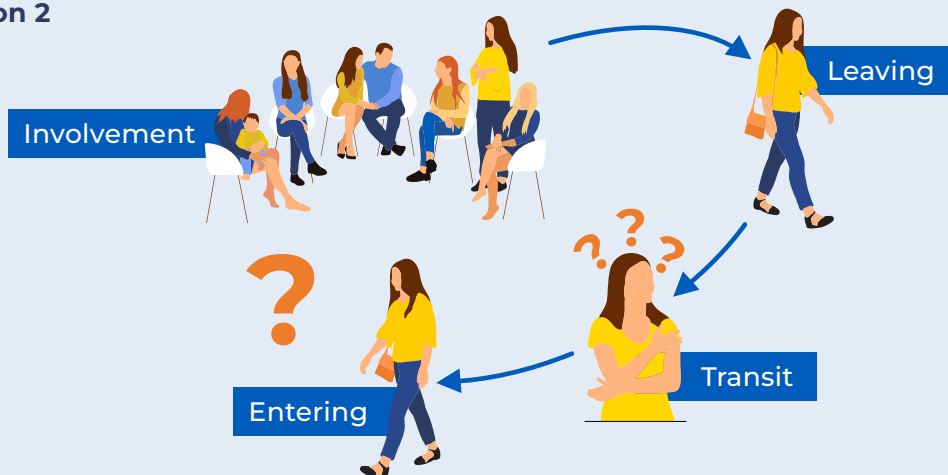


Traumatic events

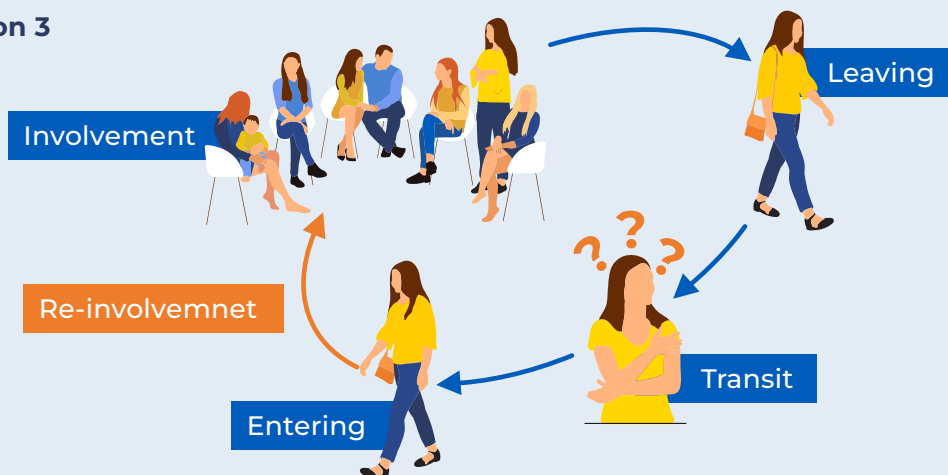


Other

### Illustration 2



### Illustration 3





**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
Hope Groups

**ROUTINE HELPS  
CHILDREN FEEL SAFE**

- Even when it feels hard, try to have some daily routines for yourself and children.
- If you can, help children with daily routines like meals or schoolwork.
- Our children learn calmness and kindness from us.
- Tell yourself a calming message again and again, Try 'I can do this, I am trying my best'

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

"Do not fear, for I am with you... I will strengthen you and help you." (Isaiah 41:10)  
God promises to be with us and help us. He can help you cope.



No.2

## Moving from Transition to Stability - Our Everyday Tools

Transition can feel like chaos, like the image of the person holding their head in confusion. We might feel confused, in shock, lost. War, displacement and disaster mean we are continually dealing with loss and traumatic situations.

The good news is we can work through transition and move toward a sense of stability. We cannot always change our circumstances, but we can develop a set of tools to help us regain some internal stability. These tools - things like healthy eating and sleeping habits, or talking with people we trust about our feelings - can also help us grieve our losses in a healthy way.

Let's imagine that each of us has a toolbox. Throughout these meetings, we are going to fill our toolbox with two sets of tools. The first set are our everyday tools - those we use routinely to help us have a healthier mind and emotions. They are a foundation for us. The other set are our anchoring tools - tools that are like an anchor for us in a storm, the tools we use when we feel afraid, anxious, panicked, or depressed.

Every one of us has the ability to fill our toolbox.

Some of these tools will be the same for many. Others will be different from person to person. The most important part of filling your toolbox is to find out what works for you and practice using the tools so it becomes a habit for you to use them.

Let's consider some everyday tools we might put into our toolbox:

### Physical Tools

- Eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water.
- Try to develop healthy sleep habits.
- Get regular physical exercise, especially any that increases your heart rate. Even ten minutes a day can help!
- Watch out so you aren't overusing alcohol or medications, or turning to drugs for relief.
- Spend time outside, especially in the sunshine.

### Social Tools

- Look for ways to maintain contact with friends and loved ones.
- Get to know new people in the place where you are settled, even temporarily. Re-engaging in a social circle is vital for healing from trauma.
- Invest in friendships that are honest and non-judgmental.
- Be willing to ask for help or receive it.
- Help someone else.

### Emotional and Spiritual Tools

- Re-establish routines as much as possible. This is especially important for children.
- Read a funny book, watch a comedian or a funny movie.
- Regain a sense of control - complete small tasks, make small decisions.
- Avoid making big decisions, if possible. When you need to make decisions, find a time when you are well-rested and feel in a healthy state of mind.

**“Nothing can dim the light which shines from within.”**

Maya Angelou.

**“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”**

Isaiah 40:31.

- Don't worry if you felt that you experienced closeness to God in the past, but that you struggle to relate to God right now. It's normal to not want to read the Bible (or other sacred texts that have helped you in the past) or pray during these times, and it doesn't mean you have lost your faith.
- An inspirational quote or Bible verse (such as those below) can be a source of spiritual support that strengthens hope.

### **For Reflection**

- Take some time to think about what resources you have. This is more than just money. Think about people who can help you, organizations, churches, or government programs. Think about your personal experiences or strengths that have helped you through this time. What tools do you already have in life?
- After considering, each person can take some time to share what resources have helped them.
- What new tool will you try out this week?



**This ends Session 1.  
Thank you for your participation.**

## SESSION 2

# FINDING STABILITY - OUR ANCHORING TOOLS

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING FOR LIFETIME PEACE  
HopeGroups

### TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

- Look after yourself as much as possible and try to rest when you can.
- Take a moment each day to listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
- Connect with loved ones as often as you can.
- Taking care of yourself also helps you to help your family.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

**"I am with you always"** (Matthew 28:20)  
Remember that God is with you  
- it's the most frequent promise of God in the Bible.



No.1

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING FOR LIFETIME PEACE  
HopeGroups

### ROUTINE HELPS CHILDREN FEEL SAFE

- Even when it feels hard, try to have some daily routines for yourself and children.
- If you can, help children with daily routines like meals or schoolwork.
- Our children learn calmness and kindness from us.
- Tell yourself a calming message again and again, Try 'I can do this, I am trying my best'

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

**"Do not fear, for I am with you... I will strengthen you and help you."** (Isaiah 41:10)  
God promises to be with us and help us. He can help you cope.



No.2

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING FOR LIFETIME PEACE  
HopeGroups

### COPING WITH STRESS, UPSET, AND ANGER

- Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling.
- Losing your temper? Breathe in and out slowly five times.
- Try to do something that helps you relax.
- Remember to praise yourself each time you take steps to cope.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
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**"Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray."** (James 5:13)  
Pause. Say a prayer and ask God to give you the strength you need for this moment.



No.5

## Recognizing the Signs

Last meeting we talked about common reactions to trauma. Learning about these things can give us a sense of power and hope; we realize we are not the only ones who feel this way, and we find common ground with the people around us. Let's review and consider a few more signs that might mean you have experienced a traumatic event.

### Physical Tools

- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbances
- Changes in appetite
- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Chronic muscle tension

### Emotional Reactions

- Feeling overwhelmed/emotionally spent
- Feeling helpless
- Feeling inadequate
- Sense of vulnerability
- Increased mood swings
- Irritability
- Crying more easily or frequently
- Suicidal or violent thoughts or urges

### Behavioral Reactions

- Isolation or withdrawal
- Restlessness
- Changes in consumption of drugs and alcohol
- Changes in relationships with others

### Thought-Pattern Reactions

- Disbelief, sense of numbing
- Replaying events in one's mind over and over
- Decreased concentration
- Confusion or impaired memory
- Difficulty making decisions or problem-solving
- Distressing dreams or fantasies

## Recognizing the Signs

Have you experienced any of these reactions since the crisis began? Are you commonly experiencing any of these now?

The good news is these reactions are normal and, with self-care and some intentional processing, the reactions may become less

frequent and even disappear with time. We will talk today about tools we can use to find an anchor of hope during stormy times. These tools can help reduce anxiety, depression, and stress in our lives.

Please remember that we are all unique! People experience different reactions to trauma, and different tools help them. You are going on a journey to find the tools that work for you.

It is also important to note that you might benefit from more than just these tools. If at any time, you feel that your trauma reactions are stopping you from living day to day life, ask your group facilitator if they can refer you to a psychologist or other mental health professional who can help you more directly.

## Our Anchoring Tools

### Intentional Breathing

Find a comfortable place to sit. If possible, look for a quiet spot, where you won't be interrupted. Taking just 30-60 seconds out of your day to breathe deeply can empower you to cope with stress. Here are some tips:

- Breathe from your diaphragm. Put your hand on your lower abdomen and feel that your stomach expands as you breathe in and falls as you breathe out.
- Listen to the sound of your breath.
- Count to 2 as you breathe in, then hold your breath for 2 seconds and slowly let your breath out for 2 seconds.
- Practice this every day, several times a day.
- When you feel particularly stressed, take 30 seconds to breathe in this way.

### Engage in Relationship

- Intentionally call or meet with someone you trust and who helps you look at life from a positive perspective. It doesn't matter what you talk about. Just engage in the relationship.
- Take a walk with someone you trust. Share how you are feeling and talk about tools that help you cope.



### Practice Little Things

- Spend time outside. Nature, fresh air and sunshine have strong healing powers.
- Reduce stressors in areas of your life. Learn to say no.
- Time away. Step away from others and allow yourself some alone time, without a phone.
- Physical exercise. Even 15 minutes can help. Consider walking, running, aerobics, swimming or yoga.
- Learn about stress. When you are learning and applying what you have learned, you are feeling more competent and successful.
- Ask questions. Sometimes asking others how they are doing, how they are coping will open ideas for yourself. Even when you share an idea of what might have helped you – you are potentially helping reduce your own stress.
- Write in a journal or a journal of thanksgiving.
- Watch a funny movie or TV show, or read a funny book. Smiling and laughter help reduce stress.
- Create music, a poem, a story or a game to play with others.
- Think about a quote or verse that gives you hope (there are examples below). You may want to pray about it or talk about it with your family and friends.

**“Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it’s just too bad, because there is no one to help him. If it is cold, two can sleep together and stay warm, but how can you keep warm by yourself? Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break.”**

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

**“Hope is being able to see that there is light, despite all the darkness.”**

Desmond Tutu

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Do you have frequent headaches? Do you feel tension in your neck, shoulders or back? When you are stressed, your body may respond with these physical sensations. Here is one technique to help your body and mind relax.

This practice involves gradually tensing and relaxing different muscle groups in your body. When you do this, you learn to recognize the physical sensations of tension and relaxation. Becoming aware of physical tension and symptoms of stress are an important part of healing.

Start by finding a quiet place where you can be alone and comfortable. Sit in a comfortable chair, close your eyes and let your body become relaxed. Next, begin to tense and then relax the muscles in your toes, and slowly work your way up the body, all the way to the head. Inhale as you tense each muscle group for about five seconds and then relax that same group for 30 seconds. As you relax, slowly exhale. Pay close attention to the sensations in your body as you tense and relax. You can repeat this process, and be sure to spend a little time enjoying your relaxed state!

## Imagine a Peaceful Place

Find a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down. Close your eyes, start to breathe more slowly, and imagine a place that is peaceful for you. Maybe you think of a favorite vacation spot, or somewhere you have always wanted to visit. Maybe this is a place from your own life. Imagine what you can see, hear, smell, touch and maybe even taste. Spend time imagining and breathing, simply enjoying the peaceful spot in your mind.

### For Reflection

- How did you feel as you practiced these tools?
- Which tool was most helpful to you?
- Which new tool do you plan to try in the coming week?

This ends Session 2.  
Thank you for your participation.



## SESSION 3

# TALK ABOUT IT

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

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### HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH CRISIS

- Children may be scared, confused and angry. They need your support.
- Listen to children when they share how they are feeling.
- Accept how they feel and give them comfort.
- Every day before you sleep, praise yourself for trying to help your children cope.

Parents and Caregivers are HEROES  
Protecting our children in a crisis

"[God] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Ask God to give you the strength you need to provide the support your children need.

No.3



**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
HopeGroups

### MAKING TRAVEL PLANS WITH OUR CHILDREN

- Make a song with your child so they memorise your full name and phone number, and number of someone you trust. Go over it every day.
- Tell your child where you're going and why, in a way they can understand and handle.
- Make backup copies or photos of all your identity documents
- Praise yourself for doing the best you can.

Parents and Caregivers are HEROES  
Protecting our children in a crisis

"Keep me safe, for in You I take refuge." (Psalm 16:1)

Dear God, please help me and give me strength as I keep my children safe. Amen.

No.10



**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

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### SMALL THINGS HELP KEEP CHILDREN SAFE

- Talk to children about what is happening in a way that they can understand.
- Identify a meeting point and make a plan in case you get separated.
- Assure your children that you will do everything to keep them safe.
- Planning with children helps them feel safer too.

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Protecting our children in a crisis

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go." (Psalm 32:8a)

You can ask God to guide you as you make plans to stay safe.

No.6



**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

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HopeGroups

### KEEPING SAFE ON THE ROAD

- If a child has a mobile phone, save your number and those of a few trusted people.
- Explain to your child how they should behave when at checkpoints, (i.e., be quiet, do not leave the vehicle).
- Hide money or bank cards in different places, in case you lose your bags.
- Being prepared takes hard work. Be sure to look after yourself.

Parents and Caregivers are HEROES  
Protecting our children in a crisis

Dear God, "Keep me safe, my God, for in You I take refuge." (Psalm 16:1) Amen.

No.15



**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

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HopeGroups

### CARING FOR CHILDREN IN A SHELTER

- Take a comfort item from home with them to a shelter
- Find something to smile about together
- Decorate the shelter together, with notes or pictures for the walls if you can
- Try to reassure your children as often as you can.

Parents and Caregivers are HEROES  
Protecting our children in a crisis

Dear God, I pray that I would experience your peace, "...which exceeds anything we can understand." (Philippians 4:7a) Amen.

No.16



# Where Am I?

## For Reflection

1. How has life changed for you since the crisis?
2. What has been the biggest change for you?

We've all been through a very difficult experience. We want to be able to cope and support ourselves and each other. To begin to do that, we need to be aware of where we are at, and what has happened to us. We might feel alone or think that we are the only one who feels this way — and it is true that each person's experience of a crisis is unique. But there are some common experiences people may have when difficult things happen.

### These are common reactions to crisis:

- You are looking for someone to blame – yourself or someone else.
- You may feel guilty — that you have survived while others haven't, or others suffered more than you.
- You may feel ashamed about how you are reacting or embarrassed about accepting help.

## For Reflection

Do any of these sound like where you are right now?

While we might look for someone to blame, feel guilty or ashamed, all these reactions can stop us from accepting what's happened, and accepting that it is not our fault.

Besides these feelings, we can also react to trauma in three main ways:

1. You may relive the experience - in nightmares or flashbacks during the day.
2. You may find yourself avoiding things that remind you of the event. You may avoid feeling at all, by becoming "numb," or you may work too much or too little.
3. You may be on alert all the time, feeling tense, overreacting, having difficulty sleeping or feeling unwell. You may find it hard to concentrate.

## For Reflection

Does any of that sound like how you are feeling?

These reactions are normal and it's good to notice them in ourselves, be aware of them and talk about it. By talking about our experiences, and finding ways to be calm and stay in the present moment, we can support one another to get through this time.

However, if these reactions continue for a long time or stop us being able to live our day to day life, we may need to speak to someone and get further support. Talk with your group leader after the session if you feel you need more support.

Here are some other ideas on healthy habits that can strengthen you to go through this time:

- Learn to recognize stressful thinking. Paying attention to stressful thoughts may help you reduce them. Training yourself to be aware of your thoughts, your breathing, your heart rate and other signs of tension helps you recognize stress when it begins.
- Breathe. Deep breathing (take a breath in through the nose and then hold for a few seconds and then let out through the mouth) is a simple tip for stress reduction that can be used anywhere at any time.
- Take breaks from news stories, including those on social media. It's good to be informed, but constant information about the crisis around you can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple of times a day and disconnecting from social media for a while.
- Be your best self. Feelings of shame, guilt, or inadequacy can lead to negative thinking. Develop the habit of gratitude and forgiveness of others.
- Time away. Step away from others and allow yourself some alone time.
- Connect with others. Get to know others – ask questions, listen to understand them.

We have spent time sharing on where we as individuals are, and on how we are doing. This



is important for our own healing, and also for us to recognize, in order to help children well, as they deal with similar issues. The next questions and tips will help us reflect on how our children are doing and how we can talk with them about their reactions to the crisis. If you are not a parent or caregiver, these tips (and others in future sessions) can still be important for you. Do you regularly interact with other children in your life (maybe you are a grandparent, an aunt or uncle, a teacher, or a close family friend to someone who has children). How could you use these tools in those relationships?

Also, although these tools are for relating to children, many of the ideas are relevant for your adult relationships, too. For example, we encourage that communication with children should be open, honest, supportive and positive. All these recommendations are also relevant for communication in adult relationships.

### For Reflection

1. How often does your child seem stressed or worried?
2. How often is your child able to talk about their problems and share their worries?
3. Have you and your children talked together about what's happened? How did it go?
4. What are some of the fears or concerns children are expressing?

Take a moment to acknowledge examples of how you have reached out and listened to your child. These moments are important, because children value when we are open and honest with them and take their concerns seriously.

Here are some key tips on how to speak with your child:

- **Be open** — Allow your child to talk freely. Ask them open questions (which means questions that can't just be answered by a "yes" or "no").
- **Be honest** — Always answer their questions truthfully. Think about how old your child is and how much they can understand. It's ok to not know all the answers.
- **Be supportive** — Your child may be scared or confused. Give them space to share how they are feeling and let them know you are there for them. Praise your child every day for something they do well.
- **Be positive** — Remind your child that you care and that they can talk to you at any time.

Avoid exposing your child to graphic details of violence: in real life, on TV, on radio or on your phone. Do not direct your child to feel a specific emotion (e.g. anger) but accept the way they feel.

Every evening, praise children and yourself for something — recognize how well you are doing in the circumstances.

## This ends Session 3. Thank you for your participation.

You will find a short discussion guide that follows this session and includes optional questions to help you talk with your own or other children about how they are doing. We look forward to meeting again next week!



## SESSION 3

### EXTRA TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**

You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the tool. If you are the parent going through this handout with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead. These are the included tools:

- Talking with Children about the Crisis
- Extra Actions - Planning for Safety Together
- Talking with Children - Simple Steps to Stay Safe



## Talking with Children About the Crisis

Begin the time with your child with regular check-in questions, such as:

1. What was the best thing that happened this week?
2. What was something funny that happened this week?
3. What was hard about this week?

### Game: Good and Bad

Explain that you will read some statements of things that could happen – a change – like winning a prize or starting a new school. The child should quickly decide whether the change is a good or a bad thing. There are no right or wrong answers!

e.g. You: “Winning a prize!” – Child: “Good!” ....  
You: “Starting a new school” – Child: “Bad!”

- Winning a prize
- Moving house to a new city

- Starting a new school
- Getting a new puppy

The crisis has made a lot of changes in our lives. Explain that today we'll be looking at what's happened, how we feel about it, and what we can do together to stay safe.

### For Reflection With Your Child

1. What are some of the changes that have happened for you and your family since the crisis?
2. How do you feel about these changes, or about what's happening now?

You can explain this to your child, or a trusted relative or friend could explain:

“It's normal to feel scared or upset. Adults do too! Lots of things have changed, and it can be scary when we don't know what will happen next, like where we will go to school. It's good to ask questions and to share how you are feeling. If there's anything you might be confused or worried about, don't be afraid to ask someone you trust.”

*Say to your child:* Here are some ways you could talk to your parents about your questions or what's worrying you:

- Ask your parent(s) to sit down with you for a few minutes and tell them how you are feeling
- If you see news about the crisis on the TV, online or in a newspaper, ask your parent(s) to talk with you about it and ask them any questions you have.
- Draw a picture about how you are feeling about the situation and share it with your parent(s).
- Talk with your family about a family safety plan.

### Encouraging Others

*Say to the child:* You are doing so well so far – [mention something specific to the child's situation – such as “you have stayed safe on your journey here” or “you helped your family when you had to shelter at home”].

### For Reflection With Your Child

1. Thinking about other children in your family or community, or about people in your family or household: Is there anyone who is having a hard time, or seems like they might be sad or worried?
2. Do you think there's anything you could do to encourage someone else this week?

Encourage the child for all their ideas and the ways they already care for others and encourage them. Suggest to the child that here are some things they could do:

- Play games with a younger brother or sister, or read them a story.
- Tell your parent(s) something you love about them or want to say thank you for.
- Draw a picture and put it in your window with an encouraging message for people who pass by.

### Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

We might feel overwhelmed by the situation but actually, as we've talked about today, there are so many things we can do ourselves that

can help us and our families to support each other and stay safe.

Some ways children can help are:

- Talking with your parents about what you are feeling worried about.
- Helping others in your family who might be having a hard time at the moment.
- Being kind – put a picture in your window with an encouraging message.
- Making a family safety plan together with your family.



## Extra Actions - Planning for Safety Together

*Note: this section is intended for use with groups who are currently in a live conflict/crisis situation or are on the move. There are activities for group members to do with their children and suggestions on how to talk with children about staying safe.*

Planning for safety together with children helps them to feel safer, too. Children will be aware that things are uncertain, and being able to talk about it and have practical actions they can be part of helps them to feel calmer and safer.

You could take some time with your children and ask them for their ideas of what you could do to stay safe. Here are some practical ways you can plan for safety together with your children:

- Make a plan together for what to do if you are separated and every day, agree on a clear place to meet if you are separated.
- Make a song or chant with your child so they memorize your full name and phone number, and the number of someone you trust. Go over it every day.
- Tell your child they should not spend time outside alone after dark or take a lift with someone alone.

- Make sure you know who your children are spending time with online and in person.

### For Parent/Caregiver Reflection

1. What have you done that has helped to keep children safe, and what are you doing now?
2. Is there something we've talked about that you are going to put into practice or do differently this week?
3. What kind of plan could you make with your family to help stay safe?

Here are some tips for staying safe with children in active conflict zones:

- If there is no shelter available, it is better to stand in the staircase of a building and stay away from windows.
- Remind your child to avoid touching unknown items or ruins after the bombing to avoid interaction with explosives.
- Practice with your child: What do we do when there is active bombing? What do we do after?
- If there is a shelter available, practice running to the shelter. Making a routine out of the bombing can significantly reduce stress and provide your child with some sense of control.

### Putting it into practice this week.

Talk with your child about what they have heard about the war and any questions they have. What can you do together as a family to stay safe?



## Talking with Children - Simple Steps to Stay Safe

*Say to your child:* You are doing so well so far – [mention something specific to the child's situation – such as “you have stayed safe on your journey here” or “you are helping your

family when you have to shelter at home”].

### For Reflection With a Child

What are some things you have been doing with your parents or brothers and sisters to stay safe? Encourage the child for all the ways they have been staying safe and the actions they are taking, even if it is difficult and means for example that they are not in school, not seeing their friends or loved ones. Share with them that there is a lot that children can do to help stay safe – we can work with our family to make plans to help us to stay safe and stay together when things are difficult.

*Say:* Here are some things you could do together with your parent(s):

- Take some time together as a family to agree on your family safety plan.
- Remember to avoid touching unknown items or walking in ruined buildings after the bombing, unless you are sure it is safe.
- Make a plan of what to do in case anyone gets separated from the others and agree on this plan every day.
- Make up a song or chant together to memorize your parent's full name and phone number, and make sure you know your own full name and address, too.
- In a conflict/war setting: Talk with your family about a plan for what to do when there is danger (e.g. running to the shelter, taking supplies with us).

### For Reflection With a Child

Is there something we've talked about that you are going to try to do this week?

*This ends the tools “Talking With Children About the Crisis”, “Extra Actions - Planning for Safety Together” and “Talking with Children - Simple Steps to Stay Safe”. We look forward to hearing how it went!*



## SESSION 4

# STRONG FAMILIES

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES


WVO PARENTING FOR CHALLENGING TIMES  
HopeGroups

### 5 MINUTES OF POSITIVE TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

- Playing with and talking to children for a few minutes every day helps them feel secure.
- Ask children what they would like to do.
- Listen to them, look at them, give them your full attention.
- Small amounts of time can help them feel safe and loved.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

“Jesus Said, ‘Let the little children come to me.’” (Matthew 19:14)  
Our time and attention are great gifts we can give children.



No.4

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING FOR CHALLENGING TIMES  
HopeGroups

### CARING FOR CHILDREN IN A SHELTER

- Take a comfort item from home with them to a shelter
- Find something to smile about together
- Decorate the shelter together, with notes or pictures for the walls if you can
- Try to reassure your children as often as you can.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

Dear God, I pray that I would experience your peace,  
“...which exceeds anything we can understand.” (Philippians 4:7a) Amen.



No.16

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING FOR CHALLENGING TIMES  
HopeGroups

### BUILDING CHILDREN'S STRENGTH IN A CRISIS

- Ask children to help with day-to-day tasks such as making food or cleaning.
- Praise children for trying or doing well.
- This encourages helpful behaviour.
- Praising children shows them that you notice and care.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

“Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.” (Proverbs 12:25)  
In times of great anxiety, kind words of praise are very important.



No.7

Today's session talks about relationships within families and will help us think through how we can relate positively with our family members. Many of these principles are relevant for communication in relationships with children and other adults.

Many of us are now living in different family groups than before the crisis. We have been separated from some family members and are living with other relatives, friends, or even new acquaintances. As we discuss “family” in today's session, please consider both your family members and the people you are currently living with. Also, when we discuss parents and children, the ideas are relevant for both parents and other caregivers, like grandparents or trusted friends of the family.

Let's be sensitive to each member's situation. Where parents are separated, or where loved ones have been lost, we can acknowledge at the start that the missing person or separated family members are not there, and that this is difficult.

## Positive Communication At Home

### For Reflection

- Can you think of a time this week where you had a good conversation with your children or other family members?
- What was positive about it?

When we're under pressure at a time of crisis and change, it can be hard to keep our communication positive – but when we do, it has a big impact for children. How we talk and behave in front of and with our children influences how they behave, too. Positive communication also involves positive discipline, such as speaking calmly and removing privileges, rather than hitting a child with our hand or another object. Poor communication between adults in the household can have a negative impact on children. Practicing peaceful, loving relationships helps children feel secure and loved.

### For Reflection

What do you think positive communication looks like in practice?

Positive communication could include:

- Trying to talk kindly to everyone in the family – both adults and children. When you are upset, make an intentional effort to speak kindly to your child and not shout or scream at them.
- Telling others what you want them to do instead of what you don't want them to do. Instead of "Stop shouting", try "Please speak more quietly".
- Being a good listener – be open and show others that you hear what they are saying.
- Saying thank you, even for small or routine things, can make a big difference.
- Praising your child every day for something they do well.

## One on One Time with Children

### For Reflection

- Can you think of an activity you have enjoyed doing with your child(ren) in the last 3 days?
- Is it easy or hard to spend time individually with each of your children? What helps or hinders you in this?
- How could spending quality time with your children help you or them?

Especially in conflict settings or times of crisis, it can be difficult to find time to spend with our children. But, one-on-one time is one of the key ways we can help children feel loved and secure, and it shows them that they are important. Playing with and talking to children every day helps them feel secure.

Even in uncertain times, you could do this by:

- Setting aside time to spend with each child. It can be for just 5 minutes or longer, and it could be at the same time each day so children can look forward to it.
- Asking your child what they would like to do. Choosing builds their self-confidence. If they want to do something that isn't possible in the current situation, then this is a chance to talk with them about it.
- Even if you aren't able to do an activity together, just listening to them, looking at them, and giving them your full attention, can make all the difference.

## Exercise - Model Possible Time with a Child

*Your facilitator will now lead you in an exercise about spending time with a child. You will be using the game called "Which Person in the House," and you can find that game in your Extra Tools for Supporting Children, at the end of this session.*

If your family has many children, you can make one on one time practical by suggesting group activities as a family, and one-on one time less frequently.

If your family is in a more stable situation or you would like more suggestions for activities, consider the ideas below. Remember that where parents are under intense stress and in ongoing conflict/crisis settings, simply spending 5 minutes a day with your child is enough and will really help.

### Ideas for different age groups of children

#### **Baby/Toddler:**

- Copy their facial expression and sounds
- Sing songs, make music with pots and spoons or other available items
- Stack cups or blocks
- Tell a story, read a book, or share pictures

#### **Young Child:**

- Read a book, tell stories, or look at pictures, play games
- Go for a walk if possible
- Dance to music or sing
- Do a chore together – make cleaning and cooking a game!
- Help with schoolwork if the child is in school

#### **Teenager:**

- Talk about something they like: sports, music, movies
- Go for a walk if possible
- Play a game together

You can do anything together! Good one on one time means that you listen to your child, look at them, give them your full attention, and have fun, even if it's for a short time.

## Putting it into Practice

Can you plan to have quality one-on-one time with your child this week? What might you do together? Could you find out what they would enjoy? It's fine if this can only be for 5 minutes a day right now.

**This ends Session 4.  
Thank you for your participation.**

You will find a short discussion guide that follows this lesson, and includes optional questions to help you talk with your own or other children.



## SESSION 4

### EXTRA TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**

You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the tool. If you are the parent going through this handout with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead. These are the included tools:

- Talking with Children about the Crisis



## Talking with Children About the Crisis

*(for parents, caregivers, or trusted friends to do with children who are settled, either as refugees or back home. You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the handout. If you are the parent going through this tool with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead.)*

**Begin the time with your child with regular check-in questions, such as:**

1. What was the best thing that happened this week?
2. What was something funny that happened this week?
3. What was hard about this week?

*Note for the parent or caregiver: you should be sensitive to the child’s living situation and family context. Where children are separated from a parent, or living in a different household away from some of the people they love, they may want to look back and talk about their family, or they may want to talk about who they live with now. Let the discussion be led by the child and don’t press them to talk about something they are not happy to discuss.*

### Topic: Me and My Family For Reflection With Your Child

Who lives in your home (or the place where you are staying) with you now?

### Game: Which Person in the House

Explain that you will play a game together now. You will say something and the child should say the name of the person in the household who is the most like what you’ve said.

E.g. “Which person in the house makes the most noise” – “My dad!”

The child should answer as quickly as they can! And the answer can be “me”.

*Be flexible here about which household the child is talking about. They may want to look back at their family home setting, or they may be thinking about where they currently are – which may be someone else’s home, a transit centre, or many other living situations.*

*Which person in the house...*

- Is the tallest?
- Makes the most noise?
- Is the youngest?
- Is the best cook?
- Is kind to others?
- Makes you laugh?



- Add your ideas on something special about your family members

Explain that now we'll be looking at how you can be yourself and be the part of your family (or household) that only you can be.

## Who Am I?

### For Reflection With Your Child

Have you ever wished you could be more like your brother or sister, or your friend at school?

*(Note to parent: Be ready to share your own answer first if the child finds it difficult to answer.)*

Sometimes it can be good to try to be like someone else – like wanting to learn to play football like your sister, or to be a good listener like your brother. But it's really important that we realize that we are also special just for who we already are!

There's no one quite like you and there are things that only you can do! It might be things like:

- Being kind
- Making people laugh
- Helping your younger sibling or your parent(s)

### For Reflection With Your Child

What is one thing that you think is really about you? It might be something you are good at or something about who you are. *(Note to parent: again, share your own answer if you need to).*

What do you think is special about being you?

## My Family

### For Reflection With Your Child

What is your favourite thing to do with your parent(s)? *(or the adults the child is currently living with)* (Share your own experience of your own childhood if you can!)

*Say to your child:* That does sound fun! Are you still managing to spend time together doing things like this at the moment? What

has changed in your family and is it easier or harder to have fun together?

When things change, our parents or other adults around us might have a lot on their mind or have many responsibilities. Sometimes we may be separated from someone in our family, or not be able to see everyone. But, our parents still love us and want to spend time with us.

### For Reflection With Your Child

What might be some ways that you could spend time with your parent(s)? *(or other caregiver)*

Here are some ideas (if you need them):

- Ask your parent (or caregiver) if you can read a book or sing songs together
- Do some exercise together to your favourite music
- Ask if you can help with cooking or preparing a meal, or another household task

*If the child is currently separated from a parent or important caregiver, you may think together about how they could keep in touch, or remember this person together with those they are living with now. For example, through phone calls, writing a letter to express your feelings and tell them about the place you are living now, doing an activity you enjoyed doing together to remember them.*

### Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

What is one thing you will ask your parent(s) if you can do together this week? Remember what you said is special about you – what can you do this week to share this with your family? e.g.

- “I am kind” – tell each person in your family something you love about them, or help someone
- “I’m good at making people laugh” – gather your family together and tell them some jokes!
- “I’m good at cooking” – ask your parents if you can help to prepare one of the meals this week

- “I’m good at writing” – write a story or a poem and share it with your family/ household one evening.

*This ends the tool “Talking with Children About the Crisis”. We look forward to hearing how it went!*

# SESSION 5

## STAYING SAFE TOGETHER

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
HopeGroups

### KEEPING OUR FAMILIES TOGETHER

- Keep children with you or someone you trust all the time.
- Encourage them to share anything that worries them with you.
- Talk to them about things that are not safe.
- Be proud of your efforts and try to take care of yourself too.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

"Hear my cry, O God;  
listen to my prayer." (Psalm 63:1)  
Dear God, please keep our family together  
and give us the strength we need. Amen.



No.8

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
HopeGroups

### MAKING AN IDENTITY TAG FOR A CHILD

- Write the full name & phone number of you and three people you trust.
- Write any medication your child needs, any special needs or disability.
- An identity tag should be covered in plastic or kept in a waterproof bag.
- Hide the tag in something your child always wears (e.g., a pocket, shoe, necklace).

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

"Hear my cry, O God;  
listen to my prayer." (Psalm 63:1)  
Dear God, please protect my children and keep them safe. Amen.



No.9

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
HopeGroups

### PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN FROM TRAFFICKERS

- Traffickers can be men, women, couples, and could be from your own community.
- Teach your children that people sometimes lie and trick children into coming with them.
- Tell children to talk to a trusted adult if they feel confused or worried.
- Teach children to trust their instincts and get away if something feels strange.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

"Save me, Lord, from lying lips  
and from deceitful tongues." (Psalm 120:2)  
Dear God, please provide the help we need and protect us  
from those that would harm us. Amen.



No.11

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
HopeGroups

### TRAVELING SAFELY WITH OUR CHILDREN

- Tell someone you trust your travel plans, where you are and who you are with.
- When it's hard, remember you're trying your best in a difficult situation.
- Travel in a group of people you know where possible.
- If you need to show your passport or ID, try to keep it in your hands.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

Dear God, as I travel with my children I will remember that you are my...  
"refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1) Amen.



No.12

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
HopeGroups

### KEEPING SAFE ON THE ROAD

- If a child has a mobile phone, save your number and those of a few trusted people.
- Explain to your child how they should behave when at checkpoints, (i.e., be quiet, do not leave the vehicle).
- Hide money or bank cards in different places, in case you lose your bags.
- Being prepared takes hard work. Be sure to look after yourself.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

Dear God, "Keep me safe, my God,  
for in You I take refuge." (Psalm 16:1) Amen.



No.15

Today's topics are designed to be used in various transition and crisis settings – with people who are in live conflict/war/disaster zones, on the move (either fleeing home or returning home after war, natural disaster, or another crisis), or settled back at home or in a new location as an internally displaced person, a refugee, or an immigrant. Where activities vary, you will see these symbols – please choose the content reflecting your context. We believe the topics we will talk about today are important for every parent and child to understand, regardless of where they live.



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**



## Staying Together

### For Reflection

Have there been times so far where you have felt worried about your children's safety?

In times of conflict and crisis, there is so much that we can worry about – it can be overwhelming and we can feel that we cannot do enough to keep our children safe. However, as a parent, you've already been doing so much – helping to find a safe place to live for your children, keeping them safe while travelling, finding food for them to eat, reassuring them.

One of the simplest and most powerful ways we can keep our children safe is just by staying together, and making sure children are not separated from us. That might mean keeping them with us or with someone we know and trust, so they have adult supervision. We know that sometimes parents are separated from one another by conflict, active attacks, or other crises, and sometimes we cannot avoid this. We shouldn't feel guilty about this, or that this is our fault. But we can do all we can to make sure that children are not separated from the family, or from people we trust. By doing this, we can avoid many risks that children might face.

### For Reflection

What do you already do to help to stay together

and prevent children from getting lost? It's great that you are already doing so much to keep your children together with you.

Some ways you can help to keep children safe by staying together:

- Tell children that staying together will help keep them safe
- Keep children with you or someone you trust all the time
- If you are travelling, hold their hand, have them walk in front of you, and stay in the same vehicle with them
- Create a safety note for each child if you are on the move, whether away from or returning home – this should be covered in plastic, or kept in a waterproof bag. Write on the note the full name and phone number of you and three people you trust, any medication your child needs, any special needs or disability. Hide a safety note on every child (e.g. in a pocket that they always wear, on a necklace or in their shoe).
- Tell your child they should not spend time outside alone after dark or take a lift with someone alone.
- Make sure you know who your children are spending time with online and in person.

### For reflection

Is there something new you will put into place this week?





## Children's Changing Roles

### For Reflection

- Thinking about your children over this time, how are they spending their time?
- Have you noticed any changes in their role, or what they do every day?

*(For example, children may have been out of school, doing more or less of something, seeing their friends more or less, helping more or less at home, etc.)*

- Do you think the situation now has made children closer to, or further away from, what you think children 'should' be doing as children?

*(For example, more time with family could be a good thing, but being out of school might not be.)*

There may have been both positive and negative changes to children's roles – and this may vary a lot between families and households. What do you think needs to be in place for children to be able to fulfil their roles as children?

Let's cover these key points, focusing on any areas which are especially relevant in your context or community:

- Engaging in education is really important – do your best to re-enrol children if they have been out of school, or enrol in support programmes, and take an interest in their work and studies, especially where school is closed and they are learning remotely.
- Children should only help with work in the house or work outside in a way that doesn't affect their wellbeing or development negatively. When thinking about sharing household chores as a family, think about an appropriate level of responsibility for children.
- Education and opportunities to learn and develop are equally important for both girls and boys, so be careful to ensure that children have the same opportunities, whatever their gender.

- Staying together as a family is very important for children's sense of safety and security, and family separation (i.e. sending children away) should be avoided.

### For Reflection

Is there something that stands out to you from what we've talked about, or something that might be relevant for your family?



## Avoiding Trafficking

### For Reflection

Can you tell me about someone who has helped you so far in the crisis? *(This might be someone who has helped you to find a place to stay, access food and clothing, or told you about a safe route to travel).*

Can you share an example of something that has helped you feel safe during the crisis?

It's wonderful to have so many people who are willing to help and show kindness to one another in this difficult time. However, at the same time, we know that in any crisis – whether due to conflict, war, disaster, or transition, there are also people who do not have good intentions and see this as an opportunity to exploit people who are vulnerable.

### For Reflection

Have you noticed anything like that during this crisis – feeling concerned about whether someone you have seen or met has good intentions -- in your experience so far?

One key risk in times of crisis is trafficking – where people who may seem like they want to help are actually seeking to exploit those who need help, for their own gain. This could involve taking people to a place where they will have to work or be exploited, and will not be free to leave. This may be presented as a good opportunity for adults or children to find work, or be supported by people elsewhere. This can happen to both adults and children, and it will usually seem like a good opportunity to find a safe place and earn money. A trafficker might offer to help a person get back home, if they have been displaced by the crisis or transition. A trafficker may also go out of their way to be helpful or give extravagant gifts,

which make it difficult for people to say no to their requests.

It's important therefore to know the signs to look out for so that you can avoid danger and find honest people who will help, and share this information with others. It is also important to know there is a lot you can do to help yourself and your children stay safe in the crisis.

### For Reflection

How do you think we can stay safe from trafficking?

Some ways you can stay safe are:

- Be aware that traffickers will look like ordinary people, and sound like they want to help.
- Trust your instincts - if something feels strange, get out immediately.
- Ask to see a photo ID before you accept anyone's help, transport or a place to stay. If local police are there, check with them.
- Teach children that they should not say yes to anyone offering help without talking to you first.
- If you are concerned that someone may have been trafficked, or that trafficking is happening, you should report this to the nearest police station or local authorities.

- If you are travelling: Travel in a group of people you know
- Keep someone you trust updated with your travel places, where you are and who you are with
- When travelling with someone you don't know, take a photo of the person and the vehicle and send it to someone you know and trust
- Make a code word with people you trust, to let them know if you are in danger
- Don't give your passport or ID documents to anyone, or your personal phone

### For Reflection

Is there someone you could share this information with?

## Putting it into practice this week

What actions could you take with your child, or what could you talk to them about from our conversation today?

## This ends Session 5. Thank you for your participation.

You will find a short discussion guide that follows this lesson and includes optional questions to help you talk with your own or other children about how they are doing. We look forward to meeting again next week!



## SESSION 5

### EXTRA TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN

The following tools are for parents, caregivers, or trusted friends to do with children in various settings. You will see the following symbols, which show if the tool is for use with children in live conflict/disaster zones, children on the move, or those who are settled.



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**

You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the tool. If you are the parent going through this tool with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead. These are the included tools:

- Staying Safe Together
- Who Can I Trust?

#### Beginning the time together

Begin with your regular check-in questions, such as:

- What was the best thing that happened this week?
- What was something funny that happened this week?
- What was hard about this week?



#### Staying Safe Together

##### For Reflection with the Child

Imagine you could create a fun and safe place for children where you are. What would be there? What would it be like?

*In an in-person setting, you might ask the child to draw this place, and in a group, children could create a huge drawing altogether, or create individual pictures and share about them.*

With all the changes that have happened recently, it may be difficult to find these safe places for children to have fun and play together.

##### For Reflection with the Child

In the place where you live now, what are your favourite places to go? Where are the best places for children?

*In a group session, you could ask children to work together to draw a map of where they live – adding in places like shops, their homes, health centres, school, churches/temples etc. They can then mark on the map with one colour the places that are safe and good for children, and use another colour to show places that are not good or safe for children.*

##### For Reflection with the Child

Has this changed since the crisis?

*[Are there new places that have been opened for children? Are there places that used to be safe, that aren't safe anymore? Or, are you still able to easily leave home and move around the neighbourhood?]*

When things are changing fast, or we are in a new place, we might feel uncertain or worried.

### For Reflection with the Child

What do you think can help children to stay safe where you are now?

There are some simple things that can help children to stay safe, wherever they are, even when things are changing a lot or are very different.

- Stay together with your family
- Tell someone you trust if you feel worried about your safety
- If you can, keep going with your schoolwork and ask for help to do that
- If you are in an unstable place or might be moving to somewhere new: Make sure you know your full name and your parents' names, and your address
- Talk with your parent(s) about what you would do if you were separated

### For Reflection with the Child

Is there anything you might do to stay safe where you are this week?



## Who can I trust?

*In a group setting, you could start this section with a group game – 'Secret Safe Zone'. Secretly choose one place in the room (such as a wall or rug) which is a 'safe zone' – where players cannot be 'tagged'. Children should run around, and they can be tagged (tapped on the shoulder) whenever they are not in the safe zone. When a child is tagged, they must sit down where they are – they can be 'released' by being tagged by another child. Gradually children will be able to work out where the safe zone is. The children win when they are all in the safe zone. Play again with one or two children choosing the safe zone.*

### For Reflection with the Child

Apart from your parents, can you think of any other adults or children who have helped you and your family since the war started?

*[This could be people who have helped with*

*food and clothing, a place to stay, transport, or sharing helpful information, for example.]*

It's great that there have been so many people who are willing to be kind and help others during this difficult time. Most people are kind and want to help us.

But, sometimes people are not kind and might say they are trying to 'help' us and our family, but really they are not helping us. For example:

- Someone might come to the community and say that they have a great opportunity for children to learn or to work, in another place. They might also offer to help older kids get back home, if you had to leave your home, city or even country – this can be dangerous as children would be separated from their family, and might not be treated well, or what the person said may not be true.
- Older children might be asked to work with soldiers or fight, which puts children in serious danger.
- Our parents could be given a job which is not good for them, where they work too hard or are not safe at work.
- This can sound scary, but there are some simple things we can do as children which can help us to know who to trust, and how to get help from people who really want to help us.

### For Reflection with the Child

What do you think children can do to make sure they are helped by safe people?

Here are a few things children can do that will help you to stay safe:

- If at all possible, stay together with your family. Don't travel on your own.
- Don't accept help from someone you don't know without talking with your parent(s) first.
- If you feel worried about something, talk to someone you trust.
- Talk with your family about these issues, and talk together about how you can stay

together and find help from people you trust.

- Share this information with other children or others in your family.
- For older children: Only share your phone number or social media details with people that you trust. Don't accept gifts which you have to keep secret.

### For Reflection with the Child

Is there anything you will talk with your family about?

If there is anything you want to talk about based on what we have discussed today, please do talk to me, or someone that you trust, about any concerns you have.

## Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

### For Reflection with the Child

From our conversation today, can you think of 3 things that might help you be safe where you are? Great!

*[Remind the child of one or two things that seemed to be important for them during the conversation.]*

What will you do this week to stay safe together?

*[Some suggestions are: Talk to someone I trust / talk with parents about safety / talk with parents about trafficking / share safety information with others / other]*

*This ends the tools "Staying Safe at Home" and "Who Can I Trust?". We look forward to hearing how it went.*



## SESSION 6

# STAYING SAFE AT HOME

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
FOR LITURGICAL PRACTICE  
HopeGroups

**COPING WITH STRESS,  
UPSET, AND ANGER**

- Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling.
- Losing your temper? Breathe in and out slowly five times.
- Try to do something that helps you relax.
- Remember to praise yourself each time you take steps to cope.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

**"Is anyone among you in trouble?  
Let them pray."** (James 5:13)  
Pause. Say a prayer and ask God to give you the strength you need for this moment.

No.5



**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
FOR LITURGICAL PRACTICE  
HopeGroups

**PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN  
FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

- If they tell you about abuse, trust your child. Reassure them it's not their fault and they are safe and loved.
- Teach your child that no one has the right to touch them or make them uncomfortable.
- Practice saying "no" loudly and strongly.
- Tell them that abusers often trick children by saying it is their 'secret'
- Talking about this with your child helps protect them.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

**"Rescue me, Lord, from evildoers;  
protect me from the violent."** (Psalm 140:1)  
Dear God, I thank you for my children. I pray that they would be kept safe. Amen.

No.13



## When I Get Angry

### For Reflection

- What has been a time this week that you remember feeling angry about something or with someone at home?
- What did you do when you felt angry?

*(Be prepared to share your own experience)*

Under stress it is normal to feel more angry than usual – whether about big things or small! We love our children and teenagers, but the stresses of the war/disaster/crisis, the extra pressures in daily life, separation from family members and the sadness we face, can all make us angry. This is normal and something that we all experience. Our anger doesn't need to be out of our control – we can do things before and during it to help us manage it.

### For Reflection

- The same things usually make us get stressed and angry every time – can you see any patterns in what makes you angry, and how do you normally react?
- Do you know what helps you to respond well?

*(In active war/conflict or unsafe settings, people may not be able to access rest, food, support and time out as in these examples. In this case, move straight onto the 'Taking a Break' tip below).*

There are ways we can help ourselves prevent anger from starting - for example:

- If we usually get angry when we are tired, can we get more rest?
- If we are angry when we are hungry, can we make sure we eat? *(be sensitive to families who may not have enough food)*
- If we are angry when we feel alone, can we ask for support or make sure we connect with others?
- If we feel under pressure and overwhelmed, can we make sure we are doing something that we enjoy and taking some time for ourselves somehow?

Finding someone we can talk to about how we are feeling can be a simple step that can make a big difference, even if we aren't able to solve all of the issues.

### For Reflection

Can you think of any ways you could prevent your anger from starting?

That sounds great! But also, however much we prepare, we will all still feel angry sometimes! We can also be prepared to react to our anger in a positive way.

Taking a break is one of the best ways to manage anger:

- When you start feeling angry, take a 10-second cool down. Breathe in and out five times before you speak or move. Then try to respond in a calmer way.
- Go somewhere else for 10 minutes to regain control of your emotions. If you have safe outdoor space, go outside.
- [if relevant in your context:] Drinking alcohol can influence our reaction. Cut back on drinking or don't drink, especially when children are awake.
- Do you have weapons or things that can be used to hit others? Lock them up, hide them, or take them out of the home.

### For Reflection

Is there something we've talked about that you want to try to put into practice this week?

## Using Positive Discipline with our Children

### For Reflection

- What have you noticed about children's behaviour during this time?
- Is it the same as usual or have you noticed more difficult behaviour?

All children misbehave. It is normal when children are tired, hungry, afraid, or learning independence. And this can be extra hard to cope with during a crisis.

### For Reflection

- How confident are you in using positive discipline rather than physical discipline with your children?
- What are some of the ways you help to encourage positive behaviours in your children?

Some ideas for positive discipline:

- Encourage positive behaviour by using positive words to say the behaviour you want to see (e.g. 'Please put your books away' rather than 'Don't make a mess') and praise your child when they are behaving well.
- Redirect unwanted behaviour quickly when you notice it beginning, by suggesting another activity.
- Use consequences rather than hitting or shouting – this is more effective and teaches children responsibility. Some ideas of consequences could be taking away privileges or taking some time to cool off (a time-out). Give your child a chance to follow instructions before giving them the consequence. Stay calm when giving the consequence and make sure it is something you can follow through with. Consequences should be proportionate and reasonable.

### For Reflection

What will you do differently for one specific behaviour with one specific child this week?

Sometimes something happens at home or outside that makes a child feel unsafe – abuse or violence against children is one of the things that can make them change their behaviour and seem to be behaving “badly”. If we notice changes in our child’s behaviour or see any physical signs of violence we should encourage the child to talk to us.

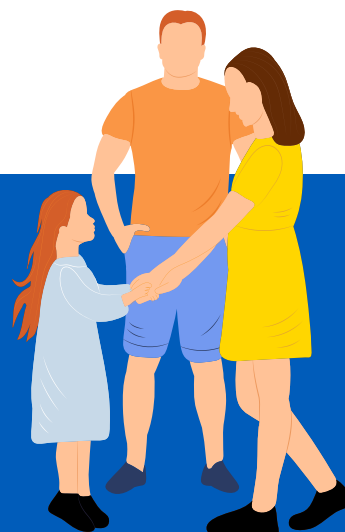
Share the appropriate procedure for reporting child abuse in your context (e.g. child helpline, social services, NGO or police.)

## Putting it into practice this week

- Could you try to talk with your child together about what ideas you and they have for how you can both manage your anger effectively?
- What could you do if you notice each other getting angry?
- What do you plan to put into practice with your child this week?

## This ends Session 6. Thank you for your participation.

You will find a short discussion guide that follows this lesson and includes optional questions to help you talk with your own or other children about how they are doing. We look forward to meeting again next week!



## SESSION 6

### EXTRA TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN

The following tools are for parents, caregivers, or trusted friends to do with children in various settings. You will see the following symbols, which show if the tool is for use with children in live conflict/disaster zones, children on the move, or those who are settled.



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**

You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the tool. If you are the parent going through this tool with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead. These are the included tools:

- Staying Safe at Home
- Someone I Can Talk To

#### Beginning the time together

Begin with your regular check-in questions, such as:

- What was the best thing that happened this week?
- What was something funny that happened this week?
- What was hard about this week?



### Staying Safe at Home

#### Activity to play with the child

Ask the child to tell you something they can do with the part of their body you name. You can take it in turns to ask one another, choosing a different part of the body each time.

E.g. “Legs” – “Running fast!” “Eyes” – “Noticing when my sister is sad”

*What’s something you’re glad you can do with your...*

- Ears?
- Feet?
- Mouth?
- Hands?
- Legs?
- Eyes?

*In a group setting, children can try to touch that part of their body as fast as they can, as well as shouting out their answers.*

Explain that today we’ll be looking at how we can stay safe at home, including how we use our bodies in a positive way.

#### Me and My Body - For reflection with the child

It’s great that we can use our body to do so many good things, as we just talked about. But sometimes we can also use our bodies in less helpful ways - maybe to hurt others or even ourselves. Can you think of any examples of this?

Some examples might be:

- Using our hands to hit or hurt each other
- Using our feet to kick someone
- Using our mouth to say unkind words

All of us get angry and upset sometimes (both children and adults!) and especially at the moment. When things are hard and confusing, sometimes we can find it difficult to stay calm and kind.

*In a group setting, you could ask children to make a face that looks angry!*

### For Reflection with the Child

- Can you think of a time you felt angry this week?
- What happened?
- What did you do?

*(Be ready to share your own example with the child, to show that all of us can find life difficult!)*

### For Reflection with the Child

- What do you normally do when you feel angry?
- Does this help you feel better?

Some things we can do if we feel angry:

- Count to ten
- Walk away from the situation
- Breathe slowly and deeply
- Talk to someone you trust
- Do some exercise or physical activity
- Write or draw how you are feeling

### For Reflection with the Child

Will you try something different this week when you feel angry?



## Someone I Can Talk To

### For Reflection with the Child

What would you do if something happened to make you feel unsafe tomorrow?

*Do not prompt the child for answers, but some of their answers might include: [Talk to someone I trust / Tell someone to stop what they are doing / Get away from the situation / Don't know]*

Look at your hand and your five fingers. It's important that we have people to talk to in case we're feeling scared, upset, angry or sad.

### For Reflection with the Child

Can you think of five people you can talk to if you are having a hard time? (one for each finger) *(This might include parents, siblings, friends, wider family, teachers, mentors, faith leaders or others).*

*In a group or 1:1 setting, children could be asked to draw around their hand, and write the name of (or draw) one person they can talk to on each finger.*

### For Reflection with the Child

- Can you still talk to these people at the moment?
- If not, is there someone else at home you can talk to?

One of the other ways we can hurt one another is by touching someone in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or when they do not want it. If that happens to us, we should know that we can:

- Tell this person to stop
- Get away from the situation
- Tell someone we trust about it

We should never keep secrets that make us sad or worried, and so it's important to think ahead about who are the people that we will talk to if we ever feel worried. We should always tell someone if we feel worried about something or feel like something is making us uncomfortable.



## Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

### For Reflection with the Child

What is one thing you will do this week to help you if you feel angry, or to talk to someone you trust?

*[Some options include: do something different if I feel angry / talk to parent about managing anger / talk to someone I trust if I am worried / other]*

*This ends the tools “Staying Safe at Home” and “Someone I Can Talk To”. We look forward to hearing how it went!*

## SESSION 7

# COPING WITH LOSS

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WWD PARENTING FOR LOST HEARTS  
HopeGroups

### HELPING OUR CHILDREN WHEN SOMEONE WE LOVE DIES

- Tell children who they will live with and who will look after them – they often worry about this.
- Listen to and accept whatever your child feels. Children may seem happy but be sad.
- Do something together to say goodbye to the person – a song or letter or prayer.
- Allow yourself to mourn your losses too.
- In simple words, tell them the person has died and will not come back.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

**"May Your unfailing love be my comfort."** (Psalm 119:76)

Dear God, as we say goodbye to..., we are sad. Please comfort us in our sadness. Amen.



No.14

### For Reflection

What have been the best parts and most difficult parts of the last week?

## Coping with Loss

Today's topic is coping with loss as a family. We're all aware that this has been a difficult time for everyone, and many of us have lost friends or family members, or have struggled with other kinds of loss during this time. We know that our children have too. By the end of our session today we will have talked about:

- How we have experienced loss as a family
- How we can support our children to deal with loss and grief

This may be a difficult topic to talk about and, at any point, group members can feel free not to answer or to end the conversation or change

the subject. Our goal is to create a safe space to begin to talk about this topic and think about some practical ideas, but if there is a need for further support, your group facilitator can help you connect to further support, such as counselling.

## How Have we Experienced Loss?

We have all experienced loss in different ways - being separated from friends and family, losing access to familiar places, losing our job, sometimes losing a loved one.

### For Reflection

Are there any ways you or your children have experienced loss during this time?

Grief is the name for the painful emotions we feel when we lose someone or something. As humans, connection to other people is very important to us, and that is why we feel bad when separated from those we love, and why losing a loved one creates the greatest pain.

We can also grieve for other losses: being separated from friends and family, or our home; losing access to a familiar place like school, the workplace, or our place of worship. And we can also grieve for things that are not so easy to see: such as losing our sense of security, or our hopes for the future.

Here<sup>5</sup> are some additional hidden losses that can cause grief - loss of:

- A world
- Status
- A sense of system identity

<sup>5</sup> Ruth E. Van Reken, co-founder of Families in Global Transition. Co-author of *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds*.

- A sense of cultural balance
- Cultural cohesion in the family
- Lifestyle
- Possessions
- Relationships
- Past that wasn't or past that was

## Phases of Grief<sup>6,7</sup>

Grief is our reaction to loss. When we experience a loss, we may go through a number of phases in the grieving process. We might also go back and forth between these phases, and we might experience them in different orders. The way one person grieves may also differ from the way someone else grieves: one may need solitude in nature and the other may need companionship. Our minds and emotions are trying to make sense of our loss and adapt to the new reality that has been created in our lives.

### Disbelief

We may feel numb or shocked. We might be struggling to believe that the loss has happened. We might avoid people or put off doing things. We might become forgetful and distracted, and try to stay busy.

We may find ourselves frequently telling others, "I'm fine."

### Anger

It's normal to feel angry after a loss. We may feel frustrated, impatient or resentful. Sometimes we might even feel like we are out of control. We might become pessimistic, cynical and irritable.

Sometimes we may be aggressive and get into arguments with other people.

### Yearning

After experiencing loss, it's common to have strong emotions of wishing our loved one was still with us. We are looking for comfort, and we might relive memories of the person we lost, through pictures or items that remind us of them.

### Depression

It's normal to feel intense pain after a loss, and that pain might come and go over time. We might feel hopeless or overwhelmed. We might have trouble sleeping and eat less or more than we normally do. We might feel less energetic or less motivated, and we might try to avoid being around people. Some people use alcohol or drugs to deaden the pain.

### Acceptance

Over time, the pain of loss usually lessens. This does not mean we are forgetting who or what we lost. We are learning to live in our new reality. We are adapting and being honest with ourselves and others. We're learning to be present and mindful. Practicing these coping skills can help us feel courageous.

### Making Sense

Loss creates a new reality in our lives, and we can find healing in making sense of that new reality. This usually takes time, and it does not mean we have to understand why our loved one died. It means we can honor our loved one and make sense of the life we now live and the people who are still with us.

"Meaning is a reflection of the love we have for those we have lost."<sup>8</sup>

David Kessler



<sup>6</sup> Maciejewski, P.K. PhD; Zhang, B. MS; Block, S.D. MD; et al (2007) An empirical examination of the stage theory of grief. *JAMA*, 297(7), 716-724. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/205661>



<sup>7</sup> Currier JM, Holland JM, Neimeyer RA. Sense-making, grief, and the experience of violent loss: toward a mediational model. *Death Stud*. 2006 Jun;30(5):403-28. doi: 10.1080/07481180600614351. PMID: 16610156. Retrieved Jan. 1, 2024, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16610156/>

<sup>8</sup> Kessler, D. (2020) *Finding meaning: The sixth stage of grief*. Scribner, New York, NY.

### For Reflection

- Which, if any, of these phases of grief have you experienced after your own loss?
- What has helped or might help you adapt to your new reality and find meaning?

## Children and Grief

### For Reflection

Thinking about the losses your children have experienced (whether loss of loved ones, or lost opportunities and friendships), how have your children reacted to these losses?

There is no 'correct' way to grieve. Children's reactions will vary a lot depending on their age and personality. If someone has died, children's reactions also depend on how close they were to that person, how the person died, and how the family are responding.

While every child is different, you might see changes in your child's:

- **Feelings:** they may feel sad, angry, frightened, lonely, guilty, or confused. They may experience more than one feeling at the same time, or feel and show nothing at all for long periods, and then suddenly feel overwhelmed by different emotions.
- **Thinking:** they may find themselves thinking constantly about what happened, or find uncomfortable or frightening thoughts or images suddenly appear in their head without warning. They may worry about the future, and find it hard to focus and concentrate.
- **Behaviour:** children may withdraw and isolate themselves, or they may carry on with their normal activities as if nothing unusual had happened. They may misbehave, deliberately getting into fights, or they may revert to the behaviour of a much younger child, such as thumb sucking, bed wetting, or demanding that you stay close. They may engage in 'repetitive play', repeatedly acting out an upsetting experience.
- **Physical state:** children might not want to eat, and may have difficulty sleeping. They may have nightmares. They may suffer from unexplained aches and pains.

All these reactions vary greatly, and a child may have many different reactions over the course of a day. Grief can continue for a long time when life circumstances are challenging, and can return again much later, for example if triggered by a reminder, such as an anniversary, or a favourite activity that the child did with the lost person. All these reactions are natural. However, in a very small number of children the reactions may be intense and prolonged and very disruptive of daily life, in which case the parent should seek further support for the child, such as from a community health worker.

## Helping my Children Deal with Loss

*This section is relevant for parents, grandparents, teachers, Sunday school teachers, and others who regularly interact with children.*

Please take note that family members grieving the death of someone they love may be so overwhelmed by their own grief that they cannot comfort one another for many months. In this case, accepting comfort from a small group of trusted friends can be healing.

### For Reflection

- How are your children coping now?
- What do you think is helping them to deal with their sadness or grief?

It's great that you can see some positive ways that your children are able to move forward and cope with these difficult things. While losing a loved one, or any other loss, can be deeply upsetting for a child, there are lots of things we can do to support our children and move forward together.

Here are some other ways we can support our children to cope with loss:

- Talking to children openly and honestly: While it is natural to want to protect children from getting upset, even very young children can tell when something unusual is happening, and not understanding what is happening causes more distress for children. If the truth is hidden from

them, children can imagine something that is worse than reality, and they may blame themselves. All children, including those with physical and mental disabilities, need clear, honest, consistent explanations appropriate to their age and ability to understand, so that they can accept the reality of the loss. Telling your children the truth will increase their trust in you and help them cope better with the loss.

- Ensure that the child receives loving, consistent care from you. Try not to punish the child for challenging behaviour or where they seem unable to do something they used to be able to do, as these can be reactions to the grief. Very young children feel more secure through loving physical contact, singing, cuddling and rocking.
- Try to maintain normal life routines and structure as much as is possible. Try to have a regular pattern to the day with allocated tasks and times for activities, such as cleaning the space, doing school work, getting exercise and having time to play.
- If there has been a death of a loved one, other children in the child's life, at school or in friendship circles, should be informed (through their teachers or parents) as to what has happened, so that they can support the child.
- Give children the opportunity to help you, but do not push them to take on adult roles and responsibilities beyond their capacity.
- Self-care - take care of your own physical and mental wellbeing. You have experienced loss as well. It is vital that you get enough sleep, eat properly, exercise, take time to relax, and also have someone to whom you can turn for emotional support. Try to avoid harmful practices such as increased alcohol or tobacco consumption.
- Art or drawing, drama, songs, and play can especially help children to find outlets for their grief. See creative ideas in the "Putting it into Practice" section below.

### For Reflection

Is there anything you want to put into practice with your children?

### Putting it into Practice this Week

An activity to do with your child this week: If the conversation has included examples of children dealing with the death of loved ones, you may want to suggest ideas for how the family could find ways to remember the person together.

- Find ways for your child to show their love for the person who has died, and to show the importance of that person in the child's life. Children may like to paint a picture, read a poem, or something they have written about that person, or sing a song, or make music. You could prepare and share a meal together which the loved one enjoyed, and talk about them during the meal. This kind of activity can also be repeated on significant anniversaries, like the birthday of the person who has died.
- Put a picture on a wall and/or objects that remind you of that person.
- Help the child to create a 'memory box' where they can place small items that remind them of the person who has died. These can be photographs if you have them, or objects such as buttons from a favourite jacket, or a pendant, or prayer beads. Or help the child create a scrap book in which they tell stories and make pictures of happy times that they remember.
- Work with children to draw a family tree. This emphasises that there is still a connection with the lost loved one, even if they are not physically with us any more. It also helps the child to see that they are still part of a wider family network.

## Wrap Up

We have all experienced collective trauma and losses. Engaging in a social network can help bring healing. Let's talk about how we can get involved with a small group of friends, in our community, in a hobby or sport, in a service organisation, in a church or faith community or congregation, or a project as part of supporting ourselves and our families in dealing with grief and loss at this time. Discuss if this Hope Group is part of a larger



organisation or church or faith community or congregation that participants might take part in. Also talk about any opportunities for children to get involved.

## This ends Session 7. Thank you for your participation.

You will find a short discussion guide that follows this lesson and includes optional questions to help you talk with your own or other children about how they are doing. We look forward to meeting again next week!



## SESSION 7

### EXTRA TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN

The following tools are for parents, caregivers, or trusted friends to do with children in various settings. You will see the following symbols, which show if the tool is for use with children in live conflict/disaster zones, children on the move, or those who are settled.



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**

You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the tool. If you are the parent going through this tool with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead. These are the included tools:

- Talking with Children about Coping with Loss



### Talking with Children about Coping with Loss

#### Beginning the time together

Begin with your regular check-in questions, such as:

- What was the best thing that happened this week?
- What was something funny that happened this week?
- What was hard about this week?

#### My Game: More or Less

Explain: You will say several things to the child, and they should respond with either ‘More!’ or ‘Less!’ to let you know whether they think there has been more or less of each thing during the last few months.

E.g. You: ‘Going to school?’ Child: ‘Less’  
You: ‘Playing with your family?’ Child: ‘More’

Use a selection of the following statements which will be relevant for the child you are speaking with:

- Going to school
- Playing with your family
- Taking care of people at home
- Eating chocolate
- Exercising outside
- Seeing your friends
- Reading books
- Going shopping
- Helping with household chores

We all have been through a lot of change and gained and lost things, sometimes things that are really important to us. Explain that today we’ll be looking at what we’ve lost and sharing some ideas together to help us to cope with these difficult times.

## What Have I Lost?

We know that this has been a hard time for all of us (adults and children) and we've all lost different things – not being able to see our friends and family, or being away from our home; not being able to go to a familiar place like school, or to our place of worship or community centre. Some of us have also lost people we love. We can also lose things we can't see – for example we could lose our sense of feeling safe, or our feeling of hope for the future.

### For Reflection with the Child

Looking back over the last few months what are some things you feel like you have lost?

*The child may mention losing a loved one or friend, or they may choose to talk about other types of loss. That's fine, and you can be guided by what the child wants to talk about in the conversation.*

That must have been a hard time for you and your family.

### For Reflection with the Child

How are you feeling about it now?

It's normal to have different reactions and feelings when we lose someone or something, and we shouldn't feel bad about that.

Here are some different ways you might be feeling when you have lost something or someone:

- You might feel sad, angry, frightened, lonely, guilty or confused, and wish things could go back to the way they were. You might feel ok for a while and then suddenly feel really sad again.
- You might find it hard to concentrate or focus on your school work, or you might find you are thinking about the situation a lot.
- You might feel like you don't want to do the things you usually enjoy doing, or you might find yourself getting into trouble more often.

- You might feel less hungry or find it hard to sleep, or feel ill.

It's normal and ok to experience any of these reactions, and it's ok to cry or share the way you are feeling with someone you trust, so you don't have to handle it on your own.

### For Reflection with the Child

Do you have a parent, friend or other adult you can talk to about how you are feeling?

## How Can I Move Forward?

### For Reflection with the Child

What are some things you already do that help you to feel better?

That's great – and actually, you already have a lot of strengths and abilities inside you that help you to be ok, even if you feel like you are having a hard time. You can probably remember some other times in your life where you were facing challenges and you were able to keep going even though things were hard.

Here are some other ideas you could try, which could help you to feel better about what you have lost (if the child has mentioned losing a loved one, talk about this specifically):

- Remember that it's ok to have feelings! And that they might come and go at different times, and that's ok.
- Talk about it – find a way to talk with your parents or other trusted adults about what happened and ask any questions you still have
- Share your feelings or find a way to express them (drawing, writing, talking to parent or a friend)
- Find ways to do the things that make you happy, like connecting with your friends, having fun with your family

### For Reflection with the Child

Is there anything you might do this week to try out one of these ideas?

## Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

If the child has mentioned the death of a friend or loved one, you may want to talk with them about these ideas for remembering the loved one together as a family.

The child may have their own idea, or some suggestions could be:

- Paint a picture, read a poem, or something they have written about that person, or sing a song, or make music
- Ask if you can prepare a meal at home which is one that reminds you of the person you have lost
- Put a picture on the wall of the person
- Create a 'memory box' where you can keep small items that remind you of the person
- Create a scrapbook with stories and pictures of happy times you can remember with the person

### An invitation to connect

If there is a programme or activity that the child could join in with as part of your organisation/project/church/community, explain this to the child now, and ask if they would like to be part of it. Ensure that you have asked permission from the parent before inviting the child to participate in any group activity.

*This ends the tool "Talking With Children about Coping with Loss". We look forward to hearing how it went!*

## SESSION 8

# BUILDING HOPE THROUGH UNDERSTANDING - GUILT AND SECONDARY TRAUMA

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WWD PARENTING FOR LIFETIME HEALTH  
HopeGroups

### TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

- Look after yourself as much as possible and try to rest when you can.
- Take a moment each day to listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
- Connect with loved ones as often as you can.
- Taking care of yourself also helps you to help your family.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

**"I am with you always"** (Matthew 28:20)  
Remember that God is with you  
- it's the most frequent promise of God in the Bible.



No.1

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WWD PARENTING FOR LIFETIME HEALTH  
HopeGroups

### COPING WITH STRESS, UPSET, AND ANGER

- Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling.
- Losing your temper? Breathe in and out slowly five times.
- Try to do something that helps you relax.
- Remember to praise yourself each time you take steps to cope.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

**"Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray."** (James 5:13)  
Pause. Say a prayer and ask God to give you the strength you need for this moment.



No.5

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WWD PARENTING FOR LIFETIME HEALTH  
HopeGroups

### ROUTINE HELPS CHILDREN FEEL SAFE

- Even when it feels hard, try to have some daily routines for yourself and children.
- If you can, help children with daily routines like meals or schoolwork.
- Our children learn calmness and kindness from us.
- Tell yourself a calming message again and again, Try 'I can do this, I am trying my best'

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

**"Do not fear, for I am with you... I will strengthen you and help you."** (Isaiah 41:10)  
God promises to be with us and help us. He can help you cope.



No.2



## Understanding Guilt, Fear and Worry, and Building Hope

It is common for those who have survived a traumatic event to experience guilt, fear, or worry. You might experience any of the following:

- Guilt about surviving.
- Guilt over what you "should" have done.
- Guilt over what you did.
- Guilt that you left a place or situation when others did not.
- Fear that it was your fault
- Worry about the losses



It's normal to think repeatedly about events that happened and to wonder what you could have or should have done differently. You might feel you don't deserve to be safe and should have been harmed as others were. You might question the fairness and justness of the world. You might also notice that your older child or children are experiencing the same feelings of guilt.

When you think you could have changed the outcome for others who did not survive, you can feel intense survivor's guilt. You might feel remorseful that you didn't do enough, help enough, share enough, or know enough. You might be telling yourself you should have tried harder to help others or to do something different than what you did.

### For Reflection

- How have you handled these thoughts and feelings, if you have experienced them?

If you find yourself with these feelings of survivor's guilt, there are some tips that can help you:

- Remind yourself who is truly responsible for this situation – you did not cause this. In the end, you can mourn those who are still suffering, but focus on not taking blame for their suffering.
- Focus on the outside factors that led to an event. Don't assume responsibility for a situation that was out of your control.
- Be kind to yourself and let self-forgiveness be the foundation upon which you move forward.
- Remember that these feelings are common. During and after a disaster such as war, sadness, fear, anger, anxiety, grief, and guilt are completely normal responses and feeling guilt does not mean you are guilty of doing anything wrong. It's OK to feel thankful for your life while at the same time mourning the death of others.
- Think about how people that love you feel about your survival. Embrace the knowledge that many who love you are deeply relieved that you are okay.
- Remember that if people you know are blaming you for leaving when they stayed,

their response may be a direct result of processing their own trauma. Consciously go back to reminding yourself that you are not to blame for the suffering of others; you did not cause this.

When you consider survivor's guilt, it's helpful to understand what trauma can do to the body, brain, and sense of well-being. Your brain and body do best when they experience satisfying activities, like the birth of a baby, a party, learning something, and feeling success.

These satisfying experiences are prompted by hormones that help regulate your moods and promote positive feelings. We need these hormones in our life to feel regulated and experience well-being.

Traumatic experiences have the opposite impact on your emotions. Toxic stress produces hormones that turn your brain to survival and tell you to "fight, freeze, or flee." These thoughts and feelings can take over when you are stressed. The survival hormones become harmful to you when they are overtaking your healthy hormones. The healthy hormones help your body be regulated; the unhealthy hormones lead to dysregulation, or to feeling that you are out of control.

Below are some **POSITIVE** suggestions that can help **YOU**, even starting **TODAY** to produce the healthy hormones and reduce harmful hormones:

- Do something meaningful for someone else.
- Allow yourself to grieve. It is hard to grieve loss during war because the threat is still present. In little moments, try to find ways to acknowledge and honor the people who were lost.
- Find a safe person to talk with.
- Find positive ways to express yourself; art, song, poetry, or dance are examples. Journaling can also be helpful.
- Practice self-care. You have experienced a harrowing event and taking care of yourself both physically and emotionally is essential for healing. Eat well, sleep well, move your body and find support to help make sense of it all.

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
- Exercise earlier in the day. Exercising regularly can improve sleep quality but should be done at least 2–3 hours before bedtime.
- Limit caffeine intake. Avoid nicotine and alcohol.
- Limit exposure to bright light at night. Go to bed in a quiet room. Take naps.
- Learn to recognize stressful thinking. Paying attention to stressful thought may help you reduce them. Training yourself to be aware of your thoughts, your breathing, your heart rate and other signs of tension helps you recognize stress when it begins.
- Get outside, turn your face to the sun and close your eyes for a few seconds.
- Laugh. Find a video on YouTube or a movie you can watch that is funny. Sit with someone and tell stories of experiences that brought you joy. Laugh or giggle.
- Sit and meditate, reflect, pray. If faith is important to you, reading an uplifting story or book, such as the Bible, may bring hope.
- Practice talking about what you are grateful for! Research shows practicing gratitude and laughter help us recover, and build **HOPE!**
- Find and use different spices known for producing “happy” hormones: (Spicy foods; Yogurt, beans, eggs, meats that are low-fat; Almonds; Sauerkraut; Foods with tryptophan: oats, cheese, canned tuna, seeds, whole milk; Green Tea extract)
- Be your best self. Feelings of shame, guilt, or inadequacy can lead to negative thinking. Develop the habit of gratitude and forgiveness of others.

Guilt can paralyze us or motivate us. Grieving your experiences is part of the healing process but remember this is not your fault. You can use your own survival to “pay it forward.”

### For Reflection

- Who are some people who are glad that you are safe?
- Which of the **POSITIVE** suggestions above are ones that have helped or that you think would be helpful for you?
- Who is one person you could share this information with?



## Understanding Secondary and Vicarious Trauma

In times of crisis and war, we hear again and again the stories that tear our hearts apart, and we see situations that cannot be erased from our minds. We are also personally experiencing again and again the stress of our own situation, and many of us are also helping others continually. All of this can seem overwhelming and without end.

Secondary trauma is a kind of exhaustion and desensitization to traumatic events when we are exposed to others who survived trauma. It can come from direct exposure to a person and their stories or through indirect exposure through the media. It can cause you to feel numb to the ongoing issues, media stories or experiences shared by others. Your child/ children might also be experiencing this secondary trauma.

Vicarious Trauma is the effect over time on a helper who is working with survivors. This type of trauma makes it feel like the helper themselves is experiencing the trauma of those they are serving.

### For Reflection

- What are some ways you have helped others through this crisis/transition?
- Have you noticed any signs of secondary or vicarious trauma, fear or worry, in your own life or in your child/ children?

- Have any of the **POSITIVE** suggestions we just talked about – or maybe others – helped you?

The **POSITIVE** suggestions for you on healthy hormones that we talked about can be helpful if you are experiencing secondary or vicarious trauma. Below are some additional ideas of healthy habits:

- Listen to your body. Learn to recognize and manage tension – use relaxation techniques.
- Reduce stressors in areas of your life. Learn to say no.
- Time away. Step away from others and allow yourself some alone time.
- Learn about stress. When you are learning and applying what you have learned, you are feeling more competent and successful.
- Take breaks from news stories, including those on social media. It's good to be informed, but constant information about the war (or crisis around you) can be upsetting.
- Move more and sit less – keeping a commitment to keeping your body moving – a walk, stretches or other exercises.
- Learn to take deep breaths in through the nose and then to hold that breath – then letting it out slowly through the mouth.
- Drink plenty of water. Keep hydrated.

## Wrap Up

Commit to practicing some of the tips we have discussed today. Choose between one and three practices you will use before our next meeting and plan to share about how it went when we meet again.

**This ends Session 8.  
Thank you for your participation.  
We look forward to meeting again  
next week!**



## SESSION 9

# LEARNING TOGETHER

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WWO PARENTING  
FOR LIFETIME HEALTH  
Hope4Groups

**ROUTINE HELPS  
CHILDREN FEEL SAFE**

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- Tell yourself a calming message again and again, Try 'I can do this, I am trying my best'

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No.2

## Supporting Children to Learn

*Be aware that in an active conflict/war or disaster zone, children and parents may not have capacity to concentrate on schoolwork or learning. In this case, move straight to the topic "Creating*

*Structure and Routine in our Day", and perhaps return to this topic when the family are in a more stable setting.*

### For Reflection

- Is your child in school at the moment?
- Whether they are or not, how has it been going trying to support your child's learning at home?

In a crisis, we may think we can't possibly think about children's learning as well as everything else we are dealing with. But, being able to keep learning is one of the things that can help children to feel normal and cope with change. And, as a parent, you already have all the qualities you need to be able to help your child learn. They have already learnt a lot from you!

We can be encouraged that even a few minutes every day sitting with your child and discussing what they have been learning makes a big difference! Supporting children to continue learning will help them feel positive about the future and ready to return to school if they are not able to attend at the moment, or help them with adjusting to school in a new place, or in a new language, or online.

Your children may have access to learning materials through books, radio, television or the internet. If you have these resources, don't put too much pressure on yourself or your children to complete all available tasks. If you do not have these materials, you can still help children learn.

### For Reflection

Can you think of ways that what you're already doing together is helping children to learn new skills or practise what they know?

Some simple ways we can help children to learn include:

- Talk to children about your daily tasks and let them help you.
- Encourage your child to practise skills and knowledge they already have.
- Encourage older siblings to help explain difficult subjects to younger children.

- Give your children a task to work on together, e.g. draw a map of your community, build a tower, write and draw a story together.

### For Reflection

Is there something we've talked about that you want to try this week to help your child learn?

## Creating Structure and Routine in our Day

### For Reflection

- How has your time together as a family changed since the conflict/war/transition?
- Do you spend more or less time at home together?
- Do you do the same kinds of activities?

It's likely that most of your usual routines will have been disrupted. You may be living with different people in the household or have left some people behind; or things could be changing fast all the time; you might be in a totally new place; or you may feel stuck in one place and unable to do your usual activities. The disruption to our daily routines of work, home and school can be hard to cope with. Making new routines together can help make children feel more secure and be better behaved.

### For Reflection

Are there things you try to do every day, or to do at particular times when you are together at home?

Here are some other ideas of ways to plan your days together:



In an active conflict/war or disaster setting, or on the move, it may be hard to imagine any kind of routine. You could do something very simple, like something you and your children do at the start of the day and at bedtime (e.g. a song in the morning, a prayer or story before bedtime) or one thing you want to try to do each day.



If the family is in a more settled or safer context, some ideas could be:

Children or teenagers can help plan the routine for the day – like making a school timetable. Today's activity (below) will help you to work on this together. Children will follow the timetable better if they help to make it.

- Include time for structured activities as well as free time.
- Allow time for normal chores and play time. Play is one of the best ways for children to learn and to support their wellbeing. Art or drawing also help children express their emotions. After the child draws, ask them: "Tell me about your drawing."
- Include exercise in each day – this helps with stress and where children have lots of energy at home.
- At the end of each day, take a minute to think about the day. Tell your child about one positive or fun thing they did, and ask your child what they liked most that day. Recognise something that you did well too!

### For Reflection

Is there something you might add into your day, or an adjustment you might make to your daily routine?

## Putting it into practice this week

An activity to do with your child this week: create or revise your family's daily routine. You could simply do this by talking together with your children about what activities they would like to do every day.

Another way to do this is:

As a family, ask 'What is important for you to do every day?' Draw or write each one on a piece of paper (examples – brush teeth, eat lunch, sleep, play, practise reading) – move the pieces of paper around and talk about:

- Which of these are still possible for us to do in our day at the moment?

- What order should they be in during the day?
- Which things do we want to agree to do every day as a family, or make time for in each day?

This way you can work together as a family to decide what new routines you can create where you are at right now – even if this doesn't look exactly the same as it used to.

### For Reflection

What is one action you will take this week?

*[Some ideas include: Talk with child about schoolwork / Help child with schoolwork / Let children help with daily tasks / Make a daily routine together / Add more activities to your daily routine]*

**This ends Session 9.  
Thank you for your participation.  
We look forward to meeting again  
next week.**

You will find a short discussion guide that follows this lesson and includes optional questions to help you talk with your own or other children about how they are doing.





## SESSION 9

# EXTRA TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN

The following tools are for parents, caregivers, or trusted friends to do with children in various settings. You will see the following symbols, which show if the tool is for use with children in live conflict/disaster zones, children on the move, or those who are settled.



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**

You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the tool. If you are the parent going through this tool with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead. These are the included tools:

- Learning Together Every Day
- Activities in My Day

### Beginning the time together

Begin with your regular check-in questions, such as:

- What was the best thing that happened this week?
- What was something funny that happened this week?
- What was hard about this week?

*Also be ready to share your idea of a perfect day!*

*In a group setting, children could work in pairs to create their perfect day, and share this with the group. Or, for a game, you could have different daily activities on pieces of paper, which the children need to arrange in the right order as fast as they can (e.g. wake up, breakfast, playing, reading, go to bed, etc).*



## Learning Together Every Day

### Activity to play with the child

Ask the child to tell you about what their perfect day at home would be. What would they do when they woke up, what would they have for breakfast, what activities would they do through the day? Try to get as much detail as possible.

Explain that today we'll be looking at how we can keep learning even when we're at home, and how we can enjoy our time together with our family.

### Learning Wherever I Am - For Reflection with the Child

- Are you able to go to your old school at the moment, or are you in a different school, or not able to attend school at all?
- If you are not able to be in school at the moment, what is that like?
- What do you miss about school?

- If you are spending more time at home, is that a good or bad thing?
- If you are in school, is it different and how is it going?

Lots of children affected by this crisis/transition have had to stop going to school during this time, or are trying to learn online, or are going to school in a new place. It can be hard when things change and are uncertain, and we shouldn't feel bad if we don't feel that we are able to focus and concentrate as well as we usually can. We don't have to stop learning just because we are not in school, or if we are in a new place.

### For Reflection with the Child

- How have you been learning if you have not been in school?
- Or, if you are still in school, who is helping you to keep learning?

It's great that you have still been learning! Even if you don't think you are, there are a lot of ways we learn apart from by doing schoolwork. When we do things with our family – helping with chores or helping a brother or sister to learn - we are learning! And when we play or have fun together, we are also learning skills like how to solve problems and how to work together.

### For Reflection with the Child

- Can you think of something you've learnt during the last month?
- How are your parent(s) or other adults at home involved in helping you learn?

We learn even better when we have someone to talk to about what we're learning, or someone we can share with.

Here are some ways we can ask our parents to be involved in our learning with us:

- Share your schoolwork with them and explain what you have been working on each day
- Work together to write a story, draw a picture, sing a song or read a book together
- Ask them to teach you something that they

can do that you want to learn – cooking a favourite food, or learning to sew, paint, build or repair something

### For Reflection with the Child

Is there something you will ask your parent(s) to do together to help you learn this week?



## Activities in my Day

### For Reflection with the Child

What is your favourite day of the week at home? Why?

*(If children are in a conflict/war or disaster setting or on the move, you could ask them about their favourite day of the week before the conflict began.)*

Especially when we are spending our time in a new place, or a lot of things are changing, it can be good if we plan to have different activities in our day to help us stay healthy.

### For Reflection with the Child

What are some things you think it is important to do every day?

This might include ideas like:

- Exercise and being active (even inside!)
- Getting enough sleep
- Eating healthy meals
- Playing and having fun
- Learning or schoolwork
- Family time
- Time outside (if we can)

*In an in-person or group setting, children could mime or act out the different activities for others to guess.*

### For Reflection with the Child

- Which ones do you do every day?
- Which would you like to do more (or less!)?

We can talk together as a family and work together to plan our days. You could ask your parents if you can make a schedule for your days if you don't have one.



*In conflict/war or disaster settings or on the move, where life is very disrupted, children may not be able to think about planning a whole day. Ask them just for one thing they would like to try and do each day – this could be really simple, like playing a game, singing a song, or telling a story at the end of the day.*

## Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

### For Reflection with the Child

What is one thing you will do to learn together with your parents this week, or to add an activity to your days? [Some ideas could be: *Talk with a parent about schoolwork / Ask to read, write, draw, sing together / Ask parent to teach you a skill / Talk about daily schedule*]

*This ends the tools “Learning Together Every Day” and “Activities in My Day”. We look forward to hearing how it went!*

## SESSION 10

# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS<sup>11</sup>

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WVO PARENTING  
HopeGroups

### PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- If they tell you about abuse, trust your child. Reassure them it's not their fault and they are safe and loved.
- Teach your child that no one has the right to touch them or make them uncomfortable.
- Practice saying "no" loudly and strongly.
- Tell them that abusers often trick children by saying it is their 'secret'
- Talking about this with your child helps protect them.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

"Rescue me, Lord, from evildoers;  
protect me from the violent." (Psalm 140:3)

Dear God, I thank you for my children. I pray that they would be kept safe. Amen.

No.13



Today we are going to talk about healthy relationships. These could include relationships with family, friends, coworkers, but we're also going to pay special attention to our romantic relationships. Right now many of our relationships face extra challenges and stress, due to the war and, for many of us, physical separation. We want to talk about healthy patterns in relationships, how to handle disagreement or conflict, and how to stay safe.

We invite your partner or spouse to join us in this session. If they are not able to be with us, please read through and discuss these topics together so that you can strengthen

your relationship. If you are not currently in a romantic relationship, use this session to consider what your expectations are for this type of relationship in your own life.

We also want to discuss teaching our children about healthy romantic relationships. One way to protect our children is by educating them and creating openness so they will be comfortable talking with us about these issues.

So what is a healthy relationship? One way we can know that our relationship is healthy is by learning to identify elements of both healthy and unhealthy relationships and recognizing those elements in our own or our children's lives.

### For Reflection with Your Partner

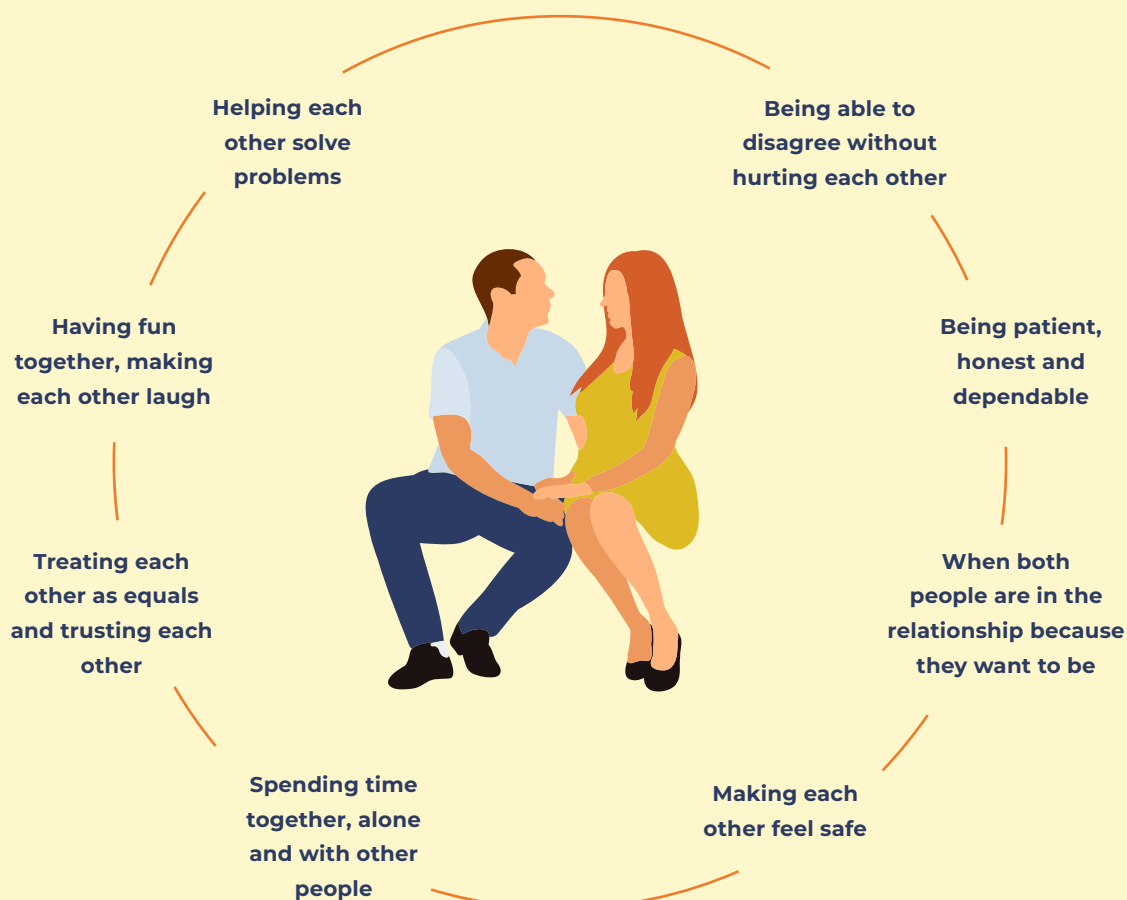
What do you think are some important elements of a healthy relationship?

Thank you for sharing! Let's talk a bit more about what a healthy relationship looks like. (See illustration 4)

Respect is vital in a healthy relationship. Respect means that the other person shows you empathy, supports you, and uses language and words that are respectful. Someone who really respects you will ask if you are okay, listen to you, and respect your choices. They will stop doing something if you want them to. They would never force you into something you do not want to do. In a healthy relationship, the other person will not be possessive or controlling over you.

<sup>11</sup> The primary sources for this session are:  
*Parenting for Lifelong Health* (n.d.) *Parenting App-Sexual Violence Prevention Module*  
*PEPEAR* (2019, Jan 16) *9-14 Year Old Prevention, Module 1-3*

**Illustration 4:** When a relationship is healthy, both partners will show these types of behaviors. Some other aspects of a healthy relationship are:



For those of you who relate to the Bible and the teachings of Jesus, we provide a list of Scripture verses that speak to us about healthy relationships.<sup>12</sup>

We often tell people to treat others the way they themselves want to be treated. In some cultures, this is known as the Golden Rule, and it is a relationship principle that Jesus teaches in the Bible.<sup>13</sup> This is a great standard to consider if your own behaviors towards others are healthy, and also to think about whether or not your friend or partner is acting in healthy ways toward you.

Here are other examples of healthy relationships that you and your partner/spouse or children may want to talk about this week:

Now let's talk about things people do in relationships that might not be healthy. (See illustration 5) These could include behaviors that hurt others in some way or do not show respect, trust, or healthy communication.

<sup>12</sup> Bible passages on healthy relationships: Proverbs 17:27; Proverbs 12:18; James 1:19; Colossians 3:19; Proverbs 14:29; Romans 12:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 1 Peter 4:8; Ephesians 4:32.

<sup>13</sup> "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets." - Matt.7:12, NLT

### Illustration 5: For Reflection with Your Partner

What are some examples of an unhealthy relationship?

It's important for us to remember that all relationships have good and bad times, and we can all make unkind choices at times. But, there are some warning signs that could mean a relationship is not healthy or safe. For example, your relationship might not be healthy if either you or your partner:



No relationship is perfect. There will be times when you have disagreements in your relationships, and that is OK, as long as you are able to solve these conflicts in a calm and healthy manner. If your friend or partner, or if you yourself have behaviors that are unhealthy but not yet unsafe, you can try to use healthy communication skills to explain how you are feeling and resolve the conflict, or you can talk with someone you trust about the situation. But, it is critical to think about what is most

important to you in these relationships. If the other person is treating you in unhealthy or unsafe ways, or you can't seem to solve conflicts in a healthy way, you may choose to end the relationship, choose a temporary separation, or just not spend time with the person quite as much. If this is a romantic relationship, you may also choose to get help from a counselor or psychologist, or chaplain or faith leader, who specializes in working with couples.



### For Reflection with Your Partner

- What are some healthy and unhealthy patterns you see in our relationship?
- How do we handle conflict or disagreement, and are there ways we could improve?
- What are two unhealthy behaviors we want to work on, and how will we plan to do that, or get help to do that?

## Staying Connected When We Are Apart<sup>14</sup>

Many of us are separated from loved ones right now, because of the war. Communication is so important both for our relationships and for our mental health! So let's talk about some ways that you can stay connected to your partner, spouse, family member or friend even when you are physically separated.

- Share more frequently with your loved one about things happening in your life; let them know about even little things.
- From time to time, record a video message for each other, especially when you don't have time for live calls.
- Find a convenient time for each of you to talk and have regular online meetings.
- Share with your loved one about your plans, feelings, thoughts, worries, hopes, and small reasons for gratitude, so that your relationship can be deeper.
- Enrich your relationship with common interests; agree together about watching a movie or TV show, or reading a book, and then talking about it together.

### For Reflection with Your Partner

Are there ways, such as those described above, that we can take positive steps to stay more connected with each other the coming week?

## Making Healthy Decisions about Sex

Now we are going to talk more specifically about healthy romantic relationships. An important part of our health and safety in these relationships is our sexual decisions. It's important for you to think about this individually, to decide what you are and are not comfortable with, and then to also talk with your spouse or romantic partner about each of your expectations in this area.

The best way for us to handle sexual decision-making is to think about what boundaries or limits we want to keep, before we are in a situation where we have to decide. By boundaries, I mean that each person knows what behaviors they are OK with and what they are not comfortable with. We might change these boundaries depending on the relationship and on various factors in our life at any given time.

When we talk about sexual decisions, we have three options:

1. **Delay Sex:** Delaying sexual activity means that you choose to wait to have sex for the first time and avoid sexual activity until you are in a safe and healthy relationship. This is especially relevant for you to consider for your children; research shows most children are ready for these types of discussions when they are between the ages of 10 and 14 years. We want to teach our children that sex is good and pleasurable in the right circumstances, but that there are times when it is healthiest to wait to have sex.
2. **Abstain From Sex:** Abstinence means you choose not to have sex at a particular time or season of your life. Even if you have been sexually active, you can still decide to stop having sex at various intervals throughout your life, because it may be the healthiest choice at that time. Abstinence is the only 100% effective way to prevent sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy.



<sup>14</sup> CETA Україна. (2023, July 22). Communication with loved ones is a very important resource for mental health. Facebook. [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid0zBMcUQgxbeW4nffK9odTcXXWpMjQifdXiBWLtULnFacUd8Fn9gkLfjyPatgBQM-Rl&id=100067650135192](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0zBMcUQgxbeW4nffK9odTcXXWpMjQifdXiBWLtULnFacUd8Fn9gkLfjyPatgBQM-Rl&id=100067650135192)

3. **Protect Yourself:** When you do have sex, you still need to protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy. Using condoms correctly every time you have sex is the best way to protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections and can help prevent pregnancy. Limiting the number of sex partners you have will also help protect you. It is safest to have only one sexual partner at a time and to have as few sexual partners as possible throughout your life.

It's also important to make wise decisions about your online activity (for both you and your partner) so that you, and your children stay safe. Be respectful in what you say, post or share on social media or text. Don't participate in degrading talk about the opposite sex online. It's never appropriate for someone to pressure you for naked pictures. Remember that anything you say or share online can have a permanent record.

## Sexual Consent

Another important part of sexual decision-making is consent. Consent is related to what behaviors you and your spouse/partner decide are acceptable for both of you, not what one partner wants to do and the other does not. To say it simply, it is what we feel we can say 'yes' to. Physical intimacy in the form of hugging, kissing or having sex should not happen without complete consent, even in marriage or a committed relationship. If someone engages in physical intimacy with you without your clear consent, that is unhealthy. If sex happens without clear consent, or someone is forced to have sex, it is sexual violence, and in most countries, it is illegal.

Consent also means that each person listens to and respects the other person when they say both what they do and do not want to do. In a healthy relationship, people respect each other's boundaries, and do not pressure each other to do things they don't want to do. When consent is missing, the answer is always NO!

Here are four important parts of sexual consent:

1. **Free from coercion or force:** Coercion takes away a person's ability to consent. It might mean that one person uses their power or position over the other person to get them to do something sexual.
2. **Clear:** The person knows what sexual act they are consenting to. Each person in the relationship is equally responsible for clearly giving and receiving consent.
3. **Continuous:** Consenting to one behavior, like kissing, does NOT mean the person automatically agrees to any other sexual behavior. Also, consenting to a behavior once does NOT mean consenting to that same behavior at another time. This is especially important in long-term relationships; a couple should regularly talk about what they do and do not want in their sexual relationship.
4. **Conscious:** This means you and your partner are both fully awake, alert, and understand what is being asked in order to give consent. Consent cannot be given if a person is asleep or intoxicated with alcohol or drugs.

All four of these aspects of consent should be present before you engage in any sexual activity.

### For Reflection with Your Partner

*Note: These questions are meant for discussion between partners/spouses, but not as a whole group. These conversations may be sensitive. If you have enough room, ask couples to spread out for more privacy. Couples might also choose to discuss these questions alone, after the session.*

- Are we in agreement about our sexual decision to delay, abstain or protect ourselves and each other sexually? If not, let's discuss what each of us are comfortable with right now.
- What is our clear process for giving sexual consent?

# Putting it into practice this week

Take some time this week to think about your own relationships and consider any elements that are healthy or unhealthy. At the end of this session, we provide an Appendix with a few short tests you can take to get a feeling for how healthy your relationship is. When we talk about relationships, it's important for us all to consider how we want to treat people and how we want to be treated by others. Remember that Golden Rule!

## Butterfly Hug and Wrap Up<sup>15</sup>

Before we finish, let's take a quick moment to give ourselves a little hug! Everyone stand up and wrap your arms across your chest, as if giving yourself a hug. The tips of your fingers should reach your collarbone. Now pat your arms, alternating hands, like the wings of a butterfly. You can keep your eyes open or closed, but as you reach a rhythm with your 'wings', make sure you breathe deeply to help calm you.

Use the following extra tools to talk with your child about healthy relationships.

*This ends Session 10. Below you will find some additional tools that you can read through and use on your own. Thank you for participating in this session. We look forward to meeting again soon!*

## Appendix for Independent Reading: Healthy Relationship Tests

It can be easy for us to recognize unhealthy relationships or even violence in another family or couple. But in our own family or relationships, we may not see the warning signs, or we can even pretend that everything is fine, even when we notice something is unhealthy.

If you are unsure about the health of your relationship, you can take this quick test<sup>16</sup> (developed by La Strada and UNFPA for the Ukrainian context). The test can help you see if there are warning signs that you may need

help now for moving in a healthy, safe and positive direction in your relationship.

### Answer the questions "yes" or "no".

1. You are not allowed out of the house or into it.
2. You are forced to use alcohol or drugs.
3. You are not helped to move heavy loads (carry large purchases from the store or move furniture).
4. You are not respected and your desires, thoughts, or feelings, are ignored or criticized without reason.
5. Your opinion is disagreed with, even though you provide clear arguments and evidence.
6. You are deprived of the right to protect your honor and dignity.
7. You are restricted from accessing your own funds or are prohibited from using them at your own discretion.
8. Your partner restricts your possibility for employment or forbids you to study or work.
9. You asked to borrow a small amount of money, but were unfairly denied.
10. You are offered to have sex on the first date.
11. You are forced to work in the porn industry or sex business.
12. You are forced to get pregnant or have an abortion.



<sup>15</sup> Dempsey, K. (n.d.). Five instant ways to soothe somatic anxiety. The Awareness Center. Retrieved June 7, 2023, from <https://theawarenesscentre.com/somatic-anxiety/>



<sup>16</sup> The Village Ukraine & UNFPA Ukraine. (n.d.). Is this a sign of physical violence? Retrieved on July 27, 2023, from <https://www.the-village.com.ua/village/city/promo/336295-unfpa-rozirvi-kolo-test>

If you answered “yes” to at least one question, there is a warning sign of unsafe behaviors in your relationship. Please talk with your facilitator one-on-one, but you can also take an additional online test,<sup>17</sup> which can help you better understand the warning signs, either in your relationship or in general.



Scan this QR code to access  
an additional online test about  
warning signs in relationships.

If you have questions or concerns, please be sure to talk with your facilitator afterwards, one-on-one. You can also call one of these hotlines, where there are specialists to help in situations of violence in relationships.

## La Strada hotlines:

### For adults

**0 800 500 335**

(from mobile or landline)

**116 123**

(from mobile)

### For children

**0 800 500 225**

(from mobile or landline)

**116 111**

(from mobile)

## This ends Session 10 Thank you for your participation.

You will find a short discussion guide that follows this lesson and includes optional questions to help you talk with your own or other children about how they are doing. We look forward to meeting again next week!



<sup>17</sup> Бондаровська В.М., Бордіян Я.І., Булах Л.В., Журавель Т.В., Куриленко О.Я., Мельник Л.А., Скіпальська Г.Б., Федорова О.А., Христова Г.О. (2014). *Prevention of Violence in the Family in the Activity of Social Sphere Specialists*. Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, Health Right International, Ukrainian Public Health Foundation.

## SESSION 10

### EXTRA TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN

The following tools are for parents, caregivers, or trusted friends to do with children in various settings. You will see the following symbols, which show if the tool is for use with children in live conflict/disaster zones, children on the move, or those who are settled.



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**

You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the tool. If you are the parent going through this tool with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead. These are the included tools:

- Talking With Children about Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships
- Pressure
- Our Words Have Power

*(for parents, caregivers, or trusted friends to do with children, especially teens, who are settled, either as refugees or back home. You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the handout. If you are the parent going through this tool with your own teen, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead.)*

*NOTE to the parent: YOU can be part of helping prevent sexual violence against children. Adolescents face risks that can negatively impact their lives well into adulthood. Sexual debut and sexual violence both occur at the age of 15 or younger at high rates. As parents and caregivers, you can provide your children with information and skills they will need to make informed decisions about sex throughout their lives and to understand the issues of sexual violence/abuse. The following conversation guide and activities will support your child’s ability to understand healthy and unhealthy relationships (including when unhealthy behaviors cross the line into violence and abuse, and where to get help if needed) and can increase their understanding of sexual consent as a foundation for the*

*prevention of sexual violence. These guides and activities were developed for children as young as nine years old.*

#### **Begin the time with your child with regular check-in questions, such as**

1. What was the best thing that happened this week?
2. What was something funny that happened this week?
3. What was hard about this week?



### **Talking With Children about Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships**

*Say to your child: We’re going to talk today about what makes a relationship healthy or*

unhealthy. This can apply to relationships with friends or in your family. We're also going to talk about romantic relationships.

### For Reflection with the Child

What are some things you might see in healthy and unhealthy relationships?

*Say to your child:* You have done a great job thinking about healthy and unhealthy relationships!

Here are some other clues that might show a healthy relationship:

- When the partners have fun together and make each other laugh;
- Help each other solve problems;
- Can disagree without hurting each other;
- Are patient, honest and dependable;
- Treat each other as equals and trust each other;
- Make each other feel safe;
- When both people are in the relationship because they want to be.

And here are some other clues that a relationship might not be healthy:

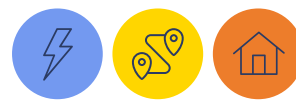
- When a partner says mean things on purpose or yells at you a lot;
- Doesn't care about hurting your feelings;
- Does not treat you as an equal or acts disrespectfully toward you;
- Does not listen to you or ask you what you want, including physical affection;
- Doesn't respect it when you feel uncertain about doing something, including physically;
- Makes you feel bad about how you are acting;
- Gossips about you or makes fun of you;
- Tries to control you, stops you from seeing your friends, is possessive and very jealous;

- Makes fun of you or makes you feel insecure about how you look and act;
- Breaks your trust; does not make you feel safe.

All these characteristics could be true of a friendship, but they might also be true of a romantic relationship. As people grow up, they start to have romantic relationships. These are relationships where you and the other person consider yourself to be more than friends. Talking about romantic relationships may not be important to your current situation, but it will be in the future as you have these types of relationships. I want you to be prepared to handle issues you may face in the future. It can also be helpful in case you need to help a friend face these same issues.

### For Reflection with the Child

- How old are most people when they have their first romantic relationship?
- What kinds of activities do they do together?
- Do they spend time mostly together or go out with other friends?



## Pressure

One important characteristic of unhealthy relationships that we want to talk about is "pressuring the other person to do things they don't want to do". As you grow up, you may face pressure from other people to do things you don't want to do or things you know you shouldn't do. These pressures may come from other girls or boys your own age, but also from older children or adults.

People can pressure you in different ways. They can offer you gifts. They can make you feel like you have to do the things they do if you want to be their friend. They can tease you and tell you it is time to prove you are grown up. They can bully and threaten you. This pressure may make you feel embarrassed or scared, but if you feel that doing something is a bad idea it is always best not to do it. Trust the feelings that tell you if something is a good or bad idea.



Talking with your parents or another trusted adult can help. They can help you think about how you can avoid situations where people are pressuring you. They can also help you imagine how you will feel if someone tries to pressure you and to think through what you will do.



## Our Words Have Power

### For Reflection with the Child

- What are some ways you could speak respectfully to or about someone of the opposite sex? How do you think that might make them feel?
- What are some disrespectful words or phrases you have used or heard others use about someone of the opposite sex? Why do you think people use these types of words and phrases?

*Say to your child:* Thank you for sharing with me! The ways we speak to and about others has a lot of power, either to harm or to help the other person. When we insult or mock others, it does not just hurt that other person, but it also promotes negative ideas and stereotypes about people, gender, and sexual topics. And that can actually hurt us all, because it shapes the ways we think about these things.

### For Reflection with the Child (ages 10 and above)

The content in your main session above (with your partner/spouse) on healthy sexual relationships is appropriate for parents to consider discussing with children ages 10-14 and older. Invite your older child to have a special one-on-one time with you. You might even make a cup of tea or have a special snack together. Read through and discuss the Making Healthy Decisions about Sex and Sexual Consent sections together. Don't try to rush through or read it all in one sitting. It's better to go at a slow pace and allow plenty of time for questions and discussion. Most importantly, make sure your child senses that you love, trust and support them. After you have discussed those sections, go through the following scenario together.

*Say to your child:* Let's look at and talk about a scenario now where a boy uses sexual slurs against a girl.

### Scenario: Ivan's friend shouts sexual comment at girl

*Ivan and his friend are sitting outside. The friend laughs and shouts after a girl who passes by, wearing school clothes. She looks back uncomfortably, and Ivan looks unsure.*

**Friend:** "Hey pretty, why are you walking so fast! Don't you want to come show us what is under that skirt?"

### For Reflection with the Child (ages 10 and above)

What warning signs do you see here?

*Some answers your child might give include: The friend makes fun of the girl, makes the girl feel insecure about how she looks and acts, and he acts disrespectfully.*

*Say to your child:* Yes, all of these are warning signs! Shouting sexual comments, whistling or making kissing sounds at someone is a type of sexual abuse. If Ivan stays silent, his friend will likely keep doing this. Ivan can help his friend see that his behaviour makes girls feel scared, angry, or sad, and is not okay.

You have the power to make a real change by not staying silent in these types of situations and by not participating in these types of actions yourself. You can set an example of respect toward others, especially those of the opposite sex.

## Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

### For Reflection with the Child

Can you think about any relationships in your life that have some of the healthy or unhealthy characteristics we've talked about today? If there are unhealthy characteristics, let's talk together about what you might be able to do to respond or change the situation.

*This ends the tools "Talking With Children about Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships", "Pressure", and "Our Words Have Power". We look forward to hearing how it went!*

## SESSION 11

# STAYING SAFE IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS<sup>19</sup>

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WWO PARENTING  
HopeGroups

**PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN  
FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

- If they tell you about abuse, trust your child. Reassure them it's not their fault and they are safe and loved.
- Teach your child that no one has the right to touch them or make them uncomfortable.
- Practice saying "no" loudly and strongly.
- Tell them that abusers often trick children by saying it is their 'secret'
- Talking about this with your child helps protect them.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

"Rescue me, Lord, from evildoers;  
protect me from the violent." (Psalm 140:1)

Dear God, I thank you for my children. I pray that they would be kept safe. Amen.

No.13



Self-praise can also be really helpful, especially when we have difficult days. Let's practice together some self-praise now.

- Let's each take a turn considering our past week and finishing the following phrase: "This week, I am proud of myself for ..." It can be anything, not just things about being a parent!
- Now, think of one thing you did well today. Would you be willing to share with the group?

## Why Staying Safe?

Last time we met, we talked about healthy and unhealthy relationships. We know that any relationship can go through good and difficult times. But it's important for us and our children to recognize signs that a relationship is not in a healthy place and to learn skills to make changes when needed. Just like last time, we invite your spouse or partner to join you for this session. If they cannot be present in our group, we encourage you to read this session together on your own and discuss the topics.

Today we're going to talk about staying safe in our relationships. This topic can be sensitive to discuss, so be sure to tell your facilitator if you need a break.

## Positive Self-Talk<sup>20</sup> and Self-Praise

Have you ever noticed that when we are having a hard time, we often talk to ourselves in negative ways, thinking things like "I am falling apart!"? These messages have a negative impact on us, but we can change the way we talk to ourselves and improve our physical and mental health. "Everybody hates me" can be changed to "Sometimes I feel insecure about people liking me, but I am friendly and likeable." The first message makes us feel horrible, and the second creates calm.

<sup>19</sup> The primary sources for this session are:

Parenting for Lifelong Health (n.d.) Parenting App-Sexual Violence Prevention Module  
PEPFAR (2019, Jan 16) 9-14 Year Old Prevention, Module 1-3



<sup>20</sup> Walden University. (n.d.). How positive self-talk can make you feel better and be more productive. Walden University School of Psychology. Retrieved June 7, 2023 from <https://www.waldenu.edu/online-bachelors-programs/bs-in-psychology/resource/how-positive-self-talk-can-make-you-feel-better-and-be-more-productive>

# “Hurt People Hurt People”

In a previous session, we discussed how trauma can impact our reactions and make us more likely to become angry and lose control of our emotions. This is an important idea for us to return to now. We are all facing such chronic stress and trauma through the war, and this can lead to harmful behaviors in our relationships. There is no excuse for someone to hurt us, and we will talk about how to stay safe. But it can be helpful for us all to recognize that anger and hurtful behaviors are sometimes related to trauma. If they are, it can also show us how to get help. This can be especially true if you or a loved one has experienced violence, bombing, or active military duty.

**“Hurt people hurt people.  
The more people are hurting, the more  
they lash out at everybody else.”<sup>21</sup>**

If your spouse or partner has changed their behaviors and become hurtful toward you or your children since the war began, first ask yourself, “What has happened to them?” People who have witnessed or experienced a life-threatening event may develop a reaction called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Some of the signs of PTSD are<sup>22</sup>:

- Flashbacks, nightmares, and upsetting memories of the trauma that we cannot get out of our minds
- Feeling detached, lack of emotions, loss of interest in activities
- Avoiding activities, people, or places that remind the person of the trauma

- Difficulty sleeping and concentrating, irritability, being constantly on guard, and startling easily

If your loved one has been in active military duty, they might also experience Combat Stress. Some of the signs include<sup>23</sup>:

- Intense anger or aggression
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts
- Moral injury - this is a psychological wound that some veterans experience, “failing to prevent, or observing acts that go against deeply held moral beliefs.”

If you recognize some of these signs in your loved one, here are some tips on how you can support them<sup>24</sup>:

- Tell them that “acknowledging they may have PTSD shows they’re strong, not weak.”
- Let them decide “what they are comfortable talking about, and don’t push.”
- “Be a good listener and don’t say things like, “I know how you felt,” or, “That’s just like when I...,” even if you also served in a combat zone. Everyone’s feelings are unique.”
- “Remind your loved one that they are not alone, and many others have personal stories they can share about their readjustment. Talking to other warriors can help them cope.”

If you are experiencing these types of reactions as a result of active military duty, there is help. Please check out the resources at the end of this session, and talk with your facilitator about finding a chaplain, counselor, or someone to walk with you through this healing process.



<sup>21</sup> Warren, R. (2019, July 24). *The Real Reason We Argue*. PastorRick.com. Retrieved July 26, 2023, from <https://pastorrick.com/the-real-reason-we-argue/>



<sup>22</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed., text rev.)*. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787>



<sup>23</sup> Wounded Warrior Project. (n.d.). *Veterans and PTSD: Understanding Causes, Signs, Symptoms and Treatment*. Retrieved July 26, 2023, from <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/mental-wellness/veteran-ptsd-treatment-support-resources#3>



<sup>24</sup> Wounded Warrior Project. (n.d.). *Veterans and PTSD: Understanding Causes, Signs, Symptoms and Treatment*. Retrieved July 26, 2023, from <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/mental-wellness/veteran-ptsd-treatment-support-resources#3>

# Learning to Recognize Warning Signs

We have talked about behaviors that might be signs your relationship is not healthy. Other behaviors in a relationship are not just warning signs, but show us clearly that we are not safe. Some examples are if your partner<sup>25</sup>:

- Hits, chokes, kicks, shoves or physically restrains you.
- Touches you sexually in a way that you don't want to be touched, forces or coerces you into any sexual activity, or touches your child/children sexually.
- Intentionally hurts you emotionally, by intimidating you, making fun of you, screaming at or harassing you.
- Isolates you from friends or family, or silences you or controls your activities and choices.
- Controls your finances and access to your basic needs.
- Uses the internet or social media to harass, intimidate or control you.

No matter what your relationship is to the other person, no one has the right to hurt you or your children in these ways. We're going to learn about ways that you and your children can say no to these types of behaviors so that you can stay safe. We are also going to talk about healthy ways to release anger and aggression; these emotions need to be given a place and a voice, but there are ways to do that so that no one is harmed.

Behaviors like the ones above are clearly unsafe, and there are also other behaviors that may be threats to your own wellbeing and safety. Sometimes we can use healthy communication

skills or the help of a trusted friend or mental health care provider to talk through the situation or problem. But, sometimes that is not enough. Sometimes the other person refuses to use healthy communication skills, and the unhealthy behaviors continue to a point where the behavior is unsafe. In those situations, talking to a counselor, social worker, or other trained worker in this area can help you make decisions about how you can best keep yourself and others safe.

## Skills for Staying Safe

**Responding to Anger.** One important way to stay safe in our relationships is to learn how to respond to anger. Anger is a natural reaction many people experience, especially when they are dealing with trauma. Anger might give us a sense of strength, and there are healthy ways we can release and express our anger that don't hurt us or the people around us. And actually, when we hold anger inside, it's not good for us at all! Check out these ideas<sup>26,27</sup>, and try them the next time you are and/or your partner is feeling especially angry:

- Try a calming exercise, like deep breathing, muscle relaxation, imagining a peaceful place, or yoga.
- Try to change the way you think about the situation that's making you angry. For example, 'instead of telling yourself, "oh, it's awful, it's terrible, everything's ruined," tell yourself, "it's frustrating, and it's understandable that I'm upset about it, but it's not the end of the world and getting angry is not going to fix it anyhow."
- If you're having an angry discussion, slow down and think about your responses. "Listen carefully to what the other person is saying, take your time before answering, and try to respond with a calm tone of voice."



<sup>25</sup> National Domestic Violence Hotline (n.d.) *Types of Abuse*. Retrieved July 17, 2023, from <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/types-of-abuse/>



<sup>26</sup> American Psychological Association. (2022, Aug.9). *Control anger before it controls you*. Retrieved July 27, 2023, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/anger/control>



<sup>27</sup> Mayo Clinic. (n.d.). *Anger management: 10 tips to tame your temper*. Retrieved July 27, 2023, from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/anger-management/art-20045434>

- Get some exercise, especially something vigorous, like running or a brisk walk.
- Use humor, but avoid sarcasm.

### For Reflection with Your Partner

- Do either of you tend to use one or more of these responses when you are angry?
- Which of these responses could you commit to try the next time you are angry?

**Boundaries in sexual relationships.** Now we are going to learn some refusal skills that will help you take action, especially in the area of sexual activity. It's important that in a relationship, we make sure the other person understands what our boundaries or limits are.

If you have communicated your boundary, but the other person is not respecting that and is pressuring or forcing you, the first refusal skill is to say "NO". We are going to look at some things you can do to say "NO" as clearly as possible.

## Say No

### Say No With Your Voice

- Yell 'No!'
- Call for help. "Someone help me!"
- Warn of consequences. "I will call the police if you touch me again."
- Name the behaviour "Do not touch my bum." or "Do not yell at me."
- Act crazy. Make a crazy scream or act like a gorilla!
- Use humour. "No lift for me, thanks. Last time I got a lift I threw up EVERYWHERE!"
- Give something to get what you want. "I will give you my phone if you let me go."

### Say No With Your Body

- You can use body language by using your hand(s) to signal, "STOP" and create space between you and the other person.

- You can say NO with your body position. – Stand FIRM and upright planting your feet solidly – you can place your hands on your hips.

### Say No With Your Face

- Say NO with your eyes. – Make direct eye contact with the other person.
- Say NO with your facial expressions. – Show that you are serious.

Sometimes even when you do your best to tell someone what you want or to tell them NO, they can still do something to you that you did not want. *It is important to understand that this is NEVER your fault!*

### Time to Practice

We will now consider a couple scenarios where you might use "saying NO" to stop a situation you are uncomfortable with. We'll read the scenario out loud, and then we can discuss together your ideas of how you could say "no".

**Scenario 1:** You had a long day at work, and now it's getting late and you are tired. You're in bed, and your spouse/partner begins to kiss you and make advances sexually. You'd rather not have sex tonight. *Skip down to the reflection questions below and discuss.*

**Scenario 2:** You've been in a romantic relationship for a while now, and you have not had sex in that relationship. You're out walking with your partner, holding hands, and he brings up the subject of sex. He says, "We've been together a long time now, and I'm ready to sleep together. I love you! Don't you love me?" Your personal boundary is that you do not want to have sex at this time. *Skip down to the reflection questions below and discuss.*

### For Reflection

- What are some different ways that you could say no?
- What could you do if your spouse/partner continues to make advances, after you say no?



# Avoiding or Getting Out of a Situation

So far we have only talked about saying “NO”. Now let’s talk about avoiding a situation and getting out of a situation once you are in it. Remember that **if possible, you should avoid situations that will make it hard for you to stick to your decision**. The Parenting Tip for this session emphasizes principles we covered earlier in Session 5 on avoiding unsafe people and places -- particularly those we do not know. In this Session, we are emphasizing avoiding situations that may be unsafe or unhealthy -- with people we do know.

As we learn skills for avoiding or getting out of unsafe situations, it is important to remember that sometimes we cannot control what someone else does to us. If someone **FORCES** you to do something that you do not want to do, that is **NEVER** your fault.

You may have to make decisions about sex many times in your life. Sometimes, you may need to decide how to tell your partner that you want to abstain from sex or that you want to protect yourself during sex. Often you may not have much time to think about what you should do or what you should say. Without a plan, it is harder to make decisions that prevent STI’s or pregnancy.

Now we are going to talk about steps that will help you strengthen your sexual decisions, whether you want to delay sex, abstain from sex, or protect yourself.

## There are three steps to strengthen your decision, whether it is to DELAY, ABSTAIN, or PROTECT (described in Session 10)

1. **STOP** - This gives you a chance to take a deep breath, and calm down.
2. **THINK** - Thinking keeps you in control of the situation. Your emotions will not get in the way. Here are some of the things you should think about:
  - a. What are you being pressured/asked to do?
  - b. What are your choices?

- c. How can you stay in control of this situation?
- d. What alternatives can you suggest? What can you do instead?

3. **ACT** - When you are calm and you have thought about what you want to do, you will act based on what you know and what you believe is the right decision for yourself.

As you put your refusal skills into action, you may worry that you are going to hurt another person’s feelings. However, you should always remember the boundaries that you have set for yourself, and what we have learned about healthy relationships. If it is a healthy relationship, the other person will respect your limits and your decisions.

## Self Defense Skills

In a dangerous situation, our nervous system usually responds automatically with what we call the “fight, flight or freeze” reaction. This means that if your mind senses danger, it will automatically tell your body to fight off the danger, run from it, or freeze. All of these reactions are normal, and the individual response might depend on the situation, your temperament or your past experiences.

When saying “NO” is not changing a potentially dangerous situation, we can use our bodies. In that situation, it’s important to know the ‘weapons’ on your body and know the ‘targets’ on your attacker’s body. This will make it more likely that you can stop them from hurting you. Use what is free on your body that you can fight with and what is open on the attacker’s body to hit.

The primary, or best targets on an attacker’s body are: the eyes, throat, groin and knees. The secondary, or next best targets are: the temples, ears, nose, space between the ribs, fingers, shins, and tops of the feet. Some of the ways you might defend yourself is to target those areas of the attacker’s body and scratch, pull, punch, kick, or twist (for example, the fingers). (See illustration 6 and 7.)



Illustration 6

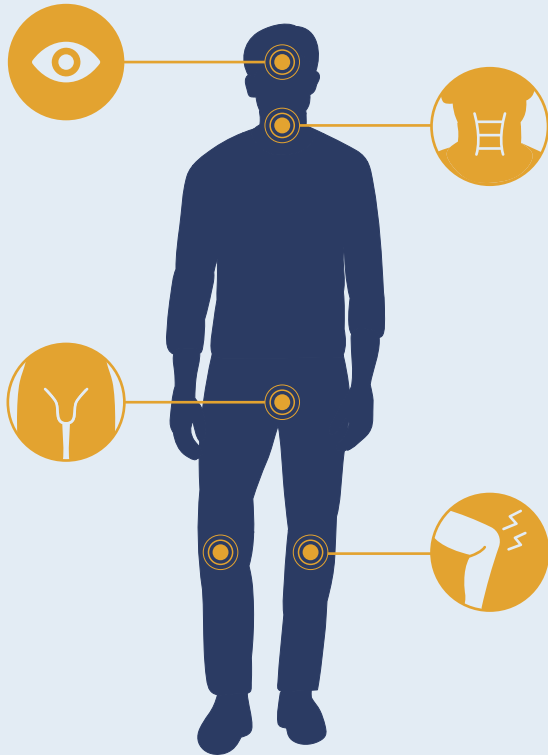
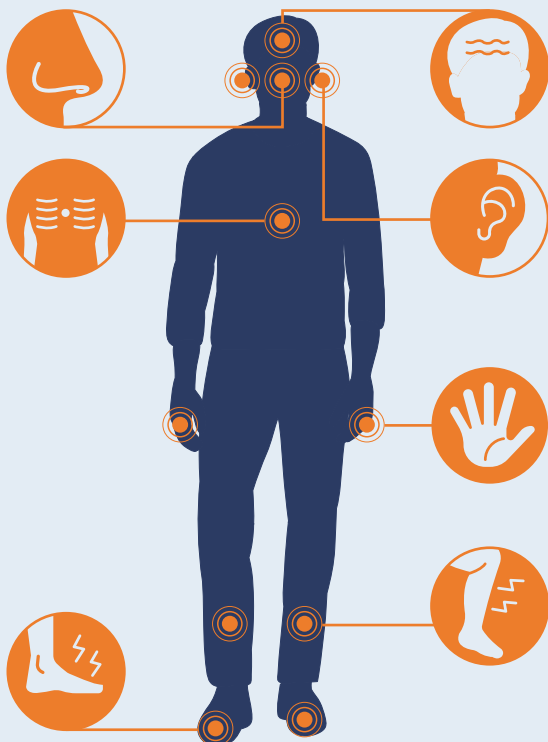


Illustration 7



If you do get hurt by someone, remember it is never your fault. Ask someone you trust for help, talk with your facilitator, or call one of the resources at the end of this session.

## Time to Practice

We will now consider a few self-defense techniques that can be powerful tools for keeping you safe. Let's all stand up and practice these together.

### Fighting Stance

***This is our first way to use our body to say NO. We don't intend to fight, but we are clearly telling the attacker NO and are ready to defend ourself if needed.***

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Now step back with your stronger foot, the one you would use to kick with.
- Bend your knees a little.
- Hold your hands up in front of your chest so your palms are facing out and your elbows are close to your sides.
- Yell "NO" to the attacker.

### Side Stomp

- Start in the Fighting Stance.
- Lift up your foot and stomp your heel with all your strength into the top of your attacker's foot.
- Yell "NO" and run away.

### Pinky Release

***You could use this skill if an attacker has their hand over your face.***

- Start in the Fighting Stance.
- Reach your hand(s) up and grab the pinky finger of your attacker. You might have to feel around before you know that you have the pinky finger.
- Pull down hard on the pinky finger to break it.
- Yell "NO" and run away.

### Eye Poke

- Start in the Fighting Stance.
- Hold all your fingers together on each hand and then strike both eyes of the attacker.
- Yell "NO" and run away.

# Making a Safety Plan

Another important skill for staying safe is to make a safety plan. If you see warning signs or

unhealthy behaviors in your relationship, make a safety plan now, before you need it. Then you will be ready if you need to act to get to safety. Here are some suggestions for a safety plan<sup>28</sup> See illustration 8):

Illustration 8



<sup>28</sup> McFarlane, J., Malecha, A., Gist, J., Watson, K., Batten, E., Hall, I., Smith, S. (2002, Nov/Dec). An Intervention to Increase Safety Behaviors of Abused Women. *Nursing Research*. Vol 51, No 6. Retrieved Jan. 1, 2024, from [https://journals.lww.com/nursingresearchonline/abstract/2002/11000/an\\_intervention\\_to\\_increase\\_safety\\_behaviors\\_of.2.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/nursingresearchonline/abstract/2002/11000/an_intervention_to_increase_safety_behaviors_of.2.aspx)

## Time to Practice

We are going to develop a safety plan for an imaginary woman, named Olena. Olena lives with her husband and 10-year old daughter in a Kyiv apartment. She does not work outside the home. She has good friends in the next building, and her parents live 10 minutes away. Her husband works each day at an office about 30 minutes from home.

Olena's husband has becoming more angry and aggressive lately. He has been keeping her from going out with friends and has begun to restrict the amount of money she has access to. Olena has tried to use good communication skills with him. He has agreed to see a counselor with her, but sometimes, Olena is concerned that he might become violent. She wants to continue working on the relationship, but she realizes she might need to get to safety one day.

## For Reflection

- What kind of information about Olena's life would help her develop a safety plan? (*For example: What relationships or resources does she have? Where does she live? What are the safe places nearby? etc.*)
- What elements of a safety plan can Olena put into place?

# Putting it into Practice this Week

We've talked today about some difficult topics. Let's all take a minute to practice a new tool for calming. When your brain is anxious, it can interpret things around you as threats and make you feel more anxious. Using a '5-4-3-2-1' mindfulness technique<sup>29</sup> can help calm you. I will guide you through this practice now. Pay attention and quietly consider what you notice.

- Find **five** things to look at in your surroundings.
- Listen to **four** sounds around you.

- Identify **three** things you can feel (this be an item you can stroke, like a cushion, or it may be the feel of your bag on your shoulder).
- Find **two** things you can smell.
- Discover **one** thing you can taste.
- Thank you for practicing altogether! Would anyone like to share how this felt for them?

As we wrap up today's session, I want us all to remember that we will make decisions about sex over and over again throughout life. It is important to make them before we are in a sexual situation. Every time you face one of these decisions, it will help you to STOP, THINK, and then ACT! You will need to have good communication with the other person if you want to have a safe and healthy relationship. It is also important to remember that sometimes we do not have a choice in what happens to us, because we cannot control other people. The good news is that research shows us that the skills we have been working together on today -- when put into practice -- make life much safer for women, adolescents, and children.

## For Reflection with Your Partner

Take some time this week to talk with your partner about this session. It's important that you choose a time when you are both well rested and calm. If you have concerns about safety in your relationship, talk with your facilitator first, before having this conversation with your partners (see below for referral options).

For those whose partners did not join the group discussion today, this session is one that you can talk about with your partner/spouse, if you feel it is safe. In your discussion, you may want to plan to discuss any warning signs you each see in your relationship, how each of you might practice new skills in responding to anger, and how you might practice saying "NO" in a way that is clear.

If you have experienced violence in a relationship, please talk with your facilitator



<sup>29</sup> Dempsey, K. (n.d.). *Five instant ways to soothe somatic anxiety*. The Awareness Center. Retrieved June 7, 2023, from <https://theawarenesscentre.com/somatic-anxiety/>

one-on-one. They can help you find resources to support you in walking through healing. We also want to provide you with the following resources:

## La Strada hotlines for domestic violence

### For adults

**0 800 500 335**

(from mobile or landline)

**116 123**

(from mobile)

### For children

**0 800 500 225**

(from mobile or landline)

**116 111**

(from mobile)



**website:**  
**la-strada.org.ua**

## Veteran's Hub, for military and their families

### hotline:

**067 348 28 68**

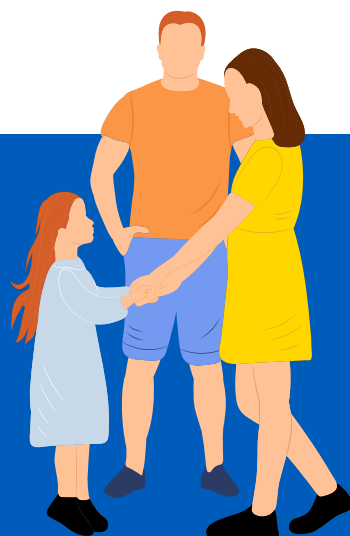


### website:

**veteranhub.com.ua**

**This ends Session 11.  
Thank you for your participation.  
We look forward to meeting  
again soon!**

Use the following extra tools to talk with your child about staying safe in their relationships.



## SESSION 11

### EXTRA TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN (FOR CHILDREN AGES 10 AND OLDER)

The following tools are for parents, caregivers, or trusted friends to do with children in various settings. You will see the following symbols, which show if the tool is for use with children in live conflict/disaster zones, children on the move, or those who are settled.



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**

You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the tool. If you are the parent going through this tool with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead. These are the included tools:

- Talking with Children over age 10 about Staying Safe in our Relationships
- Making Healthy Decisions About Sex
- Skills for Staying Safe

#### NOTE to the parent

*YOU can be part of helping prevent sexual violence against children. Adolescents face risks that can negatively impact their lives well into adulthood. Sexual debut and sexual violence both occur at the age of 15 or younger at high rates. As parents and caregivers, you can provide your children with information and skills they will need to make informed decisions about sex throughout their lives and to understand the issues of sexual violence/abuse. The following conversation guide and activities will support your child's ability to understand healthy and unhealthy relationships (including when unhealthy behaviors cross the line into violence and abuse, and where to get help if needed) and can increase their understanding of sexual consent as a foundation for the prevention of sexual violence. These guides and activities were developed for children as young as nine years old.*

#### Begin the time with your child with regular check-in questions, such as

1. What was the best thing that happened this week?
2. What was something funny that happened this week?
3. What was hard about this week?



### Talking with Children over age 10 about Staying Safe in our Relationships

*Say to your child:* We are going to talk about sex today (let them get the giggles out if there are any). In general, sex has to do with private area

touching, but also with how people who care about each other express that caring through physical touch.

Sex, sexual activity, and physical affection include many behaviors from hugging, kissing, to touching genitals (or your private parts), to sexual intercourse. Sex is a normal part of life. But, you have probably either heard or been told that people **your age** should **NOT** have sex.

### For Reflection with the Child (ages 10 and older)

Why do you think that is - if sex is a normal part of life, why do we and other adults in your life warn you **NOT** to have sex right now?

*Give your child time to think and answer, and be sure to praise them for their ideas. If your child does not give any of the following answers, be sure to point these out:*

- you can get pregnant/get someone pregnant
- you can get HIV and other STIs, which are infections you can get from sex
- to avoid emotional heartache
- waiting until marriage is part of my personal/community's/family's beliefs

That's right – these are all reasons that adults might tell you that it is not a good idea to have sex at your age. Pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV are all things that can happen. People who have sex very young are also more likely to miss school, and use alcohol and drugs.

### For Reflection with the Child (ages 10 and older)

How could getting pregnant or becoming a father affect your life at this age? (Allow your child to brainstorm answers. *If they do not say the following, bring them up yourself*):

- would make it hard to stay in school
- would have more responsibility
- would need more money
- for young girls, pregnancy and delivery can result in more medical complications than for adult women

Why should you worry about getting HIV or another STI? (Allow your child to brainstorm answers. *If they do not say the following, bring them up yourself*):

- Some infections can have harmful effects on your body.
- Some infections, including HIV, do not have a cure; so you would have to deal with them for the rest of your life.
- You can give infections to other people.
- For girls, the germs that cause HIV are more likely to infect younger girls than older girls.
- Starting to have sex when you are under the age of 15 will make it more likely that you will have more partners throughout your life. The more people that you have sex with during your life, the more of a chance you have of getting HIV or other STIs.



## Making Healthy Decisions About Sex

*Say to your child:* We talked recently about making healthy decisions about sex and sexual consent. One of the most important tools you have to keep yourself safe sexually is to make those healthy decisions and to know your own boundaries. It's important to make these decisions before you are faced with the question of whether or not to have sex, and what type of sexual activity you are comfortable with.

### For Reflection with the Child (ages 10 and older)

- What do you think is the healthiest sexual choice for you right now, delaying, abstaining or protecting?
- Have you ever felt pressure from another person to hug, kiss or participate in some kind of physical or sexual activity that you did not want to do?



### If so, what happened?

**Note to parent: if your child shares about any pressure or abuse that has occurred, make sure to respond calmly and supportively. Assure your child this was NOT their fault, that they are not in trouble, and that you love them and want to help keep them safe. Contact the La Strada hotline below:**

## La Strada hotline for domestic violence involving children

**0 800 500 225**

(from mobile or landline)

**116 111**

(from mobile)



**website**

[la-strada.org.ua](http://la-strada.org.ua)



## Skills for Staying Safe

*Say to your child:* We're going to talk now about some skills you can practice to help keep you safe if someone ever pressures or tries to force you to do something you don't want to do.

### Know It

Know the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Remember what we have discussed about healthy and unhealthy behaviors in a relationship. If you are pressured or attacked, know that it is never your fault. You are allowed to say and do what is needed to stay safe and get away – don't worry about what others may think. You are worth being defended. You are strong and powerful.

### See It

When someone makes you (or someone else) feel uncomfortable with what they say or do,

that is never okay! We all have the right to feel safe, especially at home. See the warning signs and follow your intuition. When you feel attacked with words or actions, your goal is to get away.

### Say It

Your voice can stop many attacks. Yell “No!”, call for help, warn of consequences, name the behaviour, act crazy, pretend to go along to buy time, use humour, calm them down, or negotiate. Be clear, confident, and direct. Speak using your voice, body language, and eye contact.

### Do It

When our voice is not changing the situation, we can use our bodies. Know the ‘weapons’ on your body and know the ‘targets’ on your attacker’s body. Use what is free on your body that you can fight with and what is open on the attacker’s body to hit. The primary, or best targets on an attacker’s body are: the eyes, throat, groin and knees. The secondary, or next best targets are: the temples, ears, nose, space between the ribs, fingers, shins, and tops of the feet. Some of the ways you might defend yourself is to target those areas of the attacker’s body and scratch, pull, punch, kick, or twist (for example, the fingers). *Show your child the pictures of targets from your main session.*

## Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

*Say to your child:* When we really like someone or are in love, it can be hard to recognise that something is wrong in our relationship. This is one reason it is so important for you to think about and know what makes a healthy or unhealthy relationship. Also, thinking beforehand about your physical and sexual boundaries, and knowing how to say “NO” with your voice and your body, can help keep you safe. You can also help friends stay safe by sharing this information with them. If you or someone you know is ever a victim of violence, there are organizations and people that can help you.

Here is a quick online test<sup>29</sup> that you can take to help you think about any violence or unhealthy behaviors that might be in your relationships. After you take this, we will talk together about the results and any changes you might need to make or skills you might want to practice in your relationships.

### Online test

Find out if there is violence in your life ([la-strada.org.ua](https://la-strada.org.ua))



*Note to parent: be sure to talk with your child about their results and respond if any concerns are revealed.*

### For Reflection with the Child

- Can you tell me about the options you have for staying safe in the area of sexual activity?
- Can you tell me some of the skills you can use if someone ever pressures or forces you to do something you don't want to do?

Thank you for sharing with me. I want to remind you that if someone pressures or forces you to do something, that is NEVER your fault. I want you to feel comfortable that you can come and talk to me if you feel unsafe or worried about someone's behavior. I will support and love you and help you come up with a plan to stay safe!

*Note to parent: The SaveChild site includes animated videos for teaching children of different ages about safety, abuse and warning signs. See the tab called "children" for videos broken down by ages 4-7, 8-11 and 12-15 years old. Check the videos out and decide if you would like to share them with your child:*  
<https://savechild.com.ua/4-7>



*This ends the tools "Talking with Children (ages 10 and over) about Staying Safe in our Relationships", "Making Healthy Decisions About Sex", and "Skills for Staying Safe". We look forward to hearing how it went!*



<sup>30</sup> La Strada Ukraine. (n.d.). Violence: find out if it is in your life. Retrieved July 27, 2023, from <https://la-strada.org.ua/online-test#0>

## SESSION 12

# RESILIENCE

**PARENTING TIPS**  
FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

WMO PARENTING FOR LIFETIME HEALTH  
HopeGroups

**TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF**

- Look after yourself as much as possible and try to rest when you can.
- Take a moment each day to listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
- Connect with loved ones as often as you can.
- Taking care of yourself also helps you to help your family.

Parents and Caregivers are **HEROES**  
Protecting our children in a crisis

**"I am with you always"** (Matthew 28:20)  
Remember that God is with you  
- it's the most frequent promise of God in the Bible.



No.1

### For Reflection

What have been the best parts and most difficult parts of the last week?

## Your Feelings Matter

How are you feeling today?

We usually say we are "fine" – but this sometimes doesn't really show our true feelings. This is a stressful time. We need to take care of ourselves so we can support our children and build healthy relationships, including with our partners and spouses, even when we are separated.

### For Reflection

- Can you think of anything that has made you feel happy or hopeful recently or since the crisis began?
- And what are some of the more difficult feelings you have had during this crisis?

- Can you think of something that made you feel worried, stressed or sad? What do you do when you have difficult feelings like this?

We tend to think some of our feelings are 'good' and others 'bad', but all our feelings are ok! As parents (and partners or spouses) we might be tempted to try to ignore or push away our feelings, but when we don't take care of ourselves well, we get gradually worn down and it gets harder to care for our children. Stress can build up and then burst out in unhelpful ways when we don't expect it!

### For Reflection

Do you already have any strategies you have to help you when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed?

*[Some ideas include: Take a break or time-out / Breathing exercise / Talk to someone / Exercise]*

When we feel overwhelmed it can be difficult to stay focused on the present – we might find ourselves thinking about what has gone wrong, or unable to focus. When you feel like this, it's good if you can notice, and pause, and take a moment to ground yourself.

### Activity: Breathing Exercise

*We practiced a breathing exercise in an earlier meeting of Hope Groups. It can be helpful to revisit these types of practices to check in on how they are helping us and remind us to keep practicing these types of coping skills.*

Here is one simple exercise you can try when you are feeling overwhelmed:

When the stress is too much, take 30 seconds for yourself. Let's try this together now.

- Listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
- You can put a hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath.

- Then just listen to your breath for a while.
- Try this every day.

How did that feel?

### For Reflection

What are some of the ways you already try to take care of your own needs? Is there a time in the day where you could take some time for yourself?

Some ideas could be:

- Spend some time outside
- Get some exercise that you enjoy
- Listen to music
- Get enough sleep
- Do something that makes you laugh
- Talk to a friend
- Pray, write in a journal, or read something that inspires and uplifts you
- Do something creative

*We can all recognize that some of these things might not be possible or realistic in our circumstances. Let's make special note of those which could be possible where we are at.*

### For Reflection

Is there something we've talked about that you want to try to put into practice this week?

## Spiritual Health as Part of Resilience

Spirituality is about the way a person finds meaning, hope, comfort and inner peace. For many people, spirituality involves a close

loving relationship with God that gives them hope and strength. Caring for our spirit is an important part of developing resilience. There are times, especially when we experience suffering or trauma, when we wrestle with spiritual distress, feeling empty and detached, questioning our beliefs, and feeling angry or afraid over questions about life and death.<sup>31</sup> These are all normal reactions, and learning how to care for our spirits in these wrestlings can increase our resilience. From a health perspective, spiritual care is when we respond to the needs of our spirit as we deal with trauma, illness or sadness. From a faith perspective, spiritual care typically involves seeking comfort from things that make us feel full, rather than empty -- such as music, gratitude, nature, or perhaps drawing close to God or trusted friends. It has to do with encouraging us to be part of compassionate relationships<sup>32</sup> Spiritual healing is a journey, with many unexpected turns in the road. We can't always change our circumstances, but healing can help us make peace with the life we are living. Remember when we talked about the phases of grief and making sense of our new reality. There's *always* hope for healing. Here are some tips that research has shown to be helpful on your journey toward spiritual health:<sup>33</sup>

- Ask yourself: what relationships and connections are important in your life?
- Ask: what relationships, activities, interests, values or beliefs give you meaning and purpose?
- Journal. Consider writing your thoughts, emotions, and questions in a journal.
- Lament. Take time to pour out your complaints, questions, sadness or anger over the injustices you see or experience. Write them in your journal, speak them aloud in prayer, or share them with that trusted person. For those who find comfort in the Bible, consider reading the Psalms, which are full of lamenting.



<sup>31</sup> Puchalski, C. M. (2012). *Spirituality as an essential domain of palliative care: Caring for the whole person. Progress in Palliative Care*, 20(2), 63–65. <https://doi.org/10.1179/0969926012Z.00000000028>

<sup>32</sup> NHS Education for Scotland, 2009

<sup>33</sup> Donovan, D.W. (2012). *Assessments. In Roberts, S. (ed), Professional Spiritual and Pastoral Care: A Practical Clergy and Chaplain's Handbook.*, Woodstock, V.T. Skylight Paths Publishing, 42-60.

- For those who are part of a religious community or faith, it may help build hope to spend time with others who share your faith, read the Bible or the sacred text of your faith, pray.

### For Reflection

- Is there someone in your life who is willing to simply listen to you, to be present with you in your questions, sadness or suffering, as well as in your celebrations, hopes, dreams, and joys?
- Is so, would you want to make a plan this week to spend time with that person?

As you consider these tips, remember that an important resource for your spiritual care is the hope we feel, from the compassionate presence of someone we can trust. Let's look for people like this, and take care of ourselves so that we can grow together, more and more, to become these kind of people!

## Helping My Children to Cope

*This section is relevant for parents, grandparents, teachers, Sunday school teachers, and others who regularly interact with children.*

### For Reflection

- What have you noticed about how your children have responded during this time?
- If they have been finding it difficult, have they talked about it with you?
- Or have you seen changes in their behaviour?

Children may respond to stress in different ways, such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawn, angry or agitated. They might seem to move backwards in their development, for example begin wetting the bed again, or be unable to do tasks they had been able to do before the crisis.

It can make a big difference to children's ability to cope if we are able to be supportive and reassuring and help our children to feel safe. They may often communicate their feelings

through their behaviour, and so it's good to be alert to any changes or patterns.

### For Reflection

What ways have you found already to help your child to be calm and feel safe and supported during this time?

These are great ideas! Some other tips are:

- Give children extra time and attention
- Listen to children and speak kindly to them
- Make opportunities for children to play and relax:
- Even in conflict/war or crisis settings, spending 5 minutes playing a familiar game can really help
- In a new place, try to make time to help children do familiar activities they enjoyed back home (e.g. a hobby like a sport, music, or art that they really loved or spent a lot of time on before)
- Keep to regular schedules and routines as much as possible. Even just maintaining simple routines in the morning (breakfast – dress – brush teeth) and evening (clean up – pyjamas – brush teeth – story time – prayers – lights out) can help to create a sense of normality.
- Give children clear information and facts about what is going on and on your plans for the coming days or weeks, and respond to their questions honestly and sensitively.
- Praise your child every day for something they do well.

### Putting it into practice this week

Think about how you can tell each other how you feel every day at home:

- In more stable settings: Could you create a chart together with faces showing different feelings, and then show each other which one you feel each day? See an example below.
- In crisis/transition settings, or on the move: How could you give 5 minutes to listen to your child each day?

## Wrap Up

What do you plan to do this week to take care of yourself, to help your children deal with their emotions, or to strengthen healthy relationships with people you love, including your spouse or partner?

*[Some ideas include: Take more time for myself / Talk about my feelings / Breathing Exercise / Talk to children about how they feel / Create a feelings chart]*

## Anonymous Online Survey

We are so glad you have participated in this Hope Group! Please take a few moments to submit an anonymous survey about your experience. We will use these anonymous surveys to create an impact report that will show you and your facilitator how the Hope Groups have impacted all of you! Your answers will also help us serve many other people who are experiencing crisis all over the world. Thank you!



<https://forms.office.com/r/jwr3rrb85f>

**This ends Session 12 and this Hope Group. Thank you for your participation. We look forward to hearing how these sessions help you and your family continue to adjust and thrive.**

It was a great honor to meet you and learn together how to strengthen ourselves, our relationships and our families. Some groups decide to celebrate the completion of their Hope Group together. You can do this with a simple ceremony where you celebrate each participant, or you can arrange an informal gathering and simply laugh, celebrate, and enjoy each other's company. Take time to talk about how these meetings have affected your life and how they have given you hope in your lives and strengthened your relationships.

You will find a short discussion guide that follows this lesson and includes optional questions to help you talk with your own or other children about how they are doing.





## SESSION 12

# EXTRA TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN

The following tools are for parents, caregivers, or trusted friends to do with children in various settings. You will see the following symbols, which show if the tool is for use with children in live conflict/disaster zones, children on the move, or those who are settled.



**Live Conflict**



**On the Move**



**Settled**

You will see the words “parent” and “parents” in the tool. If you are the parent going through this tool with your own child, you can substitute the words “parent” or “parents” and say “me” and “we”, instead. These are the included tools:

- Talking with Children about Feelings and Emotions



## Talking with Children about Feelings and Emotions

### Beginning the time together

Begin with your regular check-in questions, such as:

- What was the best thing that happened this week?
- What was something funny that happened this week?
- What was hard about this week?

Remind the child that you are talking together about how you are doing, giving you a chance to talk and share how you are feeling, and sharing ideas together which can help you and your family.

### My feelings and emotions

*Some of the activities in this tool build on activities in earlier tools from the Hope Groups. It can be helpful to revisit these types of practices to check in on how they are helping us and remind us to keep practicing these types of coping skills. You will also find additional suggestions on how to creatively use the activities one on one or with groups of children.*

### For Reflection with the Child

How are you feeling today?

Explain that you will start with a quick game about our feelings. You will say a feeling (e.g. “scared”, “happy”) and the child should quickly tell you something that makes them feel this way.

E.g. “Scared” – “Spiders!”; “Happy” – “when my sports team wins a competition”

*What is something that makes you feel:*

- Happy?
- Excited?

- Surprised?
- Bored?

Let the child also ask you some of these questions and give your answers! Explain that today we'll be looking at how we can recognise our feelings, and what to do when we have difficult feelings.

*In a group setting or as other options to play this game with your child, you could write different feelings on sheets of paper and spread them out through the room. Then shout out a scenario, and the children can run to the sheet which expresses how it makes them feel.*

## How do I feel?

### For Reflection with the Child

- Can you think of something that happened this week that made you feel good?
- What was it and what feelings did you have? (e.g. happy, excited, joyful) *(Be ready to share your own example first if needed).*
- Can you think of something that made you feel bad?
- What was it and what feelings did you have? (e.g. sad, angry, bored, worried, scared) *(Be ready to share your own example first if needed).*

It's normal to have difficult feelings when we go through a hard or confusing time, or when lots of things are changing around us.

### We might

- Feel more worried
- Not want to be apart from our family
- Not want to talk to people or play
- Be more angry
- Not be able to stay still and focus
- Do things we did when we were younger like wet the bed, or forget things we have learned

- Feel afraid of what might happen

This is totally normal and ok – all of our feelings are ours and we shouldn't feel bad about having them. It's good to talk about how we feel so that others can help us and understand us better. It can sometimes be hard to say how we are feeling.

### For Reflection with the Child

Can you think of some ways we can share our feelings with our family?

It can sometimes be hard to use words to say how we feel. Here are some activities that can help your child express their feelings.

**Activity 1:** Ask your child what sound a car would make when it is a happy car. The child should create the sound, and you repeat it and ask the child if they agree that this is a happy car sound. Next, ask the child what sound a car might make if it's starting to get upset. When the child makes the sound, repeat it and ask if this is the sound of a car that is getting upset. Repeat this process with other feelings, like anger. You can then ask your child regularly, "How is your car running today?" *(You could also use the sounds of the child's favorite animal, music sounds, or hand clapping.)*

Some examples of feelings your child might express are: sad, happy, scared, silly, energetic, bored, worried, angry, surprised, or others.

**Activity 2:** Cut out shapes of a child and leave the faces blank. Have an envelope for each child with their name on it. The child can pick a shape and draw a face on it to show how they feel. They will then place the shape into their envelope, leaving the head facing out. This gives the parent/caregiver an opportunity to talk with their child about how they feel. The child can pick a new shape and draw a different face at any time of the day, to show when their feelings change.

If paper is not available, this activity can be done by making a game out of it. You ask the child to draw the feeling face on your back with their finger, and then you guess what it was. Now take turns and you draw the face of your feelings on the child's back and have them guess. Afterwards say, "I am so proud of you! We are learning together to talk about our feelings!!"

*In a group or 1:1 session, you could create child shapes together to take home to use with your family.*

## What can I do with my feelings?

### For Reflection with the Child

What do you usually do when you have a difficult feeling (like you talked about earlier) or when you are feeling worried or scared?

It's great if we can think ahead to have some ideas of things we can do when we feel sad, worried or upset. Then we'll be ready to take action and help ourselves to feel better.

### For Reflection with the Child

What might be some things you can do that could help you when you have a difficult feeling?

Here are some ideas (if you need them):

- Talk about your worries to your parents, a friend, or someone you trust
- Write down your feelings
- Do some exercise that you enjoy
- Listen to music, dance, or sing
- Do something that makes you laugh
- Play a game together with your family
- Draw a picture of how you are feeling
- For difficult feelings you could draw or write these, then scrunch them up and throw them away

## Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

### For Reflection with the Child

- What can you do this week to help you and your family share your feelings?
- What is one thing you will do this week if you feel sad/scared/worried/upset?

*[Some ideas might be: Make a feelings chart with my family / Talk to someone about my feelings / Try something new if I feel sad or upset]*

- What is one thing you will do this week if you feel happy, hopeful, or playful?

*This ends the tool "Talking With Children about Feelings and Emotions". We look forward to hearing how it went!*



Hope  Groups

