

myLIFE

War Child Canada Life Skills Curriculum (Youth)



Table of Contents

CONTENTS

Life skill: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving2

Life skill: Empathy7

Life skill: Conflict Resolution and Negotiation..... 15

Life skill: Gender Equity and Child Protection21

Life skill: Self Esteem.....29

Life skill: Teamwork & Leadership35

Life skill: Time and Stress Management.....41

Life skill: Creative Thinking49

ANNEXES:

Annex 1: Solving a Problem55

Annex 2: Comforting each other.....56

Annex 3: What are you feeling?57

Annex 4: Resolving the Conflict58

Annex 5: The Difference.....59

Annex 6: Domestic Violence60

Annex 7: Children in Crisis61

Annex 8: The Right to Education.....62

Annex 9: What I Do Well.....63

Annex 10: Who I Am64

Annex 11: What Kind of Team Member Are You?65

Annex 12: What Is Going On At The Table?.....66

Life Skill: **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**

Introduction

Facilitators should begin by reading the Overview. This will be followed by reading and thinking about the Knowledge Base, which provides the specific information to be conveyed for each topic. The Instructional Framework lays out the actual instruction that the facilitators will engage in, using Activities and Resources as indicated.

Details of each topic should be modified to fit with the culture in which the facilitators and participants are working. Some of the concepts will be foreign to many cultures, such as “win-win” negotiations and organizational structures that de-emphasize the role of the leader in group work. Other concepts will be culture-specific, and will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis. Many concepts, such as gender equality and honoring creativity, however, should be supported, even when these are not aligned with cultural norms. In such cases, it will be up to the facilitator to find a way to make unorthodox concepts acceptable to participants.



Facilitator’s Note: If some participants cannot read or write, the facilitator will adjust the instruction. If only a few cannot read or write, he or she will translate the materials or ask others to translate them. If none or almost none of them can read or write, the facilitator will adjust the program, translating everything and, instead of asking participants to write, providing enough information that the participants can discuss the materials without actually reading or writing.

Overview

DEFINITION: The ability to analyze problems, conceive solutions and implement plans. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are essential for making and implementing decisions that are in the best interest of the decision-maker and of the community of which he or she is a part.

CENTRAL CONCEPT: Critical thinking and problem-solving are different from simply knowing some facts and processes. In order to think critically and solve problems effectively, one must be able to go through a series of steps:

- Identify and define the problem;
- Think of possible ways to solve the problem;
- Choose a solution and develop a plan;
- Act on the plan; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

Knowledge Base

1. **When we approach problems using logical analysis, we can usually find a reasonable solution that will take care of most of the issues, even if the solution is not perfect.** In order to do this, we must separate our feelings from our thinking.

FEELING: “I don’t like the idea because that person thought of it,” or “I am afraid there is no solution that would not harm my family.”

THINKING: “What can we do that will help the most people without harming anyone?”

To do this, we must first become clear exactly what the problem is such as, “I don’t have enough time for my schoolwork because I have to help my father,” instead of “I can’t stay in school.”

Then the problem must be broken down into small parts such as, “I have two hours of homework every day, but my father needs me to work for him for three hours a day, but if I don’t do my schoolwork, I cannot pass my exams.” Possible solutions need to be proposed such as, “Ask my father if I can work only two hours a day,” or “Get help with my studies from a classmate.”

Next, a solution must be agreed upon and a plan developed to implement it such as, “I will decide on a plan and try it for two weeks to see how well it works.”

Finally, the solution must be evaluated such as, “If nothing has changed after two weeks, I will try another solution.”

RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER

Effective critical-thinking and problem-solving skills are essential for recognizing how gender-related issues may or may not be involved in issues. By approaching problems rationally, one can find gender-based roadblocks and supports for decision-making as well as clarifying such intersections for others.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD PROTECTION

Children are defined as all those under 18 years of age. By starting with the premise that children have rights to security, health, education, and independence, one can seek reason-based approaches to child-protection issues.

Instructional Framework

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module participants will be able to:

1. Analyze their own thinking and problem-solving skills.
2. Investigate a problem's nature and structure, plan a way to deal with it, and implement the plan.

Discuss the fact that some people think that men are better critical thinkers and problem solvers than women and some people think that women are better at these. Ask participants why they think people think this way and how it influences their lives or their communities.

Ask participants if their ideas and thinking process were supported or repressed when they were younger. What is the best way that adults can encourage young people – male and female – to become effective critical thinkers?

Activities:

Learning Outcome 1: Analyze their own thinking and problem-solving skills



Facilitator's Note: This activity is about getting participants to begin thinking about the process that they go through to make a decision, and then evaluate if that is the right decision.

A. Discuss the idea that effective thinking always begins by asking questions. These questions may include:

- a. Who might be affected by this? Who might be interested in this? Who else needs to be part of this decision?
 - b. When do I need to make this by?
 - c. Why is this important?
- Have participants come up with some other questions they ask themselves when they are thinking about different issues or making decisions.

B. Have participants get into small groups (3–4 members each). Ask participants, in their groups, to think of a problem they have solved recently. This can be something, such as deciding to work less and go back to school, or deciding whether to do school work first thing in the morning or at night. They should describe as thoroughly as possible the process they have gone through to accomplish this task. How satisfied were they with the results of their decision? What would they do differently next time?

As a group they should discuss what was common in their approaches and what was different and then share these ideas with all participants, once they are done in their small groups.

Learning Outcome 2: Investigate a problem's nature and structure, plan a way to deal with it, and implement the plan.



Facilitator's Note: For this activity, use the "*Solving a Problem*" (Annex 1) image as a tool to discuss the most effective way of approaching a problem.

Make sure that they understand each item on this image, and how each one leads to the next. Explain that they probably will not spend the same amount of time on each step, but that if they skip a step or hurry through one without thinking about it carefully, the final decision they make may suffer.

- A.** Ask participants to read the steps out in "*Solving a Problem*" (Annex 1). Go over the steps in the image one by one, making sure everyone understands them and how they contribute to the process of solving a problem. Make sure to leave room for disagreements, since this is a rather elaborate process that many will not have experienced before. Make sure to consider issues that may have an impact on local or regional issues, such as religion, ethnic identity and past history.
- B.** Ask participants to propose a problem they might face that they can address using this process. The problem should be realistic as well as attainable such as, "How can I improve my performance in school?" or "How can I help youth have more of a voice in my community?"

- C.** Break participants into pairs and have each pair choose a problem to solve so that they can go through the problem-solving steps. Emphasize the importance of paying attention to each step, and having general agreement before moving on to the next step.

Share each group's conclusion. Emphasize the fact that there may be several possible solutions, and that none of them may be ideal, with problems remaining no matter which is chosen. How did their feelings influence their decisions? How did what they thought about others' feelings influence their decisions?



Facilitator's Note: Make sure that participants understand they don't ACTUALLY have to solve the problem (in "Step C") but rather just use it as an example to guide the discussion.



Life Skill: **Empathy**

Introduction

Facilitators should begin by reading the Overview. This will be followed by reading and thinking about the Knowledge Base, which provides the specific information to be conveyed for each topic. The Instructional Framework lays out the actual instruction that the facilitators will engage in, using Activities and Resources as indicated.

Details of each topic should be modified to fit with the culture in which the facilitators and participants are working. Some of the concepts will be foreign to many cultures, such as “win-win” negotiations and organizational structures that de-emphasize the role of the leader in group work. Other concepts will be culture-specific, and will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis. Many concepts, such as gender equality and honoring creativity, however, should be supported, even when these are not aligned with cultural norms. In such cases, it will be up to the facilitator to find a way to make unorthodox concepts acceptable to participants.



Facilitator’s Note: If some participants cannot read or write, the facilitator will adjust the instruction. If only a few cannot read or write, he or she will translate the materials or ask others to translate them. If none or almost none of them can read or write, the facilitator will adjust the program, translating everything and, instead of asking participants to write, providing enough information that the participants can discuss the materials without actually reading or writing.

Overview

DEFINITION: The ability to imagine what others feel without passing judgment on them.

CENTRAL CONCEPT: The central concept of this skill is that “feelings are facts,” though some participants may not be able to understand the concept when it’s stated like this. The point is that people’s feelings are important and should be taken seriously.

This means that we cannot discount others’ feelings, saying things like, “Oh, don’t pay any attention to that. It’s just because it makes you sad. That doesn’t matter.” If it makes someone sad, that has to be acknowledged as a factor in their thinking about the topic. This will need a fair amount of conversation to get everyone’s assumptions and prejudices out into the open—most of us have been trained to think that feelings (ours and other people’s) don’t matter, and many youth experience this from adults on a daily basis.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPATHY AND OTHER LIFE SKILLS: The ability to empathize with others is essential for mastering some other life skills. Conflict resolution and negotiation, for example, rely to a great extent on one’s ability to empathize with the people whom one is dealing with—without empathy, one will discount and ignore their feelings, which makes successful resolution of problems almost impossible. Effective teamwork and leadership, similarly, rely heavily on one’s ability to feel what others are feeling in order to work productively with them, seeing them as collaborators, rather than competitors.

Several of the other topics dealt with in this curriculum also rely heavily on one’s ability to empathize. Gender issues, for example, cannot be dealt with if each participant is not able to imagine how the other might be feeling. And an in-depth understanding of the importance of and influences on self-esteem is also closely connected to one’s ability to empathize with others’ feelings.

Knowledge Base

1. **There is a very big difference between empathy and sympathy, and by understanding this difference, one can enrich one's capacity to empathize.**

What follows may be comprehensible by mature youth, but it will be difficult for some to understand. The point will be to help them understand the importance of trying to imagine other people's feelings as if they were that person. The statement "you can't understand someone until you've walked a mile in their shoes" means that to really understand someone or their situation, it's important to actually experience something like what the other person is experiencing.

The difference between sympathy and empathy is that empathy is much more active than sympathy. To empathize, you must try to feel what the other person feels, which may include reminding oneself of unpleasant personal experiences. Sincere empathy results in the person being able to say, "I can feel that" or "I have felt that." Sympathy, however, only requires that one see that someone else has a feeling (sadness, anger, confusion) and then acknowledge the fact that they have it, saying "Oh, I'm so sorry you feel that way," without any personal investment in the emotion. Empathy increases one's understanding of another's point of view: I feel what you feel. Sympathy, on the other hand, distances people because it puts the sympathizer in a different position: "I am sorry that you are sad."

Empathy requires getting rid of one's assumptions and trying to understand/feel those of the other. The facilitator should think of the meanings and connotations of the words in the local language.

2. **Home-life, culture, and personal experiences affect feelings, so in trying to work with others, we must understand how experience and culture influence not only people's ideas and beliefs, but how they influence the way people feel about things.**

A word may have different connotations in different communities, and one's personal experiences may change the way one thinks and feels about the concept: a person who been to school might think differently about school than someone who has not.

We can find out more about people's feelings, and help them use their feelings by asking non-judgmental questions. A non-judgmental question is one that merely seeks information, instead of including a judgment. "Why did you act that way?" carries a judgment. "How did that make you feel?" does not. People are more willing to respond openly to non-judgmental questions.

3. **People's feelings affect their beliefs and behavior, although most people think their ideas and behaviors are "rational," or at least in keeping with certain cultural or religious strictures. When we dig deeper, however, we often find that beliefs have been strongly affected by people's feelings. Only by recognizing this in ourselves can we begin to see it in others to find ways to improve our interactions with them.**

Youth will have varying levels of understanding of the belief systems of their community and culture, so the facilitator will have to determine the group's level of maturity when presenting this information.

RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER: Gender issues are often very tense for youth, who are gradually defining themselves as adults and according to their gender. By improving abilities to empathize with members of the opposite sex, people can develop more positive relationships as they realize that everyone has power and adequacy issues; and asking others to change their attitudes and behaviors is threatening, and others' fears must be acknowledged.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD PROTECTION: Improving one's ability to empathize can influence the way one thinks about the most effective social and personal conditions for children:

1. Children feel emotions from infancy, so youth and adults need to learn to see and understand children's feelings and how these influence their behaviors;
2. Children cannot learn, mature, and enter into healthy relationships without a feeling of safety and security.



Instructional Framework

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module participants will be able to:

1. Understand the nature of empathy.
2. Pay attention to people in such a way that they can read others' feelings, including those "beneath the surface" that are not articulated.
3. Use what they have learned by being empathic to improve their relationships with other people.

- A. Divide participants into four groups. One group represents elders in the community; one group is children in the community; one group is youth; and one group are displaced persons who are new to the community. Each group has 2-3 minutes to present themselves, what they think and what they need in their community.

Once they have done this, each group then needs to decide to talk to at least one other group to see how they can use empathy to strengthen the relationship between their group and the other group.

Discuss the usefulness of using empathy as a tool to strengthen relationships between people/groups in a positive way.

Activities:

Learning Outcome 1: Understand the nature of empathy.



Facilitator's Notes: The group will discuss the meaning of empathy, how it means feeling what the person is feeling, not just feeling sorry for him or her. This exercise is meant to be fun but also informative and encourage participants to empathize with other/different groups of people who have different needs than their own.

Learning Outcome 2: Pay attention to people in such a way that they can understand/see others' feelings, including those "beneath the surface" that are not articulated.



Facilitator's Notes: Paying attention to facial expressions and body language can help us see when others are uncomfortable, angry or feeling different emotions (although these manifestations may differ, culture to culture), which can help us avoid pitfalls in our dealings with them.

- A. In “Comforting Each Other” (Annex 2), one person is comforting another person who is crying. Is this a case of empathy or sympathy? How can you tell?**

Ask participants to imagine what is going in this image (*Annex 2*), where one person is crying and the other has their arm around them. Discuss the feelings both individuals might be experiencing, and the impact that physical touching has for the two individuals. What experiences have the participants had that are similar to these?

- B. Ask participants to look at the two images in Annex 3 (“What Are You feeling?”) and ask them what they think each person is feeling.**

How do they know that? What experiences have they had that allow them to empathize with each of the people in these photos?

- C. Does the gender of the people in Annex 3 affect the way the participants feel about them? Ask the participants to think about and discuss this, and talk about how empathy can be felt across genders as they recognize others’ feelings and how similar they might be to one’s own.**

Learning Outcome 3: Use what they have learned by being empathetic to improve their relationships with other people.

Participants will practice asking questions and making statements in non-judgmental ways by imagining interactions with the people they are looking at.

Nonjudgmental questions are questions that have been asked simply to gain information, not to condemn or judge another person. They can help us discover more about the feelings that lie beneath others’ thoughts, as well as increase others’ trust of us.

For example, “Why did you do that in such a bad way?” is a judgmental question. “What did you think would happen by doing that?” is not. “Where did you get that bad idea from?” is judgmental; “Did someone suggest that to you?” is not. Ask the participants to think of other nonjudgmental questions.



Facilitator’s Notes: Using empathy images from *Annex 3*, participants will consider ways to communicate effectively with people they don’t know well, but with whom they can empathize.

- A. Break the participants into groups. Each group will use what the full group had decided about the individual’s feelings in the previous activity to determine how they would use that knowledge to work with the person in the picture (*from Annex 3*).**

Group 1: The goal of the group working with the image of the woman with her child (*in Annex 3*) will be to convince the woman that she needs to join a community group to discuss the status of women in the community. What will the participants have to consider when they talk with her? How will they frame nonjudgmental questions and statements? How might she respond to them? What can they say and how can they say it to help her decide to join the group?

Group 2: The goal of the group working with the image of the man raising his hand will be to convince him that he needs to hire some youth (over 18 years of age) for his business. What will participants have to consider when they talk to him? How will they ask questions that do not judge the man? What can they say to him to help her make this decision?

- B.** After the groups have met to discuss the issues, they will present their idea back to the rest of the group as a short (1–2 minute) drama skit showing their process and the conclusion.
- C.** At the end of the session, ask each individual to explain how improving his or her empathizing skills can help him or her work with others in the community, drawing on their personal experiences and situations.



Life Skill: **Conflict Resolution and Negotiation**

Introduction

Facilitators should begin by reading the Overview. This will be followed by reading and thinking about the Knowledge Base, which provides the specific information to be conveyed for each topic. The Instructional Framework lays out the actual instruction that the facilitators will engage in, using Activities and Resources as indicated.

Details of each topic should be modified to fit with the culture in which the facilitators and participants are working. Some of the concepts will be foreign to many cultures, such as “win-win” negotiations and organizational structures that de-emphasize the role of the leader in group work. Other concepts will be culture-specific, and will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis. Many concepts, such as gender equality and honoring creativity, however, should be supported, even when these are not aligned with cultural norms. In such cases, it will be up to the facilitator to find a way to make unorthodox concepts acceptable to participants.



Facilitator’s Note: If some participants cannot read or write, the facilitator will adjust the instruction. If only a few cannot read or write, he or she will translate the materials or ask others to translate them. If none or almost none of them can read or write, the facilitator will adjust the program, translating everything and, instead of asking participants to write, providing enough information that the participants can discuss the materials without actually reading or writing.

Overview

DEFINITION: The ability to understand the nature of conflict and the reasons for others' points of view, then to consider win-win ways of dealing with the differences.

CENTRAL CONCEPT: Conflicts arise in a variety of ways between or among a variety of individuals and/or groups. The word brings to mind physical, or at least emotional, violence as a possible way people may try to resolve the conflict.

Many, if not most, conflicts can be negotiated to benefit both parties through the development of trust. This is called a win-win situation, in which nobody loses, and everybody gets something.

There are several difficulties with win-win solutions. The first is that many people believe that for all situations, one person must gain and someone must lose. In fact, a situation in which both or all parties benefit, is often possible. But it can take time for some people to recognize this possibility.

A significant feature of a situation in which everyone benefits is that it promotes good will, so that the next time a conflict arises, both parties may be more willing to think of the needs of the and to compromise.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFLICT RESOLUTION/NEGOTIATION AND OTHER

LIFE SKILLS: Stress management is closely connected to conflict resolution and negotiation because if those involved are not able to control the impact of the stress of negotiations—and the anger and frustration that come with them—they will not be able to work well with those with whom they disagree. Empathy, as well, is important, since this will allow each participant to understand the motivation of others. The ability to develop a sense of teamwork among all participants is important.

Knowledge Base

1. Conflicts are often difficult to fully understand. They usually stem from material, rational, and emotional bases.

- A material base might be a conflict over specific resource or tangible item, like water rights or over the right to make a specific product;
- A rational base might be a well-reasoned argument about the reason one group or another should be allowed to own or do a specific thing;
- An emotional base might have to do with a group's attachment to a piece of land or way of life, even though it's not actually in their best interest.

These three aspects of conflict often become interwoven, so that even those who are involved can't pull them apart easily. Among the first steps in resolving any conflict is for each party to be able to say: "This is what I/we want. We want it for these reasons. We feel very strongly about it because of...."

2. Successful negotiation is a step-by-step process as participants acknowledge and review their options. In order to reach a point where they will be ready to develop a win-win situation, they will need to use a number of approaches:

- They will need to communicate openly, expressing how they feel about the situation and focusing on the problem, not on accusations and criticisms;
- They must actively listen, which means to listen to what the other person has to say without thinking how they're going to reply to or refute the other. Only by actively listening can they understand the other person's point of view;

- Rather than looking for a single solution, once they have clarified the problem, they will need to suggest a series of possible options to discuss; and
- They need to look for a win-win solution which will satisfy all those involved in the conflict.

3. Using effective conflict resolution techniques can not only solve the specific problem, but can also lay foundations for more effective communication and conflict resolution activities in the future.

Some people enjoy conflict, but this often means that they create conflict just for the fun of it. We need to help such people understand that their need for conflict is harmful to the community.

Others avoid conflict at all cost, preferring to let things go along as they are, even if they are not in their own or their group's interest. Well-managed conflict, however, can actually strengthen a community and improve relations among community members.

The more problems we solve together, the better able we are to solve other problems.

RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER: Gender and status issues can lie at the heart of some conflicts, though these may not be recognized, or may be so deeply embedded in the culture as to seem "natural." Conflicts, thus, can serve as a vehicle for exposing such issues, thereby making them available for discussion.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD PROTECTION: The rights of children—to schooling, to personal autonomy and decision-making, to freedom from work—are often not honored. This being the case, it is incumbent on adults to speak up for children, to serve as their proxies in negotiations for improvements in their situations.

Instructional Framework

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module participants will be able to:

1. Determine what is/are the source(s) of a conflict.
2. Take steps to resolve conflict.
3. Use conflict resolution as a way to improve the community in general by bringing people together and sharing skills that improve communication and trust.

- A.** Ask for two volunteers and have them come to the front of the room. Give each volunteer one end of the ribbon, string, or stick. Tell them that they each need to get the pen on their side of the room, but they can't let go of their end of the ribbon, string, or stick. This should result in neither volunteer getting their pen as they will be trying to pull each other to their side of the room.

Now have the volunteers start again, but tell them that they can share one pen. This should result in them going to one side of the room and getting the pen together.

- B.** Discuss the meaning of a solution in which each person wins.

- C.** Discuss the ways that youth might be able to work with communities to find solutions to local issues where everyone wins.

Activities:

Learning Outcome 1: Determine what is/are the source(s) of a conflict.



Facilitator's Note: Before this exercise you will need to ensure you have a piece of ribbon, string, or a stick. It should be at least 12cm long. You will also need to place two pens on either side of the room, far away from where there the activity volunteers will be standing (one pen on each side of the room).

Learning Outcome 2: Take steps to resolve conflicts.



Facilitator's Notes: Participants will notice how similar *"Resolving the Conflict"* (Annex 4) image is to *"Solving a Problem"* (Annex 1) image used as part of the Critical Thinking and Problem Solving curriculum. The point is to be systematic and careful about going through the process, as well as to make connections with things that the participants have already learned.

Using the *"Resolving the Conflict"* (Annex 4) graphic, participants will explain the conflict resolution process:

- Explore the issues means to talk about the issues that make up the conflict, e.g. the nature of the conflict, the reason for the conflict, etc.;
 - Start the conversation means to share both sides' points of views about the conflict;
 - Find common ground means to look for areas of agreement or potential agreement;
 - Now that the actual conflict is clear, propose ways of solving the conflict, emphasizing ways that will satisfy both sides as much as possible;
 - Make process visible refers to "transparency," so that everyone understands the conflict, the proposals, and the others' points of view.
- A.** Help the group choose a local problem that they will use as an example of conflict resolution and problem solving that could result in situation where everyone benefits. For example, how the number of books at school might be distributed so that everybody could use a copy, even though there were not enough for the full class. This might be a situation that is not actually real (they can make up a situation) if they don't seem ready to discuss something they are actually experiencing.
- B.** Break participants into pairs and have them go through the *"Resolving the Conflict"* (Annex 4) steps regarding this conflict, using the conflict they decided on in Step A above. In each pair, they should discuss their perspective on the conflict, how it could be resolved and what different people involved in the conflict might think. For example, using the example of the textbook distribution mentioned above, some students may feel that they study more than others and, therefore, should have more access to the textbook. As the pairs work through the conflict they should remember:
- When the other person is speaking, they do nothing but pay attention to what he or she is saying, without thinking about what you're going to say, and interrupting the speaker;
 - When they ask the other person questions, they are not hostile or accusatory ("What made you think that you could...?"), but merely ask questions to clarify their understanding ("If you could please tell me how your family was harmed by the previous arrangement, that would help me understand.")
 - If the other person interrupts, simply say, "Please let me finish," without raising your voice.
 - Remind the participants that active listening takes a lot of practice.

When they have finished, ask each pair to share what they decided, and what they learned from this activity.

Learning Outcome 3: Use conflict resolution as a way to improve the community in general by bringing people together and sharing skills that improve communication and trust.



Facilitator's Notes: This simple image shows the difference between hostile conflict and successful conflict resolution.



- A.** Use *“The Difference”* (Annex 5) to generate discussion about what is going on in each of the photos. Discuss how each participant would feel at the end of each scenario, the one with conflict where they are yelling at each other versus the one which ends in the participants shaking hands. How could the conflict resolution steps, discussed in the previous activity, be used in the situation where they are yelling at each other?
- B.** Ask participants to discuss the impact of gender on conflict. Would it be different if the two people in conflict were of different genders – if one were a man and one were a woman? How? What would it take to make the resolution easier?

Life Skill: **Gender and Child Protection**

Introduction

Facilitators should begin by reading the Overview. This will be followed by reading and thinking about the Knowledge Base, which provides the specific information to be conveyed for each topic. The Instructional Framework lays out the actual instruction that the Facilitators will engage in, using Activities and Resources as indicated.

Details of each topic should be modified to fit with the culture in which the facilitators and participants are working. Some of the concepts will be foreign to many cultures, such as “win-win” negotiations and organizational structures that de-emphasize the role of the leader in group work. Other concepts will be culture-specific, and will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis. Many concepts, such as gender equality and honoring creativity, however, should be supported, even when these are not aligned with cultural norms. In such cases, it will be up to the facilitator to find a way to make unorthodox concepts acceptable to participants.



Facilitator’s Note: If some participants cannot read or write, the facilitator will adjust the instruction. If only a few cannot read or write, he or she will translate the materials or ask others to translate them. If none or almost none of them can read or write, the facilitator will adjust the program, translating everything and, instead of asking participants to write, providing enough information that the participants can discuss the materials without actually reading or writing.

Overview

DEFINITION: Gender refers to the way one's gender (male and female) affects one's status in society, one's perception of one's status, rights and identity, and the importance of treating both genders equally.

Child protection involves thinking of children as full-fledged people whose basic needs must be nurtured and whose well-being must be protected so that they can develop into human beings who are capable of working productively, relating to others satisfactorily, and contributing to the well-being of their community.

The basic premise of these two cross-cutting themes is that women are equal to, and have equal rights with men, and children, as human beings, have the right to be respected and listened to, to play and be educated, to health care, and to education. All of these rights are acknowledged in United Nations and other international—and usually national—documents, treaties, laws and agreements.

Gender equity and child protection, like self-esteem, are themes that cut across all life skills and will appear in each section. This is because both of these topics are relevant to the way participants will think about each life skill, as well as the way it is implemented within the family, community, and/or nation.

These two topics, thus, will arise in many discussions. The curriculum has provided some specific ways to include them in discussions of each life skill. More importantly, facilitators should be prepared to open the discussion to include such topics, even when this may slow down the pace of the conversation.

CENTRAL CONCEPT: Individual and cultural attitudes will affect the way gender and children are viewed—they may be even more pronounced among youth, who espouse the attitudes of their elders. On the other hand, youth may be more willing to consider alternatives to cultural norms.

For many, thus, their thinking about topics such as leadership and critical thinking may be affected, either by cultural norms, or by their willingness to go against those norms. For example, cultural attitudes may affect the way topics such as the creativity of children with some people being upset by children's creativity, thinking that it threatens the stability of the household and community, while youth, valuing their own creativity, may approve of it; youth may also may be able to empathize with children as full human beings, while some adults may not think they are developed enough to merit this kind of attention.

TEACHING CONCEPT: Although supporting gender equity and child protection may be difficult—because concepts related to both are so deeply embedded in most cultures—the basic principles and means of implementation can be taught. The most important aspect of such teaching will be to help participants empathize with women (or men, in the case of women who need to acknowledge their rights and strengths) and children—this is the first step toward actively supporting women's and children's rights. Youth, sometimes not being so deeply enmeshed in their culture, may be easier to convince about the importance of these two topics than some adults.

Knowledge Base



Facilitator's Note: Before leading these discussions, the facilitator should find out whether his or her country has signed the UDHR, CEDAW and UNCRC. He or she should also investigate and become familiar with any other laws and policies adopted by his or her municipality, region or country regarding women's and children's rights that may be specific to his or her country. It would also be useful to find NGOs that are working on the issues locally.

A variety of international documents support women's and children's rights. Participants should not be expected to memorize these, but familiarizing them with some aspects is a very important first step they can take in support of these two areas.

1. **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** was passed by the United Nations in 1948. Its basic premises are that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Article 1), and that "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" (Article 2). It is very important to note that the articles emphasize "all human beings" and "everyone," since any right included in this document will apply to women and children.

Other articles protect everyone against slavery (4), torture or degrading treatment (5) and guarantee equal protection by the

law (6-12), health (25) and education (26). People also have the right to movement, a nationality, marriage, to own property, freedom of thought and expression and assembly, security, political participation, work, rest and leisure, health and housing, and education.

2. **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** was adopted by the UN in 1979. The Convention explicitly acknowledges that "extensive discrimination against women continues to exist," and emphasizes that such discrimination "violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity." As defined in Article 1, discrimination is understood as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex...in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." Article 3 requires governments to take "all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men."
3. **The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** is a treaty adopted in 1989. 194 countries have signed the treaty. Ratifying states must act in the best interests of the child. In all jurisdictions implementing the Convention compliance is expected with requirements that every child has basic rights, including the right to life and to their own name and identity.

THEMES:

1. *Best interest of the child* emphasizes that whatever action or decision is taken about a child, it must take into consideration the final benefit for the child.
2. *The concepts of survival and development* require doing everything possible to ensure that every child is given the chance to grow physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, such as to receive adequate food, shelter, and clean water, as well as developing their skills and being protected from disease.
3. *The requirement of non-discrimination* simply states that no child should suffer discrimination by anyone for any reason.
4. *Participation* involves listening to children's views and involving children in decision making on matters that affect them.



Facilitator's Note: Children are considered anyone under 18 years of age.

War Child Canada's Position Statement on Child Protection:

In keeping with War Child Canada's child-centered development approach, which focuses on the systems of relationships that children experience, we believe that creating protective environments for children must extend beyond the individual child and into households, communities and ultimately must be reinforced by national governments and the international community.

War Child Canada believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience violence or abuse of any kind and recognizes its duty of care obligations to children associated with a Do No Harm approach.

War Child Canada believes that the implementation and practice of child protection policies and procedures should always be in the best interest of the child and involve children's active participation in their own protection.

War Child Canada embraces its responsibility to provide equal rights and opportunities to all children without discrimination or unequal treatment on the grounds of their age, culture, caste, nationality, ethnicity, disability, HIV status, family situation, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual orientation.

War Child Canada's primary beneficiaries are children and young people whose lives have been impacted by war and armed conflict and much of our programming is in emergency or humanitarian situations where protection systems are weak or non-existent. War Child Canada therefore actively participates in support and referral networks for child protection services that incorporate government, non-governmental and civil society actors in cooperation.

War Child Canada uses the definition of a child as set out in The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child as any person under the age of 18. War Child is morally and legally obliged to respond to and report child protection concerns for all children with whom it works up to the age of 18. The Child Protection Policy and the actions that follow are therefore focused on under 18's, however, a significant proportion of the young people with whom we work are between the ages of 15-24 (youth as defined in the World Development Report 2007, Development and the Next Generation) and War Child Canada has a moral obligation to provide help and support to these young people we work with, where we can.

Instructional Framework

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module participants will be able to:

1. Identify key human rights documents and key rights of women and men.
2. Identify the basic principles of child protection including the rights of the child as they pertain to international documents.

- iii. You have the right to make up your own mind and to think and say what you think and share your ideas with other people – freedom of expression.
- iv. You have the right to play, to rest and relax from work.
- v. You have the right to education.
- vi. You have the right to participate in the cultural life of a community.
- vii. You have the right to life, liberty and personal security.
- viii. You have the right to not be discriminated against, including discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion or political opinion.

Activities:

Learning Outcome 1: Identify key human rights documents and key rights of women and men.



Facilitator's Note: The image "*Domestic Violence*" (Annex 6) demonstrates the lack of protections for woman's rights.

- A.** Share some of the basic rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). These are mentioned below. Please be sure to mention that these are not all the rights but just some of them. **SOME** of the basic rights are:
 - i. As an adult (over the age of 18) you have the right to marry and have a family if you choose to.
 - ii. You have the right to believe what you want to believe – freedom of thought.
- B.** Divide participants into three groups. Have each group pick one of the rights listed above. Each group should then discuss how this right applies to and is important to young men and women. How can they, as youth, help uphold this right in their community for men and women equally? Are there any barriers to this right for men or women, boys or girls?
- C.** Ask participants to share what they have discussed with the rest of the group. Open this for discussion, asking participants to share experiences they have had where women's rights or men's rights were not respected. Encourage them to describe situations they have faced that they feel violated their rights. You may find some participants (including women) may not agree about this topic. Allow diverse points of view to be expressed.

- D.** Show image “*Domestic Violence*” (Annex 6). Explain that there are about seven billion people on earth, so this means almost one-tenth of the women are not protected against domestic violence. Discuss the fact that domestic violence is a violation according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration specifically protects women’s health (Article 25), and protects against “degrading treatment” (Article 5) and actions that violate “the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity.”

Have participants discuss the realities that women and men face in their communities. What are some of the main challenges for women? Do these challenges change for younger women versus older women? Do any of these challenges violate women’s rights?

Learning Outcome 2: Identify the basic principles of child protection including the rights of the child as they pertain to international documents.



Facilitator’s Notes: Image “*Children in Crisis*” (Annex 7) shows children lined up at a relief agency to get their basic needs filled.

Image “*The Right to Education*” (Annex 8) goes into detail about two of the articles relating to education, one of the most important of children’s rights in regard to their long-term happiness.

- A.** Please remind participants that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the rights previously discussed) applies to all people, so human rights apply to youth and children as well as adults. Ask participants to discuss the human rights that they think are best adhered to in their culture for children; then the ones they think are not adhered to as well for children. How does this make them feel?
- B.** Introduce some the rights outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These include but are not limited to:
- i. Children have the right to live with their parents unless it is bad for them. They have the right to live with people/a family who cares for them.
 - ii. Children have the right to quality education
 - iii. Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or mistreated, in body or mind.
 - iv. Children have the right to help if they have been hurt, neglected or badly treated.
 - v. Children have the right to help from the government if they are poor or in need.
 - vi. Children have the right to choose their own religion and beliefs. Parents should help them decide what is right and wrong and what is best for them.
 - vii. Children have the right to be protected from exploitation (being taken advantage of).
 - viii. No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way.
 - ix. Children have the right to play and rest.
 - x. Children have the right to privacy.

Discuss some of these rights with the group. Do they feel these rights exist in their communities for children? After that, discuss with participants the impact of conflict on children. What do they think is the long-term impact of conflict on the children's self-esteem and ability to live happy, productive lives? On their rights in general?

- C.** Show image *"Children in Crisis"* (Annex 7), and ask participants to discuss how living in a situation like those shown in the picture (which may be familiar to them) might affect children. If participants have lived in circumstances like this, they can share their experiences and the impact they think these had on them.
- D.** Show image *"The Right to Education"* (Annex 8). Discuss how the right to be educated, for example, is connected with child labor (which may be necessary to feed the family, but may prevent children from going to school), may have connections to cultural assumptions about gender (that girls don't need to go to school), and with family values and experiences (that the parents may not be educated, so may not want the children to go to school). Remind participants that without an education, children's opportunities to succeed in the modern world are very limited, and ask them how the right to education, for example, can be supported while acknowledging the problems mentioned before.
- E.** The last step is to ask the participants what they feel they can do to help protect women's and children's rights in their communities. What can they, as youth, do to make a difference? What rights do they want to focus on the most?



Life Skill: **Self Esteem**

Introduction

Facilitators should begin by reading the Overview. This will be followed by reading and thinking about the Knowledge Base, which provides the specific information to be conveyed for each topic. The Instructional Framework lays out the actual instruction that the facilitators will engage in, using Activities and Resources as indicated.

Details of each topic should be modified to fit with the culture in which the facilitators and participants are working. Some of the concepts will be foreign to many cultures, such as “win-win” negotiations and organizational structures that de-emphasize the role of the leader in group work. Other concepts will be culture-specific, and will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis. Many concepts, such as gender equality and honoring creativity, however, should be supported, even when these are not aligned with cultural norms. In such cases, it will be up to the facilitator to find a way to make unorthodox concepts acceptable to participants.



Facilitator’s Note: If some participants cannot read or write, the facilitator will adjust the instruction. If only a few cannot read or write, he or she will translate the materials or ask others to translate them. If none or almost none of them can read or write, the facilitator will adjust the program, translating everything and, instead of asking participants to write, providing enough information that the participants can discuss the materials without actually reading or writing.

Overview

DEFINITION: This component of this life skills curriculum entails the examination of social and personal issues that prevent individuals from seeing themselves positively, encouraging participants to act independently and in groups with confidence. Self-esteem simply means how we see ourselves, and positive self-esteem means we emphasize our positive qualities when we think about ourselves.

Self-esteem instruction must always be based on the understanding that those who are experiencing or have experienced conflict situations may have difficulty seeing themselves positively – youth may wonder what they have done to bring problems into their lives, when most of the time, the circumstances have little or nothing to do with what the individuals you are working with will have decided or done.

It is important, however, that positive self-esteem still not be confused with an egocentric image of oneself – this means a situation where you assume that you are better than others.

Healthy self-esteem includes understanding one's strengths and weaknesses, using one's strengths to improve one's life and the life of the community while working to improve one's weaknesses.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND OTHER LIFE SKILLS:

Developing and supporting positive self-esteem lies at the heart of this life skills curriculum. People—adults, youth, and children—who do not respect and believe in themselves cannot implement the life skills provided in this curriculum. How can a person successfully negotiate, participate in group activities, and think creatively or critically if he or she does not believe in his or her own worth?

On the other hand, small successes in putting these life skills into practice can improve

one's self esteem. For example, successfully solving even a small problem—and proudly acknowledging one's success—makes a person feel better about him- or herself.

Given how important one's self-esteem is to one's success at implementing the life skills that follow, it is crucial that facilitators re-integrate components of this self-esteem component into the rest of the curriculum. These opportunities will sometimes be pointed out in the text, but facilitators should be listening closely to what participants think about the skills and their abilities to implement them to find ways to enhance participants' self-esteem.

Self-esteem instruction must always be based on the understanding that those who are experiencing or have experienced conflict situations may have difficulty seeing themselves in a positive light—people have a tendency to wonder what they have done to bring such disaster into their lives when, most of the time, the circumstances have little or nothing to do with what the individuals you are working with will have decided or done.

Knowledge Base

1. Positive self-esteem is essential for effective function in the world and entails believing that one:

- Is worthy of respect, while believing that others are also worthy of one's respect;
- Has something positive to contribute to society, while understanding that others also have things to contribute to society;
- Can learn from one's mistakes, while being willing to forgive others' mistakes and hope they learn from them; and
- Can, in general, improve one's life situation, and that others can also improve their life situations.

2. In order to improve one's self-esteem, one has to learn to objectively analyze and understand one's strengths and weaknesses, as well as (as far as possible) the causes for each:

- Since self-esteem is an emotional response, one can learn to recognize things that trigger negative self-esteem and develop techniques for minimizing one's reaction to situations that induce negative self-esteem [NOTE: Some specific techniques for this kind of thing will be addressed in detail in the Time and Stress Management unit];
- By recognizing what one can do well, one can play to that strength, thereby improving one's abilities in that area;

- By recognizing one's weaknesses, one can choose specific areas to try to strengthen and, if possible, seek help from others in this effort; and
- By understanding the importance of such self-understanding, one can use other life skills (critical thinking, creative thinking, empathy, etc.) to help oneself improve one's self-esteem.

3. Once one has begun to develop a clear picture of emotional triggers and of one's strengths and weaknesses, one can make decisions about the ways one might be able to help others or the community in general. For example:

- If one is a good listener, this skill can be used to gather information about community problems that need attention; or
- If one enjoys working in groups, this skill can be used to bring people together to deal with problems.

Instructional Framework

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module participants will be able to:

1. Think positively about themselves.
2. Understand the impact of thinking positively on their ability to make changes.
3. Understand their strengths and weaknesses.

The point is that everyone has some good characteristics, and things they do well. People cannot improve their self-esteem if they do not consider the many things that are good about themselves.

- B. Using the same form, ask each person to write at least three things that they'd like to change about themselves (what they would like to do better). Emphasize that these should be realistic, for example they should not wish they were taller!!**

After they have finished, lead a discussion on participants' hopes. Ask participants how making these changes would affect their feelings about themselves.

Activities:

Learning Outcome 1: Think positively about themselves.



Facilitator's Notes: Using the "What I Do Well" (Annex 9) template, youth will first list all the things that they do that they do well and make them feel good about themselves (at least three). After discussing these, they will list the things they would like to do better (at least three). They will then discuss these.

Learning Outcome 2: Understand the impact of thinking positively on their ability to make changes.

- A. Using "What I Do Well" (Annex 9) each person will write at least three things that they think are good about themselves. Discuss these. If what others say makes some participants think of other things they do well, they should add those to their list.**
- B. Have participants get into small groups. Ask them to discuss with their group about the good things and the challenges of living in their communities. How does the community in which they live make it easier or harder to do the things they would like to do? What in their situation would they like to change if they changed their way of thinking from 'I can't' to 'I can.'**

Learning Outcome 3: Understand their strengths and weaknesses.



Facilitator's Notes: Participants will draw and discuss a picture of themselves in the *"Who I Am" page (Annex 10)* when they feel good about themselves.

- A.** Participants will draw a picture of themselves on the *"Who I Am" page*. The picture should show them when they feel best about themselves – it should show them doing something or being with someone (like family) or anything else that can explain what makes them feel best about themselves. Emphasize that the picture doesn't have to be perfect, just something to show when they feel good about themselves, who they are and what they have done.

Participants will share their pictures with the person sitting next to them, if they feel comfortable. They do not have to share their picture if they don't want to – they can also describe it to the person next to them. Have the participants discuss their pictures in the full group. The point of this activity and this discussion is to complete the self-esteem lesson by having good thoughts about themselves.



Life Skill: **Teamwork and Leadership**

Introduction

Facilitators should begin by reading the Overview. This will be followed by reading and thinking about the Knowledge Base, which provides the specific information to be conveyed for each topic. The Instructional Framework lays out the actual instruction that the facilitators will engage in, using Activities and Resources as indicated.

Details of each topic should be modified to fit with the culture in which the facilitators and participants are working. Some of the concepts will be foreign to many cultures, such as “win-win” negotiations and organizational structures that de-emphasize the role of the leader in group work. Other concepts will be culture-specific, and will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis. Many concepts, such as gender equality and honoring creativity, however, should be supported, even when these are not aligned with cultural norms. In such cases, it will be up to the facilitator to find a way to make unorthodox concepts acceptable to participants.



Facilitator’s Note: If some participants cannot read or write, the facilitator will adjust the instruction. If only a few cannot read or write, he or she will translate the materials or ask others to translate them. If none or almost none of them can read or write, the facilitator will adjust the program, translating everything and, instead of asking participants to write, providing enough information that the participants can discuss the materials without actually reading or writing.

Overview

DEFINITION: Team members must learn to use their own strengths and to recognize the strengths of others; the leader should be a facilitator who uses his or her strengths to help the group make good decisions. To facilitate means “to make things easy,” which is a very important role for a leader—not to tell people what to do, but to help them arrive at good decisions that they are all comfortable with.

CENTRAL CONCEPT: Groups can accomplish their goals when they rely on cooperation, with each member trying to work productively with the others. Leaders can help guide this process but should not impose their ideas on the rest of the team or force people to do things a certain way.

TEACHING CONCEPT: People can learn to work together for the good of the whole, and leaders can learn to be facilitators who help make things happen, not force others to do what they want them to do.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP AND OTHER LIFE

SKILLS: By empathizing with other group members, participants will be able to work more collaboratively.

Critical thinking and problem solving are important because using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies will enable participants to analyze problems more effectively.

The skills of conflict resolution and negotiation will enable participants to identify and resolve differences between their points of view and goals. If people have the skills of time and stress management they can minimize stress, meet deadlines and work more efficiently. Being willing to think “out of the box” will enable participants to consider alternative solutions to problems.

Knowledge Base

Although every group is different, all groups develop certain characteristics and ways of operating.

It is helpful to pay attention to how the group assigns roles and authority and how members behave:

- Roles, such as leader and secretary;
- Rules and processes, such as how and when to make a decision; and
- Relationships and ways of communicating.

Each member should think about their own strengths and weaknesses and how these affect the productivity of the group. The group needs to decide how to plan together and to listen carefully to one another's points of view.

Group members need to understand these characteristics and understand how they affect the success of the group:

- a. **Roles:** roles within the group—chairperson, secretary, overseer of finances—may be assigned or may evolve informally;
- b. **Norms or rules:** groups should develop their own rules for member-admission, discussion, and decision-making, which should be explicit and subject to discussion;
- c. **Intragroup relationships:** relationships among group members are somewhat dependent on the members' statuses in the community and their personalities, but the most effective groups are those in which all have equal status and authority;
- d. **Values:** group members ideally will share values, or at least be clear about when and why their values differ;

- e. **Communication patterns:** effective communication within the group has to be based on honesty, but that honesty must be tempered by sensitivity to the interests and values of other group members; and
- f. **Status differences:** the assumption that all members have equal value—even if they come from different backgrounds or have different assigned roles in the group—but these may evolve over time as individuals assert themselves or form mini-alliances.

RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER: Gender issues can loom large in group work, as cultural biases can affect the attitudes and behaviors of both men and women toward each other, especially regarding leadership positions. Attention to gender issues will help participants create gender balance in their groups and in the way they analyze problems.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD PROTECTION: By remembering the impact of conflict on children, participants will include relevant topics in all their group discussions and plans. The well-being of children should be considered during discussions about any topic; the possibility that their well-being might be relevant should always be considered.

Instructional Framework

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module participants will be able to:

1. Understand relationships in groups.
2. Recognize the strengths of team members.
3. Use time effectively.

Activities:

Learning Outcome 1: Understand relationships in groups



Facilitator's Note: Distribute pictures of the various animals from the image *"What Kind of Team Member Am I?" (Annex 11)*. If one or more of these animals is offensive to your participants, either think of another that would work or drop it entirely.

- A. Ask participants to look at the image *"What Kind of Team Member Am I?" (Annex 11)*, explaining the characteristics of each animal, and asking which of them most closely resembles the way they work in groups. Are you a:
- **Rabbit** (quick thinking, but wants to jump from topic to topic)?
 - **Turtle** (slow but steady, stays on course and gets there in the end)?
 - **Hawk** (likes to rise above the details and watch all the activity from a distance)?
 - **Mouse** (likes to pay a lot of attention to every little detail)?
 - **Lion** (doesn't say a lot, but pays a lot of attention to what's going on and is respected)?
 - **Sheep** (would rather not get a lot of attention, but wants to be included in the activity)?
 - **Bull** (gets angry easily, but are full of passion for things that are important to you)?
 - Another **animal**, and why?

Have each participant explain what animal they choose, why they chose the animal they chose, and how these characteristics will affect what they do on a team.

Then have participants explain how their choice would be the same or different if they were the leader of a team.

- B. Have the participants get into groups of 4–5 people. Have each group choose only one animal, for example the sheep. What will happen to that group if everyone is the same? What happens in a group when everyone is sheep? What happens in a group when everyone is a lion?**
- C. Ask participants if they think there are any differences in how women or men behave in a group or in a leadership position. What are those differences? How can youth help to address those differences in a positive way?**

Learning Outcome 2: Recognize the strengths of team members.



Facilitator's Notes: Refer to the image *"What Is Going On At The Table?" (Annex 12)* to ask the questions and facilitate the discussion

- A. Each member should be able to use his or her skills best, and the leader should pay attention to what each member does well so they can use their skills best.**

Discuss the image "What's going on at the table," asking participants to decide:

- Who is most involved? How do you know?
- Who is least involved? How do you know?
- Who is the leader? How do you know?
- What else does this picture tell you about this group? How do you know?
- What is the role of gender in the group? Are the women and men behaving differently? How can you tell?

Explain that there are no right or wrong answers, but the point is that everyone is participating in the way that suits him or her best.

Learning Outcome 3: Use time effectively.



Facilitator's Notes: Write the following four statements on separate pieces of paper and post them around the room:

1. Achieving goals
2. Having a strategy
3. Providing leadership
4. Ensuring there is teamwork

- A. Ask participants to think about the four statements and have them stand under the statement they think is the most important. Ask the participants to share why they chose their statement as most important. Many will want to say that leadership is the most important, but help them understand that to achieve goals, everything must move together, at the same time to get things done.**



Life Skill: **Time and Stress Management**

Introduction

Facilitators should begin by reading the Overview. This will be followed by reading and thinking about the Knowledge Base, which provides the specific information to be conveyed for each topic. The Instructional Framework lays out the actual instruction that the facilitators will engage in, using Activities and Resources as indicated.

Details of each topic should be modified to fit with the culture in which the facilitators and participants are working. Some of the concepts will be foreign to many cultures, such as “win-win” negotiations and organizational structures that de-emphasize the role of the leader in group work. Other concepts will be culture-specific, and will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis. Many concepts, such as gender equality and honoring creativity, however, should be supported, even when these are not aligned with cultural norms. In such cases, it will be up to the facilitator to find a way to make unorthodox concepts acceptable to participants.



Facilitator’s Note: If some participants cannot read or write, the facilitator will adjust the instruction. If only a few cannot read or write, he or she will translate the materials or ask others to translate them. If none or almost none of them can read or write, the facilitator will adjust the program, translating everything and, instead of asking participants to write, providing enough information that the participants can discuss the materials without actually reading or writing.

Overview

DEFINITION: The ability to manage time, deadlines, and other pressures in a healthy and productive fashion, rather than being overwhelmed by such stresses.

Stress is a part of life for everyone. People living in stress-filled environments like war zones and post-conflict areas are subjected to even more stress, much of which is out of their control. However, living with high levels of stress poses many risks. Stress harms both emotional stability and physical health. It narrows a person's ability to think clearly, function effectively, and find satisfaction in life.

Even in very difficult circumstances, steps can be taken to manage stress, which is different from eliminating it. By managing stress so it has less impact, one can become more emotionally stable and physically healthy, thereby becoming happier, healthier, and more productive, developing the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges directly.

CENTRAL CONCEPT: Stress is physiological, so it's important to understand how one's body responds to stress and ways to diminish its impact. But stress management is not one-size-fits-all—different techniques work differently for different people.

TEACHING CONCEPT: By learning to control the impact stress has, one can behave more effectively, make more productive decisions, improve relationships, and generally feel more positive about oneself. This includes a wide range of behavioral changes, from organizing one's time more effectively to learning and practicing stress-release techniques.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND TIME MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LIFE SKILLS: One can effectively manage time and other stressors only when one believes that one has the right and responsibility to take care of oneself—enhancing one's self-esteem, thus, is central to implementing stress-relieving behaviors and thinking.

Critical and creative thinking are also crucial for effective stress management, since such management relies heavily on one's ability to analyze situations and decide on ways to improve one's situation. Once one has become more able to minimize the impact of stress on oneself, one will be more able to feel empathy for others, which is a skill that supports other life skills. Effective leadership and teamwork rely heavily on one's ability to minimize the impact stress has on both emotional stability and decision-making.

Knowledge Base

1. **By learning to recognize events and situations that cause stress, as well of the impacts of on-going stressors, one can decide ways to protect oneself from the worst of their effects.**

People living in conflict and post-conflict situations face a lot of stress on a daily basis. Different stressors, however, affect different people in different ways—for some, it is the threat to their children that is greatest; for some, the threat to their very existence, the possibility that they may be seriously injured or killed; for others, however, it is the uncertainty which brings on the greatest stress.

Stress is always physical, caused by hormones that are released into the blood to enable people to respond to the problem, but too much stress can harm both the body and the spirit.

It is important for each individual to learn which stressors have the greatest impact on them. By doing this, they can recognize when their stress level may be getting higher.

2. **Learning and experimenting with a variety of stress-releasing activities will enable one to decide which approach works best, under which circumstances.**

Simple things like taking deep breaths or finding something to laugh at are natural responses to stress.

While we often cannot eliminate stress, we can minimize its impact on us. Some methods for reducing stress are simple, like taking deep breaths, while others are more complicated, such as exercising. Sometimes it's as simple as changing the way one looks at the problem, such as realizing that the

situation is not one's fault, or accepting the fact that the problem may not be resolvable and one will have to learn to accept the consequences.

3. **Once one has learned what provokes stressful responses and what those responses are likely to be, one can organize one's life in such a way that provides protection from stressors, developing a level of emotional stability and mental control that will make it less likely that a stress-provoking event or situation will set off harmful responses.**

The most important aspect of this has to do with managing one's time so that it doesn't add to the stress one is feeling. For some people, time management comes easily. Others, however, have to be intentional about managing their time, beginning, perhaps, by creating a daily schedule—and following it, or, if they do not do so, starting again the next day and trying again. Time management is a habit one has to get into.

One thing that's difficult to get rid of is the sense of guilt and hopelessness one can feel when one doesn't manage one's time well, a fatalistic way of thinking that says, "Oh, that's just the way I am."

But everybody can get better at managing time. For adults, the hardest part of making this change is that people usually become somewhat set in their ways, so changing something this basic can be difficult (and therefore a bit stressful). And everybody will fail sometimes—if the response is, "Oh, I knew I couldn't do it," the person will remain stuck. If, however, he or she sees such failures as opportunities to improve, it can get better.

RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER: Some stressors may be culture- or gender-specific. Learning to recognize and articulate these can diminish their impact on decision-making and implementation. You can ask participants to discuss some ways in which women and men may feel stress differently if the topic comes up. Communicating the nature of such stressors to others may help lessen the impact of such stressors on interactions with others.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD PROTECTION: Children can be negatively affected by environmental and cultural stressors, often in ways that will affect their values, attitudes, and behaviors as adults. Children should not only be protected from such stressors to whatever extent possible, but should also be given tools by which to manage them. The long-term impact of stress on children can be very harmful, so it is very important to find ways to help children minimize their reactions to stress.



Instructional Framework

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module participants will be able to:

1. Understand the impact of stress on themselves.
2. Learn some techniques for reducing the impact of stress on themselves.
3. Manage time efficiently.

Activities:

Learning Outcome 1: Understand the impact of stress on themselves.

- A. Begin by defining stress. The basic definition is: “Stress is the response people feel when they are faced with circumstances that require them to take action.”**

While we usually think of stress as bad, it is natural, and it can be good—such as the stress that comes when you want to do something nice for someone you love—or it can be bad—such as when you believe that someone you love is in danger.

- B. Explain to participants that stress can sometimes be expressed in an emotional way and sometimes in a physical way.**

Divide participants into two groups. Ask group 1 to discuss some of the emotional ways that you can show emotional stress. This could include crying, feeling depressed, etc. Ask group 2 to discuss some of the physical ways you can experience stress. This could include a headache, stomach ache, crying, etc.

Have the groups then share with each other what they discussed and see if the groups can add to each others’ lists.

As a group, discuss the following questions:

- i. What are some of the main sources of stress for youth in their communities?
- ii. How could they help youth experience/feel less stress in their communities?

- C. Explain that stressors differ from culture to culture. As well, some stressors have more impact on one gender than another – in many cultures, protecting one’s “honor” is very important to boys and men; in many cultures, female modesty is very important – either to the culture in general, or to the females themselves.**

Discuss the impact that such differences may have on the way males and females react to situations.

- D. Ask participants to break into groups and discuss things that can make people experience stress physically or emotionally. If they feel comfortable they can share from personal experiences or they can make up situations.**

Ask the people in each pair to discuss the most stressful situation they are facing now. Ask participants to share some of their responses.

Learning Outcome 2: Learn some techniques for reducing the impact of stress on themselves.

- A. Begin by asking participants if they have things they do to reduce stress. Maybe they do exercise? Talk to a friend or family member? Read a book or listen to music?**

Collect a list of things that they do, and making sure there are no judgements about one another’s stress-relieving activities.

Could they share some of these ways with youth in their communities to help more youth deal with their stress?

- B. Write the following statements on a piece of paper – one paper per statement so you have 5 pieces of paper: “Positive Attitude,” “Support System,” “Exercise,” “Laughing,” “Taking time for you.”**

Ask for 5 volunteers. Have each volunteer come to the front and give each 1 piece of paper with 1 of the statements.

Each volunteer will then read their statement and act it out – this is meant to be fun! Then ask the group:

1. what they think this statement means.
2. how it relates to managing stress.



Facilitator’s Note:

- “Positive attitude” means that instead of thinking negatively about how they are handling a situation, they think of the things they have tried and how this shows that they are trying hard to solve the problem.
- “Support system” means that they are turning to people they trust: family members, friends, NGO or municipal officials.
- “Exercise” means that simply moving a bit can reduce the impact of stress; a short walk can make a big difference.
- “Laughing” means that if they can find something to laugh about, the body will release different chemicals from the ones it releases under stress (as happens with exercise), which counteract the impact of the stress-related chemicals.
- “Taking time for you” means that they just take a few minutes to listen to a song on the radio, watch a TV show, read a book, or chat with a friend.

Learning Outcome 3: Manage time efficiently.

- A. Talk to participants about managing time well. Tell participants they have three options: today, tomorrow, never. Ask participants if they think it is better to do things today, tomorrow or never. Why? What happens if we put off doing things that need to be completed?**

Ask participants to meet in pairs and discuss their problems with time management. Each should think of a situation in which poor time management caused them to feel a great deal of stress—make the connection between efficient time management and stress reduction. Why did they put off doing what needed to be done? How might they have managed their time so this wouldn't have happened?

Share what they discussed, focusing on the things that prevented them from doing what needed to be done.



Facilitator's Note: The message of this activity is very simple: Do it today or develop a clear plan to do it tomorrow. While this is not always possible, it is a good starting point as a way to manage time effectively, thereby reducing the stress caused by poor time management.

- B. Lead a discussion in which participants develop ideas for organizing their time more effectively. This may include:**

- Developing a schedule for each day/week/month, and crossing off things as they have been taken care of;
- Beginning each day by listing the things that need to be done;
- Discussing what needs to be done with relevant family members and agreeing on who will do what, when; and
- Other suggestions they may have.

Ask participants to discuss what they think will be the most difficult part of organizing their time. Discuss the fact that of course they will not always meet their goals, but, if they stick with it, they can get better at it.

Ask participants to share the most important of the lessons they learned about time and stress management.



Life Skill: **Creative Thinking**

Introduction

Facilitators should begin by reading the Overview. This will be followed by reading and thinking about the Knowledge Base, which provides the specific information to be conveyed for each topic. The Instructional Framework lays out the actual instruction that the facilitators will engage in, using Activities and Resources as indicated.

Details of each topic should be modified to fit with the culture in which the facilitators and participants are working. Some of the concepts will be foreign to many cultures, such as “win-win” negotiations and organizational structures that de-emphasize the role of the leader in group work. Other concepts will be culture-specific, and will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis. Many concepts, such as gender equality and honoring creativity, however, should be supported, even when these are not aligned with cultural norms. In such cases, it will be up to the facilitator to find a way to make unorthodox concepts acceptable to participants.



Facilitator’s Note: If some participants cannot read or write, the facilitator will adjust the instruction. If only a few cannot read or write, he or she will translate the materials or ask others to translate them. If none or almost none of them can read or write, the facilitator will adjust the program, translating everything and, instead of asking participants to write, providing enough information that the participants can discuss the materials without actually reading or writing.

Overview

DEFINITION: The ability to think creatively means that instead of thinking of the most obvious solutions for, or approaches to problems, you are willing to consider unusual or unlikely solutions and approaches to problems that are outside of/apart from/unlike traditional solutions and approaches.

Youth are often quite willing to think creatively. This is in part because they don't have as many preconceptions as adults, and in part because they like to think of themselves as different from and more open to new ideas than adults.

CENTRAL CONCEPT: Creative thinking entails:

- First, assuming that traditional ways of approaching a problem may not work.
- Second, an ability to look at the problem in new ways so unusual ways to deal with it can be considered.
- Third, the willingness to take intellectual and emotional risks, as well as a willingness to accept the fact that one's ideas may not be accepted, or, if accepted, may not work.

TEACHING CONCEPT: Effective decisions and actions often entail a blend between accepting typical or traditional solutions and trying something unusual or unfamiliar.

Everyone has the potential to be creative. While people probably cannot actually be taught to be creative, they can be encouraged and empowered to think creatively.

People can learn creative thinking by being provided examples of creative thinking and, when considering problems, helping them think of alternative ways of solving the problem.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CREATIVE THINKING AND OTHER LIFE SKILLS: Strong creative thinking skills are closely connected to most other life skills. While some situations can be dealt with and problems can be solved simply by following the accepted approaches, most situations require at least a bit of creativity. Conflicts are usually resolved and problems usually solved by someone's taking the time to think "outside the box." Empathy often enhances one's ability to think creatively, and by critically analyzing a situation, one can consider creative solutions. Finding techniques for relieving stress almost always involves thinking creatively about one's needs and strengths, and teamwork is an excellent way to increase creativity. The higher one's self-esteem, the more likely one is to trust one's creative instincts.

Knowledge Base

1. Creative thinking can often be used to effectively solve or approach problems, but thinking “differently” can be threatening to many people.

Most people already think creatively, such as the cook who substitutes an ingredient that isn’t available when following a recipe, the mechanic who uses a piece of scrap metal to replace a part in an automobile, and the student who makes a practice test for him- or herself before an exam instead of just re-studying the material.

2. Creativity comes in many forms.

All children, because they have not learned how people typically solve problems, are more creative than most adults, who lose their creativity after entering adulthood. There are a number of reasons for this, and it happens in all societies. But experience has also shown that creativity can be reawakened in adults, once they begin to trust themselves as their self-esteem improves.

An excellent vehicle for encouraging creative approaches to problems is by working in groups that are willing to treat “unique” solutions and approaches seriously. Thus, “creative” (unfamiliar) ideas are often developed by groups, not individuals, and need to be expressed in ways that honour customs and traditions.

3. “Creative” solutions may not be accepted when first proposed. The person or people proposing the solution have to make sure to explain their solution or approach as clearly as possible, and must be willing to respond to questions and disagreement.

The solution or approach may, however, gain acceptance over time if the proponents are persistent (but friendly) and open to discussion. Moreover, creative solutions can lead to a more open approach to creativity, so other such solutions may be accepted. And incremental change can lead to larger, systemic changes.

RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER: Many creative proposals for change involve protecting women’s rights and giving them a bigger say in how society works. Some people think that these changes would threaten the status quo because more rights for women might, they think, involve fewer rights for men. Considering women’s equality as a win-win situation, however, (see Conflict Resolution), the negative responses can be changed. Showing that such changes are in everyone’s best interest can lessen the fears that creative thinking can inspire.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD PROTECTION:

A society that values creative thinking must begin by valuing creativity in its children and youth, in the home, in interpersonal relationships, in the classroom, and at work. Children whose creativity is valued are more likely to think creatively as they grow older.

Instructional Framework

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module participants will be able to:

1. Imagine unusual ways of thinking about a topic.
2. Reawaken their own creativity.
3. Gather support for their creative or unique ideas.

Give them time to talk about this, then ask them what they have decided.

- B. Ask participants how creative thinking is different from critical thinking, which was in a previous section. Make sure they point out that both have the same goal – to understand situations and solve problems – but that critical thinking relies on step-by-step logic, while creative thinking is more open-minded. Explain that the two should be used to complement each other.**

Activities:

Learning Outcome 1: Imagine unusual ways of thinking about a topic.

- A. Have participants get into groups of 4-5 people. Give each group 2 sticks (they can be any size but if the sticks are different sizes that is better). If you do not have sticks you can use 2 pieces of paper.**

Tell each group that they need to come up with 10 positive uses for the sticks. If you are using paper tell participants that one of the uses cannot be writing on it!

Once the groups are done have them present their ideas to each other.

The goal of this activity is for participants to learn to think creatively about different objects and potentially use those objects to address issues or solve problems in a way they haven't thought of before.

- C. Discuss how creative thinking might be threatening to some people. Why might some people not like creative thinking? Why might it be hard for some people to accept new ideas?**

Learning Outcome 2: Reawaken their own creativity.

- A.** Explain to participants how group work can encourage creativity. Sometimes people do not like to work in groups for creative solutions, but this can also be supported by asking participants to accept other ideas without judgement, as discussed in the Leadership and Teamwork section.
- B.** After this has been discussed, break participants into groups of five people. Give them a realistic problem to solve, like how to find a job to help support their family, or how to prepare for national exams, or whatever seems suitable for the group (don't spend a lot of time discussing which problem to tackle).

Ask participants in each group to discuss among themselves the most obvious solutions to the problem – there will probably be two or three everyone can agree on. Then ask the groups to think of three more solutions which might not have been thought of and which are very creative, different or unique.

Learning Outcome 3: Gather support for their out-of-the-box ideas.

- A.** After the groups have shared their creative ideas, ask them if they have experienced a time when they had a creative idea but someone else did not like it. How did they feel? What did they do?
- B.** Ask the groups to consider how they would present their “creative” solution to others. They should discuss the problems and the solutions, as well as why this solution would be a good fix for the problem.

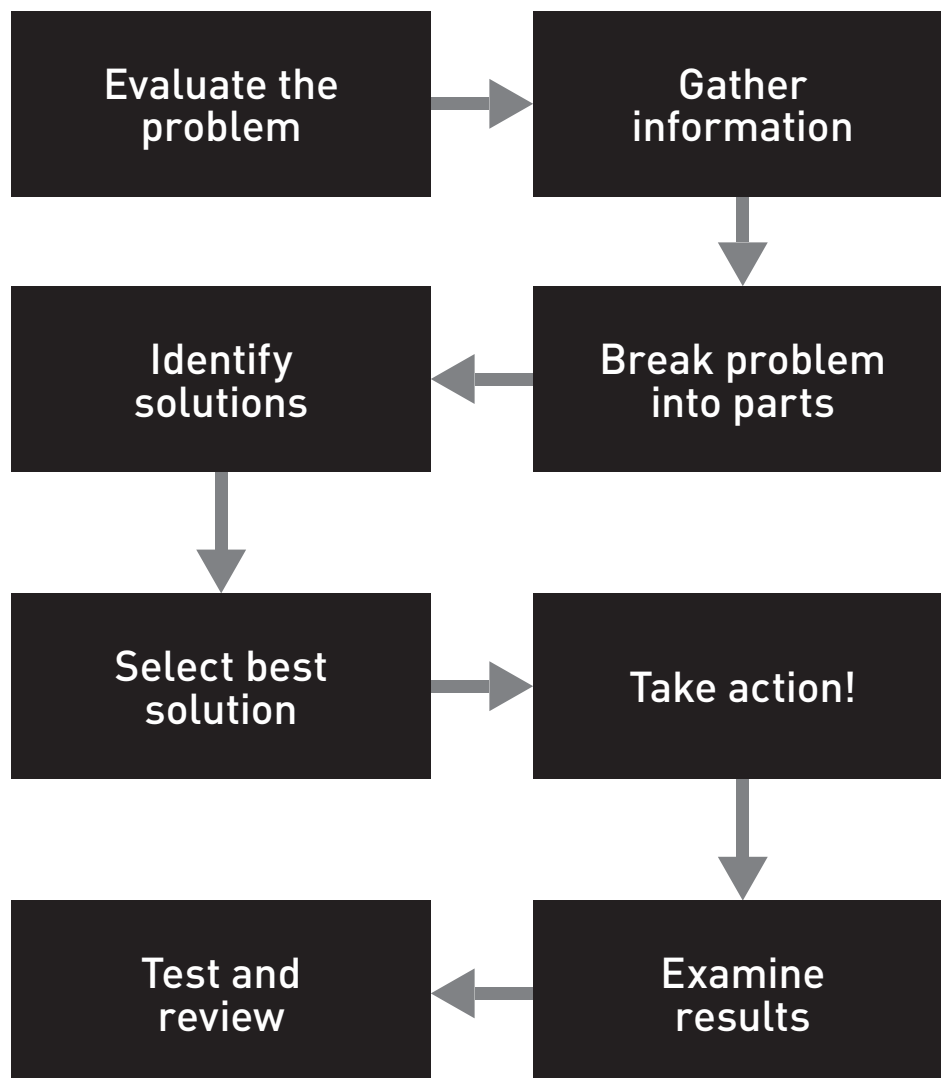
Ask them to discuss ways to keep the discussion friendly and productive. This might include making rules that everyone should follow or using the following suggestions:

- Choosing a facilitator who is charged with calling on people who have raised their hand;
- Requiring that everyone listen while others speak, not interrupting;
- Requiring that questions be phrased to get information (“Can you explain how this would affect poor people?”), not using judgement (“How could you possibly neglect the needs of the poor?”);
- Setting a time limit for comments and for the entire discussion; and
- Deciding on a process for making a final decision.

The rest of the group should critique (productively) their solution, as well as their presentation, and the people proposing the solution should respond, but without anger or frustration. If others suggest ways to modify the plan, they should consider it, integrating it into the plan if possible.



Annex 1: Solving a Problem



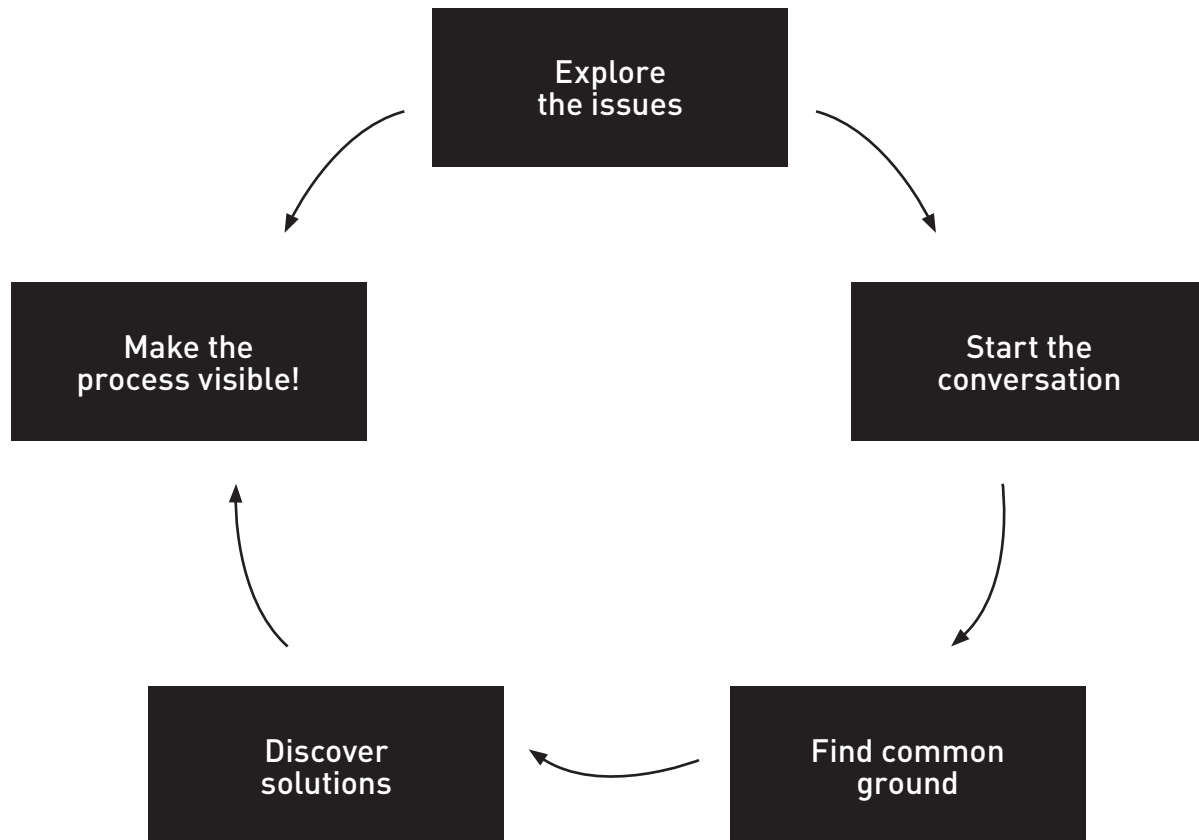
Annex 2: **Comforting Each Other**



Annex 3: **What Are You Feeling?**



Annex 4: Resolving the Conflict



Annex 5: The Difference



Annex 6: **Domestic Violence**

603
million
women live
where domestic
violence is not
considered
a crime

Annex 7: Children in Crisis



Annex 8: **The Right to Education**



Article 27

Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 28

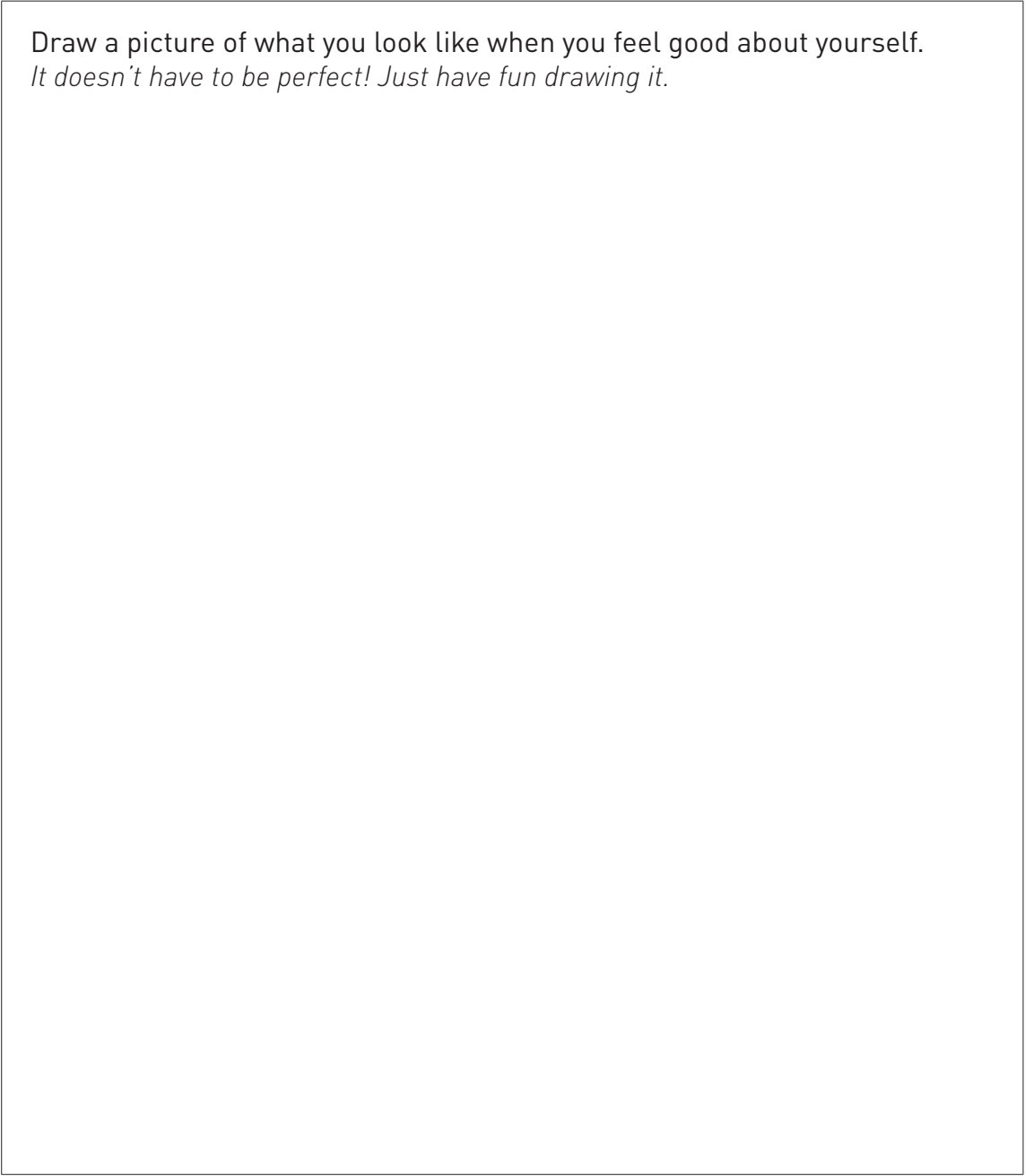
All children and young people have a right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of.

Annex 9: What I Do Well

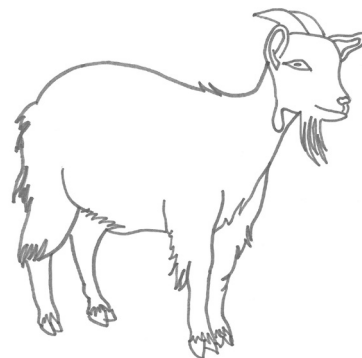
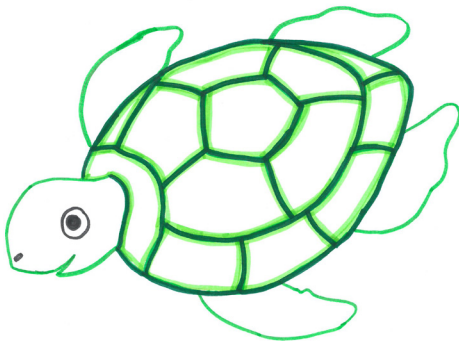
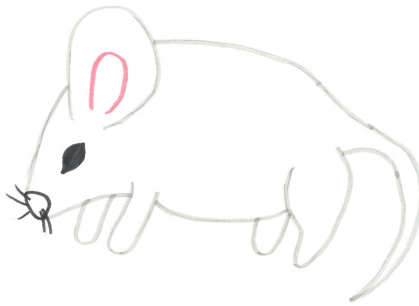
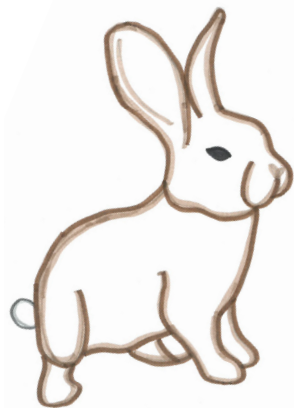
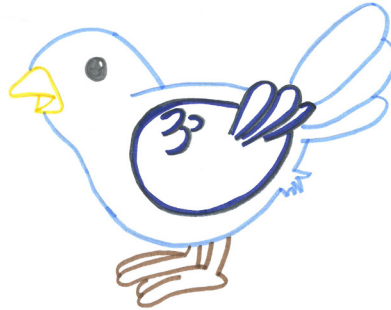
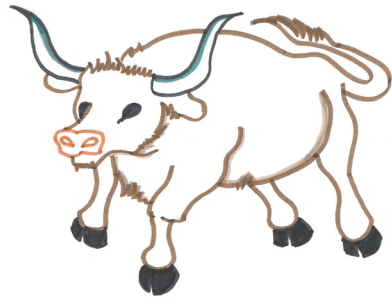
What I do well NOTE: Be specific, instead of writing "I am a good brother (or sister)" think about the things you do as a brother or sister such as "I help my siblings with their schoolwork."	What I would like to do better NOTE: Be specific, instead of writing "I will be a better brother (or sister)" think about things you could do like "I will listen when my siblings are upset."

Annex 10: **Who I Am**

Draw a picture of what you look like when you feel good about yourself.
It doesn't have to be perfect! Just have fun drawing it.



Annex 11: What Kind of Team Member Am I?



Annex 12: **What Is Going On At The Table?**



myLIFE

War Child Canada Life Skills Curriculum (Youth)

