

"Take away your grey and give yourself some colour."

– Eight year-old

Sharing in the Healing Journey Expressive Arts Toolkit



YWCA
TORONTO

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.



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All of the artwork reproduced in this Toolkit was created by participants in the children's and parents' groups. Below almost every work is a message by the same artist.

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INTRODUCTION

About the YWCA Toronto Sharing in the Healing Journey Expressive Arts Toolkit

This **Sharing in the Healing Journey Expressive Arts Toolkit** draws upon YWCA Toronto Girls and Family Programs' over 24 years of experience offering the Here to Help program. The program provides weekly groups to support children from four to 18 years old and their mother/gender diverse parent exposed to domestic violence. In 2022, the program was awarded a three-year grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada to incorporate the Expressive Arts into existing programming. This grant also included funding to expand the program to offer a second, pilot phase of programming called Adventures in Sharing, designed for participants who had completed Here to Help.

The program introduces participants to the Expressive Arts to help them process their trauma, manage emotions and build resilience. A variety of activities are included, such as mindfulness, movement, storytelling, journaling and visual arts. The aim of these creative interventions is to support participants on their healing journey while reducing the risk of re-traumatization.

YWCA Toronto Sharing in the Healing Journey Project: Key Objectives and Outcomes

- **Expressive Arts as a Healing Tool:** By expanding the existing Here to Help program to include Expressive Arts, to give children and their mother/gender diverse parent the opportunity to safely explore and process their experiences of domestic violence. Through interacting with the arts, participants gain self-awareness through exploring the skills, abilities and values that support their emotional well-being.
- **Empowerment Through Social Action:** To provide continued opportunities for self-expression and empowerment by piloting a Phase Two module of the program, called Adventures in Sharing. Designed for past participants of Here to Help, this phase of the program encourages children and their mother/gender diverse parent to recognize their strength and courage by engaging in social action and by creating a series of reflection cards. The aim of the sharing cards is to inspire, offer hope and provide encouragement to other survivors.
- **Research and Evaluation:** To pursue a process of intervention research and assessments in order to evaluate how Expressive Arts and empowerment through social action can support trauma recovery for children and their mother/gender diverse parent exposed to domestic violence.
- **Training and the Sharing in the Healing Journey Expressive Arts Toolkit:** To share knowledge and learning from the project through this Toolkit; and through disseminating the Adventures in Sharing cards created by participants to other Here to Help agencies across the city of Toronto, as well as to other agencies across Canada supporting victims of domestic violence.

How We Deliver the Program

At YWCA Toronto, the Here to Help program and the Adventures in Sharing pilot phase each offer 11 weekly group sessions with their own Agendas. The children's groups are divided by ages, typically four to six-year-olds, seven to ten-year-olds, and 10 plus. The age range for each children's group will vary depending on the number of participants registered. We have occasionally added a fourth group, to accommodate youth 13 years and older.

We provide a minimum of two facilitators per group, and facilitators have experience working with both children and adults. Typically, group size will vary between four to six children in the children's group and up to 12 parents in the adult group. Prior to each group session, facilitators will carefully prepare all of the required materials and resources (instructions for these are detailed within each Agenda). After each session, the facilitators will gather to share and debrief about what happened in their groups.

NOTE:

- On p. 3, we offer some culturally appropriate adaptations for Indigenous communities developed in consultation with Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, that serves the Indigenous community in Toronto.
- A list of external resources used in the agendas appears on p. 262.

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

As part of the *Sharing in the Healing Journey* project, YWCA Toronto partnered with Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, another Here to Help provider that serves the Indigenous community in Toronto. Meetings were held to discuss how adaptations could be made to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and healing into the program activities. As a result, the following adapted activities were developed to include where culturally responsive and relevant to the Indigenous families participating in the program.



The Medicine Wheel serves as a framework for mindful and therapeutic activities. It is believed that all aspects of the self require equal attention as we strive to maintain balance in our lives. The four quadrants represent emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical well-being. The Medicine Wheel is multi-dimensional and holistic in nature. For instance, a mindfulness activity focused on emotions could ask participants to identify four emotions they are feeling and draw how much space each emotion occupies on the Medicine Wheel. Another example would be to use animals in an exercise related to emotions. For instance, when feeling fear, calling upon the bear for bravery.

Adapting Program Activities for Use with Indigenous Communities

Introductions: Open the group with a smudge and prayer. This practice is used both to open and close the space in a respectful manner and invites the ancestors and helpers to participate.

Mindfulness: Mindfulness activities should ideally take place outdoors, in nature, on the land. If this is not possible, nature gifts can be brought indoors: for example, Mother Earth and Grandfather Stones. One example of incorporating the Medicine Wheel is by looking at the four directions and the medicines represented in each quadrant: East (tobacco), South (sage), West (cedar), and North (sweetgrass).

Note: There may be variations among Indigenous practices. For instance, when performing a mindful activity with tobacco, you might hold the tobacco in your right hand, place it in your left hand, and offer your intentions and prayers before offering the tobacco back to nature. Another example would be to offer tobacco whenever you take something from nature, such as cedar or sumac. This would be done in the same manner as described above.

Movement: For movement activities, ask participants, *“If you were an animal, which animal would you be and why?”* Participants would then think about the characteristics of that animal and act them out.

Creative Space Activities:



Options

Vision Board: Vision boards are an activity in which a person manifests their goals and dreams within a specific time frame. This activity is similar to making New Year's resolutions. Supplies would include construction paper, newspaper and magazine clippings, paint, markers, glue, etc. The objective is to include what you want to achieve, feel, or experience. The vision board should be placed where the person can see it daily. Similar to positive affirmations, this activity works on the subconscious to help the person achieve their envisioned goals.

Therapeutic Dream Catcher: This activity involves coloring and decorating an image of a dream catcher. Participants write down their negative emotions, thoughts, and feelings on the dream catcher to trap them within it. Strengths, positive traits, and supports are written around the dream catcher.

Medicine Pouch: Making a medicine pouch can be used as a self-care and coping activity. Participants create a wellness medicine bundle containing one or more of the four medicines – tobacco, sage, cedar, sweetgrass – that can be used to help them while focusing on one or more aspects of self (emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical).

Reflection Cards: Reflection cards can be created based on the Seven Grandfather Teachings: humility, honesty, bravery, truth, respect, love, and wisdom. Each teaching is associated with an animal: Humility is represented by the wolf, Bravery by the bear, Wisdom by the beaver, Truth by the turtle, Respect by the buffalo, Love by the eagle, and Honesty by the raven.



HERE TO HELP

Week 1: Introductions and Belonging

Traumatic events such as domestic violence often leave mothers/gender diverse parents and their children feeling disconnected and isolated. Through mindful body awareness activities, art making, play, storytelling and discussion, participants learn that they are not alone, become more self-aware, and know that there are those who listen and support without judgement.



“Happy Happy Happy. Yes-hi to you to.”

– Eight year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *you are not alone; you have a right to speak and be heard; you are in a safe space; you can make your own choices about how you would like to participate in group.*

Materials needed: mural paper for the Community of Kindness activity; small square cards and key chain for each child to create their reflection cards; canvas for each family for the Family Kindness mural activity; markers, crayons and various art making tools; story book, *All the Colours of the Earth* by Sheila Hamanaka. Optional: Music to accompany the movement: [Relaxing Music For Children – Be Calm and Focused \(cute animals\) | 3 Hours Extended Mix](#).



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

30 minutes: welcome, introductions, agenda review, countdown activity

Families are welcomed to the program. Mothers/gender diverse parents and children are taken to their group rooms.

30 minutes: mindfulness and normalizing activity

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain

Normalizing activity: To help children become aware they share similar experiences with others and break down the sense of isolation that many people feel when they have been exposed to domestic violence. Also, to validate a range of feelings which are common when starting something new.

40 minutes: story, creating the Community of Kindness mural

Story: *All the Colours of the Earth* by Sheila Hamanaka

Community of Kindness Mural: This is the main activity for the session. Each child is given an opportunity to share what they added to the mural. One child speaks at a time. This is a time for listening to one another.

20 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards: Participants create the first of their series of cards.



Imaginary Ball: coming together through play, movement and imagination.

If time permits, this is a fun activity that invites connection among group members. Group members stand in a circle. The facilitator begins by passing around an imaginary ball, placing it carefully in the hands of the person beside them. Each person passes the imaginary ball to the next person until everyone has had a chance to receive and pass it on. On the second time around the imaginary ball can change size and weight or stay the same from person to person. On the third time around, the imaginary ball can become any type of ball and be passed to anyone in the circle. Facilitators ensure everyone has a turn, and then “disappear” the imaginary ball when the activity is over.

Transition to Family Time: A mindful pause before transitioning to the next activity.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Beginning the weekly Family Kindness mural which each individual family creates.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

30 minutes: welcome, introductions, agenda review, countdown activity

Families are welcomed as they arrive and both mother/gender diverse parent and child/ren are taken to the children's designated group room. Once the children are settled, parents go to their group room. Facilitators introduce themselves and their roles and give a very brief review of the agenda. A brief countdown activity will be introduced that will be used to track the number of group sessions remaining. Facilitators choose their own countdown activity.

Facilitator: *"Today, we are going to get to know each other and go over what will happen each week you come to the program. We're also going to keep track of our weeks together."*

Key points to be explained:

- Each week the activities for the night will be shared.
- Before going home, families will work on an art activity together.
- Group members are encouraged to participate in the way that is right for them either by sharing their words, their art work or by listening.
- Facilitators may directly ask if someone would like to share to make sure that everyone has had a chance to be heard. Anyone can say "pass" if they choose not to share.

Children Introductions: Children introduce themselves and their favourite colour or animal.



Facilitators can choose their own introduction game.

30 minutes: mindfulness, normalizing activity

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain

Facilitator: *"Each week when we get together, we are going to start off our group with a mindful activity. Does anyone know what mindfulness is? Mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening right now in yourself, as best as you can and being kind to yourself. You can notice what you are thinking and feeling, or what your body feels like or what you are hearing and seeing. We will do mindfulness activities that will help us get ready to be together and to learn about ourselves. Mindfulness can help us manage big feelings; and it might help with focusing on activities too. It is very important that you do what is comfortable for you. This week, we are going to do Up and Down the Mountain."*

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Facilitator: “Begin by sitting as tall as you can in this moment – just sitting softly tall and feel where your feet, or your body, touch the floor or chair. Try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other into the floor. The floor is gently holding your feet and your body. Perhaps you would like to imagine sending a breath all the way down to the bottom of your feet and the tips of your toes. Perhaps send another breath through your whole body. When you are ready, take one of your hands and with the palm facing you, spread your fingers open. With the index finger of the other hand begin to trace a path. Starting with your pinkie finger, which is your littlest finger, breathe in as you go up and breathe out as you go down the pinkie. Breathe in as you go up the next finger and breathe out as you go down. Keep breathing in as you go up and out when you go down as you go to each finger. When you get up to the tip of your thumb begin to retrace your path. Breathing out as you go down the mountain and in as you go up the mountain. When you get to your pinkie, stop and take a moment to notice what is in yourself. When you are ready, bring your attention back to the group.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “What do you notice in yourself after doing that kind of breathing? What is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now: an emotion, a feeling in your body, or a thought.”

Normalizing Activity

Facilitator: “Since we’re all new to this group of people, we are going to do an activity that will help us to get to know each other more and find out why we are here. Raise your hand (or stand up or jump on one foot, etc.) if you answer yes to the following questions...”



1. If you had cereal for breakfast
2. You went to school today
3. You have a pet
4. You play a sport
5. You went outside
6. You used YouTube/Facebook/Instagram/Snapchat/TikTok, etc.
7. You have a brother or sister
8. You ever had to change school
9. You ever saw a fight at school
10. You have ever been worried about something
11. You have ever been sad about something
12. You have ever been happy about something
13. You feel nervous about coming to this group
14. You are excited to be in the group

Facilitator: “Do you know the one thing that is the same for all of the families attending this group? They have all seen or heard fighting at home and this program is a safe place where we can all meet and know that we are not alone. We’ll learn how those things that happened in our home might have brought up big or overwhelming feelings. We can talk about how to manage those big/overwhelming feelings and how to support each other in our group and as a family with those feelings. We are also going to have fun together too!”

CHILDREN'S GROUP

40 minutes: story, creating the Community of Kindness mural

Story: *All the Colours of the Earth* by Sheila Hamanaka

As an introduction to the Community of Kindness mural, read the story and share with the children that everyone is welcome in the group. Explain that the Community of Kindness mural will be a reflection of everyone in the group.

Facilitator: *"We are going to create a kindness mural for our group. We call it the Community of Kindness mural and it will show how we can treat each other and the space we are in while we are here together. Before we start, let's think about the things that make us feel good. What are some things that make you feel good (playing, friends, hugs, etc.)? Let's add your answers to the paper. You can draw or use words."*

Reflection

Before moving on to the second part of the activity, give each child an opportunity to share what they added to the mural. One child speaks at a time. This is a time for listening to one another.

Facilitator: *"Now that we can see the different things that make us feel good, let's think how we can treat each other when we are together so we can all feel good in the group. How can we treat each other and be kind to each other? What is important for us to remember about how we treat each other in the group? Everyone will be able to add their answers to the mural."*

Facilitators support children to add their answers to the mural. Facilitators will also take part in the activity and will add confidentiality in order to explain its guidelines and limits. They will also add the following if these things have not been generated by the group:

- Respect each other's opinions. Hurtful language or words that put others down will not be allowed.
- Participate in ways that feel right to each person. This may be by showing what has been created, or by listening and talking. Different people might participate in different ways and that's okay.
- Being kind with each other by listening, waiting our turn and supporting one another.

Give each child an opportunity to share what they added to the mural. One child speaks at a time. This is a time for listening to one another.

Reflection

Facilitator: *"What was it like to make this mural together? Each week we will come back to the mural to help us remember how we have agreed to be together in the group and to see if there is anything else we would like to add."*

20 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time



The Reflection Cards activity can be started in Week 2 if more time is needed for the Community of Kindness mural.

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: *"Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week's group - something you think is important to remember. It can be from the mindfulness activity or what you added to the mural. You decide what you want to put on the card."*

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our family, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”



Silent Breath: Prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye**Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: “Each family will have a chance to create a Family Kindness mural. You can use the canvas and markers. We will be adding to this mural every week we are together. Before we start, let’s think of what it means to be kind. What does kindness mean to you? (ex., being thoughtful, friendly, helpful to another person, etc.) How do you feel when someone is being kind to you?” (ex., it feels good) “Today, we are going to draw or write on the canvas, things that make you feel good when you’re with your family or your friends, your siblings, pets, cousins or other people you spend time with. You can use your markers to write or draw things that make you feel good. We’ll give you a little bit of time to do that.” Once completed, participants are encouraged to share what they put on their mural.

Mindful Activity: Up and Down the Mountain

Facilitator: “Before we say goodbye, let’s breathe Up and Down the Mountain like we did at the beginning of the group.” Optional: Music to accompany the movement: [Relaxing Music For Children - Be Calm and Focused \(cute animals\) | 3 Hours Extended Mix](#).

Reflection

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, share one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now. It can be an emotion, a feeling in your body, or a thought.”

HERE TO HELP

Week 2: Self-Compassion

For children and their mothers/gender diverse parents exposed to domestic violence, engaging in self-compassion provides an opportunity to care for themselves in a way that may not have been possible in an unstable home environment. Through stories and the creative process, this week's group provides participants with an opportunity to recognize and explore ways to embrace flaws, give love and bring kindness to themselves.



“Kind.”

– Five year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *self-compassion can help manage painful thoughts and memories, increase self-awareness, and help to bring kindness and compassion to yourself.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; story books, *My New Best Friend* by Sara Marlowe or *The Friend I Need* by Gabi Garcia; laptop for mindfulness: [How To Be Kind To Yourself | Guided Meditation For Kids | Breathing Exercises | GoNoodle](#); paper, markers, pencil crayons, water colour paints or water colour pencil crayons, paint brushes; small square cards and each child's key ring; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: [How To Be Kind To Yourself | Guided Meditation For Kids | Breathing Exercises | GoNoodle](#)

Options

Butterfly Hug: “Crossing your arms in front of you, hold the left shoulder with your right hand and your right shoulder with your left hand. Breathe in and out for five slow breaths. Now pretend that your hands are butterfly wings, and gently flap them against your shoulders for a minute or so, noticing how you feel. Finish off by giving yourself a hug.”

Hand on Heart: “Place one or two hands over your heart feeling the gentle pressure and warmth from your hand and take three deep breaths. Hands can also be placed on cheeks, arms, stomach or crossing your arms to give yourself a hug.”

Kindness Rock: “Choose a rock and hold it in your hand. Close your eyes and begin breathing deeply, noticing the texture of the rock and any other sensations that arise. Think about what self-compassion means to you and come back to the room when you're ready. Decorate the rock with words that will support you.”

Community of Kindness Mural

This week continues the process of recognizing how group members agree to treat each other and the group space during the program. Participants are encouraged to add new images or words to the mural.

50 minutes: story, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *My New Best Friend* by Sara Marlowe or *The Friend I Need* by Gabi Garcia

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: creating an image with water colour paints or water colour pencils

20 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back the children. If new children are present, facilitators and participants share their names and a favourite colour. Facilitators will review the purpose of the group.

Facilitator: *“Welcome to our new group members. Everyone is here because there was fighting and domestic violence that happened in their family. Our group is a safe place where we can meet and know that we are not alone. Some of us might be excited, nervous or unsure about being here and that is okay. We are here to support each other and to do activities to help us learn more ways to deal with our feelings.”*

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review this week’s agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: [How To Be Kind To Yourself](#) | [Guided Meditation For Kids](#) | [Breathing Exercises](#) | [GoNoodle](#) or Butterfly Hug, Hand on Heart, Kindness Rock.

Facilitator: *“Each week we will do a mindfulness activity that will help us learn about ourselves, focus and be calm. Many people feel strange or awkward when they try new activities. There is no ‘perfect way’ to do the mindfulness activities, just try your best, do what is comfortable for you and notice what you feel at the end of it. We really hope you will give it a chance.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What did you notice about yourself from doing the mindfulness activity? It might be a feeling, or a thought, or a sensation in your body. You decide what you want to share. If you don’t want to share, you can just say ‘pass.’”*



Facilitators normalize that mindfulness experiences can be different for everyone and that some people may have enjoyed it and others may not and that is okay, the important thing is to be aware of how you felt.

Community of Kindness Mural: Review the mural and provide an opportunity for new and returning group members to add any new images or words.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and care for the space we are in, while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural. **Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything on the mural that would help you to feel safe and calm in the group today?**”* This is a conversation about what makes a community of kindness.

This week, facilitators and children decide where to hang the mural in the group room, choosing a blank wall and placing it where it can easily be accessed by everyone in the group.

Facilitator: *“Let’s decide as a group where we can hang our mural, somewhere we can see it. Each week, the mural will be here for us to look at and add to if we decide there is something to be included.”*

CHILDREN'S GROUP

50 minutes: story, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *My New Best Friend* by Sara Marlowe or *The Friend I Need* by Gabi Garcia

Facilitator: "Today we will be talking about self-compassion. Does anyone know what self-compassion is? Self-compassion is another way of saying how we show love and kindness to ourselves, and how we care for ourselves. We are going to read a book to help us understand more about self-compassion." After the story: "Who was the friend or best friend? What helped them to feel better?"

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: water colours

Facilitator: "Using the water colour paints or pencil crayons, thinking about the story we read, create a picture of your best friend (you) or friend, like in the story. How can you be kind to yourself? On the back of your paper, write the words to remind you of how your new best friend is kind to you."



Write a poem or short story on the back of the image created. Children can be encouraged to start with "My best friend...."

Reflection

Each child has a chance to respond, and a chance to listen.

Facilitator: "What would you like to tell us about what you created? You can pass if you don't want to share."

**Additional Reflection Questions**

What are some ways you are kind to yourself?

How can you take care of your feelings?

What was it like to do that activity?

20 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: "Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week's group - something you think is important to remember. It can be from the mindfulness activity, the mural or the art work you created. You decide what you want to put on the card."

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in gently through your nose, and gently out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



Silent Breath: Prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Facilitator: "On your kindness mural this week, draw or write things that you do together, or can do together, as a family to show kindness and love to each other."

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Mindful Activity: Butterfly Hug

Facilitator: *“Tonight, we are going to cross our arms, and rest our hands on our shoulders. You can cross your arms and rest your hands on your elbows if that is more comfortable. Do what is comfortable and safe and feels right for you. The instructions I use are simply a guide. As we begin, sitting comfortably on the chair, feet flat on the floor. Sitting softly upright, letting the body express a sense of being present and awake. Taking a moment to notice where the feet touch the floor, and the back and legs make contact with the chair. Perhaps rolling or adjusting your shoulders and back. Feel free to close your eyes or lower your eyes, having a soft gaze or whatever feels comfortable. And when you are ready, crossing your arms in front of you, placing your right hand on your left shoulder and your left hand on your right shoulder. At your own pace, breathe in and out for five slow breaths. Breathing in and out, letting the breath be natural. Now pretend that your hands are butterfly wings, and gently flap them against your shoulders, noticing how it feels to have butterfly wings gently tapping you. When you are ready, finishing by giving yourself a hug. Before we come back to the group, notice what you are aware of in yourself, thinking of one or two words that shares what you notice in yourself in this moment.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what it was like to breathe with the circle? Or share one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now: an emotion, a feeling in your body, or a thought.”*

*“I felt a rainbow feeling,
rainbow feelings.”*

– Child participant

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *all feelings are okay; our feelings can make us feel different sensations in our body; naming feelings can help us to understand them and calm them down.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; optional laptop for mindfulness: [Brain Gym Brain Breaks - Action Songs for Children - Move and Freeze - Kids Songs by The Learning Station](#); story books, *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek or *Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia; paper, tempera paint, paint brushes, containers for water; small square cards and each child's key ring; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain - moving mindfully



[Brain Gym Brain Breaks - Action Songs for Children - Move and Freeze - Kids Songs by The Learning Station](#)

Community of Kindness Mural

Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. Moving forward, facilitators decide whether or not to add to the mural weekly. It may be enough to simply bring the participants' attention to the mural as a reminder of how the group has agreed to treat each other and the group space. Children can read what is already there and facilitators can support this process.

50 minutes: story, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek or *Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: creating an image with tempera paints

20 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain - moving mindfully

Facilitator: *"Today, we are going to do a short mindfulness activity by moving our bodies up and down. This is like the mindfulness activity we did by moving our finger up and down our hand, only today, we are going to move our whole body up and down. You can stand or sit down and make your movement small or as large as is right for you. Just like we traced the path Up and Down the Mountain on our hands, we are going to do this now with our arms and bodies. We are going to move our arms up when we breathe in and down when we breathe out. Then, if you are standing, we are going to add our legs by bending our knees when we breathe in and straightening back up when we breathe out. If you are sitting, you can continue with moving your arms. Begin by standing as tall as you can be in this moment or sitting upright. Just gently tall, either in the chair or standing. Feel where your feet touch the floor and try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other and then imagine that you can send a breath all the way down to the tips of your toes. When you are ready, move your arms up when you breathe in, and bring them down when you breathe out. Breathing in your arms go up, breathing out they go down. You could start small and then experiment as you breathe in, how high up can your arms and hands go? And now we will add our knees. As you breathe in, your arms go up and your knees bend. And as you breathe out, your arms come down and your knees straighten. Breathing in up and breathing out down. Moving to the rhythm of your own breath. Finding a flow. Now taking one more breath in and one more breath out, resting for a moment, finding a still, quiet place inside, as best as you can. Be still for a moment before we come back together in our group."*

Reflection

Facilitator: *"We moved our bodies in different ways. What was it like to move that way? What do you notice in yourself right now, it could be a feeling, or something you are thinking, or something in your body."*

Option

[Brain Gym Brain Breaks - Action Songs for Children - Move and Freeze - Kids Songs by The Learning Station](#)

Facilitator: *"Today we are going to follow a video called Move and Freeze and talk about how we feel afterwards. In the video, they will show children moving and jumping. You don't have to jump if you don't want to. Move in your own way and do what is right for you and your body."*

Reflection

Facilitator: *"We moved our bodies in different ways. What was it like to move that way? What do you notice in yourself right now, it could be a feeling, or something you are thinking, or something in your body."*

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Community of Kindness Mural: If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: “Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.” Facilitator or children can read what is on the mural.



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: “What can we add this week about how we can treat each other and how we can be in our group room together? What would help you feel safe and comfortable as we talk about feelings today?” Facilitators and children hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: story, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek or *Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia

Facilitator: “Today we will be reading a story about feelings.” After the story: “What are some feelings the story talked about? What are some other things the story told us about feelings? We all have feelings that make us feel good and some feelings that make us feel not so good. Now we are going to do an activity that can help us understand our own feelings.”

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: tempera paint image

Facilitator: “Using the paint, create an image of the feelings you have and if you want to, where you have those feelings in your body. If you check inside yourself right now, what feelings might be there? You can think about feelings you had while you were at school, or when you are doing something you really like. You can make it any way you want and show any feelings you want. Find the way that is right for you.”



For groups who have read *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek

Facilitator: “Draw a heart on a paper and in that heart add feelings you have.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share their image? What can you tell us about what you created?”



Additional Reflection Questions

What feelings do you have?

Where do you feel them on your body?

Who can you talk to about your feelings?

Tell us about the colours you chose: what was it like to choose those colours?

Facilitator: “All feelings are okay. Sometimes, we can even have different feelings from someone else and that is okay. Everyone has feelings all of the time. When we can name what we are feeling and talk about them, it can make them easier to handle and help us feel better.”

CHILDREN'S GROUP

20 minutes: reflection cards and transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: "Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week's group; something you think is important to remember. It can be from the story or the image created. You decide what you want to put on the card."

Transition to Family Time



Adapt the mindful pause to reflect the participants' needs. It may be as simple as taking one breath, stretching, singing a song, etc.

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



Silent Breath: Prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: "On your mural, add kind things that you and your family do or can do to take care of feelings. It can be how you care for your own feelings and how you care for each other's feelings."

Mindful Activity: Up and Down the Mountain - moving mindfully

Facilitator: "Before we say goodbye, we are going to do a short mindfulness activity by moving our bodies up and down. You can stand or sit down and make your movement small or as large as is right for you. Just like we traced the path Up and Down the Mountain on our hands, we are going to do this now with our arms and bodies. We are going to move our arms up when we breathe in and down when we breathe out. Then, if you are standing, we are going to add our legs by bending our knees when we breathe in and straightening back up when we breathe out. If you are sitting, you can continue with moving your arms. Begin by standing as tall as you can be in this moment or sitting upright. Just gently tall, either in the chair or standing. Feel where your feet touch the floor and try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other and then imagine that you can send a breath all the way down to the tips of your toes. When you are ready, moving your arms up when you breathe in, bring them down when you breathe out. Breathing in your hands go up, breathing out they go down. You could start small and then experiment as you breathe in, how high up can your arms and hands go? And now we will add our knees. As you breathe in, your arms go up and your knees bend. And as you breathe out, your arms come down and your knees straighten. Breathing in, up and breathing out, down. Moving to the rhythm of your own breath and finding a flow. And now taking one more breath in and one more breath out and resting for a moment, finding a still, quiet place inside, as best as you can. Be still for a moment before we come back together in our group."

Reflection

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? What was it like to move that way?"

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HERE TO HELP

Week 4: Big Feelings and What to Do With Them

The effects of trauma can trigger big or unexpected feelings from fear of one's survival. Group participants learn that these are normal responses to abuse and that the body is trying to protect them, even when they are in a safe situation. Through mindful body awareness activities, arts based sensory activities, play, storytelling and discussion, group participants learn to identify the beginning signals of 'something is not okay'. Knowing these signals allows participants to determine whether those feelings and sensations are about the past, or in the present moment.



“Keep your hand and feet to yourself.”

– 11 year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *fight, flight and freeze are normal responses when the body is trying to protect itself from danger; fight, flight and freeze reactions can happen when something triggers us to sense past danger, even when we are in a safe situation; we can learn to recognize if these feelings are in response to something that has happened in the past or the present moment and learn ways to help us calm them down.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; story book, *Big Feelings Come and Go* by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection; animal images (bear walking, gazelle running, rabbit standing still); small square cards and each child's key ring; plasticine; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity



Remind participants that feeling excited, nervous or anxious about being at the group is okay and that group is a safe place where they can share whatever they might be feeling, if they choose to. Review taking a breath as one way to help feel calmer.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Mindful Walking

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. Facilitators decide whether or not to add to the mural weekly. The mural can be used to address behavioral concerns which may arise during group time.

50 minutes: story, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *Big Feelings Come and Go* by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection

The Big Feelings Story normalizes responses that children and adults have when they are very scared and feel they are in danger, either from a situation happening in the moment or from something that happened in the past. Children learn that Big Feelings come and go and that they can do something to help themselves. They learn to self-regulate by breathing and connecting to the present environment. The story brings children together and creates an opportunity for sharing what they do when they have big feelings.

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: creating the creature

The creative space is an opportunity for children to have an internal, reflective personal space which supports externalizing their own experiences of danger (or imaginary experiences of danger). This also supports participants to integrate the learning from the story. Facilitators also make a creature. Encourage participants to work as quietly as possible.

20 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Mindful Walking: Lead participants through a series of directed walking prompts. Choose a mindful walk based on the energy of the participants and the amount of time available.



For an active group of children, it may help to focus their attention by encouraging them to notice something in the space where they are walking such as a picture on the wall, that will be shared with the group at the end of the mindful walk.

Facilitator: *"Find a place in the room where you would like to begin. This will be your starting spot. When you start to move, move into the open spaces. Let's start walking. Walking normally, noticing how your feet connect with the floor and how your body is moving through the space. Continue walking for a moment, and when you are ready, change directions and go the other way. Continue walking for a moment. Now, walk a bit quicker, notice what happens when you speed up (pause), and now slow down and walk in slow motion and notice what happens."*

If the practice is continuing, facilitators choose which of the prompts below to follow.

Options

Mud/Texture Walk: *"Now we are going to transition to pretending that we are going for walk and stumble into some mud. What does it feel like to walk in mud? Imagine the mud is on the bottom of our feet. What is the texture of the mud? Is it easy or hard to walk in? What does it look like to walk in mud? And now we are going to imagine we are walking on grass. Notice how the grass feels on the bottom of your feet (pause). Grass is a nice spot for a rest. Now we are going to either sit or lie down in the grass. See if you can breathe with the grass for a moment."*

Walking Like Cats: *"We are going to begin by imagining that we are cats. If you have a cat, great! You can let that help inspire your walk! If you don't have a cat, that's totally fine. Cats are excellent explorers and love to walk around really noticing the room that they are in. When cats are exploring a space, they usually walk slow! Let's do some cat exploring, noticing how you want to walk as a cat. Do you want to get on all fours? Do you want to stay on your two feet but get a little lower with your body? What are you noticing in the room? Can you find something new that you didn't notice before you became a cat? If you want, we can do a very quiet meow. We are now going to do our final walk around. If you have a cat, you know that cats love lying in sunbeams. Let's imagine we find a nice warm sunbeam to rest in. Since it's night time we are just going to pretend that it's a sunbeam. Once you find your sunbeam, let's make one big cat stretch and either sit or lie down for just a moment in your little sunbeams."*

Reflection

Facilitator: *"We walked in different ways. What was it like to walk that way? What do you notice in yourself right now, it could be a feeling, or something you are thinking, or something in your body after?"*

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Is there anything on the mural that you are noticing, or is drawing your attention? Is there anything that would help you to feel comfortable and safe tonight as we learn about big feelings?”*

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. What could we add that will help us feel safe and comfortable when we talk about big feelings tonight?”* Facilitators and children hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: story, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *Big Feelings Come and Go* by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection

Facilitator: *“Tonight, we will be reading a story about the big feelings we can have in our bodies when we are scared or worried. These feelings can make us feel afraid and not so good. Tonight, we are going to explore these feelings and what we can do to try and feel better if we have them. We are also going to practice calming down so we can feel better.”*



While reading the story, encourage group members to try the calming techniques shared in the story.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What stood out, or was important for you in the story? Which way to calm down did you like best?”*



For Older Children/Teens

For older participants who may not find the story engaging, big feelings can be normalized through the use of animal images.

Show the group the pictures of a gazelle, a mother bear with her cub, and a rabbit.

Facilitator: *“What do you know about the gazelle.....?”* (flight)

“What do you know about mother bears.....?” (fight)

“What do you know about the rabbit.....?” (freeze)

Discuss how these are normal responses to danger, or when we might think there is danger, for animals and for people too.

Facilitator: *“What would you do if you were angry, frustrated, sad or frightened?”*

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: creating the creature

Facilitator: "Everyone has plasticine or model magic. We are going to use these to create an animal-like creature. From your imagination, you can make any kind of animal creature you like. Think about how your animal creature responds when there is danger - does it run, does it fight, does it freeze so that it is not noticed. When you are finished, you can show the group if you want to."



Encourage the children to focus on their own creative process. It may help to provide the option of sitting in another part of the room (if the space allows) for any children who would like a quieter area to work in.

Reflection

Facilitator: "Would anyone like to show their creature or tell us about their creature? What was it like to create your creature?"



Additional Reflection Questions

What does your creature do when it feels scared?

How does your creature know when it is not feeling safe?

What might your creature be thinking or feeling in its body?

What helps the creature feel safe?

Label and keep the creatures in a safe space as they will be used in next week's group.

20 minutes: reflection cards and transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: "Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week's group; something you think is important to remember. It can be from the story or the image created. You decide what you want to put on the card."

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



From this point forward, continue to use your own mindfulness or calming activity to support the transition to family time.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye**Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: *“On your kindness mural, add what you do as a family to take care of big feelings when they come up. What kind things help to deal with the big feelings?”*

Mindful Activity: Breathing Hand on Heart, Hand on Belly

Facilitator: *“Sitting as upright as you are able to in this moment, notice where your body connects with the ground and that your body is supported by the ground. You may lower or close your eyes, whichever seems right for you in this moment. Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly and just begin to notice your breath as you breathe in and as you breathe out. There is no need to change it in any way. Just one breath in and one breath out, notice the light pressure or warmth of your hand on your heart and your hand on your belly. As you breathe in and as you breathe out. Notice how your body expands as you breathe in and how it softens as you breathe out; continue, one breath in and one breath out. One breath in and one breath out. Notice again where your body connects with the ground and that your body is supported by the ground. Staying in stillness while you count to yourself one, two, three, four.”*

Option**Expanded Breathing Practice**

Facilitator: *“For this activity, we will be opening our arms outwards, and bringing them back as though we are giving ourselves a hug. You can do this standing or sitting. Do what is comfortable and feels right for you. The instructions I use are simply a guide. As we begin, standing or sitting, notice how your feet are connecting to the floor. Keep your eyes open if you are standing. Now take a moment to notice that you are breathing. There is no need to change your breath, simply notice that you are breathing in and breathing out. And when you are ready, on your next breath in, open your arms out, expanding your arms out to the side, as wide as feels right for you. And on your breath out, bring your arms in, as though you are giving yourself a hug. And breathing in, expand your arms, noticing the sensation of your arms as they move outwards. Breathing out, bringing your arms in, noticing the sensation of your arms around your shoulders. And one final time, breathing in and expanding your arms out, breathing out bringing your arms in and around your shoulders. And when you are ready, returning your arms down by your sides. Pausing for a moment. Noticing how your feet are connected to the floor. And when you are ready, bringing your attention back to the room and the group you are with.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? What was it like to move that way?”*

HERE TO HELP

Week 5: Safety, Boundaries and Resources

In this session, group participants explore through story, art making and discussion when, where and what gives them a sense of safety, and what to do if they are feeling unsafe.



“Are you okay?”

– Five year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *it is okay to talk about when we feel unsafe; we can learn ways to help us feel safe; there are people we can trust and talk to who will help us feel safe.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; creatures created in last week's group; laptop for video [Big Bird's Comfy-Cozy Nest](#); small cardboard food boxes; glue, variety of collage material; small square cards and key rings; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Mindful Awareness with Stone or Shell



Some children might feel self-conscious or awkward at the beginning of these practices and may benefit from these feelings being normalized.

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2 if it will not be added to this week.

50 minutes: stretching and breathing, video, scribble tag, creative space activity and sharing



Exploring safety through play, imagination, discussion: a trauma-informed approach

Talking about safety may be triggering for some children. Stretching, breathing and reviewing what they can do if big feelings come up supports children to stay grounded and connected in their bodies and builds resources in case big feelings come up in the group. This process allows children to externalize their experiences of what safety looks like for them, through the creatures they made in the previous group.

Stretching and Breathing: grounding and staying connected to the body

Video: [Big Bird's Comfy-Cozy Nest](#)

Game: older children's groups, Scribble Tag

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: creating a home for the creature

This activity invites children to use their imagination. There can be no right or wrong way for children to create the story and images. Our thinking brains like to be in charge, and our bodies hold knowledge and wisdom that sometimes gets overlooked. Engaging with play, story, art materials and movement can support access to the body's knowledge and help us to see things differently. It gives the thinking brain a rest, and allows the "artist" to access new information that makes sense for them.

20 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Mindful Awareness with Stone or Shell

Facilitator: *"For this practice please choose a stone or a shell from the table and hold it in your hands. You may lower or close your eyes, whichever feels right for you. Sitting as upright as you are able to be in this moment, notice where your body is supported by the ground or the chair that you are sitting on. And notice one breath in and one breath out. Begin to imagine a place where you feel safe and secure; it can be a place where you live or have lived or visited. Or it could be a place of your imagination. As you breathe in and as you breathe out, notice the comforting things you can see, the things you can hear, the things you can feel. Breathe in and send a gentle breath through your whole body, allowing any tightness in your body to soften. Imagine the warmth of the sun on your face, a warmth that is just right for you as you inhale and as you exhale. Allow the muscles of your face to soften as you continue to breathe in and breathe out. Notice the stone or shell you are holding in your hands and without looking at the shell or stone, begin to explore it with your fingertips. Notice the sharp edges and the smooth surfaces, the cracks and crevices, the spirals or ridges. As you breathe in and breathe out, notice the size of the shell or stone, the space it takes up in your hands. As you breathe in and breathe out, notice its temperature. Is it warm or cool? Is it heavy or light? As you breathe in and breathe out, begin looking at the shell or stone and notice all that you explored with your fingertips, where it is rough or smooth, its shape, size or weight. And now the shades and shadows? See and feel the place where the stone or shell connects with the surface of your skin as you continue to breathe in and breathe out. Still holding the stone or shell, begin to notice the group space. Notice where your body touches the ground or the chair, notice the people around you, notice what thoughts, feelings or sensations you are present with in this moment."*

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body?"*

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Is there anything on the mural that you are noticing, or is drawing your attention? Is there anything that would help you to feel comfortable and safe tonight as we create a home for the creature?"* Facilitator or children can read what is on the mural.

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. What can we add that will help you feel safe and comfortable in group tonight as we create a home for our creatures?"*

Facilitators and children hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: video, creative space and sharing**Stretching and Breathing**

Facilitator: "Before we start our next activity, let's do some stretching and breathing. Sitting or standing, as you breathe in stretch your arms, legs and body as big and as far as feels right for you. As you breathe out the body returns to its starting place."



Invite one child to lead a stretch, and others follow. Each child and facilitator have a turn to lead. Review what children can do if big feelings come up. At any time, facilitators can invite everyone to take a breath.

For Younger Children: [Big Bird's Comfy-Cozy Nest](#) video

Facilitator: "Today we are going to make a home for the creatures we made last week. Let's start by watching this video." After the video: "What kind of feelings did Big Bird have (sad, angry, confused, anxious, mixed feelings)? "What kinds of things helped Big Bird to feel safe?"

Creative Space Activity and Sharing

Facilitator: "Now, you are going to make a home for your creature. Using the different materials on the table, think about what your creature needs to feel safe and add that to their home." Facilitators also create a home.



It is important that there is no literal interpretation of the story by facilitators. Be curious about what is happening in the story: what did the creature do to feel safe, acknowledging the creature's resources, ex., courage, perseverance, kindness, quick thinking, stillness, etc.

Reflection

Facilitator: "Would anyone like to share or tell us about their creature's home? What was it like to make that home? What would your creature need to feel safe?"

**Additional Reflection Questions**

What was it like to choose those materials?

What would your creature do if someone was hurting it or it was scared of getting hurt?

Who would your creature let into its house?

Discussion: creating personal boundaries

Facilitator: "In your everyday life what would you do if you felt unsafe? If someone was hurting you, or going to hurt you physically? If someone was hurting your feelings? If someone was touching you in a way that was inappropriate?"

CHILDREN'S GROUP

For Older Children/Teens**Game: Scribble Tag**

Scribble tag is a variation of the chasing game but played on paper. Playing and interacting with others through this game, calls attention to the child's ideas about safety, boundaries and resources. Facilitators may choose to pair up children or invite the children to pick their own partners.

Facilitator: Invite the two children within each pairing to sit next to each other for this activity. *"Using a long sheet of paper, each of you will place your creature at the bottom two corners of the paper and create a boundary around your creature. After your creature's 'home base' is created, choose one colour marker or crayon that you will use to play scribble tag with your partner. Each pairing will pick one person to be 'it' and that person will try to tag their partner. Using your chosen marking tool, both players will start by positioning yourselves at your own home base and only when the facilitators give you the signal to go, begin 'racing' around the paper without lifting your marker or crayon (creating scribbles). The person who is 'it' can tag their partner by gently tapping on the other person's marking tool with their own. If the person trying not to be tagged, scribbles their way back to their home base without getting tagged, the person who is 'it' must respect their partner's safe space and won't be able to tag them while they are there."* Play for three rounds and then switch roles.

Reflection

Facilitator: *"What was it like to play scribble tag? What were the different thoughts and feelings that you noticed while playing the game?"*

Creative Space Activity and Sharing

Facilitator: *"Today we are going to make a home for the creatures we made last week. A home that is safe and comfortable for our creatures. You can use the materials on the table to create your creature's home. If you like, you can also create a story or comic about your creature's safe place."*



It is important that there is no literal interpretation of the story or home created. Be curious about what is happening and how the creature created safety. Acknowledging the creature's resources, ex., courage, perseverance, kindness, quick thinking, stillness, etc.

**Create a List of Safety Words**

This can be done individually or as a group; children share if they want to.

Reflection

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share or tell us about their creature's home (or story or word list)? What was it like to make that home? What was it like to choose those materials or create that story? What would your creature need to feel safe? What would your creature do if someone was hurting it or it was scared of getting hurt? Who would your creature let into its house?"*



What does your creature do when it feels scared? How does your creature know when it is not feeling safe? What might your creature be thinking or feeling in its body? What helps the creature feel safe?

Discussion: Creating Personal Boundaries

Facilitator: *"In your everyday life what would you do if you felt unsafe? If someone was hurting you, or going to hurt you physically? If someone was hurting your feelings? If someone was touching you in a way that was inappropriate?"*

The creatures stay this week as they will be used for next week's Family Kindness mural.

20 minutes: reflection cards and transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: *“Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week’s group; something you think is important to remember. It can be from the story or the image created. You decide what you want to put on the card.”*

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: *“Before we go to be with our family, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”*

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye**Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: *“What did you find out today that you could add to the mural? What kind things help you and your family stay strong through the storms of life? What kind things keep you together?”*

Mindful Activity: Stretching with the Breath

Facilitator: *“With this mindfulness activity, we are going to be stretching our arms and legs, and you can do this either sitting or standing, whatever feels right and comfortable for you. Take a breath in and a long slow breath out, and as you breathe in, stretch your arms, legs and body as big and as far as feels right for you, and now, as you breathe out bring your body back to standing, to its starting place. And again, take a breath in and a long slow breath out, and as you breathe in stretch your arms, legs and body as big as feels right for you, and as you breathe out bring your body back to its starting place; and one last time, take a breath in and a long slow breath out, and as you breathe in stretch your arms, legs and body as big as feels right, and as you breathe out bring your body back to its starting place. And now rest for a moment, noticing how you feel in your body.”*

Option

**Repeat the mindfulness from the beginning of the group:
Mindful Awareness with Stone or Shell**

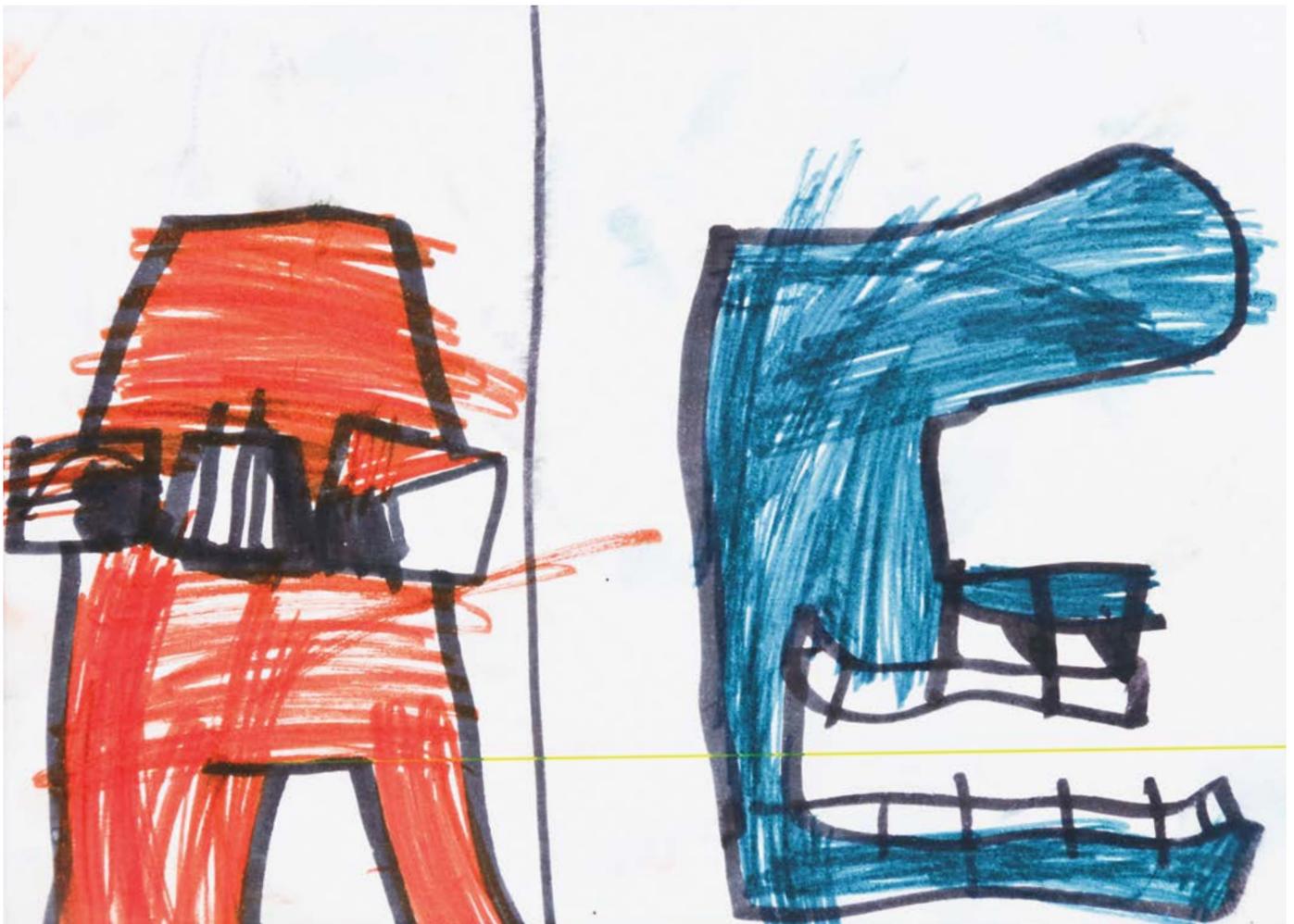
Reflection

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? What was it like to move that way?”*

HERE TO HELP

Week 6: Violence and Abuse - The Impact of the Storm and the Story of Resource

In this session, group participants explore the effects of violence and abuse through story, movement, sound, making a feeling jar and discussion; what they did, or would do if “a storm” happened in their home. Recognizing they are not responsible for the abuse is an important part of this session.



“It’s okay if you’re scared.”

– Five year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *children are not responsible for the fighting and abuse that happened in their family or home; it is normal for some children to have a lot of different feelings about what happened in their home (confused, angry at both parents, still love the abusive person, worried they may be like the abusive person, wanting their family back together); it is important to understand what we have inside us that helps us when things are difficult, our internal resources; abuse in families happens when one person tries to control another person (verbal abuse and/or emotional abuse and/or physical abuse).*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; creatures created in Week 3; glitter jar items: plastic jars, water, glitter, glue; model magic, paper, markers, etc.; small square cards and each child's key ring; Family Kindness mural; participants creatures; story book, *The Children's Star* by Lisa Sura-Liddell and Angelique Jenney.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Glitter Jars

Addressing the storm, and the effects of the storm through movement story and discussion. This exercise supports self-awareness through movement. Self-regulation is supported through expanding and tapering off movement.



Tonight's topic uses the metaphor of a storm to discuss the topic of domestic violence in families. The glitter jar activity begins the process by building resources to manage feelings that may come up. When there are big storms sometimes big feelings get shaken up. The glitter jar is another way to help those big feelings calm down.

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2 if it will not be added to this week.

50 minutes: story, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *The Children's Star* by Lisa Sura-Liddell and Angelique Jenney

Introducing the children to a conversation about the storms of life.

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: Using a variety of art materials to respond to the conversation about storms.

15 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Glitter Jars

Facilitator: *"Many people feel strange or awkward when they try new activities. These exercises might help you with big feelings. Breathing helps to get oxygen to your brain and through your whole body. Breathing helps us to slow down and think when things feel out of control. There is no 'perfect way' to do this. Just try your best and notice what you feel at the end of it. Tonight, we are going to make a glitter jar and then notice what happens when it gets shaken up. We are going to use our breath and watch as the sparkles fall to the bottom of the jar."*



Fill the jar half way with warm water; add sparkles; fill the jar with clear glue; shake the jar to mix everything. Glue the edges of the lid before closing.

Facilitator: *"Let's sit comfortably on our chairs. We are going to shake the jar and watch as the sparkles float and settle to the bottom. You can keep the jar in your hand or put it on the table. When you are ready, shake the jar and watch as the sparkles float. Notice how the sparkles float and slowly settle to the bottom of the jar. Let your body rest here as you watch the sparkles float and settle. If you want to, you can shake the jar again as we quietly watch the sparkles."*

Facilitator: *"What was it like to watch the sparkles float and settle to the bottom of the jar? What did you notice about the sparkles? Did you notice anything inside you?"*

Facilitator: As a group: *"Let's stand up and see if we can do the same thing with our bodies: it could just be your hands and fingers fluttering, or one arm or leg, or it could be the whole body. Imagine all those inside sparkles settling as you stand still and breathe in and out letting everything settle right down to the bottom of your feet, like the sparkles on the bottom of the jar. Feeling your feet on the ground. What did you notice in your body after moving like the sparkles?"*

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable tonight as we talk about storms that happen in families?"*

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. What can we add this week about how we can treat each other and how we can be in our group room? Is there anything on the mural that would help you to feel safe and calm in the group today?"*

Facilitators and children hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: story, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *The Children's Star* by Lisa Sura-Liddell and Angelique Jenney

Read the story to the children. Before moving to the creative space activity ask the children what they noticed in the story or if there is anything they would like to share about the story. This is a brief discussion to support the transition to the creative space activity.

Creative Space Activity and Sharing

The following discussion uses the metaphor of a storm to support a conversation about children's exposure to domestic violence. With the use of model magic, markers, paper, etc., children are given the opportunity to answer for their creature, questions related to the experience of living through domestic violence or "the storm". The children answer for the creature in whatever way is right and comfortable for them. It does not have to be literal, it may simply be colours, shapes, etc. Children can also have a conversation with their creature as with a puppet. Facilitators use their creature to support the discussion. Children choose whether or not to share their answers or images created.



Go slow; stay in the imagination; give children a chance to respond; allow the conversation to flow based on children's responses.

Facilitator: "Just like in the story, everyone is in this group because they had fighting in their home. Fighting in our home can feel like a storm. We know when there is a storm in the forest, there might have been lots of rain and wind and maybe even thunder." After each of the following questions, give children a minute to create their response using the model magic or paper and markers; provide the option for them to share if they want.

- **Facilitator:** "How did your creature feel during the storm?" (pause) "Would anyone like to share?" (pause)
- **Facilitator:** "What did it do? How did it stay safe?" (pause) "Would anyone like to share?" (pause)
- **Facilitator:** "Now that the storm is over what is that like for your creature? What can it do now that it couldn't do before?" (pause) "Would anyone like to share?"

Facilitator: "Before we finish, is there anything else you or your creature would like to say?" (pause)

Facilitator: "My creature would like to say that little creatures are not responsible for the storm and they are not responsible for keeping adult creatures safe."



Additional Reflection Questions for the Older/Teen Group:

In your everyday life there might be storms. How would you know if you were unsafe?

What would be happening outside of you?

What would be happening inside of you?

What are the things you could you do?

20 minutes: reflection cards and transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: "Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week's group; something you think is important to remember. It can be from the creature or an image you created. You decide what you want to put on the card."

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: *“Before we go to be with our family, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”*

The creatures and their homes join the children in family time.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: *“What did you find out today that you could add to the mural? What kind things help you and your family stay strong through the storms of life? What kind things keep you together?”*



Facilitators can invite participants to place their creature on the mural where it would feel safe and cozy.

Mindful Activity: Imaginary Ball

Children and adults stand in a big circle. The facilitator is going to pass around an imaginary ball, placing it carefully in the hands of the person beside them. Each child passes the imaginary ball to the next person until everyone has had a chance to receive and pass it on. On the second time around, the imaginary ball can change size and weight or stay the same from person to person. On the third or fourth time around the imaginary ball could change into: a volley ball, basketball, tennis ball, soccer ball, etc. and be passed spontaneously to a person across the circle. A facilitator ends the activity by “disappearing” the imaginary ball.

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body?”*

Option

Glitter Jar Mindfulness

Facilitator: *“We are going to shake the jar and watch as the sparkles float and settle to the bottom. You can keep the jar in your hand or put it on the table. Take a moment now, to let your body rest on the chair as best as you can. When you are ready, shake the jar and watch as the sparkles float. Notice how the sparkles float and slowly settle to the bottom of the jar. Let your body rest here as you watch the sparkles float and settle. If you want to, you can shake the jar again as we quietly watch the sparkles. Let’s stand up and see if we can do the same thing with our bodies: it could just be your hands and fingers fluttering, or one arm or leg, or it could be the whole body. Imagine all those inside sparkles settling as you stand still and breathe in and out letting everything settle right down to the bottom of your feet, like the sparkles on the bottom of the jar. Feeling your feet on the ground.”*

Reflection

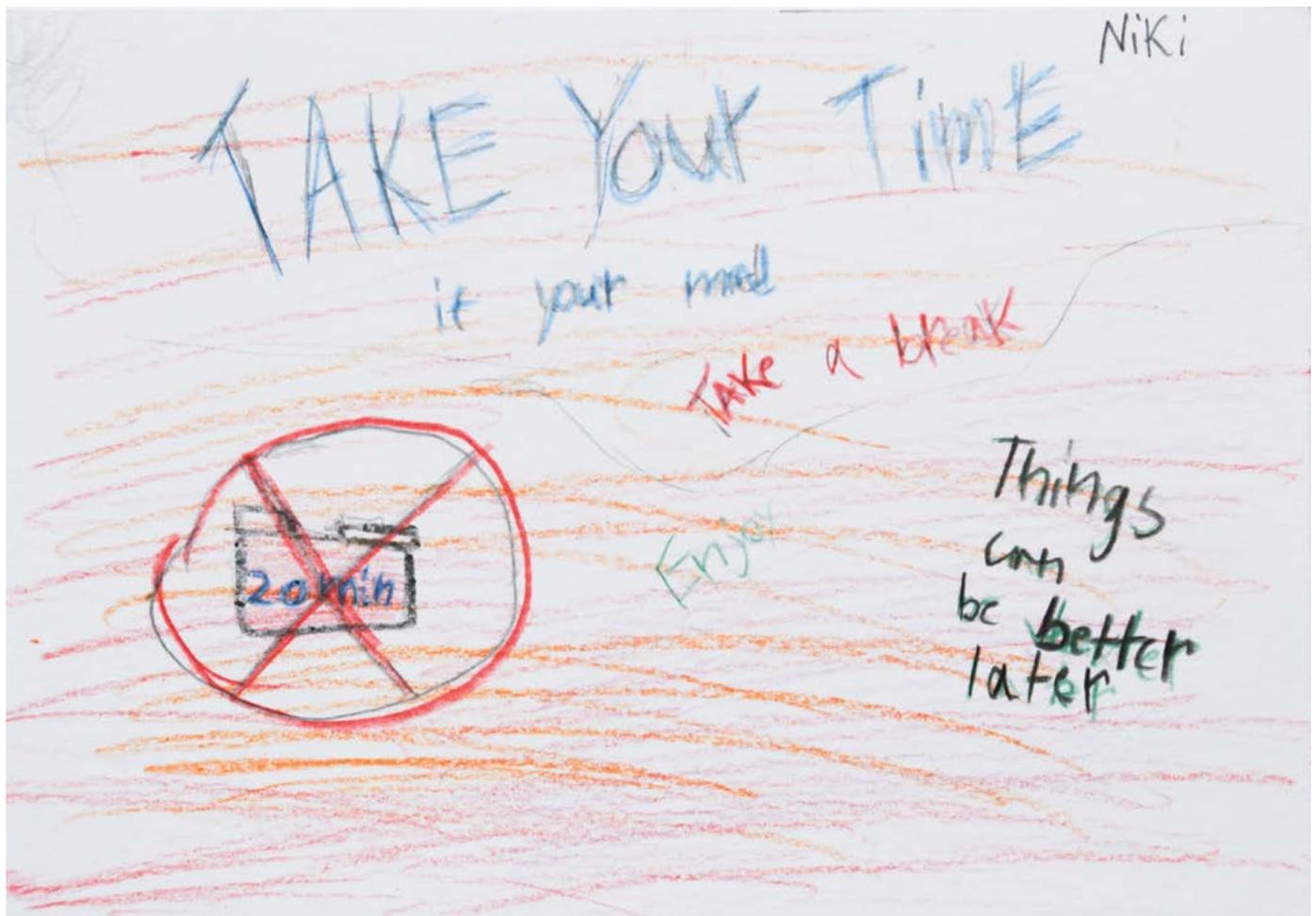
Facilitator: *“What did you notice in your body after moving like the sparkles?”*



HERE TO HELP

Week 7: Understanding Anger - Angry Feelings vs. Actions

This group session refers back to the “Big Feelings” story in Week 3 and normalizes “angry”. The session supports participants to make the distinction between feeling angry and acting it out in ways that hurt themselves or others. Through puppets, story and discussion participants learn they can talk to a trusted adult about this “big feeling” and understand the signals in the body which helps to support self-regulation. Through mindful body awareness practices, participants learn skills to support self-awareness.



“Stop and cry if you need. Take your time.”

– Nine year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *anger is a normal feeling that all people experience; there are healthy ways of dealing with and expressing anger that do not involve hurting yourself or others; there are tools we can use to help us manage our angry feelings.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; story books, *The Anger Inside* by Michelle Clayton or *A Little Spot's Anger Shield* by Diane Alber; paper bags, markers, glue, a variety of collage materials; small square cards and each child's key ring; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Energy, Breath, Release parts 1 and 2

Community of Kindness Mural: If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

50 minutes: story, creative space and sharing

Story: *The Anger Inside* by Michelle Clayton



For older children, the story book, *A Little Spot's Anger Shield* by Diane Alber

Creative Space Activity: Puppets

15 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Energy, Breath, Release parts 1 and 2



Remind participants it is okay to stop if they feel uncomfortable and that it may help to look around to see the space and people they are with. Encourage them to rejoin when they are ready, as breathing can help to deal with big feelings.

Facilitator: “Before we begin, remember, noticing is the important part of our mindfulness activities. When we experience anxiety, irritation or anger, breathing and noticing these feelings for a short time when we are in a safe place, helps us to build our ability to be okay with these uncomfortable feelings. Pausing and breathing helps us to understand whether the big feelings of fighting, running away or being invisible are about what is happening now in the present moment or about something that happened before, in the past.”

Part 1

Facilitator: “Stand, sit or lie down with your arms relaxed and soft by your sides. Notice how your feet or body connect with the ground. Take a breath in and out, noticing where your feet or body connect with the ground (repeat two or more times). On the next breath squeeze your whole body as tight as you can and as you breathe out let your whole body and hands soften, as if they are floating in warm water. And again, as you breathe in, squeeze your whole body as tight as you can and as you breathe out let your whole body and hands soften as if they are floating in warm water (repeat several more times). Send a breath through your whole body, softening your whole body, letting the floor or chair hold your body.”



Part 2

Facilitator: “Spread the fingers of one hand and with the index finger of the other hand trace the spread fingers starting with your thumb breathing in as you trace up the thumb breathing out as you trace down the thumb, continue to the index finger breathing in as you trace up breathing out as you trace down, then middle finger, ring finger, little finger and return, ring finger, middle finger, index finger, thumb, (as many times as the group can sustain).”

Facilitator: “What are you aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, thought, or body sensation?”



Additional Reflection Questions

Did you notice a difference between these two exercises? What did you notice?

How did it feel to tighten and squeeze?

What did you notice after you softened?

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable in our group tonight as we talk about the feeling of anger?”*

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. What can we add that will help you feel safe and comfortable in group tonight as we learn about the feeling of anger?”*

Facilitators and children hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: story, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *The Anger Inside* by Michelle Clayton or *A Little Spot’s Anger Shield* by Diane Alber

Facilitator: *“Tonight, we will be learning about the feeling of anger. Everyone gets angry and that is okay. All of our feelings are okay, and that includes the feeling of anger. It is important that we let people know we are angry in a safe way, so that we don’t hurt ourselves or other people. We can do this when we know and understand the signals of anger in our body; it can help us to deal with the big feeling of anger. Let’s read a story to help us understand anger. After the story: What was important from the story? What does it feel like inside your body when angry feelings come up? What are some things you do to help you calm your angry feelings?”*

Creative Space Activity: Puppets – a kind friend puppet and an anger puppet



The goal is for the anger puppet to show where it feels anger in its body, not to demonstrate how it behaves when angry.

Facilitator: *“Tonight, we are going to make a kind friend puppet and an anger puppet to help us understand the big feeling of anger. Using the paper bags and other materials, make a kind friend puppet, and an anger puppet. The anger puppet is not acting angry, but showing where it feels anger in its body so it can understand what is happening when it gets angry. When you are finished, the facilitators will put on a puppet show.”*



Older children can create the conversation as a comic strip with words and images.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Facilitators model the following dialogue with their puppets:

- **Kind Friend Creature:** *"Anger creature, when do you get really frustrated or angry?"*
- **Anger Creature:** *"I get really frustrated and angry when my friends won't play with me or when I can't get my picture the way I want it."*
- **Kind Friend Creature:** *"Where in your body do you feel your anger?"*
- **Anger Creature:** *"I feel it in my stomach. My stomach gets hot, my heart beats really fast and I want to cry and yell."*
- **Kind Friend Creature:** *"That sounds really sad and scary, like the story we read about the dragon that was lost and breathing fire. I am glad you told me. Everybody gets angry sometimes, but acting out, breathing fire like the dragon sometimes makes things worse for everybody. There are some things we could try to calm down."*

Ask the children for suggestions and invite all the anger puppets to try: pushing your hands together as if you are squishing a ball, breath in and let go, breathe in and a long breath out as though you are blowing bubbles, and wiggle your toes.

Invite the Children to Share Their Puppets

Facilitator: *"Where does the puppet feel anger? What helps the puppet to calm down and feel better? What makes you feel better?"*

20 minutes: reflection cards and transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: *"Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week's group; something you think is important to remember. It can be from the story or the image created. You decide what you want to put on the card."*

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: *"Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."*

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: *"What did you find out today that you could add to the mural? Write or draw what can help you when you are angry."*

Mindful Activity: Energy, Breath, Release

Facilitator: *"Stand, sit or lie down with your arms relaxed and soft by your sides. Notice how your feet or body connect with the ground. Take a breath in and out, noticing where your feet or body connect with the ground (repeat two or more times). On the next breath squeeze your whole body as tight as you can and as you breathe out let your whole body and hands soften, as if they are floating in warm water. And again, as you breathe in, squeeze your whole body as tight as you can and as you breathe out let your whole body and hands soften as if they are floating in warm water (repeat several more times). Send a breath through your whole body, softening your whole body, letting the floor or chair hold your body."*

Reflection

Facilitator: *"As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? How did it feel to squeeze and release?"*



HERE TO HELP

Week 8: Understanding Worry

Uncertainty around what may come next is a common experience for adults and children who have been exposed to domestic violence. Worry is a natural emotion and signals that we are unsure of what to expect or what may happen in the future. Through drawing, breathing activities, story and discussion, children will be supported in exploring the experience of worry. Through recognizing what worry feels like and sounds like to them, children have an opportunity to recognize the things that help them deal with and manage the worries they have.



“I hope you feel better.”

– Seven year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *worry is a normal feeling that all people experience; sharing our worries with someone we trust can help us feel better; there are things we can do to help us manage the feeling of worry.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; story books, *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival or *How Big Are Your Worries Little Bear?* by Jayneen Sanders; paper, oil pastels, markers, paint, water colour pencils; small square cards and each child's key ring; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Play-Doh meditation

Option

Mind Bubbles: Sit with your spine straight and your body relaxed. As best as you can, let your body relax as you breathe in and as you breathe out. Imagine you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and blow out gently as though you were blowing a bubble through the wand. Now notice if there is anything you are worried about. Imagine what it looks like. When you are ready, breathe in again and when you breathe out, blow your worry through your bubble wand. Imagine, as the worry floats in the bubble, the bubble pops and disappears. Breathe in again and breathe out; blowing your worry through the bubble wand. Imagining as the worry floats in the bubble, the bubble pops and disappears. Keep breathing in and out a few more times, blowing out worries and letting them float pop and disappear.

Community of Kindness Mural: If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

50 minutes: story, creative space and sharing

Story: *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival

Option

Story: *How Big Are Your Worries Little Bear?* by Jayneen Sanders

Creative Space Activity: Scribble Art

15 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Play-Doh

Invite participants to choose a colour of Play-Doh that they are drawn to. Have them place the unopened container in front of them and begin the mindfulness activity.

Facilitator: *"Sitting comfortably, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Take a deep breath in from your nose, feeling your lungs and belly fill with air and exhale through your mouth. Repeat two more times. Now, pick up your chosen Play-Doh and open the container. Take the Play-Doh in your hands and just begin to notice it. Notice the texture and how it feels when you squeeze it. Notice the temperature, is it warm or cold? Notice if it has a smell. Notice if it is heavy or light in your hands. Take another deep breath in and now, begin to mold or shape the Play-Doh into a shape or form that shows how worry feels. Continue to breath in and out, trying not to change your breath, simply breathing as you work with the Play-Doh. Taking a few more moments to mold the dough."*

Allow participants up to one or two minutes to work on their Play-Doh forms.

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share how worry feels to them or what you notice in your body?"*

After sharing, invite the participants to roll their Play-Doh worries back into a "neutral" ball, place it back into the container and close the lid.

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable in our group tonight as we learn about the feeling of worry?"*

Facilitator: *"What can we add this week about how to feel safe and calm in the group today as we learn about the feeling of worry?"*

Facilitators and children hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: story, creative space and sharing

Story: *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival or *How Big Are Your Worries Little Bear?* by Jayneen Sanders

Facilitator: “Today we are going to read a story about worries.” After the story: “How did Ruby care for her worry? What happened when she did that? (It got smaller.) Everyone has worries. Sometimes worries can be small or they can be big and they can affect us in different ways, just like other feelings we have talked about. It’s important to share your worries so that you are not carrying them alone. Sometimes just talking about our worries can make us feel better.”

Creative Space Activity: Scribble Art

Secure the corners with masking tape so the paper does not move around.

Facilitator: “Before we start, choose one or two colours of oil pastels. Stand or sit in front of your paper, with one oil pastel in each hand. Close your eyes if you like. Image the energy of a small-medium sized worry and when you are ready, scribble on the paper with your oil pastels, imagining the worry. You can take up as much space on the paper as you need to.” Facilitators provide 30 – 45 seconds. “Stop scribbling and take a moment to look at your scribble drawing and begin to notice the spaces. Taking water colour pencils or paint, or markers, start colouring in the spaces of your scribble art.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share their image? What is it like to look at your drawing? If your drawing could talk to you, what it would it say?”

**Additional Reflection Questions**

What was it like to fill in the spaces?

Does your drawing have a title?

When you look at your drawing, what do you notice in your body?

Did you learn anything from making this scribble drawing that can help you with worries?

20 minutes: reflection cards and transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week’s group; something you think is important to remember. It can be from the story or the image created. You decide what you want to put on the card.”

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our family, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”

CHILDREN'S GROUP

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: *“On your kindness mural, add a kind thing that helps you when you are worried. Add something you learned today that can help when you are worried.”*

Mindful Activity: Waterfall of Compassion

Facilitator: *“Standing with your feet slightly apart. Noticing where your feet connect with the ground. Knees softened and your body as upright as possible. If you would like to, imagine that you are in a warm rainforest and that you are standing near a waterfall of love and compassion. Imagine that as you bring your arms up to chest level you could open a space in that waterfall as your arms and hands open to the side at chest level. And then allow your elbows to soften and your arms and hands to cross slightly in front of your body. As you inhale, opening a space in the waterfall, as you exhale, softening. Repeat a few more times. Allowing your arms to come to your sides. As you inhale, bringing the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, palms facing the ground up to shoulder height and then turning upward. Gathering in love and compassion from the waterfall and allowing that love and compassion to flow down the back of your body. Repeat, bringing the energy of the waterfall up from the ground and then with fingertips touching and palms facing down. Allowing love and compassion to flow down the front of the body. Repeat again, bringing the energy of the waterfall up from the ground and then allowing love and compassion to flow down the centre of your body. Hands coming to rest on your belly or your heart or one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. When you are ready, bring your attention back to the room and those around you.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What do you notice in yourself: a feeling, thought or sensation in your body?”*

 If you are worriedly
BIRD WATCHING →



HERE TO HELP

Week 9: Family Changes: Bridging Loss and Grief to Hopes and Dreams

The intention of this group session is to acknowledge the changes that have taken place in the family, bring the family together giving both mothers/gender diverse parents and their children a place to express their experience of the changes, through mindful and creative practices. These exercises support healthy attachment between them.



“Hold onto each other.”

– Eight year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *many families have gone through big and small changes; changes can be neutral, positive or negative or both; it is common for family members to have different thoughts, feelings and reactions about the changes that have happened.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; story books, *Help Your Dragon Deal with Change* by Steve Herman, *Perfect Square* by Michael Hall or *Little Tree* by Loren Long; small square cards and each child's key ring; paper 5 x 7 and regular size, glue, variety of collage materials; paints, pastels, optional – musical instruments such as drums, shakers, tambourines, rain sticks, triangles, bells, chimes, etc.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Happy Hum

Community of Kindness Mural: If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

50 minutes: story, creative space and sharing

Story: *Help Your Dragon Deal with Change* by Steve Herman



Story: *Perfect Square* by Michael Hall or *Little Tree* by Loren Long

Creative Space Activity: creating a collage about change



Provide a variety of creative collage materials, as well as paints, pastels and markers, to provide options for participants to choose their own way of engaging in the activity.

20 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Happy Hum: just one note rather than a melody...one note sustains the out breath.



Remind participants it is normal to feel uncomfortable when trying something new. Encourage them to try their best and join when they are ready.

Facilitator: *“Sit with your spine straight and your body relaxed. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes and close your lips. Breathe in deeply and as you breathe out find a note to hummmmmmmmm. Breathe in and hum as you breathe out. If you would like to, place your hands on your chest to notice the vibration of your humming or how your chest moves as you breathe in, and then hum. Repeat a few more times. Breathe in and let your humming send calm to your heart. Gradually let your humming get quieter and softer. As we end, take three soft, full breaths.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What was it like to hum? What was it like to hear the other group members hum? What are you aware of yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body.”*

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable in our group tonight as we explore the changes that happened in our families?”*

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how to feel safe and calm in the group today as we explore the changes that happened in our families?”*

Facilitators and children hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: story, creative space and sharing

Facilitator: *“Today we will be talking about family changes and how sometimes changes could be really big or really small and how sometimes we like those changes and sometimes we don't like those changes.”*



The older children's group may go directly to the creative process if a story is not being read.

Story: *Help Your Dragon Deal with Change* by Steve Herman

Facilitator: “How was the dragon feeling when there were changes? What did it feel in its body? What helped the dragon feel better?”

Options

Perfect Square by Michael Hall

Facilitator: “How might the square have been feeling after all the changes it had?” Normalize there may have been different feelings it had: confused, relieved, excited, sad, etc. “Just like the changing square in the story, there have been changes in your family. All feelings are okay and people in families can have different feelings from each other and that is okay.”

Little Tree by Loren Long

Facilitator: “Why do you think Little Tree held on to the leaves? How do you think Little Tree was feeling? Normalize there may have been different feelings it had: confused, relieved, excited, sad, etc. “Just like the seasons were changing in the story of Little Tree, there have been changes in your family.”

Creative Space Activity: creating a collage about change

Facilitator: “Thinking about what change is like for you, in your family, at school or with friends. You might think about what the challenges are, the surprises, your hopes and dreams, what you like about the way your family is now. Choose art supplies that appeal to you to create a collage. You can use a 5 x 7 card or 8.5 x 11 piece of paper. There is no right or wrong way to create this collage.”



Encourage the children to focus on their own creative process. It may help to provide the option of sitting in another part of the room (if the space allows for it) for any children who would like a quieter area to work in.

Reflection

Facilitator: “What was it like to create your collage with these materials? What do you like about the way your family is now?”



Additional Reflection Questions

Does your collage have a title?

Does your collage have a message for you?

Is there anything that you discovered in this process that can support you with the changes in your family, school, work, friends?

CHILDREN'S GROUP

20 minutes: reflection cards and transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week’s group; something you think is important to remember. It can be from the story or the image created. You decide what you want to put on the card.”

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our family, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: “What are some of the things you like or look forward to, the way your family is now?”

Mindful Activity: Happy Hum

Facilitator: “Sit with your spine straight and your body relaxed. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes and close your lips. Breathe in deeply and as you breathe out find a note to hummmmmmm. Breathe in and hum as you breathe out. If you would like to, place your hands on your chest to notice the vibration of your humming or how your chest moves as you breathe in, and then hum. Repeat a few more times. Breathe in and let your humming send calm to your heart. Gradually let your humming get quieter and softer. As we end, take three soft, full breaths.”

Option

Group Rhythm (musical instruments are optional if available)

Facilitator: “For this activity, each person creates a simple sound that they can repeat. Choose something simple that you will be able to keep going. One person will begin, then the person sitting next to them will add their sound, and we will continue until everyone has joined in. We will end by one person stopping, then the person next to them will stop until everyone has stopped making their sound.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? What was it like to make music that way?”

*“Now my siblings talk now.
They talk more to each other.
It’s easier to talk about
how you feel.”*

– Child participant

HERE TO HELP

Week 10: Looking Back, Looking Forward

In this session participants reflect on what they have learned, and/or what has changed for them over the group sessions.



“Be safe. Be kind. Be respectful. Be nice. Keep your hands to yourself.”

– Eight year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *it is okay to feel sad that the group is ending; we can recognize the things we liked and learned about our time together and think of how to carry this with us after the group has ended.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; option-laptop for games [Inside Out: Guessing the Feelings Game](#) or Jeopardy Game Find Jeopardy Games About feelings (jeopardylabs.com); option, story books, *I'm Happy-Sad Today* by Lory Britain or *A Little Spot Emotion Coach* by Diane Alber; well-being kit items: small pencil case or make up bag, small flashlight, whistle (for older children only), one candy, one fuzzy, stress ball, packet of hot chocolate, bus fare (for older children), a bandaid, key chain with the small cards and the Kids Help Phone card; three 5 x 7 rectangular cards per participant; variety of art materials: markers, paint, collage items, etc.; small square cards and each child's key ring; musical instruments; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Group Rhythm

Community of Kindness Mural: If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

50 minutes: game, well-being kit, creative space activity and sharing

Game: Feelings Game

Story: *I'm Happy-Sad Today* by Lory Britain

Well-being Kit: assembling a kit to support feelings and safety planning



Story: *I'm Happy-Sad Today* by Lory Britain or *A Little Spot Emotion Coach* by Diane Alber

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: Three Cards



Provide a variety of creative collage materials, as well as paints, pastels and markers, to provide options for participants to choose their own way of creating the cards.

20 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection cards go home with the children this week.

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Group Rhythm

This activity can be implemented with or without musical instruments. A facilitator begins with a simple beat that participants can follow. Next, one participant joins in by making their sound, using the same beat as the facilitator, then the person next to that participant adds their sound using the same beat - this continues until all participants have added their sound to the group rhythm. To end the group rhythm, the facilitator stops, then each participant stops, one by one. To continue the activity, in the second round, the facilitator starts with a simple beat, then the participants join whenever they are ready, using the same beat for their sound. For a final round, the facilitator begins and everyone joins in with their own beat or rhythm.



It is important the activity starts in silence as this encourages participants to listen to the beat and to each other's sound.

Reflection

Facilitator: "What was it like to make your sound or play your instrument? What was it like to listen to the sounds around you? What are you aware of yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body?"

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: "Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable in our group tonight as we talk about what we have learned in our time together?"

Facilitator: "Is there anything new to add this week about how to feel safe and calm in the group today?"

Facilitators and children hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: game, well-being kit, creative space activity and sharing**Game**

Facilitator: “During the program, we talked about feelings and that all feelings are okay. We also learned that we can have more than one feeling at a time. Let’s play this game to see what we remember about feelings.”

Younger Age Groups**Inside Out:** [Inside Out: Guessing the Feelings](#)

Pause the video after each emotion and ask: happy feeling, what makes you feel happy; sad feeling, what helps you when you feel sad?; anger feeling, How do you know when you are angry? What helps you to calm down?; scared feeling, what can you do when you are scared? What helps you feel better?

Option

Facilitators may choose to read the story *I’m Happy-Sad Today* by Lory Britain

Facilitator: “What feelings did the book show? What was important about Little Spot’s feelings? What did Scribble Spot do to help Little Spot with its feelings?”

What can you do when you have upset feelings?

All feelings are okay and people in families can have different feelings from each other and that is okay.”

Older Age Groups

Jeopardy Game: Find Jeopardy Games About feelings (jeopardylabs.com)

This site offers many options that can be adapted to fit your needs. Choose a version that best meets your participants’ age and developmental level.

Option

Facilitators may choose to read the story *A Little Spot Emotion Coach* by Diane Alber

Facilitator: “What feelings did the book show? What was important about Little Spot’s feelings? What did Scribble Spot do to help Little Spot with its feelings?”

What can you do when you have upset feelings?

All feelings are okay and people in families can have different feelings from each other and that is okay.”

Well-being Kit

Group participants assemble their well-being kit, choosing some or all of the items available. Discuss how the different items may help with taking care of feelings and feeling safe.

Facilitator: “We are going to make a wellness kit with some things that can help us to feel safe and help us take care of our feelings. How can these items help us to take care of our feelings.” Review each item: “Who can you talk to about your feelings? What can you do if you feel unsafe?”

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: Three Cards

Facilitator: "Today we will be looking back at our time together. For our art activity tonight, everyone will create three cards. I'll tell you what to add to each card. When we have finished making all three cards, we will be able to share them with the others in the group."

On the first card, draw or write what was your favourite thing from the group.

On the second card, draw or write what you learned from the group that will help you.

On the third card, write or draw what you would tell other children about the program."

Reflection

Facilitator: "Would anyone like to share their cards? What was your favourite thing from the group? What did you learn from the group? What would you tell other children about this group?"

20 minutes: reflection cards and transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: "Using one or two of the small, square cards, draw or write what you would like to remember from this week's group; something you think is important to remember. It can be from the story or the image created. You decide what you want to put on the card."

The reflection cards go home with the children this week. They can be added to the Well-being Kit as another tool for taking care of feelings and feeling safe.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: "What have you learned about kindness during your time in the group?"



Additional Reflection Questions

What stands out to you on your Family Kindness mural?

What was it like to make this mural together?

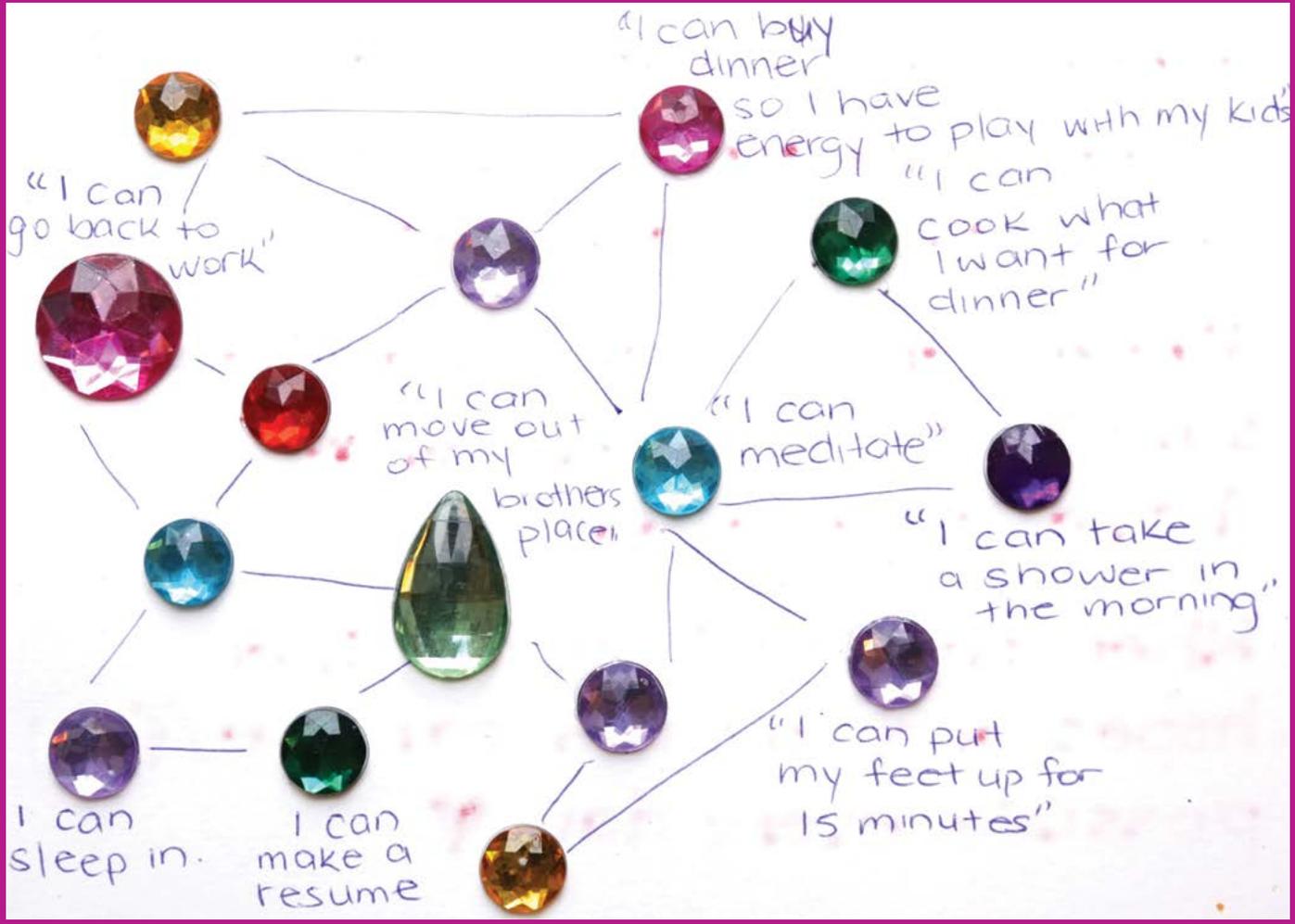
Was there anything you learned about each other from making the mural together?

Mindful Activity: Group Rhythm

This activity can be implemented with or without musical instruments. A facilitator begins with a simple beat that participants can follow. Next, one participant joins in by making their sound, using the same beat as the facilitator, then the person next to that participant adds their sound using the same beat. This continues until all participants have added their sound to the group rhythm. To end the group rhythm, the facilitator stops, then each participant stops, one by one.

Reflection

Facilitator: "What was it like to make your sound or play your instrument? What was it like to listen to the sounds around you?"



HERE TO HELP

Week 11: Celebrating Our Time Together

In this closing group families take time to appreciate and celebrate their journey through the program.



“Be happy. Be strong. Be loved. Have a smile on your face.”

– 11 year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: endings can bring up mixed feelings: sad that the group is ending and proud of the accomplishments made during the program; saying goodbye brings the opportunity to wish everyone congratulations for their hard work during the program; the group ending provides an opportunity to do new things.

Materials needed: story book, *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst, 5 x 7 cards, markers, crayons, etc.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, final countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: a favourite mindfulness activity from the program

Community of Kindness Mural: reflecting on what it means to be kind

50 minutes: story and movement, creative space activity and sharing

Story and Movement: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

Creative Space Activity and Sharing: Kindness Card

50 minutes: celebration, closing mindfulness

Facilitators and families gather to honour participants' journey in the program.

At the end of this final session, each family takes home their Family Kindness Mural along with their certificates and the parents' journals.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: a favourite mindfulness from the program

Reflection

Facilitator: *"What are you aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body."*

Community of Kindness Mural

Children can read what is on the mural, with facilitators supporting this process.

Facilitator: *"What stands out for you on the mural? What does it mean to be kind?"*

50 minutes: story and movement, creative space activity and sharing

Story: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

After reading the story, *The Invisible String*, have the children engage in a movement activity which reflects how the invisible string keeps them connected even when they are not together. Facilitators take part in this as well. This can be a dance movement or a very small movement; each participant chooses what is right for them. After each person has made a movement, the movement is repeated more quickly, creating a flow, almost like a "wave" created in sports stadiums. Adapt this activity to fit the participants in your group.

Facilitator: *"Today we will be celebrating our time together. Through a movement, we will share with each other how the invisible string keeps us connected, even when we don't see each other. If your string could dance or move, what would it look like? We are going to go around the circle and each person will have an opportunity to create a movement." After everyone has completed a movement: "Now, after each person's movement, the other group members will create the same movement." After everyone has completed a movement: "Now, each person is going to make a movement right away after the person beside them has finished. Let's try to make a movement wave."*

Reflection

Facilitator: *"What was it like to move in that way? Is there a message in your movement you would like to share?"*

CHILDREN'S GROUP**Creative Space Activity and Sharing: Kindness Card**

Children acknowledge and share what they appreciated about each other. Each child is given a 5 x 7 card, and each group member adds words or images, something kind, that they remember about that person.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What was it like to share kind words with the other group members? What important thing will you remember about coming to this program?”*

50 minutes: celebration, closing mindfulness

Families gather together. Each participant receives a certificate and is recognized for their participation in the program. At the end of this final session, each family takes home their Family Kindness Mural along with their certificates and the parents' journals. One facilitator leads everyone in a final mindfulness practice.

Options

Up and Down the Mountain (Week 1)

Butterfly Hug (Week 2)

Happy Hum (Week 9)

HERE TO HELP

Week 1: Introductions and Belonging

Traumatic events such as domestic violence often leave mothers/gender diverse parents and their children feeling disconnected and isolated. Through mindful body awareness activities, art making, play, journaling, storytelling and discussion, group participants connect and learn that they are not alone, become more self-aware, and know that there are those who can listen and support without judgement.



“The power of resources.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *you are not alone; you have a right to speak and be heard; you are in a safe space; you can make your own choices about how you would like to participate in group; children can heal from their exposure to domestic violence with the support of a loving parent.*

Materials needed: mural paper for the Community of Kindness activity; a journal for each parent; canvas for each family to create the Family Kindness mural; markers, crayons and various art making tools; story book, *All the Colours of the Earth* by Sheila Hamanaka. Optional: Music to accompany the movement: [Relaxing Music For Children - Be Calm and Focused \(cute animals\) | 3 Hours Extended Mix](#).



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

30 minutes: welcome, introductions, purpose of group, emotional safety, agenda review

Families are welcomed to the program. Mothers/gender diverse parents and their children are taken to their group rooms.

20 minutes: mindfulness

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain

40 minutes: story, creating the Community of Kindness mural

Story: *All the Colours of the Earth* by Sheila Hamanaka

Each week, facilitators will read the same story that is being read in the children's groups. The story is an introduction to the creative activity and aims to provide participants with an opportunity for quiet, personal contemplation as they move into exploring the topic of the week through creative expression.

Community of Kindness Mural: This is the main activity for the session. Each participant is given an opportunity to share what they added to the mural.

30 minutes: journaling, group sharing, transition to family time

Journaling: Participants are given a journal and an opportunity to add a reflection related to the evening's activities.

Group Sharing: Participants have an opportunity to share their reflections.



Imaginary Ball: coming together through play, movement and imagination.

If time permits, this is a fun activity that invites connection among group members. The facilitator asks them to stand in a circle and begins by passing around an imaginary ball, placing it carefully in the hands of the person beside them. Each person passes the imaginary ball to the next person until everyone has had a chance to receive and pass it on. On the second time around the imaginary ball can change size and weight or stay the same from person to person. On the third time around, the imaginary ball can become any type of ball and be passed to anyone in the circle. The facilitator ensures everyone has a turn, and then "disappears" the imaginary ball when the activity is over.

Transition to Family Time: A mindful pause before transitioning to the next activity.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Beginning the weekly Family Kindness mural which each individual family creates.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

30 minutes: welcome, introductions, purpose of group, emotional safety, agenda review

Families are welcomed as they arrive and both mothers/gender diverse parents and their child/ren are taken to the children's designated group room. Once the children are settled, parent's go to their group room.

Purpose of the group

Facilitators introduce themselves and review the purpose of the group.

Facilitator: *"We would like to welcome everyone to this first session of the program. This program is for children and their mothers/gender diverse parents who were exposed to domestic violence. Through the use of creative activities, stories, mindfulness and journaling, the parents' group will focus on understanding how children may have been impacted by their exposure to domestic violence and what they may need to heal from those experiences. You do not have to be an artist to be here. The activities are geared towards you working in whatever way is right for you, to support understanding yourself and your child through the creative process."*

Group emotional safety

Facilitators are encouraged to review emotional boundaries in order to reduce the possibility of participants being triggered by details of abuse that are not part of the purpose of the parents' group.

Facilitator: *"During the group, as we share our reflections on the creative process, parts of our past experiences may surface. For group emotional safety, we ask that you do not share descriptive details of past traumatic experiences. This is to keep group members safe and to minimize triggering (a strong emotional reaction of fear or worry caused by remembering something bad that has happened in the past). Your stories deserve to be honoured and held in a way that is not possible for us to do in this program. As much as possible, we ask you to share what is present in the moment for you."*

Introductions

Participants briefly introduce themselves by sharing: their names, their children's names and ages and what is special or what they like about their child/ren.



Facilitators can choose their own introduction game.

Agenda Review

Review tonight's topic, agenda and children's group activities. Explain that each week parents will be told what activities their children will be engaging in and that often the parent's group will be doing the same activities as the children's groups. Review any general housekeeping items, such as bathroom locations, etc.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**20 minutes: mindfulness**

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain

Facilitator: *“Each week when we get together, we are going to start off our group with a mindful activity. Are any of you familiar with mindfulness? Has anyone participated in mindfulness activities? Mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening in yourself, either in feelings, thoughts or body sensations, in the moment, as best as you can, and bringing kindness to yourself. In our program, we will use mindfulness activities as a way to understand ourselves and to support us in managing big emotions if they come up. Sometimes, we might feel self-conscious or awkward during these practices, and we might also have strong feelings or sensations that come up. These are normal experiences that can happen. If this happens for you, we invite you to stop, take a pause, look around the room, take a sip of water or anything that supports you to care for yourself. As with any mindfulness practice we use in the program, it is important that you do what is comfortable, safe and feels right for you. The instructions I use are simply a guide. Today we will be doing Up and Down the Mountain. We will be moving a finger from one hand, up and down the fingers of the opposite hand. On the up movement we will be breathing in and on the down movement we will be breathing out. The children’s groups are also doing this mindfulness activity.”*

Facilitator: *“As we begin, sit comfortably on the chair with your feet flat on the floor. Sitting softly upright, letting the body express a sense of being present and awake. Taking a moment to notice where the feet touch the floor, and the back and legs make contact with the chair. Perhaps rolling or adjusting your shoulders and back. Feel free to close your eyes or lower your eyes, having a soft gaze or whatever feels comfortable. When you are ready, take one of your hands and with the palm facing you, spread your fingers open. With the index finger of the other hand begin to trace a path. Starting with your pinkie finger, which is your littlest finger, breathe in as you go up and breathe out as you go down the pinkie. Breathe in as you go up the next finger and breathe out as you go down. Keep breathing in as you go up and out when you go down, as you go to each finger. When you get up to the tip of your thumb begin to retrace your path. Breathing out as you go down the mountain and in as you go up the mountain. When you get to your pinkie, stop and take a moment to notice what is in yourself. Notice if there is one word that describes what you are aware of yourself in this moment. When you are ready, bring your attention back to the group.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Sharing is optional. What do you notice in yourself after doing that kind of breathing? What one word describes what you are aware of in yourself right now: an emotion, a feeling in your body, or a thought.”*

40 minutes: story, creating the Community of Kindness mural

Story: *All the Colours of the Earth* by Sheila Hamanaka

As an introduction to the Community of Kindness mural, read the story to the participants. Share that all participants are welcome and explain that the Community of Kindness mural will reflect everyone in the group. Let parents know that the children are also reading the book in their groups.

Facilitator: *“We are going to create a kindness mural for our group. We call it the Community of Kindness mural and it will show how we can treat each other while we are here together. Before we start, let’s think about the things that make us feel good. What are some things that make you feel good? (playing, friends, hugs etc.). Add your answers to the mural paper. You can draw or use words.”*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Reflection

Before moving on to the next part of the activity, give each participant an opportunity to share what they added to the mural. One person speaks at a time. This is a time for listening to one another.

Facilitator: *“Now that we can see the different things that make us feel good, let’s think about what would help you to feel comfortable being here. What would you ask from other group members to support you being here? What could you offer others to support them being here? Add an image, words or both.”*

Facilitators also participate in the activity. Things for facilitators to include if the group members do not are: respecting opinions and differences, confidentiality, listening to each other, giving space for others to share, using “I” statements.



Give each participant an opportunity to share what they added to the mural. Facilitators also share what they added.

Facilitator: *“Each week we will come back to this Community of Kindness mural to remember how we want to be together and see if there is anything else we need to add.”*

Journaling: Image creation and written reflection

Give each parent a journal and have them write or create an image of what they would like their relationship to be like with their child.



This is an individual activity. Working quietly after being together as a group is an opportunity for parents to have a more internal, reflective personal space as they contemplate what is important for them.

Facilitator: *“Create an image or write in your journal, what you would like your relationship to be like with your child. What would you hope for? What would it look like? How would it feel for you and your child?”* (adapted from the Let’s Connect parenting program)

Group sharing

Facilitator: *“As we bring this part of the group to a close, we have time for anyone who would like to share their image or one thing that they would like their relationship to look like with their child.”*

Transition to family time

Facilitator: *“Before we go to be with our children, let’s take a moment to pause and take three breaths. Breathe in gently through your nose, and out gently through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye****Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: “Each family will have a chance to create a Family Kindness mural. You can use the canvas and markers. We will be adding to this mural every week we are together. Before we start, let’s think of what it means to be kind. What does it mean to be kind? (ex., being thoughtful, friendly, helpful to another person etc.) How do you feel when someone is being kind to you?” (ex., it feels good) “Today, we are going to draw or write on the canvas, things that make you feel good when you’re with your family or your friends, your siblings, pets, cousins or other people you spend time with. You can use your markers to write or draw things that make you feel good. We’ll give you a little bit of time to do that.” Once completed, participants are encouraged to share what they put on their mural.

Mindful Activity: Up and Down the Mountain

Facilitator: “Before we say goodbye, let’s breathe up and down the mountain like we did at the beginning of the group.” Optional: Music to accompany the movement: [Relaxing Music For Children - Be Calm and Focused \(cute animals\) | 3 Hours Extended Mix](#).

Reflection

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, share one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now. It can be an emotion, a feeling in your body, or a thought.”

HERE TO HELP

Week 2: Self-Compassion

For children and their mothers/gender diverse parents exposed to domestic violence, engaging in self-compassion provides an opportunity to care for themselves in a way that may not have been possible in an unstable home environment. Through stories and the creative process, this week's group provides participants with an opportunity to recognize and explore ways to embrace flaws, give love and bring kindness to themselves.



“Self-compassion is giving yourself the same kindness you would give someone else. Yes you are deserving, your feelings matter. Sometime that means putting yourself first and that’s okay.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *self-compassion can help manage painful thoughts and memories, increase self-awareness, and help to bring kindness and compassion to yourself and others.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; paper, markers, pencil crayons, water colour paints or water colour pencil crayons, paint brushes; participants' journals; Family Kindness mural; story books, *My New Best Friend* by Sara Marlowe or *The Friend I Need* by Gabi Garcia.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Facilitators review the agenda and share what activities the children's groups are engaging in.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Hand on Heart

Options

Butterfly Hug: *"Crossing your arms in front of you, hold the left shoulder with your right hand and your right shoulder with your left hand. Breathe in and out for five slow breaths. Now pretend that your hands are butterfly wings, and gently flap them against your shoulders for a minute or so, noticing how you feel. Finish off by giving yourself a hug."*

Hand on Heart: *"Place one or two hands over your heart feeling the gentle pressure and warmth from your hand. Notice your breath, without changing it in any way. Breathing in, send a breath to the tips of your toes. On the next breath in, send a breath to the top of your head. On the last breath in, send a breath to your heart and offer it thanks for supporting you to be here today. Rest for a moment, noticing what is present in you. Hands can also be placed on cheeks, arms, stomach or crossing your arms to give yourself a hug."*

Kindness Rock: *"Choose a rock and hold it in your hand. Close your eyes and begin breathing deeply, noticing the texture of the rock and any other sensations that arise. Think about what self-compassion means to you and come back to the room when you're ready. Decorate the rock with words that will support you."*

Community of Kindness Mural

This week continues the process of recognizing the support group members offer to each other and ask from each other during the program. They are encouraged to add new images or words to the mural.

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *My New Best Friend* by Sara Marlowe or *The Friend I Need* by Gabi Garcia

Creative Space: creating an image with water colour paints or water colour pencils

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time**30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye**

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Review tonight's topic and introduce the concept of self-compassion. Share with parents that the children's groups will be reading a story related to self-compassion. Let parents know children will also be invited to create an image of how they can be kind to themselves.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Hand on Heart (adapted from the Let's Connect parenting program)

Facilitator: *"Each week we will do a mindfulness activity to help us learn about ourselves, focus and be calm. It is important you do what is comfortable, safe and feels right for you. Sometimes, we might feel self-conscious or awkward during these practices, and we might also have strong feelings or sensations that come up. These are normal experiences that can happen sometimes, and if this happens for you, we invite you to stop, take a pause, look around the room, take a sip of water and do what supports you to care for yourself. The instructions I use are simply a guide."*

Facilitator: *"Today's mindfulness activity is called Hand on Heart . There are three invitations for this practice which involve placing a hand on your heart, reaching your hands out and holding your hands gently together. Do what feels comfortable for you. As we begin, sitting comfortably on the chair, feet flat on the floor. Sitting softly upright, letting the body express a sense of being present and awake. Taking a moment to notice where the feet touch the floor, and the back and legs make contact with the chair. Perhaps rolling or adjusting your shoulders and back. Feel free to close your eyes or lower your eyes, having a soft gaze."*

Beginning by placing your hand over your heart if that feels right for you. This is about tuning in to ourselves. (pause) Asking yourself, how am I feeling? (pause) what do I notice on the inside (body or thoughts)? (pause) What do I need? (pause)

And now, if it feels right for you, reaching out with your hands, palms up. This gesture is a reminder to attune to others or to tune in to others. Noticing sensations in the hands, the palms and fingers, as they reach out and expand. (pause) Asking yourself, what am I noticing in my child, what might they be feeling? (pause) What do they need? (three breaths pause)

And now, for our final gesture, if it feels right for you, connecting your hands in any way that feels comfortable. This gesture is about connecting with your child/ren (pause) Asking, how can I support and build my relationship with my child/ren? (pause) What are the ways I can care for myself? What are the ways I can care for them? (pause)

As our practice comes to an end, resting here for a moment, noticing if there is a word that comes up for you. A word that shares what you are aware of in yourself, in this moment."

Reflection

Facilitator: *"If you would like to, say one word that shares what you are aware of in this moment."*



Facilitators normalize that mindfulness experiences can be different for everyone and that some people may have enjoyed it and others may not and that is okay, the important thing is to be aware of how you felt.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Community of Kindness Mural: Review the mural and provide an opportunity for any new images or words to be added.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. You are invited to add what you would ask of others to support you in being here this week and what you can offer to support other participants this week. Is there anything on the mural that would help you to feel safe and calm in the group today?”*

This week, facilitators and children decide where to hang the mural in the group room, choosing a blank wall and placing it where it can easily be accessed by everyone in the group.

Facilitator: *“Let’s decide as a group where we can hang our mural, somewhere we can see it. Each week, the mural will be here for us to look at and add to if we decide there is something to be included”.*

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *My New Best Friend* by Sara Marlowe or *The Friend I Need* by Gabi Garcia

Choose which book to read to the parents. Let the parents know if there is a children’s group reading a different story. Move directly into the creative space activity after the story.

Facilitator: *“Today, the children will be reading this story as an introduction to the topic of Self-Compassion and giving care and kindness to oneself.”*

Creative Space: water colours

Facilitator: *“For the art creation today, you are welcome to work in your journal or on a piece of paper, and use any drawing implements you like. You are invited to create an image reflecting what comes forward for you as I share these following words (go slow and provide pauses for participants to create their image). If you would like to, imagine a place that brings you comfort. This might be a place where you have lived, or visited, a garden, a forest, a mountain or ocean. Or perhaps it is somewhere within your home, a favourite corner, or a place created in your imagination. Begin to notice the things that bring you that sense of comfort and safety (pause). What colours and textures can you see? (pause). What sounds do you hear? (pause). Are there fragrances that you can smell or a taste that comforts you? (pause). What temperature can you feel on your skin? (pause)*

In this place imagine the presence of someone who has treated you with love and compassion, a parent, grandparent, friend, neighbor, favourite pet, spiritual figure, or someone from your imagination. It can be anyone who is right for you. And allow that loving kindness to be with you, within you and surrounding you, breathing in love and compassion, and exhaling love and compassion, breathing in love and compassion and exhaling love and compassion. Once you have created your image, write down any words that come from the image, a message or title that comes from the image.”

Journaling

Provide parents with the option to add to their journal reflections of the following questions: What was it like to have that loving compassionate presence around you? When could this image and compassionate presence support you and your children?

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

Group Sharing

Facilitator: "What would you like to tell us about what you created?"



Additional Reflection Questions

What are some ways you are kind to yourself?

How can you take care of your feelings?

What was it like to create this image? What did you notice?

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our children, let's take a moment to pause and take three breaths. Breathe in gently through your nose, and out gently through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Facilitator: "On your kindness mural this week, draw or write things that you do together, or can do together, as a family to show kindness and love to each other."

Mindful Activity: Butterfly Hug

Facilitator: "Tonight, we are going to cross our arms, and rest our hands on our shoulders. You can cross your arms and rest your hands on your elbows if that is more comfortable. Do what is comfortable and safe and feels right for you. The instructions I use are simply a guide. As we begin, sitting comfortably on the chair, feet flat on the floor. Sitting softly upright, letting the body express a sense of being present and awake. Taking a moment to notice where the feet touch the floor, and the back and legs make contact with the chair. Perhaps rolling or adjusting your shoulders and back. Feel free to close your eyes or lower your eyes, having a soft gaze or whatever feels comfortable. And when you are ready, crossing your arms in front of you, placing your right hand on your left shoulder and your left hand on your right shoulder. At your own pace, breathe in and out for five slow breaths. Breathing in and out, letting the breath be natural. Now pretend that your hands are butterfly wings, and gently flap them against your shoulders, noticing how it feels to have butterfly wings gently tapping you. When you are ready, finishing by giving yourself a hug. Before we come back to the group, notice what you are aware of in yourself, thinking of one or two words that shares what you notice in yourself in this moment."

Reflection

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what it was like to give yourself a butterfly hug? Or share one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now: an emotion, a feeling in your body, or a thought."

“Being in that space makes me feel I’m comfortable and so I’m not hard on myself. I’m like, hey, take it easy. It’s okay. You’re here in your safe space. Everybody... they’re going through the same thing. So just have an open mind, have an open heart, for something that’s creative that I’ve never done with any woman’s group. This is actually the first group that I’ve attended, so for me, I find it very heartfelt and warming to be in a safe place where I can share my stories as well.”

– Parent participant

HERE TO HELP

Week 3: Feelings

For mothers/gender diverse parents and their children exposed to domestic violence, connecting with feelings may not have been safe or supported due to the uncertainty of the home environment. Through stories, art making and discussion, this week's group provides participants with an opportunity to recognize and explore their feelings.



“It’s okay to have feelings. Everyone has them!”

– Seven year-old

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *all feelings are okay; our feelings can make us feel different sensations in our body; naming feelings can help us to understand them, calm them down and create space for us to find helpful solutions; when parents are able to recognize and name their own feelings, they are better able to support their children's feelings.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; participants' journals; paper, tempera/acrylic paints, paint brushes, water, containers; Family Kindness mural canvas; story books, *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek or *Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain - moving mindfully

Community of Kindness Mural

Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. Moving forward, facilitators decide whether or not to add to the mural weekly. It may be enough to simply bring the participants' attention to the mural as a reminder of how everyone has agreed to treat each other during group time.



Facilitators may choose to reflect on the mural without adding to it or to have participants journal anything on the mural that will support them being in the group this week.

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek or *Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia

Creative Space: creating an image with tempera or acrylic paints

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Facilitators review the agenda and share that the children will be given the message that all feelings are okay. Review what activities the children's groups will be engaging in.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain movement

Facilitator: *"Our practice today will incorporate movement, with our body moving up and down from a standing position. If you choose not to stand, some options are: to remain seated and do the movement there, or to trace your fingers, as we did previously. You choose what is right for you. Your movements can be as small or big as you are comfortable with."*

(The following instructions are for the standing movement. Modify the instructions to reflect how the participants have chosen to participate)

"Begin by standing or sitting as tall as you can be in this moment. Just gently tall. Feel where your feet touch the floor and try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other and then imagine that you can send a breath all the way down to the tips of your toes. Just like we traced the path up and down the mountains on our hand we are going to do this now with our hands and bodies, breathing in your hands go up, breathing out they go down. You could start small and then experiment as you breathe in, how high up can your arms and hands go? As you breathe out, how low can your body go. Repeat until there is a flowing rhythm. What about side to side? Repeat until there is a flowing rhythm. Can you try another way? Still going up as you breathe in and down as you breathe out. Taking two more breaths and then finding that still, calm place inside, as best as you can. Taking a moment to notice one or two words that represent what you are aware of in yourself in this moment."

Reflection

Facilitator: *"If you would like to, share one word that expresses what you are aware of in this moment."*

Community of Kindness Mural: If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we have agreed to treat each other in the group. Is there anything on the mural that will support you in being in the group tonight?"*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. Our topic tonight is feelings. What would support you or help you to feel comfortable in the group as we explore the topic of feelings?"*

Facilitators hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek or *Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia

Choose which book to read to the parents. Let the parents know if there is a children's group reading a different story. Move directly into the creative space activity after the story.

Creative Space Activity: tempera paint image

Facilitator: *"Take a moment to check inside yourself right now and simply notice what you are feeling in this moment. It might be one feeling or a few feelings. Notice what colours you are drawn to and create an image. Find the way that is right for you."*

Journaling

Provide parents with the option to add to their journal: what was it like to create the image? What did you notice? Did it have a message for you? How can this support you in talking with your children about their feelings?



This is individual time for working quietly, after being together as a group. This is an opportunity for parents to have a more internal, reflective personal space as they reflect on what is important for them.

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time**Group Sharing**

Facilitator: *"What would you like to tell us about what you created?"*

**Additional Reflection Questions**

What did you learn about your feelings?

How can this support you in talking with your children about their feelings?

How can you take care of your feelings?

What was it like to create this image? What did you notice?

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: *"Before we go to be with our children, let's take a moment to pause and take three breaths. Breathe in gently through your nose, and out gently through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth."*



Adapt the mindful pause to reflect the participants' needs. It may be as simple as taking one breath, stretching or pausing for a moment.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Facilitator: *“On your kindness mural this week, add kind things that you and your family do or can do to take care of feelings. It can be how you care for your own feelings and how you care for each other’s feelings.”*

Mindful Activity: Up and Down the Mountain - moving mindfully

Facilitator: *“Before we say goodbye, we are going to do a short mindfulness activity by moving our bodies up and down. You can stand or sit down and make your movement small or as large as is right for you. Just as we traced the path Up and Down the Mountain on our hands, we are going to do this now with our arms and bodies. We are going to move our arms up when we breathe in and down when we breathe out. Then, if you are standing, we are going to add our legs by bending our knees when we breathe in and straightening back up when we breathe out. If you are sitting, you can continue with moving your arms. Begin by standing as tall as you can be in this moment or sitting upright. Just gently tall, either in the chair or standing. Feel where your feet touch the floor and try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other and then imagine that you can send a breath all the way down to the tips of your toes. When you are ready, moving your arms up when you breathe in, bring them down when you breathe out. Breathing in your hands go up, breathing out they go down. You could start small and then experiment as you breathe in, how high up can your arms and hands go? And now we will add our knees. As you breathe in, your arms go up and your knees bend. And as you breathe out, your arms come down and your knees straighten. Breathing in, up and breathing out, down. Moving to the rhythm of your own breath and finding a flow. And now taking one more breath in and one more breath out and resting for a moment, finding a still, quiet place inside, as best as you can. Be still for a moment before we come back together in our group.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? What was it like to move that way?”*

The 5 emotions



HERE TO HELP

Week 4: Big Feelings and What to Do With Them

The effects of trauma can trigger big or unexpected feelings from fear of one's survival. Group participants learn that these are normal responses to abuse and that the body is trying to protect them, even when they are in a safe situation. Through mindful body awareness activities, arts based sensory activities, play, storytelling and discussion, group participants learn to identify the beginning signals of 'something is not okay'. Knowing these signals allows participants to determine whether those feelings and sensations are about the past, or in the present moment.



“It is okay to be scared. It is okay to be brave.”

– Eight year-old

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *fight, flight and freeze are normal responses when the body is trying to protect itself from danger; these reactions occur in the brain's amygdala and can happen when something triggers us to sense past danger, even when we are in a safe situation; we can learn to recognize if these feelings are in response to something that has happened in the past or the present moment and learn ways to help us calm them down; labelling or naming feelings can shift activity away from the amygdala, back to the decision making and thinking area of the brain (pre-frontal cortex) to help slow down and calm the body; children often need a calm parent/adult to support them in regulating and understanding their emotions.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; participants' journals; story book, *Big Feelings Come and Go* by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection; plasticine; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Facilitators review the agenda and what activities the children's groups will be engaging in.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Expanded Breathing practice

Options

Breath Drawing: Using a drawing implement on a large piece of paper, begin by taking a moment to notice the breath. With eyes open or closed, begin to move the drawing implement across the page to the rhythm of the breath.

Counting Breaths: With eyes open or closed, begin to notice the breath. Notice there is an in breath and an out breath. In your mind, count each time you breathe in, from one to ten. When you reach ten, begin again from one. If you notice you have lost count, simply begin again.

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. Facilitators decide whether or not to add to the mural weekly.

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *Big Feelings Come and Go* by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection

The Big Feelings Story normalizes responses that children and adults have when they are very scared and feel they are in danger, either from a situation happening in the moment or from something that happened in the past. Participants learn that big feelings come and go and that they can do something to help themselves. They learn to self-regulate by breathing and connecting to the present environment.

Creative Space Activity: creating the creature

The creative space is an opportunity for parents to have an internal, reflective personal space which supports externalizing their own experiences of danger (or imaginary experiences of danger). This also supports participants to integrate the learning from the story.

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time**30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye**

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and let parents know the children will also be reading the same story and creating a creature.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: expanded breathing practice



Give the participants the option to sit or stand for this mindfulness practice.

Facilitator: *"Our practice today will incorporate movement. For this activity, we will be opening our arms outwards, and bringing them back as though we are giving ourselves a hug. You can do this standing or sitting. Do what is comfortable and feels right for you. Your movements can be as small or big as you are comfortable with. The instructions I use are simply a guide. As we begin, standing or sitting, noticing how your feet are connecting to the floor. Keeping your eyes open if you are standing. Now take a moment to notice that you are breathing. There is no need to change your breath, simply notice that you are breathing in and breathing out. And when you are ready, on your next breath in, open your arms out, expanding your arms out to the side, as wide as feels right for you. And on your breath out, bring your arms in, as though you are giving yourself a hug. And breathing in, expand your arms, noticing the sensation of your arms as they move outwards. Breathing out, bringing your arms in, noticing the sensation of your arms around your shoulders. And one final time, breathing in and expanding your arms out, breathing out bringing your arms in and around your shoulders. And when you are ready, returning your arms down by your sides. Pausing for a moment. Noticing how your feet are connected to the floor. And when you are ready, bringing your attention back to the room and the group you are with."*

Reflection

Facilitator: *"If you would like to, share one or two words that express what you are aware of in this moment."*

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Is there anything on the mural that you are noticing, or is drawing your attention? Is there anything that would help you to feel comfortable and safe tonight as we create a home for our creatures?"*

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. You are invited to add what would support you in being here this week as we explore the topic of Big Feelings."*

Facilitators hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *Big Feelings Come and Go* by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection

Facilitator: "Tonight, we will be reading a story about the big feelings of fight, flight and freeze and what that may feeling like in our body. Tonight, we are going to explore these feelings and what we can do to try and feel better if we have them. We are also going to practice calming down so we can feel better."



While reading the story, encourage group members to try the calming techniques in the story.

Reflection

Facilitator: "What stood out, or was important for you in the story? Which way to calm down did you like best?"

Creative Space Activity: creating the creature

Facilitator: "Everyone has plasticine or model magic. We are going to use these to create an animal-like creature. From your imagination, you can make any kind of animal creature you like. Think about how your animal creature responds when there is danger - does it run, does it fight, does it freeze so that it is not noticed. When you are finished, you can show the group if you want to."



Encourage the participants to focus on their own creative process. It may help to provide the option of sitting in another part of the room (if the space allows) for any participant who would like a quieter area to work in.

Journaling

Provide parents with the option to add to their journal: What does your creature do when it feels scared? How does your creature know when it is not feeling safe, what is it feeling in its body? What helps the creature feel safe? How might you support your child with big feelings?

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time**Group Sharing**

Facilitator: "What would you like to tell us about what you created?"

**Additional Reflection Questions**

Does your creature have a name?

What was it like to create the creature?

Does your creature have a message for you and your child?

Label and keep the creatures in a safe space as they will be used in next week's group.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: *“Before we go to be with our children, let’s take a moment to pause and take three breaths. Breathe in gently through your nose, and out gently through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”*

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: *“On your kindness mural, add what you do as a family to take care of big feelings when they come up. What kind things help to deal with the big feelings?”*

Mindful Activity: Breathing Hand on Heart, Hand on Belly

Facilitator: *“Sitting as upright as you are able to in this moment, notice where your body connects with the ground and that your body is supported by the ground. You may lower or close your eyes, whichever seems right for you in this moment. Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly and just begin to notice your breath as you breathe in and as you breathe out. There is no need to change it in any way. Just one breath in and one breath out, notice the light pressure or warmth of your hand on your heart and your hand on your belly. As you breathe in and as you breathe out. Notice how your body expands as you breathe in and how it softens as you breathe out; continue, one breath in and one breath out. One breath in and one breath out. Notice again where your body connects with the ground and that your body is supported by the ground. Staying in stillness while you count to yourself one, two, three, four.”*

Options

Lead participants in the mindfulness practice from the beginning of the group, Expanded Breathing Practice.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? What was it like to move that way?”*



HERE TO HELP

Week 5: Safety, Boundaries and Resources

Feeling safe contributes to mental health and a better sense of well-being overall. However, it can be a difficult feeling to access for those who have experienced significant trauma. In this session, group participants will use voice, play, and art making to visualize and explore feelings of safety and calm.



“Soon you’ll make a cocoon and turn into a butterfly.”

– Five year-old

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *it is our responsibility as adults to keep children physically and emotionally safe; parents can support their children to recognize who they can go to for help if they are feeling unsafe or are being hurt; children need consistent, predictable and age appropriate boundaries to help them feel secure; children learn boundaries through the age appropriate expectations and limits they have in relationship with their parents and other people they interact with; it is okay to talk about feeling unsafe; we can learn ways to help us feel safer; there are people we can trust and talk to who will help us feel safe.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; creatures created in last week's group; small cardboard food boxes; glue, variety of collage material; participant journals; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Mindful Awareness with Stone or Shell



Some people might feel self-conscious or awkward at the beginning of these practices and may benefit from these feelings being normalized.

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2 if it will not be added to this week.

50 minutes: scribble tag, creative space, journaling, group sharing

Scribble Tag

The scribble game is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity – creating a home for the creature.

Creative Space Activity: creating a home for the creature

This activity invites participants to use their imagination. There can be no right or wrong way for participants to create the story and images. Our thinking brains like to be in charge and our bodies hold knowledge and wisdom that sometimes gets overlooked. Engaging with play, story, art materials and movement can support access to the body's knowledge and help us to see things differently. It gives the thinking brain a rest, and allows the "artist" to access new information that makes sense for them.



Exploring safety through play, imagination, discussion: a trauma-informed approach

Talking about safety may be triggering for some participants. Stretching, breathing and reviewing what they can do if big feelings come up supports participants to stay grounded and connected in their bodies and builds internal resources in case big feelings come up in the group. This process allows participants to externalize their experiences of what safety looks like for them, through the creatures they made in the previous group.

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and explain that all the children will also be creating a home for their creature. Let parents know the youngest groups will be watching a video called [Big Bird's Comfy-Cozy Nest](#).

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Mindful Awareness with Stone or Shell

Facilitator: *"For this practice please choose a stone or a shell from the table and hold it in your hands. You may lower or close your eyes, whichever feels right for you. Sitting as upright as you are able to be in this moment, notice where your body is supported by the ground or the chair that you are sitting on. And notice one breath in and one breath out. Begin to imagine a place where you feel safe and secure; it can be a place where you live or have lived or visited. Or it could be a place of your imagination. As you breathe in and as you breathe out, notice the comforting things you can see, the things you can hear, the things you can feel. Breathe in and send a gentle breath through your whole body, allowing any tightness in your body to soften. Imagine the warmth of the sun on your face, a warmth that is just right for you as you inhale and as you exhale. Allow the muscles of your face to soften as you continue to breathe in and breathe out. Notice the stone or shell you are holding in your hands and without looking at the shell or stone, begin to explore it with your fingertips. Notice the sharp edges and the smooth surfaces, the cracks and crevices, the spirals or ridges. As you breathe in and breathe out, notice the size of the shell or stone, the space it takes up in your hands. As you breathe in and breathe out, notice its temperature. Is it warm or cool? Is it heavy or light? As you breathe in and breathe out, begin looking at the shell or stone and notice all that you explored with your fingertips, where it is rough or smooth, its shape, size or weight. And now the shades and shadows? See and feel the place where the stone or shell connects with the surface of your skin as you continue to breathe in and breathe out. Still holding the stone or shell, begin to notice the group space. Notice where your body touches the ground or the chair, notice the people around you, notice what thoughts, feelings or sensations you are present with in this moment."*

Facilitator: *"Sharing in one or two words, what are you aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body?"*

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Is there anything on the mural that you are noticing, or is drawing your attention? Is there anything that would help you to feel comfortable and safe tonight as we create a home for the creature?"*

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. You are invited to add what would support you in being here this week as we explore the topic Safety, Boundaries and Resources."*

Facilitators hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

50 minutes: scribble tag, creative space, journaling

Scribble Tag: This is a brief activity and should be completed in a few minutes.

Scribble tag is a variation of the chasing game but played on paper. Playing and interacting with others through this game, calls attention to the participants ideas about safety, boundaries and resources. Facilitators may choose to pair up participants or invite the participants to pick their own partners.

Facilitator: Invite the two participants within each pairing to sit next to each other for this activity. *“Using a long sheet of paper, each of you will place your creature at one of the bottom two corners of the paper and create a boundary around your creature. After your creature’s ‘home base’ is created, choose one colour marker or crayon that you will use to play scribble tag with your partner. Each pairing will pick one person to be ‘it’ and that person will try to tag their partner. Using your chosen marking tool, both players will start by positioning marker/crayon at your own home base and only when the facilitators give you the signal to go, begin ‘racing’ around the paper without lifting your marker or crayon (creating scribbles). The person who is ‘it’ can tag their partner by gently tapping on the other person’s marking tool with their own. If the person trying not to be tagged, scribbles their way back to their home base without getting tagged, the person who is ‘it’ must respect their partner’s safe space and won’t be able to tag them while they are there.”* Play for two rounds and then switch roles.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Please choose one word that reflects what it was like to play scribble tag.”*

Creative Space

Facilitator: *“Through our Community of Kindness mural, we have witnessed everyone’s wisdom and self-awareness to know what you need, to participate in the group in the way that is safe and comfortable for you. And through sharing that wisdom and self-awareness, there may have been something that resonated or connected with others as well. In thinking about what helps you to feel safe and comfortable here in the group, what does it mean to keep your creature and your children’s creatures safe? Using the different materials on the table, create a home for your creature and your children’s creatures.”*

Journaling

Provide parents with the option to add to their journal: Is there anything new you discovered? How can you create emotional and physical safety for your children? What are important boundaries for you and for your children?



It is important that there is no literal interpretation by facilitators. Be curious about what is happening in the home and how the creature created safety, acknowledging the creature’s resources, ex., courage, perseverance, kindness, quick thinking, stillness, etc.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

Group Sharing

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share or tell us about their creature’s home? What would your creature need to feel safe? What would your creature do if someone was hurting it or it was scared of getting hurt? Who would your creature let into its house?”



Additional Reflection Questions

What was it like to make the creatures home?

What helps the creature feel safe?

What boundaries does the creature have in its home to keep everyone feeling safe?

The creatures stay this week as they will be used for next week’s Family Kindness mural.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our family, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: “What did you find out today that you could add to the mural? What kind things help you and your family stay strong through the storms of life? What kind things keep you together?”

Mindful Activity: Stretching with the Breath

Facilitator: “With this mindfulness, we are going to be stretching our arms and legs, and you can do this either sitting or standing, whatever feels right and comfortable for you. Take a breath in and a long slow breath out, and as you breathe in, stretch your arms, legs and body as big and as far as feels right for you; and now, as you breathe out bring your body back to standing, to its starting place. And again, take a breath in and a long slow breath out, and as you breathe in stretch your arms, legs and body as big as feels right for you, and as you breathe out bring your body back to its starting place. One last time, take a breath in and a long slow breath out, and as you breathe in stretch your arms, legs and body as big as feels right, and as you breathe out bring your body back to its starting place. And now rest for a moment, noticing how you feel in your body.”



Repeat the Mindfulness from the beginning of the group: Mindful Awareness with Stone or Shell

Reflection

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? What was it like to move that way?”

“I’m more comfortable about using art instead of my voice, more creativity that you can see through art and colours and the shapes, and it brought out like this, these like trauma that it’s okay to heal because you expressed it through art. And that was the main part for me, was like I did this, and it’s all coming out, out of me and without using words, and it’s beautiful.”

– Parent participant

HERE TO HELP

Week 6: Violence and Abuse - The Impact of the Storm and the Story of Resource

In this session, group participants explore the effects of violence and abuse through story, movement, sound, making a feeling jar and discussion; what they did, or would do if “a storm” happened in their home. Recognizing they are not responsible for the abuse is an important part of this session.



“Share everything you have experienced, felt, saw with your closes loved one(s). To be able to speak about it will have you feeling lighter, more hopeful. Your voice and experiences matter!”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**AT A GLANCE:**

Key messages to parents: *mothers/gender diverse parents and children are not responsible for the abuse they experienced or were exposed to; it is normal for some children to have different feelings about what happened in their home (confused, angry at both parents, still love the abusive person, worried they may be like the abusive person, wanting their family back together); it is important to understand what internal resources we have that helps us when things are difficult; abuse in families happens when one person tries to control another person (verbal abuse and/or emotional abuse and/or physical abuse); it is okay to talk about the abuse that was experienced.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; participants' creatures and their homes; glitter jar items: plastic jars, water, glitter, glue; model magic, paper, markers etc; participant journals; Family Kindness mural; story book, *The Children's Star* by Lisa Sura-Liddell and Angelique Jenney.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review**30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural**

Mindfulness: Glitter Jars

Addressing the storm, and the effects of the storm through movement story and discussion. This exercise supports self-awareness through movement. Self-regulation is supported through expanding and tapering off movement.



Tonight's topic uses the metaphor of a storm to discuss the topic of domestic violence in families. The glitter jar activity begins the process by building resources to manage feelings that may come up. When there are big storms sometimes big feelings get shaken up. The glitter jar is another way to help those big feelings calm down.

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2 if it will not be added to.

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *The Children's Star* by Lisa Sura-Liddell and Angelique Jenney

Creative Space Activity: An offering to your child

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time**30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye**

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Agenda Review: Review the agenda for tonight's group and let parents know children will also be making a glitter jar. Share with parents that the children will be having a conversation using the metaphor of a storm to talk about the abuse that happened in their families. Let parents know children will be able to choose a variety of art materials to use while the conversation occurs.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Glitter Jars

Facilitator: *"Many people feel strange or awkward when they try new activities. These exercises might help you with big feelings. Breathing helps to get oxygen to your brain and through your whole body. Breathing helps us to slow down and think when things feel out of control. There is no 'perfect way' to do this. Just try your best and notice what you feel at the end of it. Tonight, we are going to make a glitter jar and then notice what happens when it gets shaken up. We are going to use our breath and watch as the sparkles fall to the bottom of the jar."*



Fill the jar half way with warm water; add sparkles; fill the jar with clear glue; shake the jar to mix everything. Glue the edges of the lid before closing.

Facilitator: *"Let's sit comfortably on our chairs. We are going to shake the jar and watch as the sparkles float and settle to the bottom. You can keep the jar in your hand or put it on the table. When you are ready, shake the jar and watch as the sparkles float. Notice how the sparkles float and slowly settle to the bottom of the jar. Let your body rest here as you watch the sparkles float and settle. If you want to, you can shake the jar again as we quietly watch the sparkles."*

Facilitator: *"What was it like to watch the sparkles float and settle to the bottom of the jar? What did you notice about the sparkles? Did you notice anything inside you?"*

Facilitator: (As a group) *"Let's stand up and see if we can do the same thing with shaking our bodies: it could be just your hands and fingers fluttering, or one arm or leg, or it could be the whole body. If it helps, imagine all those sparkles inside, settling as you stand still and breathe in and out, letting everything settle right down to the bottom of your feet, feeling your feet on the ground. Notice one word that describes what you are experiencing in your body (ex., tingly). Would anyone like to share their one word? As we move back to the table, in your journal, write down words that come to you from watching the sparkles and moving your body. Just words, not sentences or phrases. We will have a few minutes for this."*

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable tonight as we talk about storms that happen in families?"*

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. What can we add this week that will support you to feel safe in the group as we explore the topic of violence and abuse?"*

Facilitators hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**50 minutes: story, creative space**

Story: *The Children's Star* by Lisa Sura-Liddell and Angelique Jenney

Read the story to the parents. If necessary, before moving to the creative activity, take a breathing or movement pause.

Creative Space Activity

Facilitator: "Everyone here has had difficult experiences of abuse, which brought you and your children to the program. And for some people, we may feel a sense of guilt or blame for what our children were exposed to. These are normal feelings for parents to have. Our aim in this next activity is to simply bring awareness of what might be happening for your children after their exposure to the abuse. The intention is to use this awareness, to help us recognize or connect to what our children need from us as parents to heal from that exposure."

Facilitator: "In considering what your children might have felt during the storm, or how they might have been impacted, create for your child an offering, a gift that lets them know that you see them, hear them, care about their experience then and now. A gift that acknowledges your children."



Provide parents with plenty of time to engage with this activity. It is common for parents to need a few minutes to explore the art materials before deciding on how they will proceed.

Journaling

Provide parents with the option to add to their journal. Using the words from the glitter jar activity, circle the important words and shape them into a poem or love letter to their child.



Add to the journal what you appreciate about your child/ren.

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

Before the group sharing, extend an invitation for participants to move their bodies: either stretching, or walking around, rubbing hands, bending, rolling shoulders, etc. whatever the need is.

Group Sharing

Facilitator: "Is there anything from this experience you can take into your relationship with your child?"



Pauses for breathing, stretching or grounding activities will support participants as they engage in the sharing process.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

The creatures and their home join the children in family time.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: *“What did you find out today that you could add to the mural? What kind things help you and your family stay strong through the storms of life? What kind things keep you together?”*



Facilitators can invite participants to place their creature on the mural where it would feel safe and cozy.

Mindful Activity: Imaginary Ball

Children and adults stand in a big circle. The facilitator is going to pass around an imaginary ball, placing it carefully in the hands of the person beside them. Each child passes the imaginary ball to the next person until everyone has had a chance to receive and pass it on. On the second time around, the imaginary ball can change size and weight or stay the same from person to person. On the third or fourth time around the imaginary ball could change into: a volley ball, basketball, tennis ball, soccer ball etc. and be passed spontaneously to a person across the circle. The facilitator ends the activity by “disappearing” the imaginary ball.

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body?”*

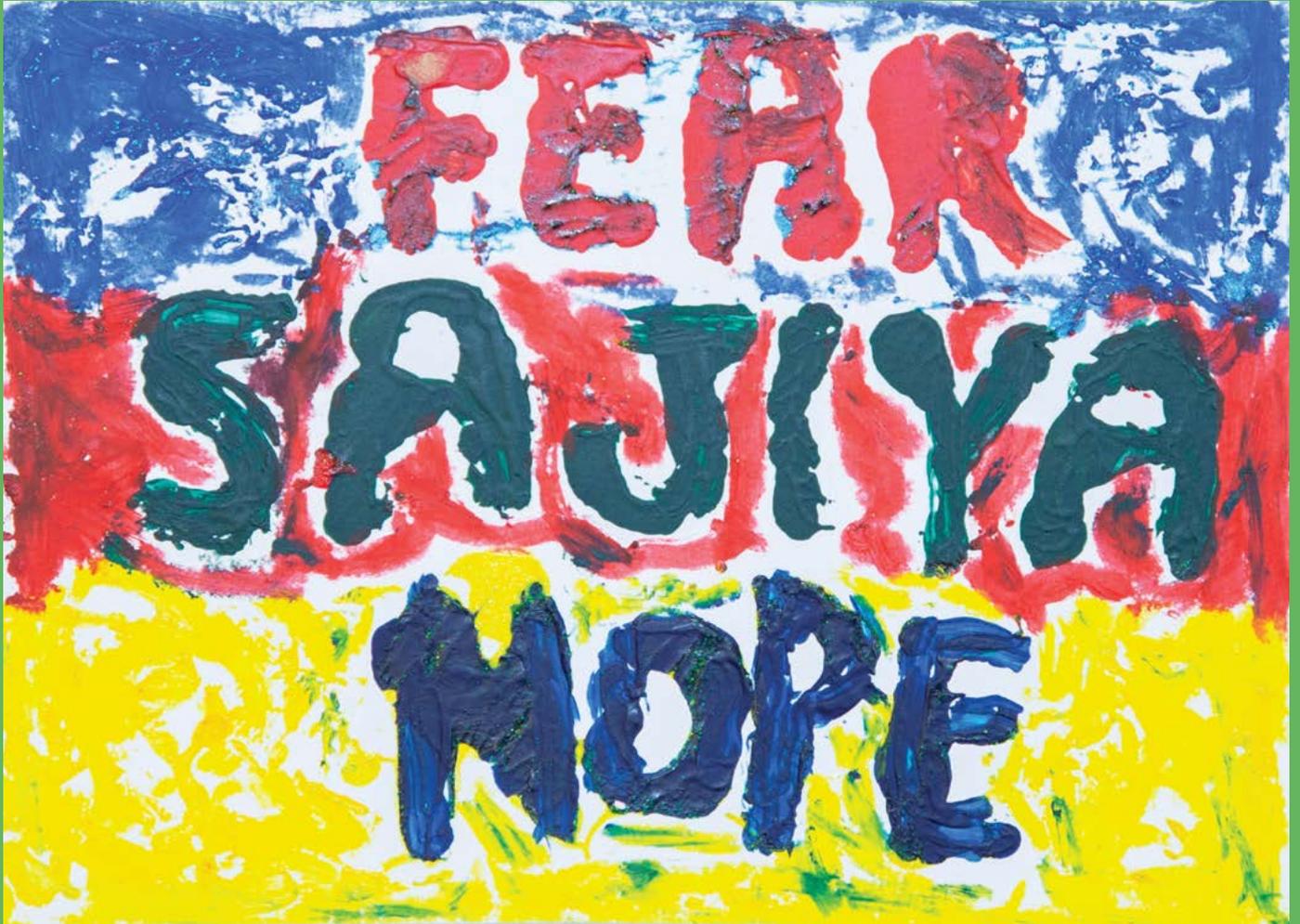
Option

Glitter Jar Mindfulness

Facilitator: *“We are going to shake the jar and watch as the sparkles float and settle to the bottom. You can keep the jar in your hand or put it on the table. Take a moment now, to let your body rest on the chair as best as you can. When you are ready, shake the jar and watch as the sparkles float. Notice how the sparkles float and slowly settle to the bottom of the jar. Let your body rest here as you watch the sparkles float and settle. If you want to, you can shake the jar again as we quietly watch the sparkles. Let’s stand up and see if we can do the same thing with our bodies: it could just be your hands and fingers fluttering, or one arm or leg, or it could be the whole body. Imagine all those inside sparkles settling as you stand still and breathe in and out letting everything settle right down to the bottom of your feet, like the sparkles on the bottom of the jar. Feeling your feet on the ground.”*

Reflection

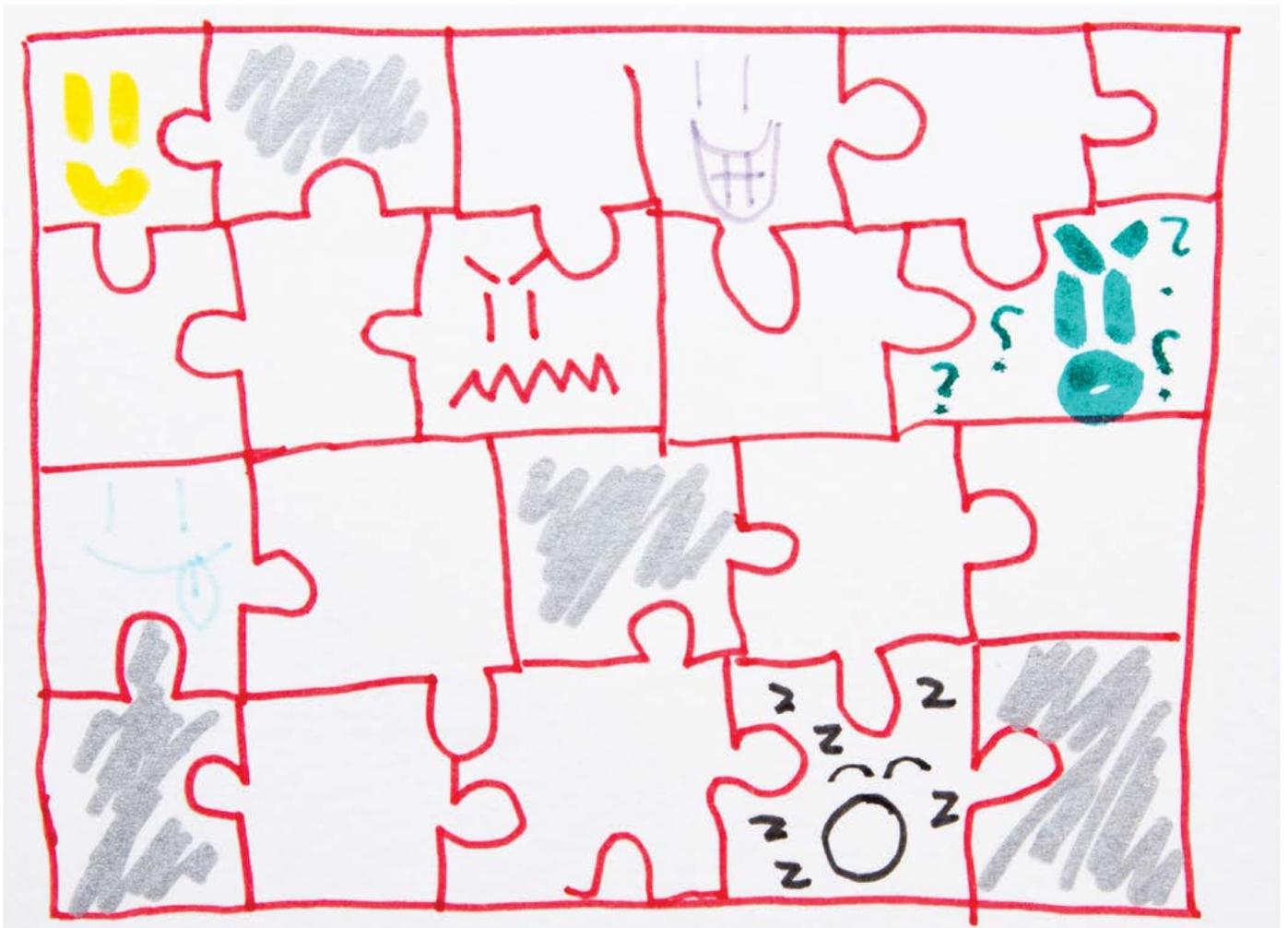
Facilitator: *“What did you notice in your body after moving like the sparkles?”*



HERE TO HELP

Week 7: Understanding Anger - Angry Feelings vs. Actions

This group session refers back to the “Big Feelings” story in Week 3 and normalizes “angry feelings”. The session supports participants to make the distinction between feeling angry and acting it out in ways that hurt themselves or others. Through puppets, story and discussion they learn they can talk to a trusted friend or other adult about this “big feeling” and understand the signals in the body, which helps to support self-regulation. Through mindful body awareness practices, they learn skills to support self-awareness.



“All parts of you, even the ones that are scary to feel...(or in the gray) All emotions are welcome. It’s what makes you YOU and they all fit together and make you the resilient person you are.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *anger is a normal feeling that all people experience; there are healthy ways of dealing with and expressing anger that do not involve hurting yourself or others; there are tools we can use to help us manage our angry feelings; anger can be a signal there are other feelings present such as hurt, disappointment, worry, shame, fear; some parents may be triggered by their children's expressions of anger.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; paper bags, markers, glue, a variety of collage materials; participants' journals; Family Kindness mural canvas; story books, *The Anger Inside* by Michelle Clayton or *A Little Spot's Anger Shield* by Diane Alber.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Energy, Breath, Release parts 1 and 2

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. Facilitators decide whether or not to add to the mural weekly.

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *The Anger Inside* by Michelle Clayton



For older children, *A Little Spot's Anger Shield* by Diane Alber

Creative Space Activity: Creating puppets

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Agenda Review: Review the agenda for tonight's group and let parents know the children will be given the message that all feelings are okay.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Energy, Breath, Release parts 1 and 2



Remind participants it is okay to stop if they feel uncomfortable and that it may help to look around to see the space and people they are with. Encourage them to rejoin when they are ready as breathing can help to deal with big feelings.

Facilitator: “Before we begin, remember, noticing is the important part of our mindfulness activities. When we experience anxiety, irritation or anger, breathing and noticing these feelings for a short time when we are in a safe place, helps us to build our ability to be okay with these uncomfortable feelings. Pausing and breathing help us to understand whether the big feeling of fighting, running away or being invisible are about what is happening now in the present moment or about something that happened before, in the past.”

Part 1

Facilitator: “Stand, sit or lie down with your arms relaxed and soft by your sides. Notice how your feet or body connect with the ground. Take a breath in and out, noticing where your feet or body connect with the ground (repeat two or more times) On the next breath squeeze your whole body as tight as you can and as you breathe out let your whole body and hands soften, as if they are floating in warm water. And again, as you breathe in, squeeze your whole body as tight as you can and as you breathe out let your whole body and hands soften as if they are floating in warm water (repeat several more times) Send a breath through your whole body, softening your whole body, letting the floor or chair hold your body.”



Part 2

Facilitator: “Spread the fingers of one hand and with the index finger of the other hand trace the spread fingers starting with your thumb breathing in as you trace up the thumb and breathing out as you trace down the thumb. Continue to the index finger breathing in as you trace up breathing out as you trace down, then middle finger, ring finger, little finger and return, ring finger, middle finger, index finger, thumb (as many times as the group can sustain).”

Facilitator: “In one word, what are you aware of in yourself right now?”



Additional Reflection Questions

How did it feel to tighten and squeeze?

What did you notice after you softened?

Community of Kindness Mural

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable in our group tonight as we talk about the feeling of anger?”*

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. What can we add that will help you feel safe and comfortable in group tonight as we learn about the feeling of anger?”*

Facilitators hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *The Anger Inside* by Michelle Clayton or *A Little Spot’s Anger Shield* by Diane Alber

Choose which book to read to the parents. Let the parents know if there is a children’s group reading a different story. Move directly into the creative space activity after the story.

Creative Space Activity: Puppets – a kind friend puppet and an anger puppet



The goal is for the anger puppet to show where it feels anger in its body, not to demonstrate how it behaves when angry.

Facilitator: *“Tonight, we are going to make a kind friend puppet and an anger puppet to help us understand the big feeling of anger. Using the paper bags and other materials, make a kind friend puppet, and an anger puppet. The anger puppet is not acting angry, but showing where it feels anger in its body so it can understand what is happening when it gets angry. When you are finished, the facilitators will put on a puppet show.”*

Journaling

Provide parents with the option to journal a dialogue with their puppets. Provide the script below, for parents to add to their journal and answer.

- **Kind Friend Creature:** *“Anger creature, when do you get really frustrated or angry?”*
- **Anger Creature:**
- **Kind Friend Creature:** *“Where in your body do you feel your anger? What does it feel like?”*
- **Anger Creature:**
- **Kind Friend Creature:** *“Are there some things you can do to help you feel steady when the big feeling of anger comes up?”*
- **Anger Creature:**

What was the important thing that came out of this playful interaction? How will it support your parenting, to support your child?

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

Group Sharing

Facilitator: “Do either of the puppets have a message or any new discoveries to share?”



Additional Reflection Questions

What was it like to choose the materials you used to create your puppet?

Is there anything from this activity you can take into your relationship with your child?

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our family, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

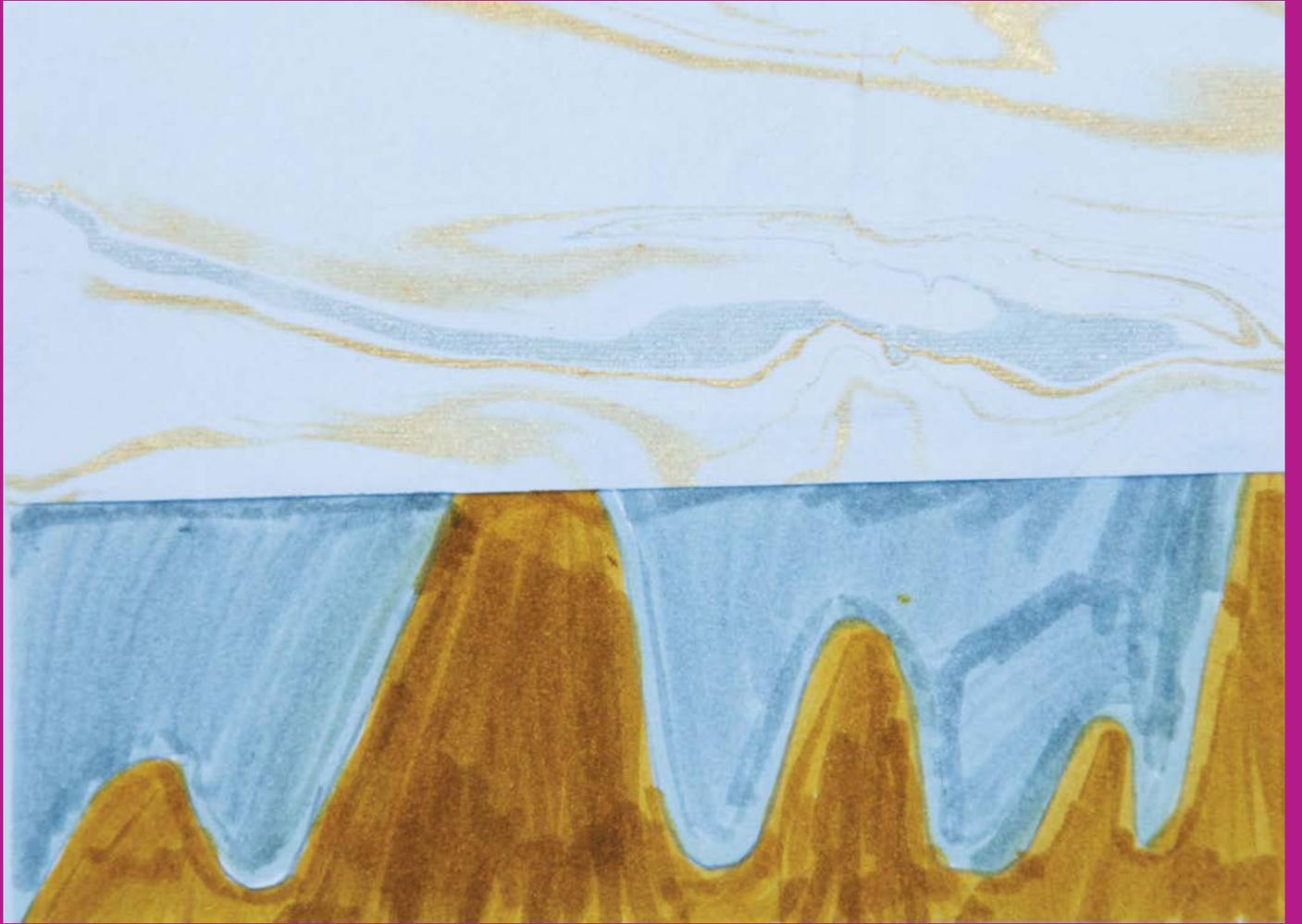
Facilitator: “What did you find out today that you could add to the mural? Write or draw what can help you when you are angry.”

Mindful Activity: Energy, Breath, Release

Facilitator: “Stand, sit or lie down with your arms relaxed and soft by your sides. Notice how your feet or body connect with the ground. Take a breath in and out, noticing where your feet or body connect with the ground (repeat two or more times). On the next breath squeeze your whole body as tight as you can and as you breathe out let your whole body and hands soften, as if they are floating in warm water. And again, as you breathe in, squeeze your whole body as tight as you can and as you breathe out let your whole body and hands soften as if they are floating in warm water (repeat several more times). Send a breath through your whole body, softening your whole body, letting the floor or chair hold your body.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? How did it feel to squeeze and release?”



HERE TO HELP

Week 8: Understanding Worry

Uncertainty around what may come next is a common experience for mothers/gender diverse parents and their children who have been exposed to domestic violence. Worry is a natural emotion and signals that we are unsure of what to expect or what may happen in the future. Through drawing, breathing activities, story and discussion, parents will be supported in exploring the experience of worry. Through recognizing what worry feels like and sounds like to them, they have an opportunity to recognize the things that help them and their children deal with and manage the worries they have.



“Let your worries go!”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *worry is a normal feeling that all people experience; sharing our worries with someone we trust can help us feel better; there are things we can do to help us manage the feeling of worry.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; paper, oil pastels, markers, paint, water colour pencils; participants' journals; Family Kindness mural canvas; story books, *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival or *How Big Are Your Worries Little Bear?* by Jayneen Sanders.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Play-Doh meditation

Option

Mind Bubbles: Sit with your spine straight and your body relaxed. As best as you can, let your body relax as you breathe in and as you breathe out. Imagine you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and blow out gently as though you were blowing a bubble through the wand. Now notice if there is anything you are worried about. Imagine what it looks like. When you are ready, breathe in again and when you breathe out, blow your worry through your bubble wand. Imagine, as the worry floats in the bubble, the bubble pops and disappears. Breathe in again and breathe out; blowing your worry through the bubble wand. Imagining as the worry floats in the bubble, the bubble pops and disappears. Keep breathing in and out a few more times, blowing out worries and letting them float pop and disappear.

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. Facilitators decide whether or not to add to the mural weekly.

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival or *How Big Are Your Worries Little Bear?* by Jayneen Sanders

Creative Space Activity: Scribble Art

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Agenda Review: Review the agenda for tonight's group. Let parents know the children will be reading a story called *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival which includes ways to manage worries.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Play-Doh meditation

Facilitator: *"Sitting comfortably, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Take a deep breath in from your nose, feeling your lungs and belly fill with air and exhale through your mouth. Repeat two more times. Now, pick up your chosen Play-Doh and open the container. Take the Play-Doh in your hands and just begin to notice it. Notice the texture and how it feels when you squeeze it. Notice the temperature, is it warm or cold? Notice if it has a smell. Notice if it is heavy or light in your hands. Take another deep breath in and now, begin to mold or shape the Play-Doh into a shape or form that shows how worry feels. Continue to breath in and out, trying not to change your breath, simply breathing as you work with the Play-Doh. Taking a few more moments to mold the dough."*

Allow participants up to one or two minutes to work on their Play-Doh forms.

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share how worry feels to them or what you notice in your body?"*

After sharing, invite the participants to roll their Play-Doh worries back into a "neutral" ball, place it back into the container and close the lid.

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable in our group tonight as we learn about the feeling of worry?"*

Facilitator: *"What can we add this week about how to feel safe and calm in the group today as we learn about the feeling of worry?"*

Facilitators hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival or *How Big Are Your Worries Little Bear?* by Jayneen Sanders

Choose which book to read to the parents. Let the parents know if there is a children's group reading a different story. Move directly into the creative space activity after the story.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Creative Space Activity: Scribble Art



Secure the corners with masking tape so the paper does not move around.

Facilitator: “Before we start, choose one or two colours of oil pastels. Stand or sit in front of your paper, with one oil pastel in each hand. Close your eyes if you like. Image the energy of a small-medium sized worry and when you are ready, scribble on the paper with your oil pastels, imagining the worry. You can take up as much space on the paper as you need to (Facilitators provide 30 – 45 seconds). Stop scribbling and take a moment to look at your scribble drawing and begin to notice the spaces. Taking water colour pencils or paint, or markers, start colouring in the spaces of your scribble art.”

Journaling

Provide parents with the option to journal: What is it like to look at your drawing, what do you notice? What was it like to fill in the spaces? Does your drawing have a title? Does the drawing have a message for you? Is there anything from this exercise that would support you when you think about worry?

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

Group Sharing

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share their image? What is it like to look at your drawing? If your drawing could talk to you, what it would it say?”

**Additional Reflection Questions**

What was it like to fill in the spaces?

Does your drawing have a title?

When you look at your drawing, what do you notice in your body?

Did you learn anything from making this scribble drawing that can help you with worries?

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our family, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: “On your kindness mural, add a kind thing that helps you when you are worried. Add something you learned today that can help when you are worried.”

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**Mindful Activity:** Waterfall of Compassion

Facilitator: *“Standing with your feet slightly apart, notice where your feet connect with the ground. Knees softened and your body as upright as possible. If you would like to, imagine that you are in a warm rainforest and that you are standing near a waterfall of love and compassion. Imagine that as you bring your arms up to chest level you could open a space in that waterfall as your arms and hands open to the side at chest level. And then allow your elbows to soften and your arms and hands to cross slightly in front of your body. As you inhale, opening a space in the waterfall, as you exhale, softening. Repeat a few more times. Allowing your arms to come to your sides. As you inhale, bringing the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, palms facing the ground up to shoulder height and then turning upward. Gathering in love and compassion from the waterfall and allowing that love and compassion to flow down the back of your body. Repeat, bringing the energy of the waterfall up from the ground and then with fingertips touching and palms facing down. Allowing love and compassion to flow down the front of the body. Repeat again, bringing the energy of the waterfall up from the ground and then allowing love and compassion to flow down the centre of your body. Hands coming to rest on your belly or your heart or one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. When you are ready, bring your attention back to the room and those around you.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What do you notice in yourself: a feeling, thought or sensation in your body?”*

“There was one that I really liked, the last one we did, actually, that was very meaningful for me, the scribble art, because we were filling up gaps, right? And I don’t know, I found a beauty on filling all those gaps and then it looks so beautiful and it make me I’m like, okay, sometimes you just see this very messy and entangled thing, but there’s always colour and light in that awful situation.”

– Parent participant

HERE TO HELP

Week 9: Family Changes: Bridging Loss and Grief to Hopes and Dreams

The intention of this group session is to acknowledge the changes that have taken place in the family, bring the family together giving both mothers/gender diverse parents and children a place to express their experience of the changes, through mindful and creative practices. These exercises support healthy attachment between parents and children.



“Future is BRIGHT! River can not go back.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: many families have gone through big and small changes; changes can be neutral, positive or negative or both; it is common for family members to have different thoughts, feelings and reactions about the changes that have happened; parents may experience new challenges and stresses related to parenting and their relationship with their children; it is common for children to miss the other parent or adult, even though they may not have liked the way that person behaved; it is common for children to wish for their families to return to the way they were before.

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; paper 5 x 7 and regular size, glue, variety of collage materials; paints, pastels; participants' journals; Family Kindness mural canvas; story books, *Help Your Dragon Deal with Change* by Steve Herman, *Perfect Square* by Michael Hall or *Little Tree* by Loren Long. Optional: musical instruments such as drums, shakers, tambourines, rain sticks, triangles, bells, chimes, etc.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Happy Hum

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. Facilitators decide whether or not to add to the mural weekly.

50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling

Story: *Help Your Dragon Deal with Change* by Steve Herman, *Perfect Square* by Michael Hall or *Little Tree* by Loren Long

Creative Space Activity: creating a collage about change



Provide a variety of creative collage materials, as well as paints, pastels and markers, to provide options for participants to choose their own way of engaging in the activity.

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Agenda Review: Review the agenda for tonight's group. Let parents know the children will be reading a story about change. Share with parents that it is common for family members to have different thoughts, feelings and reactions about the changes that have happened in their family.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Happy Hum: (just one note rather than a melody...one note sustains the out breath)



Remind participants it is okay to feel uncomfortable when trying something new. Encourage them to try their best and join when they are ready.

Facilitator: “Sit with your spine straight and your body relaxed. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes and close your lips. Breathe in deeply and as you breathe out find a note to hummmmmmmmm. Breathe in and hum as you breathe out. If you would like to, place your hands on your chest to notice the vibration of your humming or how your chest moves as you breathe in, and then hum. Repeat a few more times. Breathe in and let your humming send calm to your heart. Gradually let your humming get quieter and softer. As we end, take three soft, full breaths.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “What was it like to hum? What was it like to hear the other group members hum? What are you aware of yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body.”

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: “Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable in our group tonight as we explore the changes that happened in our families?”

Facilitator: “Is there anything new to add this week about how to feel safe and calm in the group today as we explore the changes that happened in our families?”

Facilitators hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**50 minutes: story, creative space, journaling**

Story: *Help Your Dragon Deal with Change* by Steve Herman, *Perfect Square* by Michael Hall or *Little Tree* by Loren Long

Choose which book to read to the parents. Let the parents know if there is a children's group reading a different story. Move directly into the creative space activity after the story.

Creative Space Activity: creating a collage about change

Facilitator: *"Thinking about what change is like for you, in your family, at your workplace, school, or with friends. You might think about what the challenges are, the surprises, your hopes and dreams, what you like about the way your family is now. Chose art supplies that appeal to you to create a collage. You can use a 5 x 7 card or 8.5 x 11 piece of paper. There is no wrong way to create this collage."*



Encourage participants to focus on their own creative process. It may help to provide the option of sitting in another part of the room (if the space allows for it) for any participant who would like a quieter area to work in.

Journaling

Provide parents with the option to journal: How are boundaries, roles and responsibilities different in the way your family is now? What do you like about your family the way it is now? Is there anything that you discovered in this process that can support your children with their experiences of change?

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time**Group Sharing**

Facilitator: *"What was it like to create your collage with these materials? Is there anything you discovered that can support you and your children?"*

**Additional Reflection Questions**

Does your collage have a title?

Does your collage have a message for you?

Is there anything that you discovered in this process that can support you with the changes in your family, school, work, friends?

What do you like about the way your family is now?

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: *"Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye****Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: "What are some of the things you like or look forward to, the way your family is now?"

Mindful Activity: Happy Hum

Facilitator: "Sit with your spine straight and your body relaxed. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes and close your lips. Breathe in deeply and as you breathe out find a note to hummmmmmmmm. Breathe in and hum as you breathe out. If you would like to, place your hands on your chest to notice the vibration of your humming or how your chest moves as you breathe in, and then hum. Repeat a few more times. Breathe in and let your humming send calm to your heart. Gradually let your humming get quieter and softer. As we end, take three soft, full breaths."

Option

Group Rhythm (musical instruments are optional if available)

Facilitator: "For this activity, each person creates a simple sound that they can repeat. Choose something simple that you will be able to keep going. One person will begin, then and then the person sitting next to them will add their sound, and we will continue until everyone has joined in. We will end by one person stopping, then the person next to them will stop until everyone has stopped making their sound."

Reflection

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body? What was it like to make music that way?"



HERE TO HELP

Week 10: Looking Back, Looking Forward

In this group session mothers/gender diverse parents and their children reflect on what they have learned, and/or what has changed for them over the sessions.



Resilient Tree

“A tree does not start off as a tree. It starts from a tiny seed or bud. It grows as you feed it, water it & care for it. Season change but your tree stands strong, its roots grounded. The tree grows tall and beautiful, weathers storms & surpass its trials & tribulations. I too one day wish to become like the resilient tree. Standing tall, strong & ready to face any challenge.” By: SM

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *it is okay to feel sad that the group is ending; we can recognize the things we liked and learned about our time together and think of how to carry this with us after the group has ended; we can continue to create special family time with our children through art activities, story time, game night, etc.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness mural; well-being kit items: small pencil case or make up bag, small flashlight, whistle, one candy, one fuzzy, stress ball, packet of hot chocolate, a bandaid; story book, *The Mountain That Loved a Bird* by Alice McLerran; optional story book, *A Little Spot Emotion Coach* by Diane Alber; medium-sized rectangular cards; variety of art materials: markers, paint, collage items etc.; optional, musical instruments such as drums, shakers, tambourines, rain sticks, triangles, bells, chimes, etc.; participants' journals; Family Kindness mural canvas.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Group Rhythm

Community of Kindness Mural: Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2.

50 minutes: story, well-being kit, creative space, journaling

Story: *The Mountain That Loved a Bird* by Alice McLerran or *A Little Spot Emotion Coach* by Diane Alber

Well-being Kit: assembling a kit to support feelings and safety based on what participants have learned about taking care of feelings and being safe during the program

Creative Space Activity: Three Cards



Provide a variety of creative collage materials, as well as paints, pastels and markers, to provide options for participants to choose their own way of creating the cards.

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group and share the activities the children will be engaging in: for the younger children, a guessing game video about feelings called Inside Out: Guessing the Feelings; and for the older children, a Jeopardy game focused on feelings. Let parents know if the older children's groups will be reading *A Little Spot Emotion Coach* by Diane Alber.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: Group Rhythm

This activity can be implemented with or without musical instruments. A facilitator begins with a simple beat that participants can follow. Next, one participant joins in by making their sound, using the same beat as the facilitator, then the person next to that participant adds their sound using the same beat – this continues until all participants have added their sound to the group rhythm. To end the group rhythm, the facilitator stops, then each participant stops, one by one.



It is important the activity starts in silence as this encourages participants to listen to the beat and to each other's sound.



To continue the activity, in the second round, the facilitator starts with a simple beat, then the participants join whenever they are ready, using the same beat for their sound. For a final round, the facilitator begins and everyone joins in with their own beat or rhythm.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What was it like to make your sound or play your instrument? What was it like to listen to the sounds around you? What are you aware of yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body?”*

Community of Kindness Mural



If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Is there anything on the mural that is drawing your attention or that you are noticing tonight? Is there anything that will help you feel safe and comfortable in our group tonight as we talk about what we have learned in our time together?”*

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how to feel safe and calm in the group today?”*

Facilitators hang the mural in its chosen location once everyone has had a chance to add an image or words.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

50 minutes: well-being kit, story, creative space, journaling**Well-being Kit**

Group participants assemble their well-being kit, choosing some or all of the items to add. Discuss how the different items may help with self care.

Facilitator: *"We are going to make a wellness kit with some things that can help us to feel safe and help us take care of our feelings. How can these items help us to take care of our feelings? (Review each item) Who can you talk to about your feelings? What can you do if you feel unsafe?"*

Story: *The Mountain That Loved a Bird* by Alice McLerran

Reflection:

Facilitator: *"Taking a moment to reflect on the story, what stood out for you? What thoughts do you have about the theme of the story? What message did this story have for you?"*



Facilitators may choose to not read a story and move directly to the creative activity.

Creative Space Activity: Three Cards

Facilitator: *"Today we will be looking back at our time together. For our art activity tonight, everyone will create three cards. I'll tell you what to add to each card. When we have finished making all three cards, we will be able to share them with the others in the group."*

On the first card, draw or write, what did you bring to the group?

On the second card, draw or write, what did you get from the group?

On the third card, write or draw, what will you take with you from the group?"

Journaling

Provide parents with the option to journal. What have you learned about your child/ren during the program? What have you learned about your parenting? How has your relationship with your child/ren changed, if at all?

Group Sharing

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share their cards? You decide what you would like to share."*

20 minutes: group sharing, transition to family time**Transition to Family Time**

Facilitator: *"Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth; in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: *“What have you learned about kindness during your time in the group?”*



Additional Reflection Questions

What stands out to you on your Family Kindness mural?

What was it like to make this mural together?

Was there anything you learned about each other from making the mural together?

Mindful Activity: Group Rhythm

This activity can be implemented with or without musical instruments. A facilitator begins with a simple beat that participants can follow. Next, one participant joins in by making their sound, using the same beat as the facilitator, then the person next to that participant adds their sound using the same beat. This continues until all participants have added their sound to the group rhythm. To end the group rhythm, the facilitator stops, then each participant stops, one by one.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What was it like to make your sound or play your instrument? What was it like to listen to the sounds around you?”*



HERE TO HELP

Week 11: Celebrating Our Time Together

In this closing group session, families take time to appreciate and celebrate their journey through the program.



[No message]
– Seven year-old

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**AT A GLANCE:**

Key messages to parents: endings can bring up mixed feelings - sad that the group is ending and proud of the accomplishments made during the program; saying goodbye brings the opportunity to wish everyone congratulations for their hard work during the program, the group ending provides an opportunity to do new things.

Materials needed: story book, *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst, 5 x 7 cards, markers, crayons, participants' journals, Family Kindness mural.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review**30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural**

Mindfulness: a favourite mindfulness from the program

Option: The Heart

Community of Kindness Mural: reflecting on what it means to be kind

50 minutes: story and movement, creative space, sharing

Story and Movement: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

Creative Space Activity: Kindness Card

50 minutes: celebration, closing mindfulness

Facilitators and families gather to honour participants' journey in the program.

At the end of this final session, each family takes home their Family Kindness Mural along with their certificates and the parents' journals.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity: Review the agenda for tonight's group.

30 minutes: mindfulness, community of kindness

Mindfulness: a favourite mindfulness from the program

Option

The Heart

Participants pick their own heart bead blindly from a bag.

Facilitator: *"Please hold the object in your palm. Take a moment to look at the object. Notice its shape and texture. Perhaps noticing how it feels in the palm of your hand, its weight. Noticing how it catches the light. Noticing its colours; its smoothness; its curves. Perhaps turning it over and noticing the other side. And now recognizing how this is a heart shape. Noticing any thoughts which may have come up; emotions or body sensations. What is it like to hold your heart in your hand?"* (pause).

"Now hand your heart to the person on your right and accept another's heart from the left. Noticing this heart; its colours and texture; its curves. Notice any thoughts you may be having; perhaps of missing your own heart or liking one heart more than the other. Perhaps noticing if you hold this heart more gently or with more care. What is it like to hold another's heart in your hand?" (pause).

"And now receive your original heart back, noting any thoughts, emotions and body sensations. What would it be like to know that we can care for our own heart as well as we care for another's heart? Being thoughtful about how we take care of ourselves and about what it means to offer ourselves kindness and compassion; to be thoughtful about how we take care of ourselves as we continue on the journey that started here, in our group. Keep this heart as a reminder of how we might take care of ourselves and as a reminder of your time in the group."

Reflection

Facilitator: *"What are you aware of yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body?"*

Community of Kindness Mural

Participants can read what is on the mural, with facilitators supporting this process.

Facilitator: *"What stands out for you on the mural? What does it mean to be kind?"*

50 minutes: story and movement, creative space, group sharing

Story: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

After the story, engage in a movement activity which reflects how the invisible string keeps people connected even when they are not together. Facilitators take part in this as well. This can be a dance movement or a very small movement; each participant chooses what is right for them. After each person has made a movement, the movement is repeated more quickly, creating a flow, almost like a "wave" created in sports stadiums. Adapt this activity to fit the participants in your group.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Facilitator: *“Today we will be celebrating our time together. Through a movement, we will share with each other how the invisible string keeps us connected, even when we don’t see each other. If your string could dance or move, what would it look like? We are going to go around the circle and each person will have an opportunity to create a movement.”* (After everyone has created a movement) *“Now, each person is going to make a movement right away after the person beside them has finished. Let’s try to make a movement wave.”*

Option

After each person’s movement, the other group members can mirror the same movement.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What was it like to move in that way? Is there a message in your movement you would like to share?”*

Creative Space Activity: Kindness Card

Participants acknowledge and share what they appreciated about each other. Each participant is given a 5 x 7 card, and each group member adds words or images, something kind, that they remember about that person.

Group Sharing

Facilitator: *“What was it like to share kind words with the other group members? What important thing will you remember about coming to this program?”*

50 minutes: celebration, closing mindfulness

Families gather together. Each participant receives a certificate and is recognized for their participation in the program. At the end of this final session, each family takes home their Family Kindness Mural along with their certificates and the parents’ journals. One facilitator leads everyone in a final mindfulness practice.

Options

Up and Down the Mountain (Week 1)

Butterfly Hug (Week 2)

Happy Hum (Week 9)

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 1: Introductions and Belonging

Adventures in Sharing invites all group participants to share images and words of wisdom on cards they create each week. The intention of each card is for participants to demonstrate something they have learned about themselves from Here to Help, that helped them and to share these learnings with someone who may have encountered experiences of domestic violence, as they did themselves. At the end of the program, each participant will choose one or two cards they would like to be printed and made into copies. The chosen cards are carefully reproduced and all of the participants' artwork is compiled to create one collective deck of cards. The deck of cards will be shared with other agencies that support children and their caregivers who are going through significant changes in their families, where the images and words might help them to feel comforted and that they are not alone. Group participants get all of their original artwork back at the end of the process, as well as their own community deck of cards.



AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *you are not alone; you are in a safe place, you have wisdom to share, you have a right to speak and be heard, you can make your own choices about how you'd like to participate in group.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child, 8.5 x 11 envelopes for each child, variety of art materials: paper, markers, crayons, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family. [Relaxing Music For Children – Be Calm and Focused \(cute animals\) | 3 Hours Extended Mix.](#)



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

30 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Families are welcomed to the program. Mothers/gender diverse parents and children are taken to their group rooms.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural, Imaginary Ball

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain

Community of Kindness Mural: This visual arts activity brings children together in a community of kindness and supports them in recognizing internal resources through the creation of images that the facilitators and children can refer to throughout the weeks they are together. Participants are invited to reflect on the images and recognize the various ways in which they have agreed to treat each other in both the physical and listening space during their time in group.

Imaginary Ball: This activity brings the group together through play, movement and imagination. It invites connection and choice within the frame of the activity. It is inclusive and non-competitive.

30 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards: Working independently and as quietly as possible, children are invited to create a reflection card each week that will include an image on one side and words on the other. The card is a small representation about what helped them and what words of wisdom they would share with a friend. This card will become a series of cards and after each group, facilitators will place each child's completed card in an envelope with the child's name on it. At the end of the program, children will choose their favourite card to include in the community card deck.

Transition to Family Time: A mindful pause before transitioning to the next activity.

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

Each week, families will come together at the end of group to work on a Family Kindness mural.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

30 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Families are welcomed as they arrive and both mothers/gender diverse parents and their children are taken to the children's designated group rooms. Once children are settled into their rooms and given their name tags, mothers/gender diverse parents go to their group room. Facilitators introduce themselves, explain their roles and briefly review the agenda. A countdown activity that helps to keep track of the number of group sessions remaining will be introduced. Facilitators choose their own countdown activity.

Facilitator: *"Today, we are going to get to know each other and go over what will happen each week you come to the program. We're also going to keep track of our weeks together."*

Key points to be explained:

- Each week, the activities for the session will be shared.
- Before going home, families will work on an art activity together.
- Group members are encouraged to participate in a way that feels right for them either by sharing through their words, their artwork, or by listening.
- Facilitators may directly ask if someone would like to share to make sure that everyone has had a chance to be heard. Anyone can say "pass" if they choose not to share.

About Adventures in Sharing

Facilitator: *"When you came to the Here to Help group, you knew the one thing that was the same for all the families was that children had seen or heard fighting at home. Here to Help was a safe place where you could meet other children and know that you are not alone. Adventures in Sharing is like Here to Help. It is a safe place to talk about how to manage big overwhelming feelings and how to support each other in our group and as a family with those feelings. We know that you learned some things about yourself that helped you and hope you will share the things that you learned with other children who have seen or heard fighting at home. In Adventures in Sharing, we invite you to make a reflection card each week about the things you learned that helped you."*

Children Introductions: Children introduce themselves and say their favourite colour or animal.



Facilitators can choose their own introduction game.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural**Mindfulness:** Up and Down the Mountain

Facilitator: “Each week when we get together, we are going to start off our group with a mindful activity. Does anyone know what mindfulness is? Have you participated in mindfulness activities? Mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening right now in your mind and body as best as you can and being kind to yourself. We will do mindfulness activities that will help us to get ready to be together and to learn about ourselves. Mindfulness can help us manage big feelings and it might help with focusing on activities too. It is very important that you do what is comfortable for you. This week, we are going to do Up and Down the Mountain.”



It is important that the activity starts in silence, as this provides participants with a moment for reflection and an opportunity to listen to their own bodies.

Facilitator: “Begin by sitting as tall as you can in this moment, just sitting softly tall. Feel where your feet touch the floor. Notice how the chair holds your body. Try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other into the floor. The floor and chair are gently supporting your feet and your body. Perhaps you would like to imagine sending a breath all the way down to the bottom of your feet and tips of your toes. Now send another breath throughout your whole body. Take one of your hands with your palm facing you and spread your fingers open. With the index finger of your other hand, begin to trace a path. Starting with your little finger, trace it ‘up the mountain’ as you breath in and trace your finger ‘down the mountain’ as you breathe out. Continue breathing up and down the mountain until you reach the tip of your thumb and begin to retrace your path. When you are ready, bring your attention back to the group.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “What do you notice in yourself after doing that kind of breathing? Or what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It could be a word that reflects an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”

Community of Kindness Mural

Facilitator: “We are going to create a kindness mural for our group. We call it the Community of Kindness mural and it will show how we can treat each other while we are here together. Before we start, let’s think about the things that make us feel good. What are some things that make you feel good (playing, friends, hugs, etc.)? Let’s add your answers to the paper. You can draw or use words.”

Reflection: Before moving on to the second part of the activity, give each child an opportunity to share what they added to the mural. One child speaks at a time. This is a time for listening to one another.

Facilitator: “Now that we can see the different things that make us feel good, let’s think about how we can treat each other when we are together, so we can all feel good in the group. How can we treat each other and be kind to each other? What is important for us to remember about how we treat each other in the group? Everyone will be able to add their answers to the mural.”

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Facilitators support children to add their answers to the mural. Facilitators will also add to the mural and include the following if they have not been generated by the group:

- Confidentiality – explain the limits and guidelines.
- Respect each other's opinions. Hurtful language or words that put others down will not be allowed.
- Participate in a way that feels right for each person. This may be by showing what has been created, or by listening and talking. Different people might participate in different ways and that's okay.
- Being kind with each other by listening, waiting our turn and supporting one another.

Give each child an opportunity to share what they added to the mural. One child speaks at a time. This is a time for listening to one another.

Reflection: “What was it like to make this mural together?” Let the children know that each week the group will come back to this Community of Kindness mural to remember how we want to be together, and see if there is anything else we need to add.



Imaginary Ball: coming together through play, movement and imagination

If time permits, this is a fun activity that invites connection amongst group members. Group members stand in a circle. The facilitator begins by passing around an imaginary ball, placing it carefully in the hands of the person beside them. Each person passes the imaginary ball to the next person until everyone has had the chance to receive and pass it on. On the second time around, the imaginary ball can change size and weight or stay the same from person to person. On the third time around, the imaginary ball can become any type of ball and be passed to anyone in the circle. The facilitator ensures that everyone has a turn, and then “disappears” the imaginary ball when the activity is over.

30 minutes: reflection card, transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about what makes you feel good. If it feels more comfortable, you can start by choosing a favourite colour or a colour that makes you feel good and create an image using the single colour. When you're finished, turn the card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about what makes you feel good or how to settle and calm down. You get to decide what to put on the card.” **Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.**



For children who finish their cards quickly, offer other art prompts and materials.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another child who might be have heard fighting at home?”

Facilitators place each child's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."


 Option

Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye**Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: "Each family will have a chance to create a Family Kindness mural. You can use the canvas and markers. We will be adding to this mural every week we are together. Before we start, let's think of what it means to be kind. Does anyone know what it means to be kind (ex., being thoughtful, friendly, helpful to another person, etc.)? How do you feel when someone is being kind to you (ex., it feels good)? Today, we are going to draw or write on the canvas, things that make you feel good when you're with your parent or your friends, your siblings, pets, cousins or other people you spend time with. We'll give you a little bit of time to do that." Once completed, ask if anyone would like to share what they put on their mural.

Mindful Activity: Up and Down the Mountain

Facilitator: "Before we say goodbye, let's breathe up and down the mountain like we did at the beginning of the group."


 Option

Music to accompany the movement: Relaxing Music for Children - Be Calm and Focused KIDZEN - Music for Kids.

Reflection

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, we invite you to share one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now. It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body."

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 2: Self-Compassion

Self-compassion means treating yourself with the same care, kindness and understanding as you would a friend, especially in difficult moments. For participants who have experienced trauma, self-compassion can promote healing and support emotional resilience. Practicing self-compassion through mindfulness, movement, art creation and self-reflection tools can help children navigate their experiences with love and compassion, rather than moving forward with feelings of shame or guilt.



“Love yourself be kind to yourself because you are special.”

– Seven year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *self-compassion can help us manage painful thoughts and feelings when we encounter difficult experiences; self-compassion increases our self-awareness and resilience; it is important to be kind and compassionate towards yourself.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each child; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family; story book: *Listening with My Heart: A Story of Kindness and Self-Compassion* by Gabi Garcia.

Special equipment needed: a hand drum



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Waterfall of Love and Compassion

Options

Compassionate Body Scan: Letting go of regrets from the past or worries about the future, begin the mindfulness by bringing loving attention to the different parts of your body, noticing any discomfort and allowing any tension to soften. If it feels comfortable for you, rest a hand over your heart, feeling this soothing and comforting touch. If difficult feelings arise, try repeating some loving kindness phrases in your mind and end with compassion for your entire body, loving and appreciating your mind and body as they are now.

Body Scan with Liquid Sunlight: Sitting with your eyes closed, imagine a steady stream of warm sunlight flowing through your body. Allow the sunlight to wash away any tension and watch as it flows down, bringing with it a sense of ease and comfort.

Community of Kindness Mural

This week continues the process of recognizing how group members agree to treat each other and the group space during the program. Participants are encouraged to add new images or words to the mural.

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: *Listening with My Heart: A Story of Kindness and Self-Compassion* by Gabi Garcia

Movement: Dance Freeze with Drum

Creative Space: Create an image that reflects movements from the dance.

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children. If new children are present, facilitators and participants share their names and a favourite colour and review the purpose of the group.

Facilitator: *“Welcome to our new group members. Everyone is here because there was fighting in their family. Our group is a safe place where we can meet and know that we are not alone. Some of us might be excited, or nervous or maybe both and that is okay. Adventures in Sharing is like Here to Help - it is a safe place to talk about how to deal with our feelings. In Adventures in Sharing, we invite you to make a card each week about the things you learned that could help someone else who has had similar experiences.”*

Agenda Review and Countdown Activity

Review this week's agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Waterfall of Love and Compassion (optional mindfulness activities)

Facilitator: *“Each week, we are going to start off our group with a mindful activity. Mindfulness can help us manage big feelings and it may help with our focus too. It is very important that you do what is comfortable for you. This week, we are going to do the Waterfall of Love and Compassion.”*



For mindfulness practices that involve movement, it is good trauma-informed practice to demonstrate parts of this practice before asking participants to do it all together.

Starting with hands by the sides, slowly raise the arms outward on either side of the body while keeping palms facing down. Once the arms reach shoulder height, turn palms upward, and if possible continue raising them overhead. Let the fingertips meet. Then interlock the fingers and slowly lower hands in front of the body. When the arms are back to a fully downward position, release the interlocked fingers and return hands to the sides of the body, before starting again.

Facilitator: *“Standing or sitting as tall as you can be in this moment, notice where your feet connect with the floor or the surface you are sitting on. You can lower your eyes if that feels right for you in this moment. Begin to notice your breath as you inhale and as you exhale. You don't need to change it in any way, just one breath in and one breath out. Imagine that we are in a rainforest, somewhere warm, with the sun shining through the tall trees. Imagine that you can hear birds singing and close by the sounds of a waterfall. Imagine that this is a waterfall of love and compassion. With your palms facing the ground bring the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, right up over your head and with fingertips touching. Breathing out bring love and compassion down into your body, right to the soles of your feet. Breathing in bring the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, overhead and with fingertips together. As you breathe out bring love and compassion into your body. Repeat the movement once more and on your last breath out, rest one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. Breathe in and breathe out, noticing what you are present with in this moment. Then slowly bring your attention back to the room and the people around you.”*

Facilitator: *“What do you notice in yourself after doing that kind of breathing? Or what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”*

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Community of Kindness Mural: Review the mural and provide an opportunity for new and returning group members to add any new images or words.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything on the mural that would help you to feel safe and calm in the group today?”* This is a conversation about what makes a community of kindness.

This week, facilitators and children decide where to hang the mural in the group room, choosing a blank wall and placing it where it can easily be accessed by everyone in the group.

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: *Listening with My Heart: A Story of Kindness and Self-Compassion* by Gabi Garcia

Facilitator: *“Today, we will be talking about self-compassion. Does anyone know what self-compassion is? Self-compassion is a way of showing ourselves love, care, and kindness. We are going to read a book to help us better understand self-compassion.”*

Movement: Dance Freeze with Drum

Facilitator: *“As a group listen to the drum and the drum will tell your body how to move; it may be slow and smooth, or fast and spiky. Try moving close to the ground, to the side, up high, or all around. When the drum begins again, start your movement. When the drum stops, freeze like a statue.”*



Creative Space

The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity – reflection cards.

Facilitator: *“Show the movements from your dance on a big sheet of paper using a marker colour of choice. When the movement has been expressed onto the paper, write one word about how your body feels after the dance freeze.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What was it like to move and then freeze with the drum? Remember, you can say ‘pass’ if you don’t want to share.”*



Additional Reflection Questions

*Are there other times you could do this? With a parent? Your friends?
If you could give your image a title, what would it be called?*

CHILDREN'S GROUP

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: "Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about what self-compassion means to you. When you are finished, turn the card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about why self-compassion is important or what you can do to be kind, caring and loving to yourself. You get to decide what to put on the card."

Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.

Offer children the option to use the markers, paint, and/or collage materials in the group bin. For the remainder of the program, additional art materials are also provided and children are encouraged to experiment with these items when creating their images on their cards:

- Sponges can create interesting textures when using paint.
- Painter's tape can be applied before adding mediums like paint or pastels to the card and then removed afterwards to create various patterns and designs.
- Small pieces of plasticine can be spread onto the card using the fingers to blend in.



For children who finish their cards quickly, offer other art prompts and materials.

Facilitator: "Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another child who might be have heard fighting at home?"

Facilitators place each child's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye**Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: *“On your kindness mural, draw or write things that you do together or can do together as a family to show kindness and love to each other.”* Once completed, ask if anyone would like to share what they put on their mural.

Mindful Activity: Waterfall of Love and Compassion

Facilitator: *“Standing or sitting as tall as you can be in this moment, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or the surface you are sitting on. You can lower your eyes if that feels right for you in this moment. Begin to notice your breath as you inhale and as you exhale. You don’t need to change it in any way, just one breath in and one breath out. Imagine that we are in a rainforest, somewhere warm, with the sun shining through the tall trees. Imagine that you can hear birds singing, and close by the sounds of a waterfall. Imagine that this is a waterfall of love and compassion. With your palms facing the ground bring the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, right up over your head and with fingertips touching. Breathing out bring love and compassion down into your body, right to the soles of your feet. Breathing in bring the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, overhead and with fingertips together. As you breathe out bring love and compassion into your body. Repeat the movement once more and on your last breath out, rest one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. Breathe in and breathe out, noticing what you are present with in this moment. Then slowly bring your attention back to the room and the people around you.”*

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”*

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 3: Feelings

This group is a safe place for participants to talk about how to manage feelings that may feel overwhelming at times and support each other in group and as a family during the process. Through movement, mindfulness, art making, and self-reflection, participants learn that they are not alone in experiencing a range of feelings and learn tools to help them recognize, label and better manage the feelings, thoughts and sensations in their bodies.



“It’s okay to have feelings. Everyone has them!”

– Seven year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *all feelings are okay; our feelings can make us feel different sensations in our body; naming feelings can help us to better understand them and calm them down; there are productive ways to manage our feelings.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each child; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family; story book: *The Grand Hotel of Feelings* by Lidia Brankovic.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain: moving the body

Community of Kindness Mural

Hang the mural in the agreed location chosen in Week 2. In the weeks ahead, facilitators decide whether or not to add to the mural weekly. It may be enough to simply bring the participants' attention to the mural as a reminder of how the group has agreed to treat each other and the group space. Children can read what is already there and facilitators can support this process.

30 minutes: story, creative space

Story: *The Grand Hotel of Feelings* by Lidia Brankovic

Creative Space: Creating a feelings image and responding to the image with a movement.

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children, briefly review the agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain: moving the body

Facilitator: *“This week, we are going to do Up and Down the Mountain, but this time we are going to do it standing or sitting, and using our whole body. Standing or sitting as upright as you can keep your feet slightly apart, arms softly at your sides. If you would like to, you can imagine your feet having roots that go way down into the ground. Breathe in right from the soles of your feet, up through your body and bring your arms up until the tips of your fingers are reaching towards the ceiling, like a tree reaching up towards the sky. As you breathe out, bend your body and reach down towards the floor. Breathing in and reaching up, breathing out and reaching down. Breathe in and stretch your arms out to the side. Breathe out and bring your arms across your body to give yourself a big hug.”*

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body after breathing and stretching our bodies in these different ways? What thoughts or feelings are you noticing?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? What would help you feel safe and comfortable as we talk about feelings today?”*

30 minutes: story, creative space

Story: *The Grand Hotel of Feelings* by Lidia Brankovic

Reflection

Facilitator: *“After listening to the story, can you name some other feelings that might visit? What are some ways to manage or make space for these feelings?”*

Creative Space: Feelings and Movement



The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Facilitator: Part One – “How many different kinds of feelings can you name? Can you name a feeling and show a movement?” Each child gets a chance to participate before moving to the creative space.

Facilitator: Part Two – “Take a sheet of the large kraft paper and choose oil pastels, crayons or markers. As you think about all of the different kinds of feelings there are, choose colours and express your movement onto the paper that correspond to different feelings. You might choose to make a picture about one feeling or many. There is no right or wrong way to do this, just like there are no right or wrong feelings. Feel what is right for you.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “Notice what you feel or think right now. What was it like to make this picture? Is there is a song or a dance that comes from your picture?”

**Additional Reflection Questions**

Does your image have a title?

What are the different feelings that you have?

Where do you feel them in your body?

Why did you express your feelings with these movements and colours?

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about feelings. When you are finished, turn the card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about how you understand your feelings, or what helps you calm down when you are feeling sad, mad, frustrated, worried, happy or excited? You get to decide what to put on the card.”

Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.



For children who finish their cards quickly, offer other art prompts and materials.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another child who might be have heard fighting at home?”

Facilitators place each child's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: *“On your kindness mural this week, add kind things that you and your family do or can do to take care of feelings. Your images and words can be about how you care for your own feelings and how you care for each other’s feelings.”*

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain

Facilitator: *“This week, we are going to do Up and Down the Mountain, but this time we are going to do it standing or sitting, and using our whole body. Standing or sitting as upright as you can keep your feet slightly apart, arms softly at your sides. If you would like to, you can imagine your feet having roots that go way down into the ground. Breathe in right from the soles of your feet, up through your body and bring your arms up until the tips of your fingers are reaching towards the ceiling, like a tree reaching up towards the sky. As you breathe out, bend your body and reach down towards the floor. Breathing in and reaching up, breathing out and reaching down. Breathe in and stretch your arms out to the side. Breathe out and bring your arms across your body to give yourself a big hug.”*

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”*



ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 4: Big Feelings

We all encounter big emotions for various reasons, and when faced with overwhelming feelings that are hard to process, we can be led to react in ways that may not be helpful to us or those around us. These emotions often signal that our sympathetic nervous system is activated, indicating that something significant is happening, which can overwhelm our thinking brain and trigger automatic responses like fight, flight, and freeze. Fortunately, practices that focus on mindful body awareness and arts-based sensory activities can help engage the parasympathetic nervous system, returning us back to a sense of safety and calm.



"Big feelings are okay."

– Five year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *big feelings are trying to communicate with us; the activated responses when we are triggered are called, fight, flight, and freeze; these reactions are normal responses when the body is trying to protect itself from danger; there are emotional regulation tools like arts-based activities you can use to return to a feeling of safety.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each child; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family; story book: *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings* by Britney Winn Lee.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Press and Release

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings* by Britney Winn Lee

Movement: Awakening Feelings and Sensations

Creative Space: Capturing feelings and sensations on paper

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children, briefly review the agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Press and Release

Facilitator: *"This week, we are going to do Press and Release. This breathing, pressing and releasing can be something that supports you when you have big feelings. Big feelings are normal, especially after you have seen or heard fighting at home. Begin by sitting or standing, softly upright. You may close your eyes or lower your gaze. Can you feel where your feet touch the floor? Try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other into the floor. Trust that the floor or chair is gently holding your body. Perhaps you would like to imagine sending a breath all the way down to the bottom of your feet and the tips of your toes. Take a deep breath in and press one foot into the ground. As you breathe out, slowly relax your foot. Repeat on the other foot. Do this three times at your own pace. Next, take your hands and clasp them together. On your next in breath, press your hands together. On your next out breath slowly release your hands. Do this three times at your own pace. Moving towards the face, on your next in breath, tense your face muscles as tight as you can and on your out breath, relax your face. Do this three times at your own pace. After the last pressing and release, allow all the energy inside your body to settle into stillness. In the stillness count, to yourself, three breaths. Notice how your body feels now, just standing or sitting down still."*

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body after pressing and releasing our bodies in these different ways? What thoughts or feelings are you noticing?"*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let's have a look at what we already have on the mural."*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *"Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything that you would like to add that will help with your feelings, especially when those feelings seem big and overwhelming?"*

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings* by Britney Winn Lee

Reflection

Facilitator: *"Silently raise your hand if you've ever felt the way that the boy in the story feels. How did the boy and the girl who was crying show each other kindness? What discovery did the boy make to help him learn to accept all of his big, big feelings?"*

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Movement: Awakening Feelings and Sensations

Facilitator: “Begin by standing with your legs about hip width apart. One by one, press your feet into the ground and feel the surface supporting your body. Once you feel comfortable and supported, we are going to awaken our bodies and senses. Start by gently bending down to lightly tap your feet with your hands and slowly move up the body until you reach your head (be especially gentle with your face). Next, begin to roll your shoulders backwards three times. Try to follow your breath and move at your own pace. After the third rotation, change direction and roll your shoulders forward three more times. Pause. Next, start shaking out your arms one by one. Pause. Now, shake out your legs one by one. Notice where the energy in your body wants to move and move with it (freestyle movement). After your movement is complete, come to stillness and take a moment to connect your breath and the energy flowing throughout your body. In your mind, notice if you can identify any big feelings or sensations in your body. If big feelings are being revealed to you, think about where in the body your emotion is sitting (ex., stomach, chest, throat).”

Creative Space: Feelings and Movement

The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

Facilitator: “Take a piece of the large kraft paper and with the markers, crayons, or oil pastels, create an abstract image of the feelings and sensations that appeared to you during your movements. Just as in the story, show what these feelings and sensations look like using various colours, lines, and shapes on the paper.”

Reflections

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share their art and if it has a title or a name? What was it like to move and discover the different feelings and sensations in your body? What are the different feelings and sensations that you noticed? How does movement and expression help you with big feelings and sensations?”

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about what helps you deal with big feelings. When you are finished, turn the card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about how you take care of big feelings when they come up? You get to decide what to put on the card.” **Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.**



For children who finish their cards quickly, offer other art prompts and materials.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another child who might be have heard fighting at home?”

Facilitators place each child's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: "On your kindness mural this week, add kind what you do as a family to take care of big feelings when they come up. What kind of things help you and your family to deal with big feelings?"

Mindfulness: Breathing Hand on Heart, Hand on Belly

Facilitator: "Sitting as upright as you are able to in this moment, notice where your body connects with the ground and feel your body supported by it. You may lower your gaze or close your eyes, whichever feels right for you in this moment. Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly and just begin to notice your breath as you breathe in and as you breathe out. There is no need to change it in any way. Just one breath in and one breath out, notice the light pressure or warmth of your hand on your heart and your hand on your belly as you breathe in and out. Notice how your body expands as you breathe in and how it softens as you breathe out. Continue one breath in and one breath out. One breath in and one breath out. Notice again where your body connects with the ground and that your body is supported by it. Staying in stillness while you count to yourself one, two, three, four."

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body."

It's okay



be
yourself

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 5: Safety, Boundaries and Resources

Feeling safe is essential for mental health and overall well-being, yet it can be a challenging sensation to access, especially for those who have experienced trauma. In this session, children will use their voices, engage in play, and creatively express themselves to explore and visualize feelings of safety, calm, and healing.



"Stay safe."

– Seven year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages for children: *feeling safe is an important part of overall well-being; safety is not always easy to feel if you have experienced trauma and it is okay to talk about with a trusted adult when you feel unsafe; creative activities can help restore a sense of safety and calm.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each child; variety of art materials: extra canvas roll paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Happy Hum

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: movement, creative space

Movement and Creative Space: Scribble Tag

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children, briefly review the agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Happy Hum

Facilitator: *"This week, we are going to do the Happy Hum. Your hum might be a very small hum, or it might be a big hum. We might try experimenting with big and small hums so that you can find the one that is right for you today. Sitting as upright as you can in this moment, notice how your feet connect with the floor and your body is supported by the surface you are sitting on. If you feel comfortable, you can close your eyes, or allow your eyes to look downward. It works best if you keep your lips closed and hum a few notes yourself until you find a note that you like. Now we will hum together. Breathe in deeply and with your outbreath hum your note. Breathe in. Breathe out and hum your note. Repeat a few more times. If you feel comfortable, place your hands on your chest, and notice what happens when you breathe in and when you breathe out and hum. As you are humming, let your humming send calm into your heart. And as we come to the end of our happy hum practice, we are going to take three, soft, slow, mindful breaths."*

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body after breathing and humming?"*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let's have a look at what we already have on the mural."*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *"Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything that you would like to add that helps you create boundaries and maintain a safe space?"*

30 minutes: movement, creative space

Movement and Creative Space: Scribble Tag



The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Scribble tag is a variation of the chasing game but played on paper and includes an image of the child's safe space as their "home base". Playing and interacting with others through this game, calls attention to the child's ideas about safety, boundaries and resources. Facilitators may choose to pair up children or invite the children to pick their own partners.

Facilitator: Invite the two children within each pairing to sit next to each other for this activity. *"Using a long sheet of paper, each of you will create a small image of what your safe space looks or feels like at opposite ends of the paper. After you complete your image, draw a circle or your favourite shape around it to represent the boundary. After your 'home base' is created, choose one colour marker or crayon that you will use to play scribble tag with your partner. Each pairing will pick one person to be 'it' and that person will try to tag their partner. Using your chosen marking tool, both players will start by positioning yourselves in your own home base and only when the facilitators give you the signal to go, begin 'racing' around the paper without lifting your marker or crayon creating scribbles around the empty space on the paper. The person who is 'it' can tag their partner by gently tapping on the other person's marking tool with their own. If the person trying not to be tagged, scribbles their way back onto their home base without getting tagged, the person who is 'it' must respect their partner's safe space and won't be able to tag them while they are there."* Play for three rounds and then switch roles.

Reflection

Facilitator: *"What was it like to play scribble tag? What were the different thoughts and feelings that you noticed while playing the game?"*



Additional Reflection Questions

What does your home base look or feel like?

Can you find an image within the scribbles that you and your partner created?

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: *"Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image that brings you calm and a feeling of safety. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about what you would tell a friend or another child about feeling safe and setting boundaries. You get to decide what to put on the card."* **Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.**



For children who finish their cards quickly, offer other art prompts and materials.

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another child who might be have heard fighting at home?"*

Facilitators place each child's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: "On your kindness mural this week, add kind things that you and your family do or can do to take care of your personal boundaries and respecting other family members' boundaries."

Mindfulness: Happy Hum

Facilitator: "Sitting as upright as you can in this moment, notice how your feet connect with the floor and your body is supported by the surface you are sitting on. If you feel comfortable, you can close your eyes, or allow your eyes to look downward. It works best if you keep your lips closed and hum a few notes yourself until you find a note that you like. Now we will hum together. Breathe in deeply and with your outbreath hum your note. Breathe in. Breathe out and hum your note. Repeat a few more times. If you feel comfortable, place your hands on your chest, and notice what happens when you breathe in and when you breathe out and hum. As you are humming, let your humming send calm into your heart. And as we come to the end of our happy hum practice, we are going to take three, soft, slow, mindful breaths."

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body."

It's not
your fault

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 6: The Story of Resilience

Building resilience is a crucial process that gives us the tools and skills that are needed to navigate and manage overwhelming thoughts and emotions during challenging moments. In this session, children will engage in mindfulness, movement, and creative activities that are designed to strengthen their resilience and support emotional well-being.



“I am strong like a tree.”

– Five year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key message for children: *you are not responsible for the fighting that has happened in the home; we have internal resources that can help us overcome challenging experiences.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each child; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family; story book: *I Am Courage: A Book of Resilience* by Susan Verde.

Special equipment needed: a hand drum



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Happy Hums to Long Tones

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: story, movement

Story: *I Am Courage: A Book of Resilience* by Susan Verde

Movement: Rooted Trees Gathering Water

Staying rooted in the ground even in the changing seasons, supports participants through movement and voice to express and recognize their resilience.

Creative Space: Creating an Image of Your Tree

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children, briefly review the agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Happy Hum to Long Tones

Facilitator: *“This week, we are going to start with the Happy Hum again, but then open our mouths so that we can make a stronger note, each on our own breath. Stand or sit as upright as you can in this moment, notice how your feet connect with the floor and if you are sitting, how your body is supported by the surface you are sitting on. If you feel comfortable to do so, you can close your eyes, or allow your eyes to look downward. It works best if you keep your lips closed and hum a few notes yourself until you find a note that you like. Now we will hum together. Breathe in deeply and with your outbreath hum your note. Breathe in. Breathe out and hum your note. This time breathe in and if you feel comfortable, open your mouth and send your note out over the ocean - if it helps, make the sound ‘ahhhhhh’ with your note. Again, breathe in and on the outbreath, send your ‘ahhhhhh’ note over the ocean. Place your hands on your chest, breathe in and on the outbreath, send your ‘ahhhhhh’ note out over the ocean. Take three more silent breaths in your own time and find the stillness.”*

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body while humming? Any thoughts or feelings?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything you would like to add that would show what helps you overcome challenging moments in life?”*

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: *I Am Courage: A Book of Resilience* by Susan Verde

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Being courageous doesn’t always mean that we are fearless. It means we can feel scared but face our personal challenges anyway. What are some things that help you build courage and resilience? How can we help others feel more resilient too?”*

Movement: Rooted Trees Gathering Water: with voice and hand drum



Facilitators can gently accompany the movement with the hand drum, keeping a soft but steady beat. They can follow the children's lead. Some trees have branches that grow upwards and then bend down towards the ground, like weeping willows. Willows are very flexible. Their roots are deep and strong.

Facilitator: "Stand or sit where you have enough space to swish your arms sideways without colliding with anyone. Let's start by imagining we are trees with roots that go down into the earth to where the water is. We can reach right down to the ground scoop up water, breathing in bringing the water up our bodies and reaching up to the sky. A small breeze flutters our leaves and sways the tree slightly from side to side. Let's reach down again and bring more water up through our bodies until our arms and fingertips are reaching the sky while our roots are still strongly in the ground. The tree bends from side to side, sweeping down to the ground our arm/branches sweeping from one side to the other. When the wind/drum stops we all stand still. As the sun comes out, we bend down and scoop up water again, bringing it up through our bodies, reaching our fingertips to the sky, breathe in and on the outbreath send your 'ahhhhhh' note out over the ocean. Bringing your arms to rest at your sides, let's take another three breaths in silence and stillness."

Reflection

Facilitator: "Notice what you think or feel right now. Would anyone like to share?"

Creative Space: Creating an Image of Your Tree



The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

Facilitator: "Take a piece of the large kraft paper and choose oil pastels, paint, crayons, or markers and create an image or picture of your tree."

Reflections

Facilitator: "Would anyone like to share their art and if it has a title or a name? What was it like to move like a strong and resilient tree? How did you capture that in your image?"

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: "Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image that captures what resilience means to you. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about what helps you overcome challenges and grow from your experiences. You get to decide what to put on the card." **Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.**



For children who finish their cards quickly, offer other art prompts and materials.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Facilitator: "Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another child who might be have heard fighting at home?"

Facilitators place each child's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: "On your kindness mural this week, add kind what helps you and your family to stay rooted and grow through life's challenges?"

Mindfulness: Happy Hum to Long Tones

Facilitator: "This week, we are going to start with the Happy Hum again, but then open our mouths so that we can make a stronger note, each on our own breath. Stand or sit as upright as you can in this moment, notice how your feet connect with the floor and if you are sitting, how your body is supported by the surface you are sitting on. If you feel comfortable to do so, you can close your eyes, or allow your eyes to look downward. It works best if you keep your lips closed and hum a few notes yourself until you find a note that you like. Now we will hum together. Breathe in deeply and with your outbreath hum your note. Breathe in. Breathe out and hum your note. This time breathe in and if you feel comfortable, open your mouth and send your note out over the ocean - if it helps, make the sound 'ahhhhhh' with your note. Again, breathe in and on the outbreath, send your 'ahhhhhh' note over the ocean. Place your hands on your chest, breathe in and on the outbreath, send your 'ahhhhhh' note out over the ocean. Take three more silent breaths in your own time and find the stillness."

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body."

*“It made me feel really
happy because we get to
do lots of creativity.”*

– Child participant

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 7: Understanding Anger - Feelings vs. Actions

Anger is a powerful emotion that, if not recognized or explored, can impact both ourselves and those around us. In this session, children will have the opportunity to safely explore and process the intensity of the feeling through somatic activities, while also learning strategies to recognize the physical cues in their bodies that support self-regulation and emotional control.



“It’s okay to be scared, everyone gets scared sometimes.”

– Seven year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages for children: *feeling angry is a normal emotional response; there are strategies you can learn to manage angry feelings so that they do not harm yourself or others.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each child; variety of art materials: model magic, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, feathers, pipe cleaners, other collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Handshake or Squeeze Hands and Release

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: movement, creative space

Movement: Stretching in all Directions

Creative Space: Model Magic Puppets

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP**MAIN AGENDA:**

Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children, briefly review the agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Handshake or Squeeze Hands and Release

Facilitator: *“This week, we are going to squeeze our hands tight and release. If there is time, we will try it with our whole bodies. Sitting or standing as tall as you can be in this moment, notice how your body is supported by the chair you are sitting on or the floor you are standing on. Notice your body as you breathe in and as you breathe out. On the next breath in, squeeze your hands into a fist as tight as you can. As you breathe out let your hands soften and open. On the in breath squeeze your hands in a fist as tight as you can. As you breathe out allow your hands to soften and open. Breathe in and squeeze tight. Breathe out and soften. Notice how your body feels when your fists are tightly squeezed. Notice how your body feels when your hands soften.”*



Invite participants to squeeze and release other areas of the body:

Toes and feet
Shoulders
Face

Facilitator: *“Finish the practice with a gentle shaking of the body and then imagine all the energy calmly settles through your body and into the ground. Take two more breaths.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“This breathing, squeezing and releasing can be something that supports you when you feel frustrated or angry. What do you notice in yourself after doing that kind of breathing and movement?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything that you would like to add that helps you calm angry feelings?”*

30 minutes: movement, creative space**Movement:** Stretching in all Directions**Facilitator:** *“Standing, sitting or lying down, make yourself as small as you can and then stretching your fingers and toes in opposite directions, make yourself as big as you can. Repeat this movement. On your third repetition, see if you can find a different direction to stretch in and now come back to your normal way of standing, sitting, or lying down and take a deep breath in and a long breath out.”***Creative Space:** Model Magic Puppets**The creative space is intended to be a quick warm-up activity before the main art activity – reflection cards.****Facilitator:** *“Do you ever have one of those days when nothing goes the way you want it to go? Maybe you can't find your favourite sweater because it's in the wash, or you forgot your new toy at school? Does anyone have any examples when things don't go the way you want? How do you feel when that happens? What do you feel in your body (hot, tight, shaky, etc.)?”***Facilitators may add other feelings like sad, frustrated, angry, etc., if those feelings are not shared by the children.****Facilitator:** *“Make a model magic puppet that fits on your thumb or finger that shows the way it feels in your body when nothing goes the way you want it to go and you feel angry or frustrated. You can add other art materials to your puppet. It can also be painted.”***Reflections:****Role playing with model magic puppets:** Facilitators can lead with the following script and engage the children in a conversation about angry feelings vs. actions through their puppet creation:**Facilitator:** *“Would anyone like to share what they made? Does your puppet have a name? Does your puppet _____ (name) want to say anything about angry feelings? Is there something that _____ can do when he/she is feeling angry that won't hurt anyone?”***Facilitator:** *“What would help your puppet feel calm or return to a 'neutral' state? Add other art materials to your puppet to show how it might transform angry feelings.”***Conclude the activity by sharing some other ways to manage angry feelings:***Talking to your mom, a trusted friend, or adult**Practice breathing out like you're blowing bubbles**Squeeze your hands into a fist and then let your hands soften**Rub your feet on the ground, or notice the surface you are sitting on**Put on some music and do a dance or sing along*

CHILDREN'S GROUP

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image that would help you calm angry feelings when you look at it. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about what helps with angry feelings, especially when they seem big and overwhelming. You get to decide what to put on the card.”

Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.



For children who finish their cards quickly, offer other art prompts and materials.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another child who might be have heard fighting at home?”

Facilitators place each child's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: “On your kindness mural this week, add what you do as a family to take care of anger when it comes up. In your family, what kinds of things help you to deal with the feeling of anger?”

Mindfulness: Handshake or Squeeze Hands and Release

Facilitator: “This week, we are going to squeeze our hands tight and release. If there is time, we will try it with our whole bodies. Sitting or standing as tall as you can be in this moment, notice how your body is supported by the chair you are sitting on or the floor you are standing on. Notice your body as you breathe in and as you breathe out. On the next breath in, squeeze your hands into a fist as tight as you can. As you breathe out let your hands soften and open. On the in breath squeeze your hands in a fist as tight as you can. As you breathe out allow your hands to soften and open. Breathe in and squeeze tight. Breathe out and soften. Notice how your body feels when your fists are tightly squeezed. Notice how your body feels when your hands soften.”

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”

*“The glitter jar
made me calm.”*
– Child participant

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 8: Making Friends with Worry

Worry is a natural response that arises when we are uncertain of the past or afraid of what the future may hold. Children will have the opportunity to explore the feeling of worry through mindfulness, movement, art-making, and discussion. These creative interventions will help them recognize the sensations of worry, while also offering tools to manage and ease those worries.



“When I feel scared, I pretend it is a balloon and let it float away.”

– Five year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages for children: *feeling worried about what is past or present is a normal feeling for many people; sharing our worries with someone we trust can help us feel better; there are creative tools we can use to help us ease the feeling of worry.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each child; variety of art materials: Play-Doh, large kraft paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, feathers, pipe cleaners, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family; story book: *My Magic Breath: Finding Calm Through Mindful Breathing* by Nick Ortner and Alison Taylor; card deck (optional for reference) [Mindful Kids | Ages 4+ | Card Deck | Barefoot Books](#).



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Play-Doh Meditation

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: *My Magic Breath: Finding Calm Through Mindful Breathing* by Nick Ortner and Alison Taylor

Movement: Sweeping the Air in Figure Eights (adapted from [Mindful Kids | Ages 4+ | Card Deck | Barefoot Books](#))

Creative Space: Scribbling Figure Eights

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children, briefly review the agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Play-Doh Meditation

Facilitator: Invite children to choose a colour of Play-Doh that they are drawn to. Invite the children to place the unopened container in front of them and begin the mindfulness activity. *“Sitting comfortably, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Take a deep breath in through your nose, feeling your lungs and belly fill with air and breathe out through your mouth. Repeat two more times. Now, pick up your Play-Doh and open the container. Take the Play-Doh in your hands and just begin to notice it. Notice the texture and how it feels when you squeeze it. Notice the temperature of the Play-Doh (is it warm or cold?). Notice if the Play-Doh has a smell. Notice if the Play-Doh is heavy or light in your hands. Take another deep breath and now, begin to mold or shape the Play-Doh into a shape or form that shows how worry feels to you.”*

Allow children a few minutes to work on their Play-Doh figurine.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share how worry feels to them or what you notice in your body while working with the Play-Doh?”*

After sharing, invite the children to roll their Play-Doh worries back into a “neutral” ball, place it back into the container and close the lid.

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything you can write down or draw that helps you to stay in the present moment?”*

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: *My Magic Breath: Finding Calm Through Mindful Breathing* by Nick Ortner and Alison Taylor

Reflection

Facilitator: “What happens when we practice mindful breathing? How do you feel after mindful breathing? When do you think you would use your magic breath?”

Movement: Sweeping the Air in Figure Eights (adapted from [Mindful Kids | Ages 4+ | Card Deck | Barefoot Books](#))

Facilitator: “Sitting, standing or lying down as tall as you can be in this moment, take one finger and make the smallest figure eight in the air in front of you; begin to make a bigger figure eight; using one hand make a much bigger figure eight in the air above you, in front of you, down low; now use both hands and your whole arm to make figure eights; try using one foot, or if you are sitting or lying down, both feet; and then come back to your normal way of sitting or standing and take three breaths and notice how your body feels after moving like this.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “Notice what you feel or think right now. Would anyone like to share?”

Creative Space: Scribbling Figure Eights



The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

Facilitator: “Think about the way that worry feels in your body and using the oil pastels and a large piece of paper, you can scribble or make little and big figure eights all over the paper. For this picture scribbling is okay; when you are finished your scribble, take your favourite colours of paint or crayons, start filling in the spaces between the scribbles; some of the spaces will be very small and some spaces might be big. No matter how your picture turns out will be okay.”

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image of something that helps calm worried feelings. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about what helps worry feel calm? You get to decide what to put on the card.” **Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.**



For children who finish their cards quickly, offer other art prompts and materials.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Reflection

Facilitator: "Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another child who might have heard fighting at home?"

Facilitators place each child's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: "On your kindness mural add what helps you and your family to calm worries; to take care of worries."

Mindfulness: Mind Bubbles: Breathe Your Worries Free (adapted from [Mindful Kids | Ages 4+ | Card Deck | Barefoot Books](#))

Facilitator: "Sitting or standing as tall as you can, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Imagine you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in as deeply as you can and as you breathe out imagine you are blowing a bubble through the wand, watching it float into the air and then disappear. Breathe in again and if you have a small worry imagine what it looks like. Breathe out and blow your worry through your bubble wand. Imagine it forming a bubble that floats into the air, pops and disappears. Repeat until the worry has been set free and your body feels calm."

Reflection:

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body?"



ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 9: Hopes and Dreams

Hopes and dreams can be powerful motivators, helping us navigate various life challenges. Children will explore and reflect on the significant changes that have happened within their family using mindful and creative practices. Through these activities, group participants will learn how to cope with transitions while strengthening the bond and attachment between parents and children.



“Let your worries float away to the clouds.”

– Seven year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *many families have experienced big and small changes; changes can be positive, negative, neutral, or a combination of these outcomes; we all react differently to change; hopes and dreams help keep us motivated and work towards our goals.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each child; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, aluminum foil, markers, crayons, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.

Special equipment needed: one musical instrument for the facilitator and one for each child. Musical instruments may include drums, shakers, tambourines, rain sticks, triangles, bells, chimes, etc.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Music Making in Community

Listening and valuing each person's importance in the group process.

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: creative space, voice and movement

Creative Space: Print Making

Voice and Movement: Response to each painting.

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children, briefly review the agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Music Making in Community

Facilitator: *“Sitting or standing as tall as you can, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Notice the musical instrument you are holding in your hands. Notice the colour; is it smooth or rough; heavy or light; and take a breath in and a breath out. One person (could be the facilitator) will begin by creating a simple rhythm with their instrument. The person who begins will then signal to the person next to them that it is their turn to join in by turning towards them and making eye contact. The person next to them joins in, and the next, until everyone in the circle is playing together. Then the person who began stops playing, then the person next to them stops playing, and then the next, all around the circle.”*

We want to be able to hear what it sounds like as each person's rhythm joins in, what it sounds like when everyone is playing together, and what it sounds like as each person's rhythm finishes.

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body? Any thoughts or feelings?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let's have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? What are some words and images that represent your hopes and dreams?”*

30 minutes: creative space, voice and movement

Creative Space: Print Making



The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

As the session includes big topics like family changes and hopes and dreams, this art activity invites the group to witness and embrace the transformative process.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Facilitator: “You have one piece of aluminum foil and one piece of paper. Using the paints provided, add paint colours of your choice to the aluminum foil in whatever way feels right to you. Before the paint dries, place your painted foil onto the blank piece of paper (paint-side down). Gently rub, tap, or press on the aluminum foil to transfer your painting onto the paper. Gently lift the foil to reveal your new image.” Encourage children to choose other colours or materials that make them feel calm and happy and invite them to add these materials to their printed artwork.

Reflection

Facilitator: “Thinking about family changes and your hopes and dreams for today, tomorrow, or a year from now, it is important to remember that just like every print that each of you created came from your last image, we are always moving into every new experience from our last one - sometimes there are surprises waiting for us, sometimes we may not always like what meets us there, or maybe we do! No matter what our new experience looks like, we can transform the way a moment feels to us by using things that help us feel safe, calm, grounded, and happy.”

Voice and Movement Response

Facilitator: “We are going to visit each person’s artwork and together we are going to use our voices to send a tone or hum to the painting. Breathing in, and as you breathe out, send your hum or tone to the painting. Continue together for a few breaths. As a group, move to the next painting.”



Invite the group to share a movement that shows how each painting moves them.

Reflection

Facilitator: “What was it like to make this picture? What was it like to have the group sing or move to your painting?”

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image that reflects your hopes and dreams. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about what you learned about hopes and dreams. You get to decide what to put on the card.” **Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.**



For children who finish their cards quickly, offer other art prompts and materials.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another child who might be have heard fighting at home?”

Facilitators place each child’s card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: *"Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."*



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: *"On your kindness mural, this week add what your hopes and dreams are, or what your hopes and dreams are as a family."*

Mindful Activity: Music Making in Community

Facilitator: *"Sitting or standing as tall as you can, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Notice the musical instrument you are holding in your hands. Notice the colour; is it smooth or rough; heavy or light; and take a breath in and a breath out. One person (could be the facilitator) will begin by creating a simple rhythm with their instrument. The person who begins will then signal to the person next to them that it is their turn to join in by turning towards them and making eye contact. The person next to them joins in, and the next, until everyone in the circle is playing together. Then the person who began stops playing, then the person next to them stops playing, and then the next, all around the circle."*

We want to be able to hear what it sounds like as each person's rhythm joins in, what it sounds like when everyone is playing together, and what it sounds like as each person's rhythm finishes.

Facilitator: *"As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body."*



Be

resilient, and
don't
give up at
all! I believe
in you all!



ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 10: Looking Back, Looking Forward

This week, children will reflect on their journey in the program and select the cards they would like to contribute to the community card deck.



"Fly up to the sky."

– Five year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: *it is okay to feel sad that the group is ending; it is important to reflect on what we have learned during our time together and consider what we liked that we want to take with us from the program.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each child; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each child; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.

Special equipment needed: a hand drum



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Steady and Strong like a Mountain

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: movement

Movement: Dance Freeze with Drum

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards: Creating and choosing cards for the community deck.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children, briefly review the agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Steady and Strong like a Mountain

Facilitator: *“Begin by sitting or standing with your feet hip width apart so that the top of your head and your feet make a triangle. Notice how your body is supported by the surface you are sitting or standing on, feeling your feet connected to the floor. You may choose to rest your arms on your lap or relaxed by your side. Eyes can be closed or looking down. Take a slow breath in and a slow breath out and bring to mind an image of a mountain. Imagine how this mountain connects right down to the earth and breathe in and breathe out. Imagine this mountain in the spring and summer when wildflowers, birds and animals come to visit, rain falls, the wind blows, and the mountain stays steady and strong. Breathe in and breathe out; imagine the mountain in the fall when the leaves change and winter when the snowflakes begin to fall and cover it in crisp white snow and the mountain stays steady and strong. Breathe in and breathe out. Through all of the big and small storms, the mountain stays steady and strong. Take one more deep breath in and breathe out. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and begin to notice the room that we are in today and the people around you.”*



This activity could be done as an art meditation. Facilitators may invite children to draw an image of their mountain and include any other elements they would like to add to their picture.

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body? Any thoughts or feelings?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*

“What is it like to reflect on this mural and see what you have created with the group?”

30 minutes: movement

Movement: Dance Freeze with Drum

Facilitator: "As a group, listen to the drum and the drum will tell your body how to move. It may be smooth and slow, or fast and spiky. Your body may want to move as low to the ground as it will go, to the side, up high, or all around. When the drum stops, freeze to make a statue. When the drum begins again, begin moving again, listening to the drum. When it stops, freeze to make a statue."



Depending on the group, facilitators may invite each child to take a turn drumming for the rest of the group.

Reflection

Facilitator: "What do you notice in your body after doing the Dance Freeze?"

**Additional Reflection Question**

What was it like to play the drum for the rest of the group?

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: "Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about your time in the group. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend. For your message, you may want to write about what you have learned from the group. You get to decide what to put on the card." **Facilitators can help children with the writing part of the activity.**

Review and Choose Reflection Cards

Facilitators invite children to look through their reflection card envelope and choose one or two cards that they would like to be shared and included in the Adventures in Sharing community card deck. Invite the children to work on finishing their chosen cards, making sure the image and words reflect messages that are appropriate for sharing with other children and families who have shared similar experiences.

Facilitator: "Would anyone like to share with us the cards they have chosen?"

Facilitators collect the chosen cards and place them in their corresponding envelope. Children will keep and bring home the cards they have not chosen to include in the community card deck.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our family, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

GROUP**30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye****Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: *“On your kindness mural this week, add what is most important to you and your family.”*

Mindful Activity: Steady and Strong like a Mountain

Facilitator: *“Begin by sitting or standing with your feet hip width apart so that the top of your head and your feet make a triangle. Notice how your body is supported by the surface you are sitting or standing on, feeling your feet connected to the floor. You may choose to rest your arms on your lap or relaxed by your side. Eyes can be closed or looking down. Take a slow breath in and a slow breath out and bring to mind an image of a mountain. Imagine how this mountain connects right down to the earth, as you breathe in and breathe out. Imagine this mountain in the spring and summer when wildflowers, birds and animals come to visit, rain falls, the wind blows, and the mountain stays steady and strong. Breathe in and breathe out. Imagine the mountain in the fall when the leaves change and winter when the snowflakes begin to fall and cover it in crisp white snow and the mountain stays steady and strong. Breathe in and breathe out. Through all of the big and small storms, the mountain stays steady and strong. Take one more deep breath in and breathe out. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and begin to notice the room that we are in today and the people around you.”*

We want to be able to hear what it sounds like as each person’s rhythm joins in, what it sounds like when everyone is playing together, and what it sounds like as each person’s rhythm finishes.

Option

Facilitators may choose their own mindfulness activity.

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”*



ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 11: Celebration

Families come together to celebrate their journey and reflect on what they have learned and will take with them from this program.



“Hold onto each other.”

– Eight year-old

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to children: endings can bring up mixed feelings and emotions; you may feel sad that the group is ending, but proud of your accomplishments along the way; acknowledging the courage to share experiences during the program is something to be celebrated; goodbyes are an opportunity to start something new and exciting.

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; story book: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst.

Special equipment needed: a hand drum and one musical instrument for each facilitator and participant. Musical instruments may include drums, shakers, tambourines, rain sticks, triangles, bells, chimes, etc.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: A favourite mindfulness activity from the program.

Community of Kindness Mural: reflecting on what it means to be kind

30 minutes: story, movement

Story: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

One hour: celebration, closing mindfulness

At the end of this final session, each family takes home their Family Kindness Mural along with their certificates and the parents' journals.

CHILDREN'S GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back children, briefly review the agenda and complete the countdown activity.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: A favourite mindfulness activity.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body? Any thoughts or feelings?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

Facilitators hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. Children can read what is already on the Community of Kindness mural, with facilitators supporting this process and reflect on what it means to be kind.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Are there any words or images that stand out for you on this mural? What does being kind mean to you?”*

30 minutes: story, movement

Story: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

As a final goodbye with the other group participants, read the story, *The Invisible String*. After the story, have the children engage in a movement activity, reflecting on how the invisible string keeps them connected even when they are not together. Facilitators take part in this as well. This can be a dance movement or a very small movement, each participant chooses what is right for them. After each person has made a movement, the movement is repeated more quickly, creating a flow, almost like a “wave” created in sports stadiums. Adapt this activity to fit the participants in your group.

Facilitator: *“Today we will be celebrating our time together. Through a movement, we will share with each other how the invisible string keeps us connected, even when we don’t see each other. If your string could dance or move, what would it look like? We are going to go around the circle and each person will have an opportunity to create a movement.”*

Facilitator: *“What was it like to move in that way? Is there a message in your movement you would like to share?”*

One hour: family celebration and closing mindfulness

Families gather together for a celebration. Each participant receives a certificate of completion and is recognized for their participation in the program. At the end of this final session, each family takes home their Family Kindness Mural along with their certificates and the parents’ journals.

Closing Mindfulness: Music Making in Community

Facilitator: *“Sitting or standing as tall as you can, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Notice the musical instrument you are holding in your hands. Notice the colour; is it smooth or rough; heavy or light; and take a breath in and a breath out.” Using the hand drum, a facilitator will begin by creating a simple rhythm with the instrument. The facilitator who begins will then signal to each family that it is their turn to join in by turning towards them and making eye contact and repeat this process until all families have joined in with their chosen musical instrument and everyone is playing together. The facilitator will then signal to each family when to stop playing their instrument until the final sounds of hand drum close out the practice.”*

We want to be able to hear what it sounds like as each person's rhythm joins in, what it sounds like when everyone is playing together, and what it sounds like as each person's rhythm finishes.

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 1: Introductions and Belonging

Adventures in Sharing invites all group participants to share images and words of wisdom on cards they create each week. The intention of each card is for participants to demonstrate something they have learned about themselves from Here to Help, that helped them and to share these learnings with someone who may have encountered experiences of domestic violence, as they did. At the end of the program, each participant will choose one or two cards they would like to be printed and made into copies. The chosen cards are carefully reproduced and all of the participants' artwork is compiled to create one collective deck of cards. The deck of cards will be shared with other agencies that support children and their caregivers who are going through significant changes in their families, where the images and words might help them to feel comforted and that they are not alone. Group participants get all of their original artwork back at the end of the process, as well as their own community deck of cards.



MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *you are not alone; you are in a safe place, you have wisdom to share, you have a right to speak and be heard, you can make your own choices about how you would like to participate in the group.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant, 8.5 x 11 envelopes for each participant, journal for each participant, variety of art materials: paper, markers, crayons, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family. [Relaxing Music For Children - Be Calm and Focused \(cute animals\) | 3 Hours Extended Mix.](#)



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

30 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Families are welcomed to the program. Mothers/gender diverse parents and children are taken to their group rooms.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural, Imaginary Ball

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain

Mindfulness practices will be the opening and closing activities for each session. The mindfulness practices support participants in being present and grounded in the moment, while building and connecting to internal resources of resilience and self-knowledge. Through mindfulness practices and reflection, the aim is to provide choice, and to support self-awareness and self-regulation through connecting to what is here, in the present moment, either in the body, emotions or thoughts. By helping to regulate the nervous system through breath work, self-contact, movement, awareness and slowing down, participants are empowered to develop a relationship with their feelings and sensations in a way that may help make those feelings and sensations easier to experience and manage. Mindfulness activities aim to support participants to recognize that they can make choices, in any situation, from a calmer and steadier place, rather than reacting from a place of fear or anxiety.

Community of Kindness Mural: This visual arts activity brings mothers/gender diverse parents together in a community of kindness and supports them in recognizing internal resources through the creation of images that facilitators and participants can refer to throughout the weeks they are together. Participants are invited to reflect on the images and recognize the various ways they have agreed to treat each other in both the physical and listening space during their time in the group.

Imaginary Ball: This activity brings the group together through play, movement and imagination. It invites connection and choice within the frame of the activity. It is inclusive and non-competitive.

30 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards: Working independently and as quietly as possible, parents are invited to create a reflection card each week that will include an image on one side and words on the other. The card is a small representation about what helped them with words of wisdom they would share with a friend. This card will become a series of cards and after each group, facilitators place parent's completed card in an envelope with their name on it. At the end of the program, they will choose their favourite card to include in the community card deck.

Transition to Family Time: A mindful pause before transitioning to the next activity.

30 minutes: Family Kindness mural, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Each week, families will come together at the end of group to work on a Family Kindness mural using a large piece of canvas. A prompt related to kindness will guide the families in adding to their mural. Family members are encouraged to add independently their answer to the prompt. Before leaving, families will also participate in a closing mindfulness practice. This allows both mothers/gender diverse parents and children to experience mindfulness together and creates a quiet, calming transition to the session ending.

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

30 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Families are welcomed as they arrive and both parents and children are taken to the children's designated group rooms. Once children are settled into their rooms and given their name tags, parents go to their group room. Facilitators introduce themselves, explain their roles and briefly review the agenda.

Facilitator: *"Today, we are going to get to know each other and go over what will happen each week you come to the program."*

Review Group Emotional Boundaries

Facilitator: *"For group emotional safety, we ask that you do not share personal details of past traumatic experiences. Your stories deserve to be honoured in way that is not possible for us to do in this program. We ask that you share what you are experiencing in the present moment. This is to keep group members safe and to minimize triggering (a strong emotional reaction of fear or worry caused by remembering something bad that has happened in the past)."*

Participants briefly introduce themselves: names, children's names and ages, what is special or what they like about their child/ren.

Review tonight's topic and children's group activities. Explain that each week parents will be told what activities their children will be doing in group and why, and that often they will be doing the same activities.

Key points to be explained:

- Each week, the activities for the session will be shared.
- Before going home, families will work on an art activity together.
- Group members are encouraged to participate in a way that feels right for them either by sharing through their words, their artwork, or by listening.
- Facilitators may directly ask if someone would like to share to make sure that everyone has had a chance to be heard. Anyone can say "pass" if they choose not to share.
- Review general housekeeping.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

About Adventures in Sharing

Facilitator: *“When you came to the Here to Help group, you knew the one thing that was the same for all the families was that children had seen or heard fighting at home. Here to Help was a safe place where you could meet other families and know that you are not alone. Adventures in Sharing is like Here to Help. It is a safe place to talk about how to manage big overwhelming feelings and how to support each other in our group and as a family with those feelings. We know that you learned some things about yourself that helped you and hope you will share the things that you learned with other families who have seen or heard fighting at home. In Adventures in Sharing, we invite you to make a reflection card each week about the things you learned that helped you.”*

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain

Facilitator: *“Each week when we get together, we are going to start off our group with a mindful activity. Does anyone know what mindfulness is? Has anyone participated in mindfulness activities? Mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening right now in your mind and body as best as you can and being kind to yourself. We will do mindfulness activities that will help us to get ready to be together and to learn about ourselves. Mindfulness can help us manage big feelings and it might help with focusing on activities too. It is very important that you do what is comfortable for you. This week, we are going to do Up and Down the Mountain.”*



It is important for the activity to start in silence, as this provides participants with a moment of reflection and an opportunity to listen to their own bodies.

Facilitator: *“Begin by sitting as tall as you can in this moment, just sitting softly tall. Feel where your feet touch the floor. Notice how the chair holds your body. Try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other into the floor. The floor and chair are gently supporting your feet and your body. Perhaps you would like to imagine sending a breath all the way down to the bottom of your feet and tips of your toes. Now send another breath throughout your whole body. Take one of your hands with your palm facing you and spread your fingers open. With the index finger of your other hand, begin to trace a path. Starting with your little finger, trace it ‘up the mountain’ as you breathe in and trace your finger ‘down the mountain’ as you breathe out. Continue breathing up and down the mountain until you reach the tip of your thumb and begin to retrace your path. When you are ready, bring your attention back to the group.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What do you notice in yourself after doing that kind of breathing? Or what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It could be a word that reflects an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”*

Community of Kindness Mural

Facilitator: *“We are going to create a kindness mural for our group. We call it the Community of Kindness mural and it will show how we can treat each other while we are here together. Before we start, let’s think about the things that make us feel good. What are some things that make you feel good (friends, hugs, etc.)? Let’s add your answers to the paper. You can draw or use words.”*

Reflection: Before moving on to the second part of the activity, give each parent an opportunity to share what they added to the mural. One participant speaks at a time. This is a time for listening to one another.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Facilitator: “Now that we can see the different things that make us feel good, let’s think about how we can treat each other when we are together, so we can all feel good in the group. How can we treat each other and be kind to each other? What is important for us to remember about how we treat each other in the group? Everyone will be able to add their answers to the mural.”

Facilitators support parents to add their answers to the mural. Facilitators will also add the following if they have not been generated by the group:

- Confidentiality - explain the limits and guidelines.
- Respect each other’s opinions. Hurtful language or words that put others down will not be allowed.
- Participate in a way that feels right for each person. This may be by showing what has been created, or by listening and talking. Different people might participate in different ways and that’s okay.
- Being kind with each other by listening, waiting our turn and supporting one another.

Give each participant an opportunity to share what they added to the mural. One participant speaks at a time. This is a time for listening to one another.

Reflection: “What was it like to make this mural together?” Let the group participants know that each week the group will come back to this Community of Kindness mural to remember how we want to be together, and see if there is anything else we need to add.



Imaginary Ball: coming together through play, movement and imagination

If time permits, this is a fun activity that invites connection among group members. The facilitator asks group members to stand in a circle and begins by passing an imaginary ball, placing it carefully in the hands of the person beside them. Each person passes the imaginary ball to the next person until everyone has had the chance to receive and pass it on. On the second time around, the imaginary ball can change size and weight or stay the same from person to person. On the third time around, the imaginary ball can become any type of ball and be passed to anyone in the circle. The facilitator ensures that everyone has a turn, and then “disappears” the imaginary ball when the activity is over.

Reflections

Facilitator: “What was it like to ‘play’ with the imaginary ball? Each participant has an opportunity to respond, if they would like to. Are there other times you could do this? (ex., with your children? your friends? indoors? at the park?) Did you notice that you had everything you needed to play?”

30 minutes: reflection card, transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about what makes you feel good. If it feels more comfortable, you can start by choosing a favourite colour or a colour that makes you feel good and create an image using the single colour. When you’re finished, turn the card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend or other adult. For your message, you may want to write about an important lesson you learned about yourself or ways to cope and how that has supported your parenting and relationship with your child. You get to decide what to put on the card.”



For parents who finish their cards quickly, offer journals to write in.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today? What was it like to think about sharing this with another person who might have had a similar experience to you?”

Facilitators place each parent’s card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our children, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”

Option

Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye**Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: “Each family will have a chance to create a Family Kindness mural. You can use the canvas and markers. We will be adding to this mural every week we are together. Before we start, let’s think of what it means to be kind. Does anyone know what it means to be kind (ex., being thoughtful, friendly, helpful to another person, etc.)? How do you feel when someone is being kind to you (ex., it feels good)? Today, we are going to draw or write on the canvas, things that make you feel good when you’re with your family, friends, or other people you spend time with. We’ll give you a little bit of time to do that.” Once completed, ask if anyone would like to share what they put on their mural.

Mindful Activity: Up and Down the Mountain

Facilitator: “Before we say goodbye, let’s breathe up and down the mountain like we did at the beginning of the group.”

Option

Music to accompany the movement: Relaxing Music for Children - Be Calm and Focused KIDZEN - Music for Kids

Facilitator: “Begin by sitting as tall as you can in this moment, just sitting softly tall. Feel where your feet touch the floor. Notice how the chair holds your body. Try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other into the floor. The floor and chair are gently supporting your feet and your body. Perhaps you would like to imagine sending a breath all the way down to the bottom of your feet and tips of your toes. Now send another breath throughout your whole body. Take one of your hands with your palm facing you and spread your fingers open. With the index finger of your other hand, begin to trace a path. Starting with your little finger, trace it ‘up the mountain’ as you breath in and trace your finger ‘down the mountain’ as you breathe out. Continue breathing up and down the mountain until you reach the tip of your thumb and begin to retrace your path. When you are ready, bring your attention back to the group.”

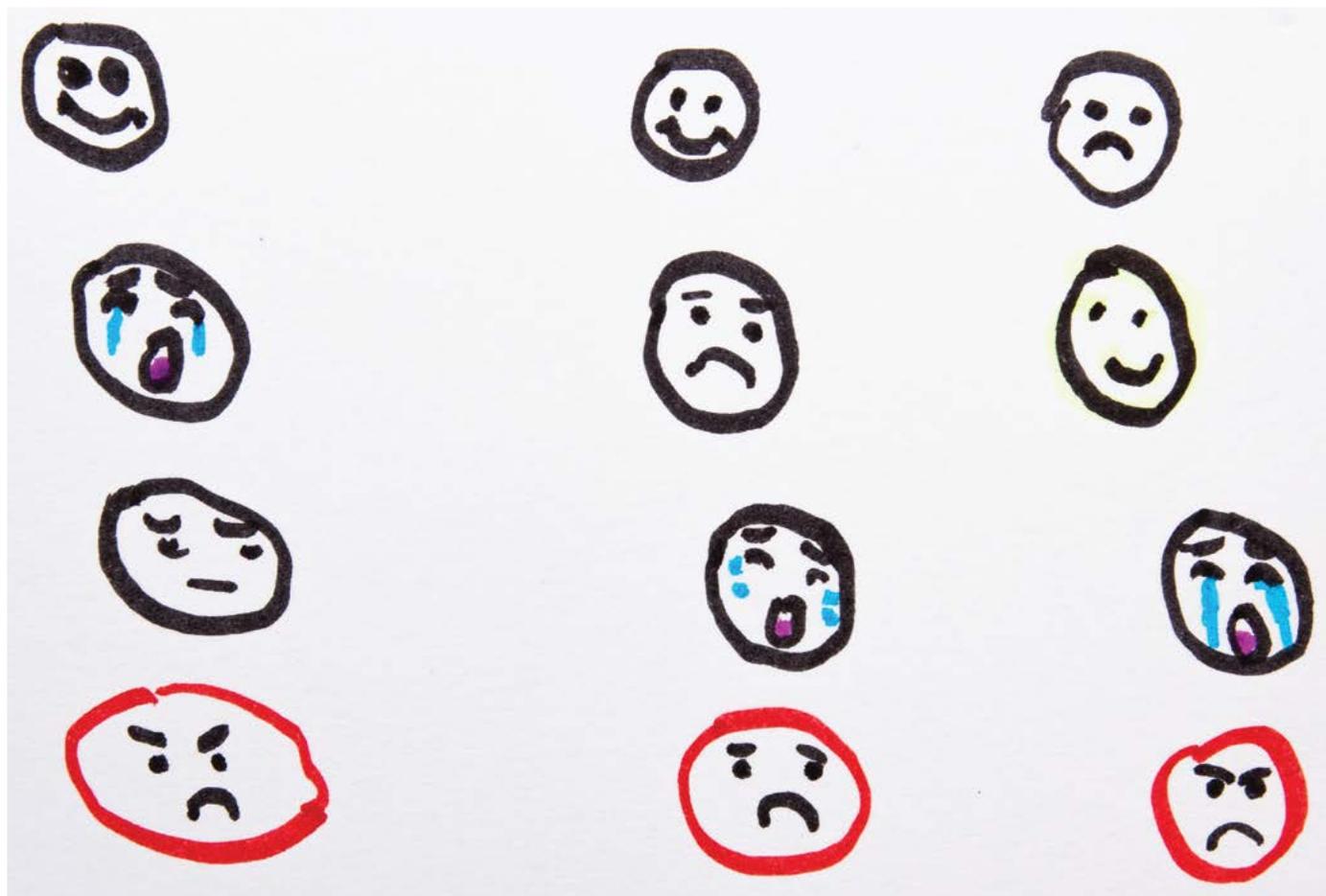
Reflection

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, we invite you to share one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now. It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 2: Self-Compassion

Self-compassion means treating yourself with the same care, kindness and understanding as you would a friend, especially in difficult moments. For participants who have experienced trauma, self-compassion can promote healing and support emotional resilience. Practicing self-compassion through mindfulness, movement, art creation and self-reflection tools can help both parents and children navigate their experiences with love and compassion, rather than moving forward with feelings of shame or guilt.



“Feelings. First acknowledge the emotion. Enjoy things that make you happy. Embrace life’s wonders. Love yourself. Inhale in & out. Never give up hope. Give yourself a break. Self-care.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *self-compassion can help us manage painful thoughts and feelings when we encounter difficult experiences; self-compassion increases our self-awareness; it is important to be kind and compassionate towards yourself.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each participant; journal for each participant; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.

Special equipment needed: a hand drum



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Each week, facilitators will welcome mothers/gender diverse parents to the group and share what to expect for the evening.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Waterfall of Love and Compassion

Options

Compassionate Body Scan: Letting go of regrets from the past or worries about the future, begin the mindfulness by bringing loving attention to the different parts of your body, noticing any discomfort and allowing any tension to soften. If it feels comfortable for you, rest a hand over your heart, feeling this soothing and comforting touch. If difficult feelings arise, try repeating some loving kindness phrases in your mind and end with compassion for your entire body, loving and appreciating your mind and body as they are now.

Body Scan with Liquid Sunlight: Sitting with your eyes closed, imagine a steady stream of warm sunlight flowing through your body. Allow the sunlight to wash away any tension and watch as it flows down, bringing with it a sense of ease and comfort.

Community of Kindness Mural

This week continues the process of recognizing how group members agree to treat each other and the group space during the program. Participants are encouraged to add new images or words to the mural.

30 minutes: movement, creative space

Movement: Dance Freeze with Drum

Creative Space: Create an image that reflects movements from the dance.

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye**

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Welcome back parents. If new parents are present, facilitators and participants share their names and review the purpose of the group and this week's agenda.

Facilitator: *“Welcome to our new group members. Everyone is here because there was fighting in their family. Our group is a safe place where we can meet and know that we are not alone. Some of us might be excited, or nervous or maybe both and that is okay. Adventures in Sharing is like Here to Help - it is a safe place to talk about how to deal with our feelings. In Adventures in Sharing, we invite you to make a card each week about the things you learned that could help someone else who has had similar experiences.”*

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Waterfall of Love and Compassion (or Compassionate Body Scan, Body Scan with Liquid Sunlight)

Facilitator: *“Each week, we are going to start off our group with a mindful activity. Mindfulness can help us manage big feelings and it may help with our focus too. It is very important that you do what is comfortable for you. This week, we are going to do the Waterfall of Love and Compassion.”*



For mindfulness activities that involve movement, it is good trauma-informed practice to first demonstrate the motions before guiding participants through them all together.

Starting with the hands at the sides, slowly raise the arms outward to the sides of the body while keeping the palms facing down. Once the arms reach shoulder height, turn the palms upward and, if possible, continue raising them overhead. When the fingertips meet above the head, interlock the fingers and slowly lower the hands in front of the body. When the arms are back to a fully downward extension, release the interlocked fingers and return the hands to the sides of the body before starting again.

Facilitator: *“Standing or sitting as tall as you can be in this moment, notice where your feet connect with the floor or the surface you are sitting on. You can lower your eyes if that feels right for you in this moment. Begin to notice your breath as you inhale and as you exhale. You don't need to change it in any way, just one breath in and one breath out. Imagine that we are in a rainforest, somewhere warm, with the sun shining through the tall trees. Imagine that you can hear birds singing and close by the sounds of a waterfall. Imagine that this is a waterfall of love and compassion. With your palms facing the ground bring the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, right up over your head and with fingertips touching. Breathing out, bring love and compassion down into your body, right to the soles of your feet. Breathing in, bring the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, overhead and with fingertips together. As you breathe out, bring love and compassion into your body. Repeat the movement once more and on your last breath out, rest one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. Breathe in and breathe out, noticing what you are present with in this moment. Then slowly bring your attention back to the room and the people around you.”*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Facilitator: *“What do you notice in yourself after doing that kind of breathing? Or what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”*

Community of Kindness Mural: Review the mural and provide an opportunity for new and returning group members to add any new images or words.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything on the mural that would help you to feel safe and calm in the group today?”* This is a conversation about what makes a community of kindness.

This week, facilitators and participants decide where to hang the mural in the group room by choosing a blank wall that can be easily accessed by all participants.

30 minutes: movement, creative space

Movement: Dance Freeze with Drum

Facilitator: *“As a group listen to the drum and the drum will tell your body how to move; it may be slow and smooth, or fast and spiky. Try moving close to the ground, to the side, up high, or all around. When the drum begins again, start your movement. When the drum stops, freeze like a statue.”*

**Creative Space**

The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

Facilitator: *“Show the movements from your dance on a big sheet of paper using a marker colour of choice. When the movement has been expressed onto the paper, write one word about how your body feels after the dance freeze.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“What was it like to move and then freeze with the drum? Remember, you can say ‘pass’ if you don’t want to share.”*

**Additional Reflection Questions**

*Are there other times you could do this, ex., with your children?
If you could give your image a title, what would it be called?*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: *“Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about what self-compassion means to you. When you are finished, turn the card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend or other adult. For your message, you may want to write about why self-compassion is important or what you can do to be kind, caring and loving to yourself. You get to decide what to put on the card.”*

Offer participant the option to use the markers, paint, and/or collage materials from the group bin. For the remainder of the program, additional art materials are also provided and mothers are encouraged to experiment with these items when creating their images on their cards:

- Sponges can create interesting textures using paint.
- Painter’s tape can be applied before adding materials like paint or pastels to the card, and then removed afterwards to create various patterns and designs.
- Small pieces of plasticine can be spread onto the card using the fingers and blended in.



For parents who finish their cards quickly, offer journals to write in.

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today?”*

Facilitators place each parent’s card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: *“Before we go to be with our children, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”*



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye****Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: *“On your kindness mural, draw or write things that you do together or can do together as a family to show kindness and love to each other.”* Once completed, ask if anyone would like to share what they put on their mural.

Mindful Activity: Waterfall of Love and Compassion

Facilitator: *“Standing or sitting as tall as you can be in this moment, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or the surface you are sitting on. You can lower your eyes if that feels right for you in this moment. Begin to notice your breath as you inhale and as you exhale. You don’t need to change it in any way, just one breath in and one breath out. Imagine that we are in a rainforest, somewhere warm, with the sun shining through the tall trees. Imagine that you can hear birds singing, and close by the sounds of a waterfall. Imagine that this is a waterfall of love and compassion. With your palms facing the ground bring the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, right up over your head and with fingertips touching. Breathing out, bring love and compassion down into your body, right to the soles of your feet. Breathing in, bring the energy of the waterfall up from the ground, overhead and with fingertips together. As you breathe out, bring love and compassion into your body. Repeat the movement once more and on your last breath out, rest one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. Breathe in and breathe out, noticing what you are present with in this moment. Then slowly bring your attention back to the room and the people around you.”*

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”*

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 3: Feelings

This group is a safe place for participants to talk about how to manage feelings that may feel overwhelming at times and support each other in group and as a family during the process. Through movement, mindfulness, art making, and self-reflection, participants learn that they are not alone in experiencing a range of feelings and learn tools to help them recognize, label and better manage the feelings, thoughts and sensations in their bodies.



“Valid forever. No matter the situation, in all walks of life, you deserve love, respect and to be heard. You’re irreplaceable to someone.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *all feelings are okay; our feelings can make us feel different sensations in our body; naming feelings can help us to better understand them and calm them down; there are productive ways to manage our feelings.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each participant; journal for each participant; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family; story book: *The Grand Hotel of Feelings* by Lidia Brankovic.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain: moving the body

Community of Kindness Mural

Hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. In the weeks ahead, facilitators decide whether or not to add to the mural weekly. It may be enough to simply bring the participants' attention to the mural as a reminder of how the group has agreed to treat each other and the group space. Participants can read what is already there and facilitators can support this process.

30 minutes: story, creative space, movement

Story: *The Grand Hotel of Feelings* by Lidia Brankovic

Creative Space: Creating a feelings image and responding to the image with a movement.

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Review tonight's topic and let parents know that children will be given the message that all feelings are okay. Share what the children will be doing in their groups and review the agenda.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain: moving the body

Facilitator: *"This week, we are going to do Up and Down the Mountain, but this time we are going to do it standing or sitting, and using our whole body. Standing or sitting as upright as you can keep your feet slightly apart, arms softly at your sides. If you would like to, you can imagine your feet having roots that go way down into the ground. Breathe in right from the soles of your feet, up through your body and bring your arms up until the tips of your fingers are reaching towards the ceiling, like a tree reaching up towards the sky. As you breathe out, bend your body and reach down towards the floor. Breathing in and reaching up, breathing out and reaching down. Breathe in and stretch your arms out to the side. Breathe out and bring your arms across your body to give yourself a big hug."*

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body after breathing and stretching our bodies in these different ways? What thoughts or feelings are you noticing?"*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *"Let's look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let's have a look at what we already have on the mural."*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *"Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? What would help you feel safe and comfortable as we talk about feelings today?"*

30 minutes: story, creative space, movement

Story: *The Grand Hotel of Feelings* by Lidia Brankovic

Creative Space: Feelings and Movement



The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

Facilitator: Part One - *"How many different kinds of feelings can you name? Can you name a feeling and show a movement?"* Each participant gets a chance to share before moving to the creative space.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Facilitator: Part Two – “Take a sheet of the large kraft paper and choose oil pastels, crayons or markers. As you think about all of the different kinds of feelings there are, choose colours and express your movement onto the paper that correspond to different feelings. You might choose to make a picture about one feeling or many. There is no right or wrong way to do this, just as there are no right or wrong feelings. Feel what is right for you.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “Notice what you feel or think right now. What was it like to make this picture? Is there a song or a dance that comes from your picture?”

**Additional Reflection Questions**

Does your image have a title?

What are the different feelings that you have?

Where do you feel them in your body?

Why did you express your feelings with these movements and colours?

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about feelings. When you are finished, turn the card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend or other adult. For your message, you may want to write about how you understand your feelings, or what helps you calm down when you are feeling sad, mad, frustrated, worried, happy or excited? You get to decide what to put on the card.”



For parents who finish their cards quickly, offer journals to write in.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today?”

Facilitators place each parent’s card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our children, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

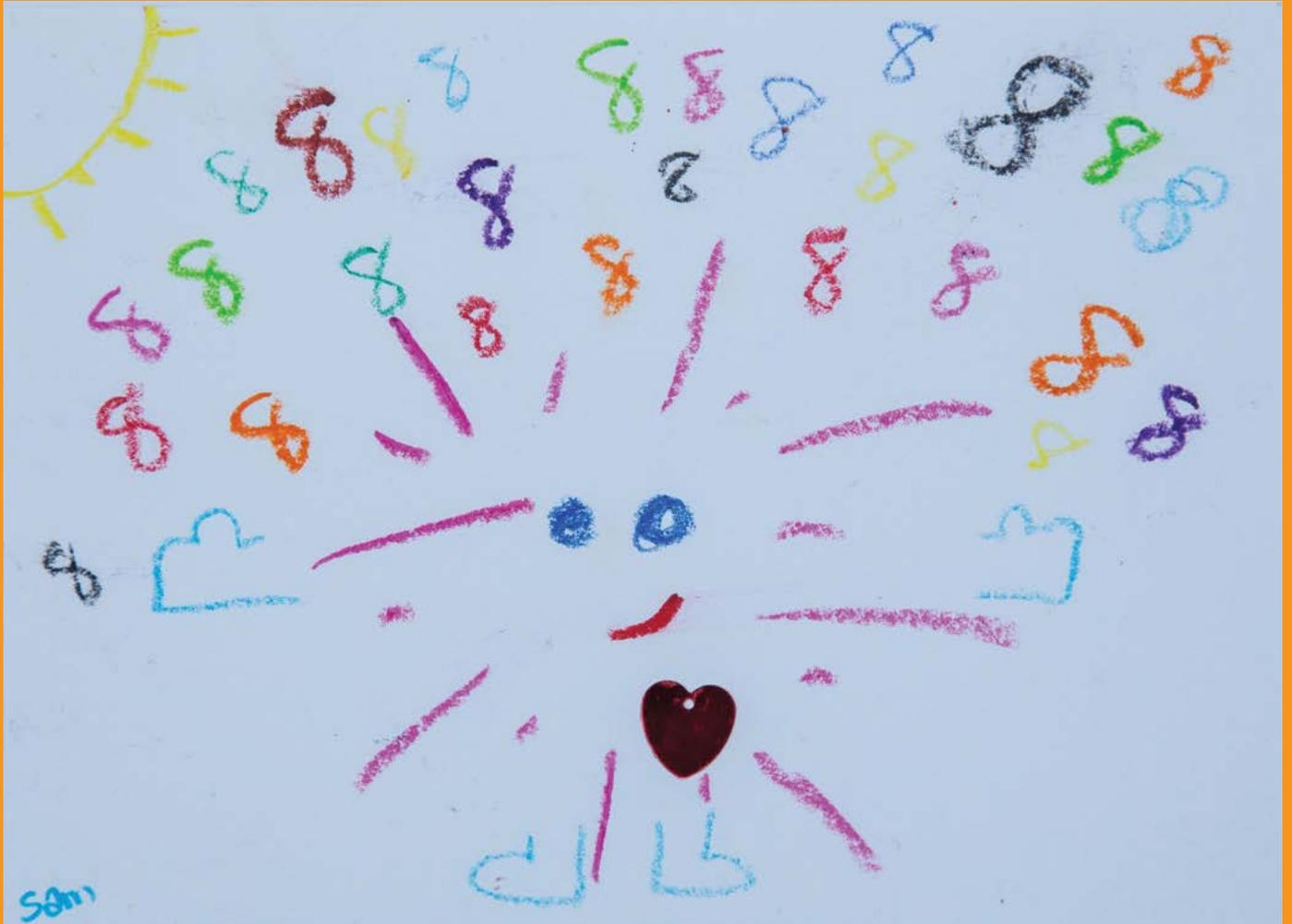
MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye****Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: *“On your kindness mural this week, add kind things that you and your family do or can do to take care of feelings. Your images and words can be about how you care for your own feelings and how you care for each other’s feelings.”*

Mindfulness: Up and Down the Mountain: moving the body

Facilitator: *“This week, we are going to do Up and Down the Mountain, but this time we are going to do it standing or sitting, and using our whole body. Standing or sitting as upright as you can keep your feet slightly apart, arms softly at your sides. If you would like to, you can imagine your feet having roots that go way down into the ground. Breathe in right from the soles of your feet, up through your body and bring your arms up until the tips of your fingers are reaching towards the ceiling, like a tree reaching up towards the sky. As you breathe out, bend your body and reach down towards the floor. Breathing in and reaching up, breathing out and reaching down. Breathe in and stretch your arms out to the side. Breathe out and bring your arms across your body to give yourself a big hug.”*

Facilitator: *“As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”*



ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 4: Big Feelings

We all encounter big emotions for various reasons, and when faced with overwhelming feelings that are hard to process, we can be led to react in ways that may not be helpful to us or those around us. These emotions often signal that our sympathetic nervous system is activated, indicating that something significant is happening, which can overwhelm our thinking brain and trigger automatic responses like fight, flight, and freeze. Fortunately, practices that focus on mindful body awareness and arts-based sensory activities can help engage the parasympathetic nervous system, returning us back to a sense of safety and calm.



“Tough times don’t last... tough people do!”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *big feelings are trying to communicate with us; the activated responses when we are triggered are called, fight, flight, and freeze; these reactions are normal responses when the body is trying to protect itself from danger; there are emotional regulation tools you can use to help you and your children return to a feeling of safety.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each participant; journal for each participant; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family; story book: *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings* by Britney Winn Lee.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Press and Release

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: story, movement creative space

Story: *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings* by Britney Winn Lee

Movement: Awakening Feelings and Sensations

Creative Space: Capturing feelings and sensations on paper.

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**MAIN AGENDA:**

Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review, countdown activity

Welcome back parents and briefly review the agenda.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Press and Release

Facilitator: *“This week, we are going to do Press and Release. This breathing, pressing and releasing can be something that supports you when you have big feelings. Big feelings are normal, especially after you have seen or heard fighting at home. Begin by sitting or standing, softly upright. You may close your eyes or lower your gaze. Can you feel where your feet touch the floor? Try pressing one foot into the floor and then the other into the floor. Trust that the floor or chair is gently holding your body. Perhaps you would like to imagine sending a breath all the way down to the bottom of your feet and the tips of your toes. Take a deep breath in and press one foot into the ground. As you breathe out, slowly relax your foot. Repeat on the other foot. Do this three times at your own pace. Next, take your hands and clasp them together. On your next in breath, press your hands together. On your next out breath slowly release your hands. Do this three times at your own pace. Moving towards the face, on your next in breath, tense your face muscles as tight as you can and on your out breath, relax your face. Do this three times at your own pace. After the last pressing and release, allow all the energy inside your body to settle into stillness. In the stillness count, to yourself, three breaths. Notice how your body feels now, just standing or sitting down still.”*

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body after pressing and releasing our bodies in these different ways? What thoughts or feelings are you noticing?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything that you would like to add that will help with your feelings, especially when those feelings seem big and overwhelming?”*

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings* by Britney Winn Lee

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Have you ever felt the way that the boy in the story feels? What discovery did the boy make to help him learn to accept all of his big, big feelings? How can you use the lessons in the book to help your children who may experience big feelings?”*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**Movement:** Awakening Feelings and Sensations

Facilitator: “Begin by standing with your legs about hip width apart. One by one, press your feet into the ground and feel the surface supporting your body. Once you feel comfortable and supported, we are going to awaken our bodies and senses. Start by gently bending down to lightly tap your feet with your hands and slowly move up the body until you reach your head (be especially gentle with your face). Next, begin to roll your shoulders backwards three times. Try to follow your breath and move at your own pace. After the third rotation, change direction and roll your shoulders forward three more times. Pause. Next, start shaking out your arms one by one. Pause. Now, shake out your legs one by one. Notice where the energy in your body wants to move and move with it (freestyle movement). After your movement is complete, come to stillness and take a moment to connect your breath and the energy flowing throughout your body. In your mind, notice if you can identify any big feelings or sensations in your body. If big feelings are being revealed to you, think about where in the body your emotion is sitting (ex., stomach, chest, throat).”

Creative Space: Feelings and Movement

The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

Facilitator: “Take a piece of the large kraft paper and with the markers, crayons, or oil pastels, create an abstract image of the feelings and sensations that appeared to you during your movements. Just as in the story, show what these feelings and sensations look like using various colours, lines, and shapes on the paper.”

Reflections

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share their art and if it has a title or a name? What was it like to move and discover the different feelings and sensations in your body? What are the different feelings and sensations that you noticed? How does movement and expression help you with big feelings and sensations?”

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about what helps you deal with big feelings. When you are finished, turn the card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend or other adult. For your message, you may want to write about how you take care of big feelings when they come up or what is something that helps you support your children when they experience big feelings? You get to decide what to put on the card.”



For parents who finish their cards quickly, offer journals to write in.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today?”

Facilitators place each parent’s card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our children, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: “On your kindness mural this week, add kind what you do as a family to take care of big feelings when they come up. What kind of things help you and your family to deal with big feelings?”

Mindfulness: Breathing Hand on Heart, Hand on Belly

Facilitator: “Sitting as upright as you are able to in this moment, notice where your body connects with the ground and feel your body supported by it. You may lower your gaze or close your eyes, whichever feels right for you in this moment. Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly and just begin to notice your breath as you breathe in and as you breathe out. There is no need to change it in any way. Just one breath in and one breath out. Notice the light pressure or warmth of your hand on your heart and your hand on your belly as you breathe in and out. Notice how your body expands as you breathe in and how it softens as you breathe out. Continue, one breath in and one breath out. One breath in and one breath out. Notice again where your body connects with the ground and that your body is supported by it. Staying in stillness while you count to yourself one, two, three, four.”

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”

“Like, look, most of the times because when you’re going through abuse, and this is very unfortunate, I think the abuse persists in many cases, which is my case, right? It still happens, even though we are separated for a long time. And a lot of times I came to the group very, very upset. And just being there and doing this, you know, having that community with me and, I don’t know it has this special energy, right? Like we’re all like, with that generosity of like, giving away whatever we can and supporting each other, it really, like, helped me going through all this. Like, for example, I had a horrible situation this weekend, and I know I’m going today, and I’m like Thank God I’m going today because it’ll help me, right? And it’ll help my daughter.”

– Parent participant

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 5: Safety, Boundaries and Resources

Feeling safe is essential for mental health and overall well-being, yet it can be a challenging sensation to access, especially for those who have experienced trauma. In this session, mothers/gender diverse parents will use their voices, engage in play, and creatively express themselves to explore and visualize feelings of safety, calm, and healing.



"The power of resources."

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *feeling safe is an important part of overall well-being; safety is not always easy to feel if you have experienced trauma and it is okay to talk about it to someone you trust when you feel unsafe; creative activities can help restore a sense of safety and calm.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each participant; journal for each participant; variety of art materials: extra canvas roll paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Happy Hum

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: movement, creative space

Movement and Creative Space: Scribble Tag

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Welcome back parents and briefly review the agenda.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Happy Hum



Normalize for participants that they may feel self-conscious or awkward at the beginning of these practices and they may also experience strong feelings or sensations that may arise. It is important they take a moment to pause and take care of themselves.

Facilitator: *“This week, we are going to do the Happy Hum. Your hum might be a very small hum, or it might be a big hum. We might try experimenting with big and small hums so that you can find the one that is right for you today. Sitting as upright as you can in this moment, notice how your feet connect with the floor and your body is supported by the surface you are sitting on. If you feel comfortable, you can close your eyes, or allow your eyes to look downward. It works best if you keep your lips closed, and hum a few notes yourself until you find a note that you like. Now we will hum together. Breathe in deeply and with your outbreath hum your note. Breathe in. Breathe out and hum your note. Repeat a few more times. If you feel comfortable, place your hands on your chest, and notice what happens when you breathe in and when you breathe out and hum. As you are humming, let your humming send calm into your heart. And as we come to the end of our happy hum practice, we are going to take three, soft, slow, mindful breaths.”*

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body after breathing and humming?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything that you would like to add that helps you create boundaries and maintain a safe space?”*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

30 minutes: movement, creative space**Movement and Creative Space: Scribble Tag**

The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

Scribble tag is a variation of the chasing game but played on paper and includes an image of the participant's safe space as their "home base". Playing and interacting with others through this game, calls attention to the participants' ideas about safety, boundaries and resources. Facilitators may invite them to pick their own partner for the activity.

Facilitator: Invite the two participants within each pairing to sit next to each other for this activity. *"Using a long sheet of paper, each of you will create a small image of what your safe space looks or feels like at opposite ends of the paper. After you complete your image, draw a circle or your favourite shape around it to represent the boundary. After your 'home base' is created, choose one colour marker or crayon that you will use to play scribble tag with your partner. Each pairing will pick one person to be 'it' and that person will try to tag their partner. Using your chosen marking tool, both players will start by positioning yourselves at your own home base and only when the facilitators give you the signal to go, begin 'racing' around the paper without lifting your marker or crayon (creating scribbles). The person who is 'it' can tag their partner by gently tapping on the other person's marking tool with their own. If the person trying not to be tagged, scribbles their way back onto their home base without getting tagged, the person who is 'it' must respect their partner's safe space and won't be able to tag them while they are there. Each round ends when either the person who is 'it' tags their partner or their partner scribbles their way back to their home base without getting tagged."* Play for three rounds and then switch roles.

Reflection

Facilitator: *"What was it like to play scribble tag? What were the different thoughts and feelings that you noticed while playing the game?"*

**Additional Reflection Questions**

What does your home base look or feel like?

What have you learned about safety and boundaries from the game?

Can you find an image within the scribbles that you and your partner created?

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: *"Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image that brings you calm and a feeling of safety. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today you think is important and that you can share with a friend or other adult. For your message, you may want to write about feeling safe and setting boundaries, or what you have learned about yourself that has supported your parenting and relationship with your child. You get to decide what to put on the card."*



For parents who finish their cards quickly, offer journals to write in.

Facilitator: *"Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today?"*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Facilitators place each parent's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our children, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."

Option

Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: "On your kindness mural this week, add kind things that you and your family do or can do to take care of your personal boundaries and respecting other family members' boundaries."

Mindfulness: Happy Hum

Facilitator: "Sitting as upright as you can in this moment, notice how your feet connect with the floor and your body is supported by the surface you are sitting on. If you feel comfortable, you can close your eyes, or allow your eyes to look downward. It works best if you keep your lips closed, and hum a few notes yourself until you find a note that you like. Now we will hum together. Breathe in deeply and with your outbreath hum your note. Breathe in. Breathe out and hum your note. Repeat a few more times. If you feel comfortable, place your hands on your chest, and notice what happens when you breathe in and when you breathe out and hum. As you are humming, let your humming send calm into your heart. And as we come to the end of our happy hum practice, we are going to take three, soft, slow, mindful breaths."

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body."



ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 6: The Story of Resilience

Building resilience is a crucial process that gives us the tools and skills that are needed to navigate and manage overwhelming thoughts and emotions during challenging moments. In this session, mothers/gender diverse parents will engage in mindfulness, movement, and creative activities that are designed to strengthen their resilience and help them to support their emotional well-being and that of their children.



“Everyday is a new day. Maybe today is a bad day but tomorrow will be a better day.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *building and maintaining resilience during challenging experiences can help you manage big feelings when they arise; children are not responsible for the fighting that has happened in the home; we have internal resources that can help us overcome challenging experiences.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each participant; journal for each participant; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family; story book: *I Am Courage: A Book of Resilience* by Susan Verde.

Special equipment needed: a hand drum



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Happy Hums to Long Tones

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: story, movement

Story: *I Am Courage: A Book of Resilience* by Susan Verde

Movement: Rooted Trees Gathering Water

Staying rooted in the ground, even in the changing seasons, supports participants through movement and voice to express and recognize their resilience.

Creative Space: Creating an Image of Your Tree

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Welcome back parents and briefly review the agenda.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Happy Hum to Long Tones

Facilitator: *“This week, we are going to start with the Happy Hum again, but then open our mouths so that we can make a stronger note, each on our own breath. Stand or sit as upright as you can in this moment, notice how your feet connect with the floor and if you are sitting, how your body is supported by the surface you are sitting on. If you feel comfortable to do so, you can close your eyes, or allow your eyes to look downward. It works best if you keep your lips closed, and hum a few notes yourself until you find a note that you like. Now we will hum together. Breathe in deeply and with your outbreath hum your note. Breathe in. Breathe out and hum your note. This time breathe in and if you feel comfortable, open your mouth and send your note out over the ocean - if it helps, make the sound ‘ahhhhhh’ with your note. Again, breathe in and on the outbreath, send your ‘ahhhhhh’ note over the ocean. Place your hands on your chest, breathe in and on the outbreath, send your ‘ahhhhhh’ note out over the ocean. Take three more silent breaths in your own time and find the stillness.”*

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body while humming? Any thoughts or feelings?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything you would like to add that would show what helps you overcome challenging moments in life?”*

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: *I Am Courage: A Book of Resilience* by Susan Verde

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Being courageous doesn’t always mean that we are fearless. It means we can feel scared but face our personal challenges anyway. What are some things that help you build courage and resilience? How can we help our children feel more resilient too?”*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Movement: Rooted Trees Gathering Water: with voice and hand drum



Facilitators can gently accompany the movement with the hand drum, keeping a soft but steady beat. They can follow the participants' lead. Some trees have branches that grow upwards and then bend down towards the ground, like weeping willows. Willows are very flexible. Their roots are deep and strong.

Facilitator: “Stand or sit where you have enough space to swish your arms sideways without colliding with anyone. Let’s start by imagining we are trees with roots that go down into the earth to where the water is. We can reach right down to the ground scoop up water, breathing in bringing the water up our bodies and reaching up to the sky. A small breeze flutters our leaves and sways the tree slightly from side to side. Let’s reach down again and bring more water up through our bodies until our arms and fingertips are reaching the sky while our roots are still strongly in the ground. The tree bends from side to side, sweeping down to the ground our arm/branches sweeping from one side to the other. When the wind/drum stops we all stand still. As the sun comes out, we bend down and scoop up water again, bringing it up through our bodies, reaching our fingertips to the sky, breathe in and on the outbreath send your ‘ahhhhhh’ note out over the ocean. Bringing your arms to rest at your sides, let’s take another three breaths in silence and stillness.”

Reflection

Facilitator: “Notice what you think or feel right now. Would anyone like to share?”

Creative Space: Creating an Image of Your Tree



The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

Facilitator: “Take a piece of the large kraft paper and choose oil pastels, paint, crayons, or markers and create an image or picture of your tree.”

Reflections

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share their art and if it has a title or a name? What was it like to move like a strong and resilient tree? How did you capture that in your image?”

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image that captures what resilience means to you. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend or other adult. For your message, you may want to write about what helps you overcome challenges and grow from your experiences. You get to decide what to put on the card.”



For parents who finish their cards quickly, offer journals to write in.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today?”

Facilitators place each parent’s card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our children, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: “On your kindness mural this week, add kind what helps you and your family to stay rooted and grow through life’s challenges?”

Mindfulness: Happy Hum to Long Tones

Facilitator: “Stand or sit as upright as you can in this moment, notice how your feet connect with the floor and if you are sitting, how your body is supported by the surface you are sitting on. If you feel comfortable to do so, you can close your eyes, or allow your eyes to look downward. It works best if you keep your lips closed, and hum a few notes yourself until you find a note that you like. Now we will hum together. Breathe in deeply and with your outbreath hum your note. Breathe in. Breathe out and hum your note. This time breathe in and if you feel comfortable, open your mouth and send your note out over the ocean - if it helps, make the sound ‘ahhhhhh’ with your note. Again, breathe in and on the outbreath, send your ‘ahhhhhh’ note over the ocean. Place your hands on your chest, breathe in and on the outbreath, send your ‘ahhhhhh’ note out over the ocean. Take three more silent breaths in your own time and find the stillness.”

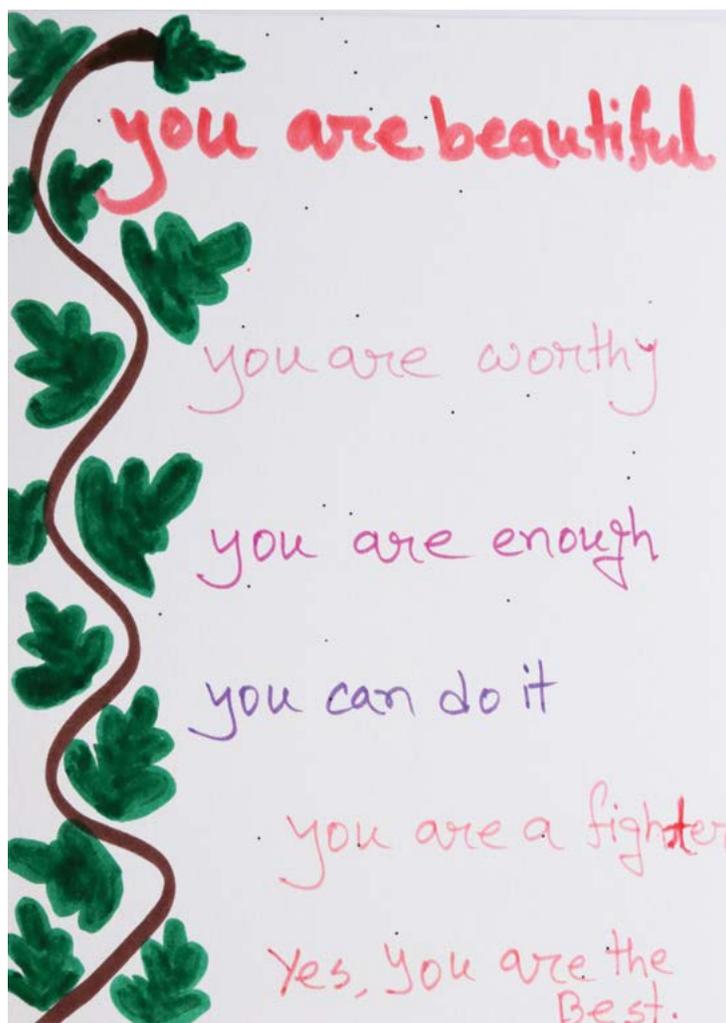
Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”



ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 7: Understanding Anger - Feelings vs. Actions

Anger is a powerful emotion that, if not recognized or explored, can impact both ourselves and those around us. In this session, mothers/gender diverse parents will have the opportunity to safely explore and process the intensity of the feeling through somatic activities, while also learning strategies to recognize the physical cues in their bodies that support self-regulation and emotional control.



“If you ever given an option between being right or being kind - always choose to be kind.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**AT A GLANCE:**

Key messages to parents: *feeling angry is a normal emotional response; it is normal to recognize feelings of anger in your children; there are strategies you can learn to manage angry feelings so that they do not harm yourself or others.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each participant; journal for each participant; variety of art materials: model magic, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, feathers, pipe cleaners, other collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Handshake or Squeeze Hands and Release

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: movement, creative space

Movement: Stretching in all Directions

Creative Space: Model Magic Puppets

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**MAIN AGENDA:**

Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Welcome back parents and briefly review the agenda.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Handshake or Squeeze Hands and Release

Facilitator: *“This week, we are going to squeeze our hands tight and release. If there is time, we will try it with our whole bodies. Sitting or standing as tall as you can be in this moment, notice how your body is supported by the chair you are sitting on or the floor you are standing on. Notice your body as you breathe in and as you breathe out. On the next breath in, squeeze your hands into a fist as tight as you can. As you breathe out let your hands soften and open. On the in breath squeeze your hands in a fist as tight as you can. As you breathe out allow your hands to soften and open. Breathe in and squeeze tight. Breathe out and soften. Notice how your body feels when your fists are tightly squeezed. Notice how your body feels when your hands soften.”*



Invite participants to squeeze and release other areas of the body:

Toes and feet
Shoulders
Face

Facilitator: *“Finish the practice with a gentle shaking of the body and then imagine all the energy calmly settles through your body and into the ground. Take two more breaths.”*

Reflection

Facilitator: *“This breathing, squeezing and releasing can be something that supports you when you feel frustrated or angry. What do you notice in yourself after doing that kind of breathing and movement?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything that you would like to add that helps you calm angry feelings?”*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**30 minutes: movement, creative space**

Movement: Stretching in all Directions

Facilitator: “Standing, sitting or lying down, make yourself as small as you can and then stretching your fingers and toes in opposite directions, make yourself as big as you can. Repeat this movement. On your third repetition, see if you can find a different direction to stretch in and now come back to your normal way of standing, sitting, or lying down and take a deep breath in and a long breath out.”

Creative Space: Model Magic Puppets



The creative space is intended to be a quick warm-up activity before the main art activity – reflection cards.

Facilitator: “Do you ever have one of those days when nothing goes the way you want it to go? Maybe you can’t find your favourite sweater because it’s in the wash, the house keys are missing and cereal just got spilled all over the floor? Does anyone have any examples of when things don’t go the way you want? How do you feel when that happens? What do you feel in your body (hot, tight, shaky, etc.)?”



Facilitators may add other feelings like sad, frustrated, angry, etc., if those feelings are not shared by the participants.

Facilitator: “Make a model magic puppet that fits on your thumb or finger that shows the way it feels in your body when nothing goes the way you want it to go and you feel angry or frustrated. You can add other art materials to your puppet. It can also be painted.”

Reflections:

Role playing with model magic puppets: Facilitators can lead with the following script and engage the parents in a conversation about angry feelings vs. actions through their puppet creation:

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share what they made? Does your puppet have a name? Does your puppet _____ (name) want to say anything about angry feelings? Is there something that _____ can do when he/she is feeling angry that won’t hurt anyone?”

Facilitator: “What would help your puppet feel calm or return to a ‘neutral’ state? Add other art materials to your puppet to show how it might transform angry feelings.”



Conclude the activity by sharing some other ways to manage angry feelings:

Talk to a trusted friend or counsellor

Practice breathing out like blowing bubbles

Squeeze your hands into a fist and then let your hands soften

Rub your feet on the ground, or notice the surface you are sitting on

Put on some music and do a dance or sing along

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image that would help you calm angry feelings when you look at it. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend or other adult. For your message, you may want to write about what helps with angry feelings, especially when they seem big and overwhelming. You get to decide what to put on the card.”



For parents who finish their cards quickly, offer journals to write in.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today?”

Facilitators place each parent’s card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our children, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”



Silent Breath – prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

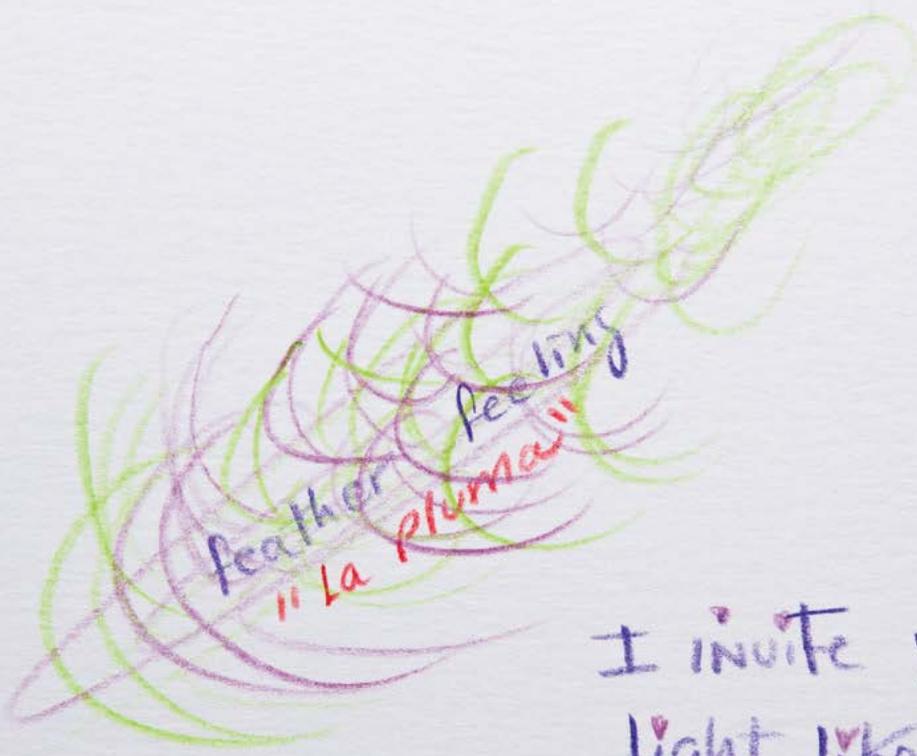
Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: “On your kindness mural this week, add what you do as a family to take care of anger when it comes up. In your family, what kinds of things help you to deal with the feeling of anger?”

Mindfulness: Handshake or Squeeze Hands and Release

Facilitator: “Sitting or standing as tall as you can be in this moment, notice how your body is supported by the chair you are sitting on or the floor you are standing on. Notice your body as you breathe in and as you breathe out. On the next breath in, squeeze your hands into a fist as tight as you can. As you breathe out, let your hands soften and open. On the in breath squeeze your hands in a fist as tight as you can. As you breathe out allow your hands to soften and open. Breathe in and squeeze tight. Breathe out and soften. Notice how your body feels when your fists are tightly squeezed. Notice how your body feels when your hands soften.”

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”



feather feeling
"La pluma"

I invite you to feel
light like a feather on
every situation.

Let it Flow (o)

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 8: Making Friends with Worry

Worry is a natural response that arises when we are uncertain of the past or afraid of what the future may hold. Group participants will have the opportunity to explore the feeling of worry through mindfulness, movement, art-making, and discussion. These creative interventions will help them recognize the sensations of worry, while also offering tools to manage and ease those worries.



“Let your worries go!”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *feeling worried about what is past or present is a normal feeling for many people; sharing our worries with someone we trust can help us feel better; there are creative tools we can use to help us ease the feeling of worry.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each participant; journal for each participant; variety of art materials: Play-Doh, large kraft paper, markers, crayons, oil pastels, paint, feathers, pipe cleaners, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Play-Doh Meditation

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: My Magic Breath: Finding Calm Through Mindful Breathing

Movement: Sweeping the Air in Figure Eights (adapted from Mindful Kids www.barefootbooks.com)

Creative Space: Scribbling Figure Eights

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Welcome back parents and briefly review the agenda.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Play-Doh Meditation

Facilitator: Invite participants to choose a colour of Play-Doh that they are drawn to. Invite them to place the unopened container in front of them and begin the mindfulness activity. *“Sitting comfortably, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Take a deep breath in from your nose, feeling your lungs and belly fill with air and exhale through your mouth. Repeat two more times. Now, pick up your Play-Doh and open the container. Take the Play-Doh in your hands and just begin to notice it. Notice the texture and how it feels when you squeeze it. Notice the temperature of the Play-Doh, is it warm or cold? Notice if the Play-Doh has a smell. Notice if the Play-Doh is heavy or light in your hands. Take another deep breath and now, begin to mold or shape the Play-Doh into a shape or form that shows how worry feels to you.”* Allow participants a few minutes to work on their Play-Doh figurine.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share how worry feels to them or what you notice in your body while working with the Play-Doh?”*

After sharing, invite group participants to roll their Play-Doh worries back into the shape of a “neutral” ball formation, place it back into the container and close the lid.

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? Is there anything you can write down or draw that helps you to stay in the present moment?”*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

30 minutes: story, movement, creative space

Story: My Magic Breath: Finding Calm Through Mindful Breathing

Reflection

Facilitator: "What happens when we practice mindful breathing? How do you feel after mindful breathing? How can you encourage your children to use their magic breath?"

Movement: Sweeping the Air in Figure Eights (adapted from Mindful Kids www.barefootbooks.com)

Facilitator: "Sitting, standing or lying down as tall as you can be in this moment, take one finger and make the smallest figure eight in the air in front of you; begin to make a bigger figure eight; using one hand make a much bigger figure eight in the air above you, in front of you, down low; now use both hands and your whole arm to make figure eights; try using one foot, or if you are sitting or lying down, both feet; and then come back to your normal way of sitting or standing and take three breaths and notice how your body feels after moving like this."

Reflection

Facilitator: "Notice what you feel or think right now. Would anyone like to share?"

Creative Space: Scribbling Figure Eights



The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

Facilitator: "Think about the way that worry feels in your body and using the oil pastels and a large piece of paper, you can scribble or make little and big figure eights all over the paper. For this picture scribbling is okay; when you are finished your scribble, take your favourite colours of paint or crayons, start filling in the spaces between the scribbles; some of the spaces will be very small and some spaces might be big. No matter how your picture turns out will be okay."

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: "Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image of something that helps calm worried feelings. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend or another mother. For your message, you may want to write about what helps worry feel calm? You get to decide what to put on the card."



For parents who finish their cards quickly, offer journals to write in.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Reflection

Facilitator: "Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today?"

Facilitators place each parent's card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: "Before we go to be with our children, let's take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth."



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: "On your kindness mural add what helps you and your family to calm worries; to take care of worries."

Mindfulness: Mind Bubbles: Breathe Your Worries Free (from Mindful Kids www.barefootbooks.com)

Facilitator: "Sitting or standing as tall as you can, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Imagine you are holding a bubble wand, breathe in as deeply as you can and as you breathe out imagine you are blowing a bubble through the wand, watching it float into the air and then disappear. Breathe in again and if you have a small worry imagine what it looks like, breathe out and blow your worry through your bubble wand, imagine it forming a bubble that floats into the air, pops and disappears. Repeat until the worry has been set free and your body feels calm."

Reflection:

Facilitator: "As we get ready to say goodbye, would anyone like to share what you are aware of in yourself right now: a feeling, a thought, or something in your body?"



ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 9: Hopes and Dreams

Hopes and dreams are powerful motivators, helping us navigate various life challenges. Group participants will explore and reflect on the significant changes that have happened within their family using mindful and creative practices. Through these activities, mothers/gender diverse parents will learn how to cope with transitions while strengthening the bond and attachment between them and their children.



“Share everything you have experienced, felt, saw with your closes loved one(s). To be able to speak about it will have you feeling lighter, more hopeful. Your voice and experiences matter!”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *many families have experienced big and small changes; changes can be positive, negative, neutral, or a combination of these outcomes; we all react differently to change; hopes and dreams help keep us motivated and work towards our goals.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each participant; journal for each participant; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, aluminum foil, markers, crayons, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.

Special equipment needed: one musical instrument for the facilitator and one for each participant. Musical instruments may include drums, shakers, tambourines, rain sticks, triangles, bells, chimes, etc.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Music Making in Community

Listening and valuing each person's importance in the group process.

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: creative space, voice and movement

Creative Space: Print Making

Voice and Movement: Response to each painting.

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Welcome back parents and briefly review the agenda.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Music Making in Community

Facilitator: *“Sitting or standing as tall as you can, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Notice the musical instrument you are holding in your hands. Notice the colour; is it smooth or rough; heavy or light; and take a breath in and a breath out. One person (could be the facilitator) will begin by creating a simple rhythm with their instrument. The person who begins will then signal to the person next to them that it is their turn to join in by turning towards them and making eye contact. The person next to them joins in, and the next until everyone in the circle is playing together. Then the person who began stops playing, then the person next to them stops playing, and then the next, all around the circle.”*

We want to be able to hear what it sounds like as each person’s rhythm joins in, what it sounds like when everyone is playing together, and what it sounds like as each person’s rhythm finishes.

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body? Any thoughts or feelings?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*



If the mural will be added to, the following questions can support the process:

Facilitator: *“Is there anything new to add this week about how we can treat each other or the space we are in? What are some words and images that represent your hopes and dreams?”*

30 minutes: creative space, voice and movement

Creative Space: Print Making



The creative space is intended to be a brief warm-up activity before the main art activity - reflection cards.

As the session includes big topics like family changes and hopes and dreams, this art activity invites the group to witness and embrace the transformative process.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Facilitator: “Everyone has one piece of aluminum foil and one piece of paper. Using the paints provided, add paint colours of your choice to the aluminum foil in whatever way feels right to you. Before the paint dries, place your painted foil onto the blank piece of paper (paint-side down). Gently rub, tap, or press on the aluminum foil to transfer your painting onto the paper. Gently lift the foil to reveal your new image.” Encourage participants to choose other colours or materials that make them feel calm and happy and invite them to add these materials to their printed artwork.

Reflection

Facilitator: “Thinking about family changes and your hopes and dreams for today, tomorrow, or a year from now, it is important to remember that just like every print that each of you created came from your last image, we are always moving into every new experience from our last one – sometimes there are surprises waiting for us, sometimes we may not always like what meets us there, or maybe we do! No matter what our new experience looks like, we can transform the way a moment feels to us by using things that help us feel safe, calm, grounded, and happy.”

Voice and Movement Response

Facilitator: “We are going to visit each person’s artwork and together we are going to use our voices to send a tone or hum to the painting. Breathing in, and as you breathe out, send your hum or tone to the painting. Continue together for a few breaths. As a group, move to the next painting.”



Invite the group to share a movement that shows how each painting moves them.

Reflection

Facilitator: “What was it like to make this picture? What was it like to have the group offer a sound or movement to your painting?”

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image that reflects your hopes and dreams. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend or other adult. For your message, you may want to write about what you learned about having hopes and dreams. You get to decide what to put on the card.”



For parents who finish their cards quickly, offer journals to write in.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the card they made today?”

Facilitators place each parent’s card in their corresponding envelope after the activity is complete.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our children, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

Family Kindness Mural

Facilitator: “On your kindness mural, this week add what your hopes and dreams are, or what your hopes and dreams are as a family.”

Mindful Activity: Music Making in Community

Facilitator: “Sitting or standing as tall as you can, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Notice the musical instrument you are holding in your hands. Notice the colour; is it smooth or rough; heavy or light; and take a breath in and a breath out. One person (could be the facilitator) will begin by creating a simple rhythm with their instrument. The person who begins will then signal to the person next to them that it is their turn to join in by turning towards them and making eye contact. The person next to them joins in, and the next until everyone in the circle is playing together and then the person who began stops playing, then the person next to them stops playing, and then the next, all around the circle.”

We want to be able to hear what it sounds like as each person’s rhythm joins in, what it sounds like when everyone is playing together, and what it sounds like as each person’s rhythm finishes.

Facilitator: “As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body.”



ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 10: Looking Back, Looking Forward

This week, mothers/gender diverse parents will reflect on their journey in the program and select the cards they would like to contribute to the community card deck.



“Future is BRIGHT! River can not go back.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: *it is okay to have big feelings about the group ending; it is important to reflect on what we have learned in group and what we liked that we want to take with us from the program.*

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; 5 x 7 cards for each participant; 8.5 x 11 envelope for each participant; journal for each participant; variety of art materials: large kraft paper, markers, crayons, paint, collage items, scissors, glue, etc.; Family Kindness mural canvas for each family.

Special equipment needed: a hand drum



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: Steady and Strong like a Mountain

Community of Kindness Mural

30 minutes: movement

Movement: Dance Freeze with Drum

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time

Reflection Cards: Creating and choosing cards for the community deck.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Welcome back parents and briefly review the agenda.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness: Steady and Strong like a Mountain

Facilitator: *“Begin by sitting or standing with your feet hip width apart so that the top of your head and your feet make a triangle. Notice how your body is supported by the surface you are sitting or standing on, feeling your feet connected to the floor. You may choose to rest your arms on your lap or relaxed by your side. Eyes can be closed or looking down. Take a slow breath in and a slow breath out and bring to mind an image of a mountain. Imagine how this mountain connects right down to the earth as you breathe in and breathe out. Imagine this mountain in the spring and summer when wildflowers, birds and animals come to visit, rain falls, the wind blows, and the mountain stays steady and strong. Breathe in and breathe out; imagine the mountain in the fall when the leaves change and winter when the snowflakes begin to fall and cover it in crisp white snow and the mountain stays steady and strong. Breathe in and breathe out. Through all of the big and small storms, the mountain stays steady and strong. Take one more deep breath in and breathe out. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and begin to notice the room that we are in today and the people around you.”*



This activity could be done as an art meditation. Facilitators may invite parents to draw an image of their mountain and include any other elements they would like to add to their picture.

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body? Any thoughts or feelings?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

If the mural will not be added to, facilitators hang it in the location chosen in Week 2.

Facilitator: *“Let’s look at our Community of Kindness mural. Remember that the mural will show how we can treat each other and be kind to each other while we are here in the group together. Let’s have a look at what we already have on the mural.”*

“What is it like to reflect on this mural and see what you have created with the group?”

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

30 minutes: movement

Movement: Dance Freeze with Drum

Facilitator: “As a group, listen to the drum and the drum will tell your body how to move. It may be smooth and slow, or fast and spiky. Your body may want to move as low to the ground as it will go, to the side, up high, or all around. When the drum stops, freeze to make a statue. When the drum begins again, begin moving again, listening to the drum. When it stops, freeze to make a statue.”



Depending on the group, facilitators may invite each participant to take a turn drumming for the rest of the group.

Reflection

Facilitator: “What do you notice in your body after doing the Dance Freeze?”

**Additional Reflection Question**

What was it like to play the drum for the rest of the group?

40 minutes: reflection cards, transition to family time**Reflection Cards**

Facilitator: “Using one or two of the 5 x 7 cards, create an image about your time in group. When you are finished, turn your card over and write down something you learned today that you think is important and that you can share with a friend or other adult. For your message, you may want to write about what you learned from coming to this group. You get to decide what to put on the card. When you’re finished writing your message, turn the card over and create an image that represents your words.”

Review and Choose Reflection Cards

Facilitators invite parents to look through their reflection card envelope and choose one to two cards that they would like to be shared and included in the Adventures in Sharing community deck. Invite them to work on finishing their chosen cards, making sure the image and words reflect messages that are appropriate for sharing with other families who may have lived through similar experiences.

Facilitator: “Would anyone like to share with us the cards they have chosen?”

Facilitators collect the chosen cards and place them in their corresponding envelope. Parents will keep and bring home the cards they have not chosen to include in the community card deck.

Transition to Family Time

Facilitator: “Before we go to be with our children, let’s take three breaths. Ready? Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth; and last time, in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth.”



Silent Breath - prompt participants to inhale and as they exhale, to focus on not making a sound.

30 minutes: family time, mindfulness, goodbye

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**Family Kindness Mural**

Facilitator: *"On your kindness mural this week, add what is most important to you and your family."*

Mindful Activity: Steady and Strong like a Mountain

Facilitator: *"Begin by sitting or standing with your feet hip width apart so that the top of your head and your feet make a triangle. Notice how your body is supported by the surface you are sitting or standing on, feeling your feet connected to the floor. You may choose to rest your arms on your lap or relaxed by your side. Eyes can be closed or looking down. Take a slow breath in and a slow breath out and bring to mind an image of a mountain. Imagine how this mountain connects right down to the earth, as you breathe in and breathe out. Imagine this mountain in the spring and summer when wildflowers, birds and animals come to visit, rain falls, the wind blows, and the mountain stays steady and strong. Breathe in and breathe out. Imagine the mountain in the fall when the leaves change and winter when the snowflakes begin to fall and cover it in crisp white snow and the mountain stays steady and strong. Breathe in and breathe out. Through all of the big and small storms, the mountain stays steady and strong. Take one more deep breath in and breathe out. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and begin to notice the room that we are in today and the people around you."*



Option

Facilitators may choose their own mindfulness activity from the previous weeks.

Facilitator: *"As we get ready to say goodbye, what is one word that tells us what you are aware of in yourself right now? It can be about an emotion, a thought, or a feeling in your body."*

“The biggest part that I always come back to in thinking of my trauma is that I’m not the person I used to be, and the person I used to be was very much into art and creative, like I was a makeup artist before. I always got the art award in school. I was very much a creative person, and all of my trauma really took that away from me and I’m starting to lay the foundation of it again through these programs, just reminding myself that I still can be a creative person, that I can still reflect, I can still be self-aware. I was very confident in myself and it was because of my creativity before. And so, it’s helping to lay that framework again. Every session, I would say yes, because it’s the place where I feel like I’m building parts of the old me again.”

– Parent participant

ADVENTURES IN SHARING

Week 11: Celebration

Families come together to celebrate their journey and reflect on what they have learned and will take with them from this program.



“Everything you want is on the other side of fear. Just be brave and keep moving.”

– Parent

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

AT A GLANCE:

Key messages to parents: endings can bring up mixed feelings and emotions; you may feel sad that the group is ending but proud of your accomplishments along the way; acknowledging the courage to share experiences during the program is something to be celebrated; goodbyes are an opportunity to start something new and exciting.

Materials needed: Community of Kindness canvas; story book: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst.

Special equipment needed: a hand drum and one musical instrument for each facilitator and participant. Musical instruments may include drums, shakers, tambourines, rain sticks, triangles, bells, chimes, etc.



Time frames are a general estimation of how much time may be needed for each activity.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness mural

Mindfulness: A favourite mindfulness activity from the program.

Community of Kindness Mural: reflecting on what it means to be kind

30 minutes: story, movement

Story: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

One hour: celebration, closing mindfulness

At the end of this final session, each family takes home their Family Kindness Mural along with their certificates and the parents' journals.

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP

MAIN AGENDA:



Scripts in the agenda are a guide. Use the words that are right for you.

20 minutes: welcome, agenda review

Welcome back parents and briefly review the agenda.

30 minutes: mindfulness, Community of Kindness

Mindfulness

Facilitators and group participants may choose a favourite mindfulness activity from the previous weeks.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Would anyone like to share what they notice in their body? Any thoughts or feelings?”*

Community of Kindness Mural

Facilitators hang the mural in the location chosen in Week 2. Parents can read what is already on the Community of Kindness mural, with facilitators supporting this process, and reflect on what it means to be kind.

Reflection

Facilitator: *“Are there any words or images that stand out for you on this mural? What does being kind mean to you?”*

30 minutes: story, movement

Story: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

As a final goodbye with the other group participants, read the story, *The Invisible String*. After the story, have the group participants engage in a movement activity, reflecting on how the invisible string keeps them connected even when they are not together. Facilitators take part in this as well. This can be a dance movement or a very small movement, each participant chooses what is right for them. After each person has made a movement, the movement is repeated more quickly, creating a flow, almost like a “wave” created in sports stadiums. Adapt this activity to fit the participants in your group.

Facilitator: *“Today we will be celebrating our time together. Through a movement, we will share with each other how the invisible string keeps us connected, even when we don’t see each other. If your string could dance or move, what would it look like? We are going to go around the circle and each person will have an opportunity to create a movement.”*

Facilitator: *“What was it like to move in that way? Is there a message in your movement you would like to share?”*

MOTHERS'/GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS' GROUP**One hour: family celebration and closing mindfulness**

Families gather together for a celebration. Each participant receives a certificate of completion and is recognized for their participation in the program. At the end of this final session, each family takes home their Family Kindness Mural along with their certificates and the parents' journals.

Closing Mindfulness: Music Making in Community

Facilitator: *“Sitting or standing as tall as you can, notice where your feet connect with the floor, or where your body connects to the chair you are sitting on. Notice the musical instrument you are holding in your hands. Notice the colour; is it smooth or rough; heavy or light; and take a breath in and a breath out.”* Using the hand drum, a facilitator will begin by creating a simple rhythm with the instrument. The facilitator who begins will then signal to each family that it is their turn to join in by turning towards them and making eye contact and repeat this process until all families have joined in with their chosen musical instrument and everyone is playing together. The facilitator will then signal to each family when to stop playing their instrument until the final sounds of hand drum close out the practice.

We want to be able to hear what it sounds like as each person's rhythm joins in, what it sounds like when everyone is playing together, and what it sounds like as each person's rhythm finishes.

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Take away your
grey and give
your self some
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