



Workshop goals:

- To observe the indicators of fear in others with compassion
- To develop your empathy and your interpersonal skills
- To train yourself in welcoming others with kindness and offering your help

Take-home message for the children:

- Everyone experiences emotions in certain situations.
- Welcoming other people's emotions with kindness can help them.
- The calmer and the more present I am, the more I can help.
- Being teased is a part of life, you can talk about it and make it less impactful.

Theoretical background for the teacher:

Welcoming a child's emotion allows you to defuse a scary situation at his or her own pace. It's not always appropriate to intervene or to minimize ("It's not that bad."). Welcoming all reactions and feelings, including their nuances - no matter what, without judgment or moralizing comments - is all a child needs to calm down again. "You express an emotion, you don't object it" (Bruno Humbeek).

Empathy is defined as the act of trying to understand the inner experience of another person, to attune to their emotions. These social and interpersonal skills can be trained. You can explain to the children the appropriate ways of behaving and, more importantly, demonstrate and apply them, since they learn first and foremost through observation and imitation of adults. These behaviors can be trained by "auto-instruction", as well as by role playing.

Outline of the workshop and suggested activities

Adjust and adapt according to childrens' age

Children are welcomed

Presentation of goals to children

Watching video with children

Discussion: guide the children to discuss what they have seen and what they remember 20 to 30 min.

Questions about the film to introduce the subject to the children:

1. What happened?
2. What do the characters feel?
3. What do they think?
4. How do they react?
5. What do they do?

Activities – Workshop 6

How do I help my friend manage their fear?

Be present and welcome your friend (cf worksheet 6A) (several times)

5 to 10 mins

Being welcoming towards others and actively listening to them can be trained. Worksheet nr. 6 offers the student a 4-step auto-instructive routine. Invite the students to stand up so they can go through the steps using their bodies. Suggest to them to walk around the classroom (or adapt the exercise according to your spatial possibilities) and stop in front of another student, so they can work two by two. “I stop...”. They can then simply slowly breathe whilst standing in front of the other. “I breathe...”. Then they could put their hand behind their ear to show “I’m listening...”. And finally, invite them to hold the hand of the other one. “I respond, I offer my help...”.

Some fearful situations (cf worksheet 6B)

5 to 10 mins

By thinking about some situations that they themselves have experienced, the children become conscious of the emotions they have lived through and that the others are experiencing, as well as of the help they received or offered to others. Helping each other is possible and welcome. After having discussed some of the situations with the children, which perhaps were scary for some of them, you can discuss their emotions (with The Flower of Emotions or The Thermometer of Fear) and the possible help one could offer.

Helping my friend that’s afraid... (cf worksheet 6C)

10 mins

This exercise starts out with some questions the children can ask themselves before they go and help their friend that’s afraid. However, no one ever has to go... Nonetheless, the propositions the worksheet offer could encourage them. The lifesaver that is meant as a visual memory aid (you could cut it out) could collect some questions and options for the students to make use of in a real situation. The small lifesavers could be offered as a gesture of help.

Role plays and sketches (cf worksheet 6D)

20 mins

You can then proceed to select either a situation one of the children talked about, or one of the ideas on the worksheet, and assign every child one of the roles in groups of three. Child **A** will play the role of the child that’s afraid, and child **B** will be the one that’s offering help. The third child will play the role of the observer, **C**. The role of C is to observe and watch the emotion’s indicators, as well as to listen to everyone’s lines – just like a director or a camera. C is not allowed to say anything during the role play.

All groups enact the situation at the same time in order to reduce the stress of being observed by others. The role play shouldn’t be too long. After a few interactions, you can invite them to gather and talk about what happened in every group and what helped reduce the intensity of the emotion. Then the children switch roles. And after that, gather again...

Debate: I’m afraid of being teased... or not! (cf workshop 6E)

20 to 30 mins.

Here are some questions that can start a debate or discussion within the group, to develop empathy and think about the consequences of teasing.

Conclusion

Activities can be concluded with reflection time with the children: what do you remember, what have you understood...?

Ask the children to make a decision that they will then present to the group.

Each child makes a decision: “I decide to...”, “I will...”