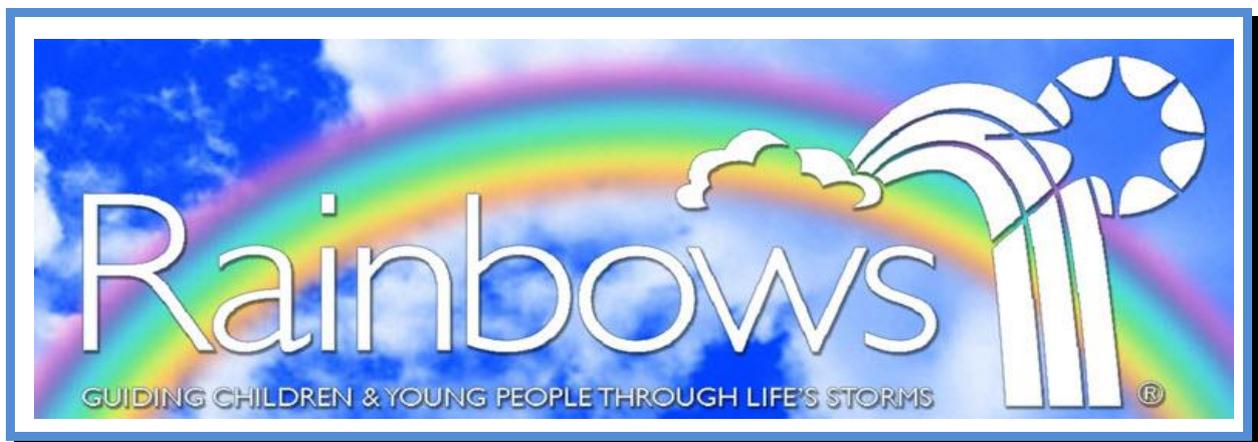


Silver Linings

Community Crisis Response Bereavement Support Programme for ages 12 – 17



Silver Linings Leader's Handbook

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Rainbows Bereavement Support

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Community Crisis Response Bereavement Support Programme

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1. Purpose and Rationale

In life people are sometimes faced with situations that they cannot control.

Natural disasters, such as floods, gales, fires, earthquakes or epidemic illness and human driven crises, such as terrorist attacks, loss of life through accidents, suicide, criminal acts or hostage situations, such **Crisis Events** can thrust people into painful circumstances so suddenly that whole communities grieve as one. When this happens, people become highly vulnerable and experience many emotions that they did not think they were capable of feeling, prior to the crisis event.

Adults who are straining to find answers may be able to cope by supporting each other and by finding ways to exist within this new reality and children will need support too. Rainbows Bereavement Support hopes that **Silver Linings Community Crisis Response Programme** will help fulfil some of the support needs of the children.

Children have the same feelings as adults, but often have no outlet to express them. Children need to understand that the crisis event in their community will become part of their personal history and they will need help and guidance to know how to deal with this.

The children will need:

- To have an understanding of the crisis event appropriate to their age.
- Caring adults to support them whilst they try to understand what has happened in their life and how it affects them.
- To know that the diverse feelings they are experiencing are normal emotions and are okay.
- To seek direction from adults to answer their concerns and assist them to formulate questions, know how to act, what to say and where they can share their innermost feelings.

The Silver Linings Programme is an outlet for children in the form of a peer support, crisis response model based on six sessions in which participants share their personal stories, express their feelings, and reconcile the crisis event using their coping skills and move on to the future – knowing that they will be supported by people who care for them. The closing session allows a participant to select a Personal Goal, which they can control and strive to achieve. To implement the Silver Linings Programme, teachers, classroom assistants and other professionals will lead the activities and guide the discussions to work through the specific topics in each of the Silver Linings Programme sessions.

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2. General Guidelines and Recommendations For Using The Silver Linings Programme

1. Inform parents and carers about the Silver Linings Programme and request their cooperation and understanding whilst assisting the children. (See Sample Letter For Parents/Carers)
2. Schedule the Silver Linings sessions at a time when there can be a natural break after the session prior to returning to regular classwork or activities. Try to meet at the same time for each session – establishing a routine is important for the children, whatever the circumstances.
3. There are six sessions including a personal ‘My Own Goal’ concluding session. Participants will need time between sessions to process and reflect upon their feelings. It is recommended that one session is held on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday for two weeks respectively. If participants appear to require more time between each session, you may rearrange the schedule accordingly.
4. Try to have at two adults at each session to assist children who may become upset or even feel the need to leave the session for a time.
5. The session length will depend on the number of participants at the session and making time provision for those children who want to share their feelings with the group, if they so desire. If there are enough adults, small groups can be formed to allow for enough sharing time.
6. Some children may not be ready or comfortable to discuss their feelings or experiences. Be mindful of their preferences and do not force participants to talk or participate. Encourage those children who are willing to express their feelings and listen without passing judgement.
7. The Silver Linings Programme is divided into age level editions. The age level is clearly identified on the resources. When preparing to use the Silver Linings Programme, ensure that each adult leader has the prerequisite Leader’s Guide.
8. Folders may be given to each participant to keep their materials and Participant Booklet together.
9. Whatever life challenge brings the children together to grieve will, throughout the Silver Linings Programme, will be referred to as the **Crisis Event**. Leaders should refer to the actual **Crisis Event** in their discussions with participants and explain the use of the term to the participants when using the resources.
10. The Silver Linings Programme is not counselling or therapy. Ensure that you have contact numbers for appropriate Counsellors, Care Workers or other Professional agencies to refer to in case of emergency situations, or if participants require additional guidance or psychological assistance.
11. If any children participating in the Silver Linings Programme have directly experienced significant loss in their lives because of a death, divorce or family

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separation, it may be appropriate to enrol them on a Rainbows Bereavement Support Programme.

Each age relevant Rainbows Programme provides a safe and confidential setting for children to talk through their feelings with others who are experiencing similar situations. They are helped to articulate their feelings by a trained adult facilitator whom they know and trust.

The Rainbows Bereavement Support Programmes provide materials which form a structured 12 – 14 week programme to assist participants through their grief and loss. The Rainbows Programmes develop self-esteem, trust, confidence and resilience, whilst promoting positive emotional development and healthy relationships.

If Rainbows Bereavement Support Programmes are not offered in your community and you want find out more, information is available at www.rainbowsgb.org

3. Sample Letter For Parents/Carers

Dear Parents/Carers,

The current events that we are all experiencing will have a lasting effect on the minds and hearts of everyone within our community. Our children have experienced a personal benchmark which they will remember as powerfully as prior generations who have dealt with other crises.

In order to support all children who need to understand that this event will become part of their personal history, we would like to offer them support while they learn to cope with their thoughts and feelings surrounding this crisis. Presently we will be offering a community crisis response programme called Silver Linings.

The Silver Linings Programme was created to provide support for children by Rainbows Bereavement Support GB, a national charity which has a proven, positive impact on the lives of children grieving a significant and often devastating loss in their lives.

We encourage you to ask your child about their experiences while participating in the Silver Linings Programme and give them time to discuss their questions and answer their concerns. They will need to know that they are not alone with this remembered burden, so they will feel the safety and security of having trusted adults who care for them. If you have any questions, please contact: _____

Yours sincerely,

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4. Helping The Child or Adolescent Trauma Survivor

Helpful information used with permission from National Institute of Mental Health.

Early intervention to help children and adolescents who have suffered trauma from violence or a disaster is critical. Parents, teachers and mental health professionals can do a great deal to help these youngsters recover. Help should begin at the scene of the traumatic event.

According to the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder of the Department of Veterans Affairs, workers in charge of a disaster scene should:

- Find ways to protect children from further harm and from further exposure to traumatic stimuli. If possible, create a safe haven for them. Protect children from onlookers and the media covering the story.
- When possible, direct children who are able to walk away from the site of violence or destruction, away from severely injured survivors, and away from continuing danger. Kind but firm direction is needed.
- Identify children in acute distress and stay with them until initial stabilization occurs. Acute distress includes panic (marked by trembling, agitation, rambling speech, becoming mute, or erratic behaviour) and intense grief (signs include loud crying, rage, or immobility).
- Use a supportive and compassionate verbal or non-verbal exchange (such as a hug, if appropriate) with the child to help him or her feel safe. However brief the exchange, or however temporary, such reassurances are important to children.

After violence or a disaster occurs, the family is the first-line resource for helping. Among the things that parents and other caring adults can do are:

- Explain the episode of violence or disaster as well as you are able.
- Encourage the children to express their feelings and listen without passing judgment.
- Help younger children learn to use words that express their feelings. However, do not force discussion of the traumatic event.
- Let children and adolescents know that it is normal to feel upset after something bad happens.
- Allow time for the youngsters to experience and talk about their feelings. At home, however, a gradual return to routine can be reassuring to the child.
- If your children are fearful, reassure them that you love them and will take care of them. Stay together as a family as much as possible.
- If behaviour at bedtime is a problem, give the child extra time and reassurance. Let him or her sleep with a light on or in your room for a limited time if necessary.

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- Reassure children and adolescents that the traumatic event was not their fault.
- Do not criticize regressive behaviour or shame the child.
- Allow children to cry or be sad. Don't expect them to be brave or tough.
- Encourage children and adolescents to feel in control. Let them make some decisions about meals, what to wear, etc.
- Take care of yourself so you can take care of the children.

When violence or disaster affects a whole school or community, teachers and school administrators can play a major role in the healing process. Some of the things educators can do are:

- If possible, give yourself a bit of time to come to terms with the event before you attempt to reassure the children. This may not be possible in the case of a violent episode that occurs at school, but sometimes in a natural disaster there will be several days before schools reopen and teachers can take the time to prepare themselves emotionally.
- Don't try to rush back to ordinary school routines too soon. Give the children or adolescents time to talk over the traumatic event and express their feelings about it.
- Respect the preferences of children who do not want to participate in class discussions about the traumatic event. Do not force discussion or repeatedly bring up the catastrophic event; doing so may re-traumatize children.
- Hold in-school sessions with entire classes, with smaller groups of students, or with individual students. These sessions can be very useful in letting students know that their fears and concerns are normal reactions. Many counties and school districts have teams that will go into schools to hold such sessions after a disaster or episode of violence. Involve mental health professionals in these activities if possible.
- Offer art and play therapy for young children in school.
- Be sensitive to cultural differences among the children. In some cultures, for example, it is not acceptable to express negative emotions. Also, the child who is reluctant to make eye contact with a teacher may not be depressed, but may simply be exhibiting behaviour appropriate to his or her culture.
- Encourage children to develop coping and problem-solving skills and age-appropriate methods for managing anxiety.
- Hold meetings for parents to discuss the traumatic event, their children's response to it, and how they and you can help. Involve mental health professionals in these meetings if possible.

Most children and adolescents, if given support such as that described above, will recover almost completely from the fear and anxiety caused by a traumatic experience within a few weeks. However, some children and adolescents will require more help perhaps over a longer period of time in order to heal. Grief over the loss of

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a loved one, teacher or friend may take months to resolve, and may be reawakened by reminders such as media reports or the anniversary of the death.

In the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event, and in the weeks following, it is important to identify the youngsters who are in need of more intensive support and therapy because of profound grief or some other extreme emotion. Children and adolescents who may require the help of a mental health professional include those who show avoidance behaviour, such as resisting or refusing to go places that remind them of the place where the traumatic event occurred, and emotional numbing, a diminished emotional response or lack of feeling toward the event. Youngsters who have more common reactions including re-experiencing the trauma, or reliving it in the form of nightmares and disturbing recollections during the day, and hyperarousal, including sleep disturbances and a tendency to be easily startled, may respond well to supportive reassurance from parents and teachers.

5. Programme Leader Guidance and Responsibilities

- Make a commitment to lead all sessions with the participants, who need the stability of an understanding adult who has listened to their fears.
- Be calm and encouraging. Be careful not to transfer your anxieties regarding the crisis situation to the participants.
- Answer participants questions honestly with facts, remaining non-judgemental,
- Show acceptance of participants' feelings, while using words and phrases appropriate to their understanding and age.
- Create a safe and comfortable environment in which to share.
- Work with other adults to comfort and soothe the participants with your presence and words when required.
- Use active listening, eye contact and empathetic responses, whilst showing you value the feelings participants are willing to share with their group.
- Discuss confidentiality with the group. Adults should promise to keep the confidence of participants at all times, unless someone is hurting them or another child, or they are going to hurt themselves, or if they are harming or are thinking of hurting someone else. In these cases the named person for Safeguarding should be informed.
- Set common group guidelines of respect and courtesy.

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6. Common Age Level Reactions To Crisis Situations & Support Suggestions

As adults we need to realise that young people can all feel loss deeply. Children and teenagers need to know that they are 'safe' now with their teachers at school and with their parents/carers. While we cannot guarantee anything in this life, we can try to reassure them that there are trusted adults available who will help them.

Young children do not understand the concept of 'time' in the same way as adults. One minute, a crisis may seem to go on forever, and the next, they will be playing just as if nothing ever happened. Teenagers may resent the imposition of change on their futures and may react angrily or be immensely saddened, and generally feel they cannot go on. Both extremes can be common due to the growing up process, but can be alleviated by support from adults at this crucial time.

Children and adolescents need to know that they are not alone during this crisis. This event may indeed change their lives. Yet for generations people have adapted to changes and we must work together to help one another work through these difficult times.

Encourage participants to talk about their life – how it was before the crisis and how it is now. Listen for clues about their anxieties and help them to think of ways to handle their worries. In some circumstances, changes they have shared may take some time to handle. Discuss what they might be able to do in the meantime. This can help the children and teenagers initiate open discussions with their parents/carers and other trusted adults and give them more than one outlet for support while they strengthen their network of assistance in case they need more help.

Most importantly - Make use of all the activities, written activities, games and suggestions in **Silver Linings** to initiate discussion. If the participants are quiet in the beginning, be patient and allow them time to feel comfortable. Healing and acceptance take place in the telling and retelling of the stories about what happened to them, as well as having the opportunity of being able to share their true feelings.

7. Silver Linings Resources

Leader's Guide containing the Aim & Rationale for each session, as well as complete instructions for participants' activities and suggestions for discussion questions.

Participant Booklet (Photocopiable) containing age appropriate personal activities. Sessions typically include a page to read from the booklet which should be done prior to participants working on the topic activity. Each session ends with an opportunity for participants to write down their own ideas and observations.

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8. Elements of a Silver Linings Session

Each session with the participants contains four elements:

1. Gathering
2. Focus
3. Connecting
4. Closing

Each element is linked to the next and moves easily from one to another. The length of time needed for each element will depend on the age and particular needs of the participants.

Gathering

Begin the first session by explaining the **Crisis Event** that has happened. Let the participants know the purpose of the session and the schedule being followed. Introduce any other adult leader/s who will be assisting at each session.

At beginning of every session explain to the participants the following guidelines:

- Everyone has a chance to share and be heard when they are ready and feel comfortable.
- Everyone needs to respect each other's feelings and listen to others.
- Adults should promise to keep the confidence of participants at all times, unless someone is hurting them or another child, or they are going to hurt themselves, or if they are harming or are thinking of hurting someone else. In these cases the named person for Safeguarding should be informed.

After the first session, this element allows time to reacquaint the group with why they are here and to bring up any special issues. It may be appropriate to ask participants to share how they are feeling and any current events or developments they have heard about, or are experiencing now. This may be incorporated into the discussions at that session.

Focus

This element focuses the participants on the topic that is to be covered in the session. This element may involve the group project or the personal activity. Participants may be able to discuss issues while completing their task. Discussion should be encouraged whenever participants are ready.

Connecting

This is the main element of each session and allows the participants to 'connect' their feelings with the **Crisis Event**. The group leader may need to direct the discussion with open-ended questions to keep things moving. Invite each participant to share and remember, not to force anyone to talk or write. It may take some

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participants some time before they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings.

Closing

This final element of the session provides a short time of closure after such deep sharing before returning to the normal day's activities. Reading aloud the words from the **Closing** together or listening can accomplish a gentle close to the session.

9. Overview of Silver Linings Sessions and Topics

This programme for 12 – 17 year olds consists of six sessions:

- Session 1:** FEELINGS AND ME
Topic: ME? TALK ABOUT FEELINGS?
- Session 2:** CHANGES FOR ME
Topic: LIFE CHANGES
- Session 3:** UNDERSTANDING FEAR AND ANGER
Topic: FEAR - ANGER - UNDERSTANDING
- Session 4:** ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS
Topic: NEW BEGINNINGS
- Session 5:** COPING WITH A CRISIS
Topic: COPING IN THE WORLD TODAY
- Session 6:** MY OWN GOAL
Topic: MY OWN UNIVERSE

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Silver Linings - Session Instructions for ages 12 – 17

SESSION 1

TITLE: ME? TALK ABOUT MY FEELINGS?

RATIONALE: Young people need to know everyone has feelings and that they are a natural and integral part of each person. It is important that each participant understands that there are no GOOD or BAD feelings – they just ARE! We all experience pain-filled and joyful feelings depending on the situation at hand. It is how we express our feelings that is our responsibility and within our control. The expression of feelings will not necessarily change a situation, but it may change the understanding and attitude we have regarding the event in question.

AIM:

- To have the participants realise that feelings are as essential to our well-being as breathing.
- To assist participants to use appropriate vocabulary to express their feelings so that they are able to tell their personal story and share their feelings and thoughts.
- To reinforce the group guidelines by asking everyone to respect each other's feelings and not to criticise the ideas and suggestions of others in the group.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Participant Booklet
- Pens and pencils

GATHERING:

Begin the first session by recalling the **Crisis Event** that has happened. Let the participants know the purpose of the Silver Linings sessions and the schedule being followed. Introduce any other adult leader/s who will be assisting at each session. Explain that the sessions are an opportunity to talk about the **Crisis Event** that has affected individuals and the community.

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Explain to the participants the following guidelines:

- Everyone has a chance to share and be heard when they are ready and feel comfortable.
- Everyone needs to respect each other's feelings and listen to others.

Explain that the group leader/s will keep the confidence of participants at all times, unless someone is hurting them or another child, or they are going to hurt themselves, or if they are harming or are thinking of hurting someone else, in which case this will be reported to the named person for Safeguarding. Participants can then write their name on their own Participant Booklet. Read aloud or ask the participants to read '**Arrows**' in their Participant Booklet and ask if anyone has anything they would like to add to the focus of the session.

FOCUS: Leader to introduce the session by saying: 'Today we will begin to examine our own perceptions and stories about what we have seen and heard surrounding the (state the **Crisis Event**) and share our feelings about them.'

Ask the participants to read '**Me? Talk about Feelings?**' in their Participant Booklet. Explain the first activity which asks them to remember their own stories about the **Crisis Event**. Once these stories are shared and discussed, they will be better prepared to look deeper into their feelings in the second activity.

Ask participants to complete the second activity by writing their answers when they have deciphered the feeling word or phrase in their Participant Booklet.

CONNECTING: It might be difficult for the participants to start talking about their feelings, so focus on events first. Telling their personal stories of when and where they heard about the **Crisis Event** will assist them to begin linking feelings to what happened that day. Allow time for sharing and discussion of their answers and stories.

It is crucial for the **participants to know where to find people in their lives with whom they can speak freely about their feelings and gain answers and insights**. So use the following group discussion questions to do this:

- **What is the strongest feeling you have today?** (*Most participants will say that they are feeling scared, so give them a chance to find their own solutions by asking: **How are you going to handle that feeling?** Helpful solutions can be written and displayed, so that participants can remember them.*)
- **Who is the person you know who can be trusted to hear about your feelings?**
- **What will you tell that person when you next see them?**

The License Plate Activity in the Participant Booklet will enable the participants to express their feelings in a personal way.

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CLOSING: Leader closes the session by reading out the following: **‘Talking about our feelings as we remember a situation lets others know how deeply we appreciate what has happened. Once feelings have been spoken out loud, we can begin to process what they mean to us. Expressing our feelings can help us understand ourselves and each other. Understanding can lead us to hope for a brighter future.’**

Then ask the group to open their Participant Booklet to their Personal Journal Page and explain their journal entries are their personal accounts of what was discussed this session, stress that this information is for them only and that no one else will read it without their permission.

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SESSION 2

TITLE: LIFE CHANGES

RATIONALE: As adults, we realize that our lives are constantly changing. Some changes are positive ones - marriages, births, new homes, promotions, etc. Some are negative - illness, unemployment, destructive natural disasters, threats, violence, and acts of war. Changes are a fundamental part of our lives. When viewed from a perspective of growth, they can give us an opportunity to become more compassionate individuals. By our example, we can guide our youth to the same conclusions.

Sometimes these traumatic changes are very difficult for us to understand. As adults, we may have resources that enable us to cope and offer tools for rebuilding, as well as guide us toward acceptance. What we cannot change must be reconciled as part of our lives and integrated into our personal history. Often, young adults are not afforded this knowledge or opportunity.

Young adults need to be able to tell someone their story - what they have heard, seen, and most especially, how they feel about what has occurred. They need to understand that they did not cause this negative event. They need to have help to understand the current situation, even when the adults who are guiding them are not quite sure themselves. They need assistance in making the adjustments to this 'new way of life' too.

AIM:

- To reassure the participants that they are not to blame for the **Crisis Event**.
- To provide a safe place for the participants to share their story and how they feel about it.
- To clearly define new words associated with the participants' experience.
- To openly discuss new words and answer questions honestly according to the developmental age of the participants.
- To instill in the participants hope that they possess the inner strength to survive this new event.
- To assist participants in finding easier adjustments in the transitions that are taking place.

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RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Participant Booklet
- Pencils/pens
- A4 Paper

GATHERING: Begin by briefly discussing what has happened since the last session by asking the participants if there are any special issues they would like to talk about and include them in the discussion during the session.

FOCUS: Leader to ask the participants to read **Change is a process, not an event** page in their Participant Booklet and then explain that they can write about those changes they have experienced because of **Crisis Event** in their booklet. As they share their ideas about family, friends, or neighbourhoods, encourage the participants to share their past memories and what things were like before the **Crisis Event**.

CONNECTING: Explain how all memories are important because they help make us who we are. Discuss that while each one's memories are different, they are all linked together by the common bond of having gone through the **Crisis Event** or similar loss. The participants will always be connected to one another because of the changes they have encountered together.

What things do they remember from **BEFORE** the **Crisis Event** that are changed now.

Examples to get them started:

Security enforcement Police Presence Time Energy

Anger Loss Sadness Strength Hope

Everybody Yourself Faces Safety Courage Recession

Unemployment Yearning for the Past University Plans

Leader to ask the participants if they have any questions about what they have heard or seen since the last session that they would like to discuss, such as:

Uncertain future – Where will we live now? Who can help us now?

Parents having to travel away from home for jobs.

Parents laid off from work.

Will school ever be the same again after the Crisis Event?

My parents/carers are acting worried all the time, what should I do?

What can I do when I am feeling sad? What do I need now?

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Using the Participant Booklet explain to participants the instructions for the **'My Personal Life Changes'** activity, which entails marking a checklist with statements relating to themselves and writing some statements about their own changes.

Then using the Participant Booklet explain to the participants the instructions for the **'Spiral of Change'** activity, which entails writing some words and phrases about the ways they will continue and cope with the changes in their lives.

CLOSING: Leader closes the session by reading out the following: **'This time has been so difficult for us. Knowing that there are others who have had changes in their lives, helps us move forward together. We need to remember the good times and look for ways to grow and learn about life in the future.'**

Then ask the group to open their Participant Booklet to the 'Life Changes – My Personal Journal' page and explain that participants may write anything else they would like about the changes for them and their feelings. Stress that this information is for them only and that no one else will read it without their permission.

Ask each participant to write one of the changes they have been discussing on an A4 piece of paper and ask the other participants to make suggestions about what to do about the changes, which can then be written on the paper. Display the changes and suggestions.

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SESSION 3

TITLE: FEAR - ANGER - UNDERSTANDING

RATIONALE: Hurt can be described as a great upset of the heart. People are hurt when they feel they have lost something – a loved person, friendship, self-esteem, pride, confidence, safety and their sense of security or possessions. The building up of hurt can sometimes lead to anger. There is often a strong fear underlying the feeling of anger.

Anger, compounded by fear, is a very common and immediate response after a sudden traumatic change or loss. Anger can be an explosive emotion and not often easily explained. It is necessary for the participants to understand that anger does not have to make sense to be real. The participants must know that it is okay to have these feelings of anger. Repressed anger can often result in depression or actual physical illness. Allowing the feelings of anger to be brought up and expressed appropriately enables the emotional wound to heal in a healthy way.

Participants need to see that sharing angry, fearful or hurtful feelings does not automatically necessitate that we act on those feelings. It is **alright** to feel all these feelings, however actions fuelled by anger must be carefully examined so that anger is not allowed to take control.

AIM:

- To enable each participant to understand that anger is a valid emotion that should be expressed in appropriate ways.
- To encourage the participants to look closely at their own fears to see what may be at the root of their anger.
- To ensure that each participant understands that it is okay and normal to become angry when we have lost something we treasure or love.
- To help each participant look for ways to express their anger in ways that does not promote more hurt on others.
- To realize that seeking understanding is a way to learn more about other people, the world, and ourselves.

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RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Participant Booklet
- Selected newspaper articles or reports from the Internet related to the **Crisis Event** outlining ways people have reacted negatively to others regarding this event or use the letter/announcement/press release sent out by the community about the **Crisis Event**.
- Paper and pens

GATHERING: Begin by briefly discussing what has happened since the last session by asking the participants if there are any special issues they would like to talk about and include them in the discussion during the session. Explain that the purpose of this session is to explore the participants' feelings of hurt or anger. To understand that we may feel hurt or angry about the drastic changes in our lives; to help us put our emotions into words so we can talk about them and feel better that we are not alone.

FOCUS: Leader to ask the participants to read **Fear – Anger - Understanding** page in their Participant Booklet.

Then hand out the newspaper articles or reports from the Internet related to the **Crisis Event** outlining ways people have reacted negatively to others regarding this event or use the letter/announcement/press release sent out by the community about the **Crisis Event**. Ask the participants to read these and explain what happened according to the reports/letter/announcement/press release. Discuss the participants' interpretations of these.

Then explain the activity page about the fears and anger they are carrying today, participants then write or draw their feelings of **fear** or **anger** quickly, which will enable the participants to gain valuable insights into their immediate reactions. Then reflect on these feelings by quickly writing in their Participant Booklet on the page with the headings of **Fear, Anger, Understanding**.

CONNECTING: Ask the participants to look at their own answers in their Participant Booklet and to pay particular attention to the statements they wrote.

Discuss with participants ways of finding positive control of their feelings of anger and fear by using the following prompt questions.

How can I avoid placing my fears on people who are not ready to listen?

(E.g. listen to ourselves and find those trusted few who need our attention as much as we need theirs.)

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Talk about ways of finding positive control over anger.

(Exercise - Being closer to family and friends - Volunteering - Give yourself time to heal)

Instead of yelling, blaming others, (etc.), we can

(They could try honoring all those who have been affected by the **Crisis Event** and use their energies in a more positive way.)

What if my anger seems to reoccur along with painful memories? What should I do about it?

If the participants seem to want to discuss more details or ideas about a particular statement, give them the opportunity to do so. As a leader, you will need to portray a 'calming attitude' during these discussions that may become intense at times. It is always important to encourage the participants to find solutions to their anger that will be helpful and not hurtful.

Remind participants: ***It takes courage to come face to face with our anger and decide not to exist in fear anymore.***

CLOSING: Leader closes the session by reading out the following: **'Sharing our feelings of fear and anger can help us learn better ways to cope with them. Our motto should always be: I will be fair to others and not blame people I do not know for actions, words or things other people did.'**

Then ask the group to open their Participant Booklet to the 'Fear - Angry – Understanding – My Personal Journal' page and explain that participants their writing should concentrate on what they perceive as the *strongest* fear/anger reaction they are feeling now - and what they plan to do about it.

Ask the participants to write a group poem using the words; **FEAR** or **ANGER**. You must start each line with the **first letter** of the chosen word and continue using the letters of the word in order. Then display the poem.

SAMPLE POEM:

Anyone can feel its might.
No one really wants it in sight.
Great strife has happened filled with fear.
Everyone wants it out of here.
Really be honest and it takes flight!

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SESSION 4

TITLE: ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS

RATIONALE: Goodbyes are difficult for most people, but often they hold special pain for young people who have suffered painful transition. The participants need to know that goodbyes are a part of life and also an opportunity for new beginnings.

It is important for these participants to be able to reach acceptance that their reality has changed or altered in some ways. After experiencing a loss or traumatic change, memories can be painful and often we wish for things to be as they were. This can keep us from acknowledging what really happened.

It is essential for those who experience a crisis to cherish the memories of the past, reminisce over the good times, accept the changes in our lives and do try to look toward an altered, yet hopeful future. Each person brings to that future what they have learned from their experience.

As a young person works through the emotional change they may feel because of the crisis, they will realize that sadness is not only the emotion of endings, it can also be a necessary preparation for new beginnings. A mighty oak may start out as just a little acorn, but it takes a long time for it to develop into a majestic tree. Nature is patient, and so should we be, as we sort out our lives and emotions, keeping all the changes involved uppermost in our minds.

AIM:

- To assist participants to gently close the door on the past.
- To encourage participants to look toward hope filled new beginnings.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Participant Booklet
- Pens and pencils

GATHERING: Begin by briefly discussing what has happened since the last session by asking the participants if there are any special issues they would like to talk about and include them in the discussion during the session.

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Explain that the purpose of this session is to explore how things in life used to be and how we felt then. To examine how things are now and look at life with the prospect of new beginnings.

FOCUS: Leader to ask the participants to read **Endings and Beginnings** page in their Participant Booklet which has the T.S. Eliot quote and see if anyone can add any words of wisdom or add anything to the quote.

Ask the participants to complete the **THEN and NOW!** activity in their Participant Booklet by writing an explanation of how the participants viewed the given meanings of the words. In addition to the four words shown in the boxes, encourage participants to think of other words whose previous meanings have really 'ended' for them.

Then explain participants the **'It's a beginning...'** activity, which is to write their own experiences of New Beginnings, that they will try to pursue.

CONNECTING: Explain to the participants that nature is constantly changing around us, but sometimes these changes take a long time. Every season has the ability to show us 'endings and beginnings'.

Ask participants: *How long does it take to accept a new beginning? Would anyone like to share a personal experience?*

Explain to participants that people who lose their lives helping others during any crisis are viewed as heroes. Most of them are ordinary people who realized that an ENDING demanded courage from them and that they made that choice towards a new BEGINNING. Not all of us will have to sacrifice our lives in this exchange, but it is good to remember those who did for our sake.

Ask participants: *How have you remembered the victims of the **Crisis Event** and their families – donations, fundraising, volunteering?*

Ask participants *to think about the things they may have taken for granted before the **Crisis Event**?*

Explain to the participants that sometimes people think some things are very important until something happens to convince them otherwise – our priorities change.

Ask participants: *What are some of their new priorities since the **Crisis Event**?*

Explain to participants that we have all learned how one event can change our perspective very quickly. When there is a crisis, we may need to personally distance ourselves to be able to see NEW BEGINNINGS and make them part of our lives because of the great sense of loss we feel at this time. Young adults need to know

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that this can happen and as people moving forward it is bound to be part of our goals and dreams.

Ask participants: *What can we do to help ourselves accept changes now?*

CLOSING: Leader closes the session by reading out the following: **‘The crisis we experienced took each one of us to an ending. Every person has the chance to show how they will respond to the new beginning that is part of life now. It matters what each person does because each one of us is part of the global community. What will you do with your chance to change the world?’**

Then ask the group to open their Participant Booklet to the ‘Endings and Beginnings – My Personal Journal’ page and explain that participants may write anything else they would like about their feelings related to ‘Endings and Beginnings’ and to choose one of the Beginnings they imagined and write about how they will achieve it.

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SESSION 5

TITLE: COPING IN THE WORLD TODAY

RATIONALE: Examining crisis and sudden change in our lives requires countless readjustments, compromise and patience. Unfamiliar rules may be established; new types of personal discipline may be enforced upon us. Challenging situations, ideas, people and places, may be thrust upon young people who are just learning how to deal with life as it is.

Because young people naturally are inexperienced in life, they cannot possess the knowledge and wisdom to know the best way to handle small and large crises as they develop. As these youngsters try to reassemble the pieces of their emotional and sometimes physical aspects of their lives, adults need to help them to find coping tools to be able to turn their situations from problems into possibilities.

AIM:

- To help participants acquire the coping tools necessary to successfully handle crises as they happen.
- To help participants to know where to find assistance during current times of transition.
- To allow the participants the opportunity to see that everyone must go on with their lives even though they have been drastically changed because to the **Crisis Event**.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Participant Booklet
- Pens and pencils

GATHERING: Begin by briefly discussing what has happened since the last session by asking the participants if there are any special issues they would like to talk about and include them in the discussion during the session. Explain that the purpose of this session is to help us to find within ourselves ways to solve the difficult problems that enter our lives.

FOCUS: Leader to ask the participants to read **Coping in the World Today** introduction page in their Participant Booklet and draw their attention to the quotes from Aesop.

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Then explain to participants that the **Coping in the World** activity in their Participant Booklet asks the participants to look outside of themselves and give their opinions and thoughts about people they admire, the decisions of leaders, the strength of their community – and what they view as their own important personal lesson in all this turmoil.

CONNECTING: Participants now have an opportunity to talk about solutions to the following dilemmas:

A friend is being bullied; You do not pass an important exam; A friendship has ended

Possible Solutions:

<i>Give back/volunteer</i>	<i>Celebrate your accomplishments</i>	<i>Talk it out</i>
<i>Hang on to Hope</i>	<i>Look to people and family members we trust</i>	
<i>Set Personal Goals</i>	<i>Find Trusted people to talk to</i>	<i>Try to heal</i>

Take time during discussions to allow the participants to come to their own conclusions about what their coping skills can be in the days and months ahead.

What should we do if those who usually support was are unavailable?

Who can we turn to?

Can we agree to turn to each other – how can we make this happen?

Then ask participants to complete the **Handle With Care** activity in their Participant Booklet. When completed ask the participants to ask one question which they would like answered.

CLOSING: Leader closes the session by reading out the following: **‘Thinking of solutions is the easiest part of learning how to cope with a crisis. Actually living out these solutions is what makes them work. Being flexible and knowing that we must keep trying to find new answers is a key part of overcoming obstacles. Knowing we are not alone during this struggle can help us.’**

Then ask the group to open their Participant Booklet to the ‘Coping in the World Today – My Personal Journal’ page and explain that participants may write anything else they would like about their feelings related to ‘Coping in the World Today’.

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SESSION 6

TITLE: MY OWN UNIVERSE

RATIONALE: The goal of **Silver Linings** is to encourage open discussion of what has happened and support the participants while they grieve their losses or changes. Seldom is this journey wrapped up so quickly. The hope is that participants have learned to reach out to others to assist them as they encounter loss or traumatic change in their lives.

To end the sessions the participants are given a final task of assigning themselves a **Personal Goal**. This goal can be done at any time and can be as simple as portraying a positive attitude and showing others care.

AIM:

- To encourage participants to practice the messages brought to them by examining the silver linings or positives in each cloud or negative situation they encounter.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Participant Booklet
- Board or Flip Chart to record highlights from discussions
- Silver Linings Certificate for each participant to distribute at the end of the session (optional)

GATHERING: Begin by briefly discussing what has happened since the last session by asking the participants if there are any special issues they would like to talk about and include them in the discussion during the session. Tell participants that the first session they attended they had already begun to accomplish one important goal – that is talking about the **Crisis Event**. Explain that the purpose of this session is to try to set a **Personal Goal** we can work to achieve.

FOCUS: Leader to ask the participants to read ‘**GOALS**’ introduction page in their Participant Booklet.

Ask the participants to complete the My Own Universe activity by writing answers to the three questions about their Silver Linings group and their strongest priority.

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CONNECTING: Participants now have an opportunity to think about what they could do as a personal goal. Using the activity in their Participant Booklet – My Own Universe – ‘The World I Live In Depends On Me’. Ask each participant to read the values under ‘What are you looking for?’ and number them from 1 to 9. Nine = highest – and One = lowest. Once everyone has finished, tabulate the results together. Explain to the participants that ‘In a survey of American people, these values were ranked as follows:

9 An exciting life

8 A world of beauty

7 National Security

6 Inner Harmony

5 True Friendship

4 A sense of accomplishment

3 Happiness

2 Freedom

1 Family Security

How did the group compare with these survey results? Then discuss the differences or similarities in choices, focus on whether the recent traumatic changes had an impact on their answers.

Explain to participants the ‘The World I Live In Depends On Me’ can seem a bit daunting, but in truth it sometimes takes many small goals to achieve the large goal we have in mind. The message is **NO GOAL IS TOO SMALL**. Let the participants know they do not have to accomplish this goal right away, but they should **START TRYING** to master their goals so they don’t become forgotten.

Tell the participants that throughout their lives, if they accomplish one goal, they can always strive for a new one. If they are unable to achieve their goal, they can always redirect their efforts towards a different goal. Even changing goals can be a rewarding and educational experience. Learning when failing is not failing to learn. Times and circumstances change what we have in mind, but only we can halt our forward movement and direction when we stop pursuing goals and dreams.

Participants can then write their own personal goal/s in their Participant Booklet – ‘My Personal Goal’; when complete participants may share their goals if they wish to.

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Tell the participants that it sometimes takes many small goals to achieve the large goal we have in mind – remind them that **‘No Goal Is Too Small.’**

Explain to the participants that they do not have to accomplish their goals right away, but they should start **trying** to achieve their goals, they can always direct their efforts to a different goal.

CLOSING: Leader closes the session by congratulating the participants on their courage to share their feelings together.

Leader to read aloud the following:

Goals and dreams are so alike but somehow the word ‘Goal’ seems formal and aloof.

Dreams are cloudlike and subtle – does anybody really believe they can come true? Yet, both are so important because they can.....

Point the way

Lead us forward

Turn us around

Give direction

Send us back

Keep us going

Show determination or defeat.

By being together these past six sessions, we have already chosen to achieve goals of reaching out to one another.

Now that we have learned we are not alone, the sky’s the limit.

We can proceed – following our own arrows, our own direction, and our own goals – pointing the way.

(Optional) Then read out the words on the Silver Linings Certificate and ask each participant to come forward to receive their personalised certificate.

Silver Linings Certificate



Name of Participant

- ~ has shown courage in sharing feelings about the crisis;*
- ~ has learned to find trusted adults who will help explain the changes happening in their world today;*
- ~ remembers that by searching for positive solutions we can reach out and assist other people in our community;*
- ~ can be fair through actions, in words and in how to treat others;*
- ~ has created Personal Goals;*
- ~ is awarded this certificate because while looking for a silver lining in the clouds of confusion, has discovered HOPE.*

Leader's Signature

Date