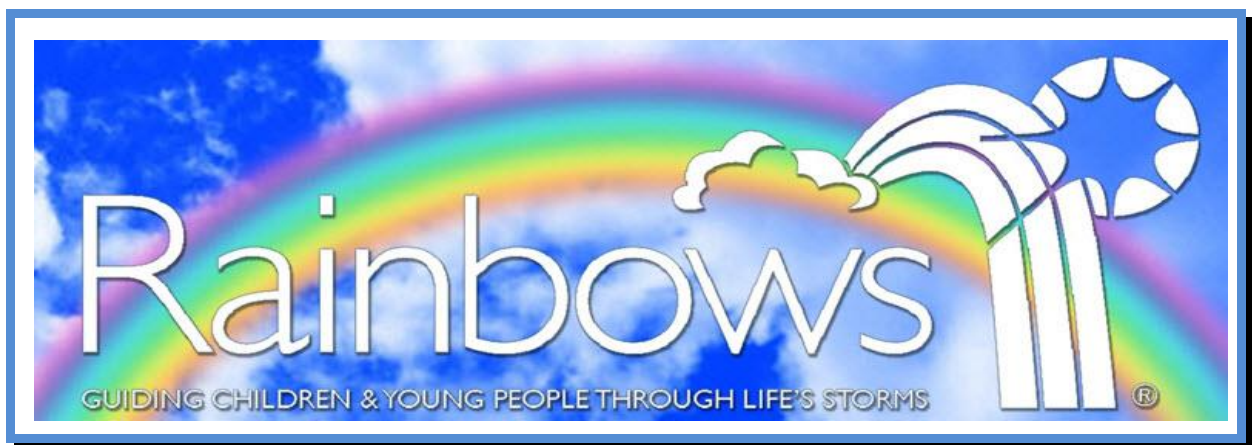


Silver Linings

**Community Crisis Response
Bereavement Support
Programme for ages 7 – 11**



**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,

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 7 – 11 year olds consists of six sessions:

Session 1: FEELINGS AND ME

Topic: FEELINGS

Session 2: CHANGES FOR ME

Topic: UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

Session 3: ANGRY AND SCARED

Topic: UNDERSTANDING ANGER

Session 4: ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS

Topic: ACCEPTING AND ADJUSTING

Session 5: WEATHERING THE STORMS

Topic: COPING WITH A CRISIS

Session 6: MY OWN GOAL

Topic: REACHING OUT TO OTHERS AND MOVING ON

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Silver Linings - Session Instructions for ages 7 – 11

SESSION 1

TITLE: FEELINGS AND ME

RATIONALE: Children need to know that everyone has feelings and that they are a natural and integral part of each person, just as eyes, hair and bodies. Feelings are important because they can push people apart or bring them together. It is important to explain to participants that there are no GOOD or Bad feelings – they just ARE! We all experience pain-filled and joyful feelings depending on the situation. It is how we express our feelings which 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 assist participants to realise that feelings are as essential to our well-being as breathing.
- To assist participants to name their feelings so that they may tell their personal story and share their 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
- Display Vocabulary of Feelings Words

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.

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.

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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. Read together the ideas from **'My Personal Crisis First Aid Kit'** this is at the beginning of the Participant Booklet. Explain that these are things we can all do during this time of crisis. Participants can then write their name on their own Participant Booklet.

FOCUS: Leader to introduce the session topic by saying: 'Today we will think about the things we have seen and heard about (state the **Crisis Event**) and share our feelings about them.'

Ask the participants to read **Feelings and Me** pages in their Participant Booklet and explain the activities, pointing out the Vocabulary of Feelings words and explain any words which participants do not understand. Encourage the group to **add** their own words to the given Vocabulary of Feelings and to share these additions with the group.

Vocabulary of Feelings

| POSITIVE FEELINGS | NEGATIVE FEELINGS |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Loved | Sad |
| Alive | Upset |
| Excited | Helpless |
| Secure | Nervous |
| Happy | Alarmed |
| Proud | Scared |
| Important | Cross |
| Great | Angry |
| Respected | Hopeless |
| Strong | Weak |
| Popular | Terrified |
| Needed | Dreadful |
| Cared for | Guilty |
| Wanted | Furious |
| Satisfied | Bitter |
| Brave | Worn-out |
| Glad | Shocked |
| Pleased | Confused |
| Terrific | Terrible |

Participants write their feelings related to the **Crisis Event** for the 'THEN, TODAY & FUTURE' activity in their Participant Booklet.

CONNECTING: Working with a partner the participants take turns at role-play, being a reporter and conducting an interview using the suggested questions, which are in the Participant Booklet. When everyone has had a turn, bring the whole group

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together for discussion. Participants could respond to the group questions by speaking to their partner first, then ask for responses which can be listened to by the whole group.

It is important for the participants to find people in their lives that 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?**

Participants may then compose a 'Feelings Cinquain' poem by using the instructions and examples in their Participant Booklet.

CLOSING: Leader closes the session by reading out the following: **'Talking about our feelings as we think about a situation lets others know how deeply we appreciate what has happened. Letting our feelings out can help us understand each other. Understanding can lead us to hope for a brighter future.'**

Then ask the group to open their Participant Booklet to the 'Feelings and Me – My Personal Journal' page and explain that participants may write anything else they would like about themselves and their feelings.

Display the Vocabulary of Feelings Words along with the 'Feelings Cinquains' which the participants would like to display. Explain to participants that this display can be added to in the subsequent sessions.

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SESSION 2

TITLE: CHANGES FOR ME

RATIONALE: As adults, we realise that our lives are constantly changing. Some changes are positive ones e.g. marriages, births, new homes, promotions. Some changes are negative e.g. illness, unemployment, destructive natural disasters, 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.

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 instil 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.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Participant Booklet
- 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 **Changes for Me** page in their Participant Booklet and then explain the 'Bag' activity, participants to then write their answers questions in the 'Bag' in order to prompt the participants to share their experiences about the **Crisis Event** and the changes participants have experienced with friends and family. Explain how memories are important because they help us

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make us who we are as persons. Explain that while each person's memories are different, all are linked together by the common bond - the **Crisis Event** – and by having gone through the loss we all feel. Explain that the participants will always be connected to one another because of the changes they have encountered together.

CONNECTING: Ask the participants what things they remember from BEFORE the **Crisis Event** that are changed now.

Using the Participant Booklet explain to participants the instructions for the '**Spiral of Change**' activity, which entails writing some words and phrases about the changes.

Leader can provide examples of 'change' words to assist participants: **Loved person has died – depressed - energy - yell – loss – sadness – strength – hope – safety – yearning the past...**

Participants can work with a partner to write words on their 'Spiral of Change' activity.

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?*

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 'Changes for Me – My Personal Journal' page and explain that participants may write anything else they would like about the changes for them and their feelings.

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.

SESSION 3

TITLE: ANGRY AND SCARED

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 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 heal the hurts which are the cause of their anger in ways that do not promote more hurt on others.

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

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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 anger and fear.

FOCUS: Leader to ask the participants to read **Angry and Scared** page in their Participant Booklet and then explain the activity page, participants then write their feelings of anger/fear in response to the given statements.

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.

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

Discuss with participants ways of finding positive control of their feelings of anger.

Instead of yelling, blaming others etc. we can _____.

If participants seem to want to discuss more details or ideas about a particular statement, give them the opportunity to do so.

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 'Angry and Scared – My Personal Journal' page and explain that participants may write anything else they would like about their feelings.

Ask each participant to draw on a piece of paper a symbol of what they can do to cope with their feelings of angry without hurting others: Go for a walk/run = draw a pair of shoes/trainers; Breathe deeply and relax = draw blowing up a balloon; Bounce a ball/play football/basketball = draw a ball; Ride a bike/scooter/skateboard = draw a bike/scooter/skateboard etc.

Display the symbols and explain to the participants that these symbols can be reminders of their discussions about how to appropriately deal with angry feelings.

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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 hopeful new beginnings.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Participant Booklet
- Pictures related to the cycles of nature
- Paper and glue
- Large paper plates or circles

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

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this session is to explore endings and beginnings and think about accepting and adjusting to changes.

FOCUS: Leader to ask the participants to read **Endings and Beginnings** page in their Participant Booklet. Ask the participants to think about the things they have previously taken for granted. Explain to the participants that sometimes people think some things are really important until something happens to convince them otherwise.

Example: People don't mind waiting for security checks at the airport, so that they can feel safe when travelling. Waiting in a queue does not seem so frustrating when it keeps everyone safe when flying.

CONNECTING: Explain to the participants that nature is constantly changing around us, but sometimes these changes take a long time.

Ask participants to use the images related to nature to create a display to show aspects of the cycles of nature: changing seasons; sowing and harvesting crops; life cycle of a tree and how timber can be used for making paper, furniture or buildings.

As a group make a list of changes that the participants grandparents may have experienced over their lifetimes: advances in technology; communication; transport and medicine.

Using the Participant Booklet explain to participants the Endings and Beginnings activity which will enable them to see that some endings can also be accepted as beginnings.

Ask the participants to think of any other Endings or Beginnings that they can think of and record these for everyone to see. After each is written, ask the participants to rate the suggested Ending or Beginning using the following:

Easy To Do, Difficult To Do, Need Time To Assess, Seems Impossible Right Now

Few Endings or Beginnings will be rated as **Easy To Do** because our own thoughts and feelings may take time to discern. When there is a crisis, people need time to personally distance themselves to see 'New Beginnings' and make them part of their lives because of the great sense of loss they feel at the time of the crisis.

Explain to the participants that a brighter outlook on life can happen after a crisis and as people move forward it is bound to be part of a person's goals and dreams.

Discussion Questions:

- How long does it take to accept a new beginning? How long for us personally?
- What can we do to help ourselves accept changes now?

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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 write their own answer to the question: **What will you do with your chance to change the world?**

Then give each participant a large paper plate or paper circle and a pen/pencil. Explain to the group that they are to draw lines and divide the plate/circle into eight sections. Then thinking of their discussions they must fill in four segments with an example in each of an Ending and in the corresponding four segments and example of possible New Beginnings.

Display the plates/circles and explain to the participants that these can be reminders of their discussions about Endings and Beginnings.

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SESSION 5

TITLE: WEATHERING THE STORMS

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 children 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 children 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
- Paper 'Life Saving Ring' cut-outs – at least 3 per participant (use template)
- Polo Mints or Fruits sweets to hand out 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. Explain that the purpose of this session is to find ways to cope with our problems or 'personal storms'.

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FOCUS: Leader to ask the participants to read **Weathering the Storms** introduction page in their Participant Booklet and then the chart on the activity page to allow them to come to their own conclusions about what their coping skills can be in the days and months ahead.

Ask the participants to do the **Weathering the Storms** activity which involves reading the statements and then selecting the action they think they can handle now. Then when all have completed the activity find out what everyone's responses were to see if they all agree or disagree on which strategies are possible or not possible for them.

Ask participants to look at the 'Life Saving Ring' activity page in their Participant Booklet and read through the instructions. Use the following prompt questions to assist the participants to think about what to write:

- Who are the people who have helped you so far?
- What have these people done to help?
- What else helps you get through difficult times?

When everyone has completed the activity, give each participant some of the 'Life Saving Ring' cut-outs and ask them to write a 'Thank You' to each person who has helped.

CONNECTING: Participants now have an opportunity to discuss what they could do to cope with difficult or sudden change.

- Who should we turn to?
- How can we turn to each other? In what ways?

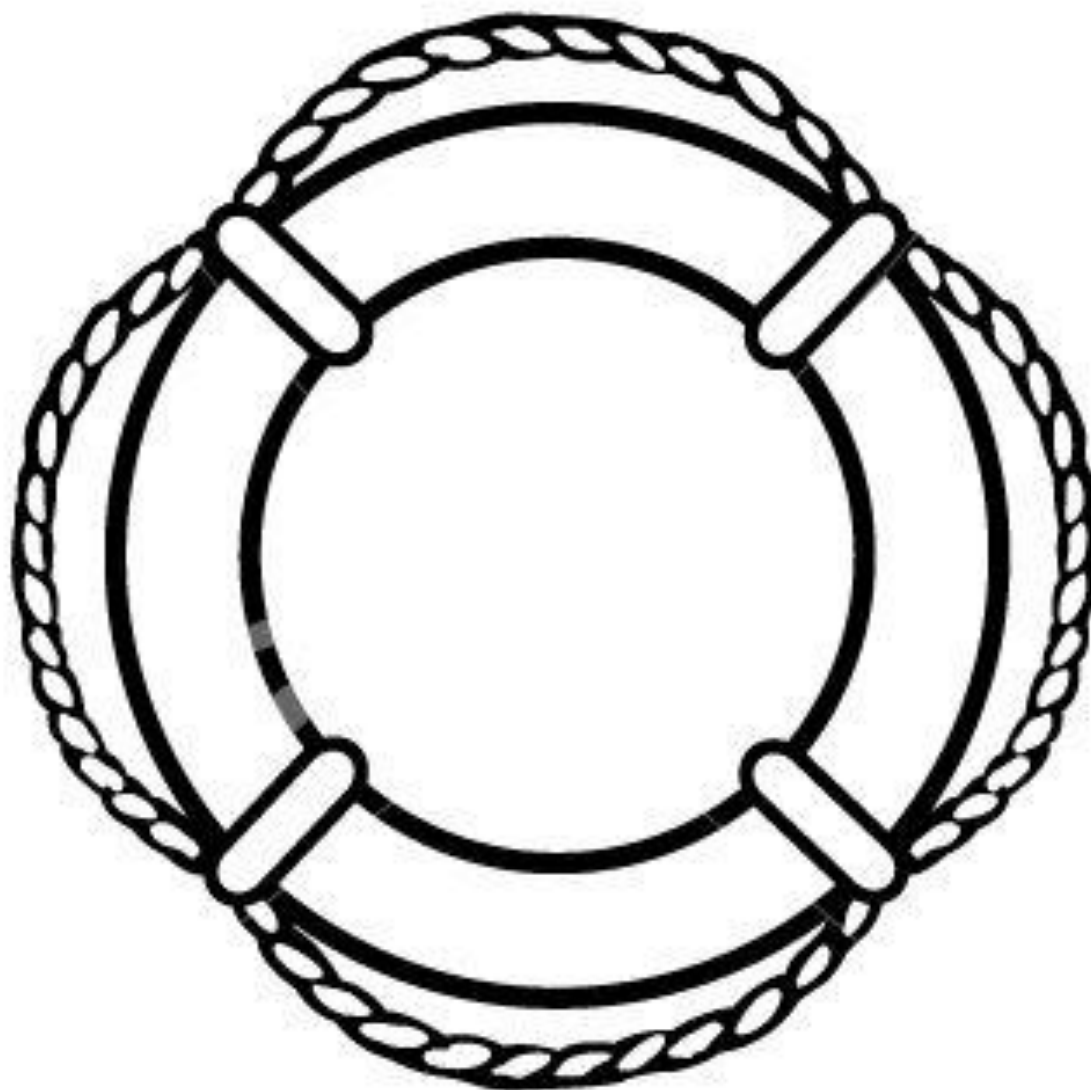
Possible solutions: Hang onto hope; Talk it through; Speak to people and family that we trust; Set personal goals; Celebrate our accomplishments.

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 'Weathering the Storms – My Personal Journal' page and explain that participants may write anything else they would like about their feelings related to 'Weathering the Storms'.

Display the 'Life Saving Ring' Thank You cut-outs and explain to the participants that these can be reminders of their discussions about Weathering the Storms and how to cope.

Silver Linings



Lifesaving Ring Template

Silver Linings

SESSION 6

TITLE: MY OWN GOAL

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

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 **My Own Goal – ‘Goals and Opportunities’** introduction page in their Participant Booklet.

Ask participants to think of as many words as they can for the **GOAL** e.g. aim; purpose; hope mission; desire; accomplishment. Write the words the participants think of on the board/Flip Chart.

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CONNECTING: Participants now have an opportunity to discuss what they could do as a personal goal. Then ask for their ideas. If participants need assistance say that they could look back to 'Weathering the Storms' in their Participant Booklet

Ideas: Enjoy life; Help others; Show respect for the feelings of others through my words and actions; Celebrate my accomplishments.

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

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. 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