

# Direct Work with Children and Young People for the Purpose of Single / Core Assessments

Training course for  
Portsmouth City Council  
2, 3, 4 October 2023

Practice Guidance &  
Worksheets



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# **Direct Work with Children & Young People For the Purpose of Assessment**

## **Practice Guidance**

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## ADDENDUM – Assessment Worksheets

# 1. Introduction

This guide is designed for practitioners responsible for undertaking direct work with a child or young person for the purpose of a Core Assessment, in line with The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (Department of Health). It is based on the premise that a child or young person's views and contributions should always be gathered and recorded as part of an assessment and that that our interventions need to be child-focused and not just parent-focused. There is an accompanying CD to this guide, which contains a variety of worksheets and direct work tools.

## The Legal & Statutory Context

Research, inspections and inquiries indicate that children's voices are often absent or minimised during assessment and frequently focus on parents rather than the child. For example, the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié noted that successive professionals never communicated with the child, resulting a recommendation that Directors of social services must ensure that no case involving a vulnerable child is closed until the child and their carer have been seen and spoken (Laming 2003 p183). This theme of communicating with children is also reflected in statutory and legal guidance. For example, *The Children Act* (1989 & 2004) places a duty on local authorities ascertain the child's wishes and feelings and give them due consideration, having regard for the child's age and understanding and *The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families*, which outlines the requirements for initial and core assessments, notes how direct work with children is an essential part of assessment and that a child has a right to be involved and consulted about matters which affect their lives. The *Framework* outlines five critical components in direct work with children:

(i) *Seeing children*: an assessment cannot be made without seeing the child, however young and whatever the circumstances.

(ii) *Observing children*: the child's responses and interactions in different situations should be carefully observed wherever possible, alone, with siblings, with parents and/or caregivers or in school or other settings. Children may hide or suppress their feelings in situations which are difficult or unsafe for them, so it is important that general conclusions are not reached from only limited observations.

(iii) *Engaging children*: this involves developing a relationship with children so that they can be enabled to express their thoughts, concerns and opinions as part of the process of helping them make real choices, in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate.

(iv) *Talking to children*: although this may seem an obvious part of communicating with children, it is clear from research that this is often not done at all or not done well. It requires time, skill, confidence and careful preparation by practitioners. Their views must be sought before key meetings and a range of opportunities for talking to children may be needed,

appropriate to the child's circumstances, age and stage of development, which may include talking to the child on their own, in a family meeting or accompanied by or with the assistance of a trusted person.

(v) *Activities with children:* undertaking activities with children can have a number of purposes and beneficial effects. It is important that they are activities which the child understands and enjoys, in which trust with the worker can develop and which give the child an experience of safety. They can allow positive interaction between the worker and the child to grow and enable the professional to gain a better understanding of the child's responses and needs. (DH 2000)

However, the statutory guidance does not provide specific advice on what specific issues need to be explored with children and young people and how to obtain this information – hence the need for this guide and the accompanying training.

### **About the author**

Robert Tucker is an Independent Child Care Consultant. He has over 25 years experience in the field of social work, child care and child protection with experience in residential child care, Children and Families Teams and in a specialist Child Protection Team. He has worked as a therapeutic practitioner and child care consultant for SACCS, an independent agency providing specialist intervention for traumatised children throughout the United Kingdom and specialised in undertaking child care assessments, intervention, expert witness work, consultancy and training. He has worked as the Head of Therapeutic Care for a private agency specialising in providing therapeutic residential care for adolescents who display sexually abusive behaviours and for 12 years worked for The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, a national charity specialising in sexual abuse and sexual behaviour concerns, where he provided specialised assessment, intervention, expert witness, consultancy and training services for agencies throughout the UK. He now works independently with children, young people, their families and carers, specialising in providing independent assessments, intervention, consultancy and training services in respect to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused, who have experienced complex trauma and attachment difficulties and who display inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviours. He contributes to social work and psychology courses as a guest lecturer and has given presentations to conferences on matters relating to trauma, sexual abuse and sexual behaviours.

## 2. What information should we be seeking from the child?

Many core assessments are dominated by adult agendas, often recording adult perceptions of the child's needs and only minimally recording direct evidence from the child. Practitioners should ask themselves whether the views of the child have been sought and recorded *throughout* the various domains and dimensions of the core assessment. If this is not the case, then your assessment is incomplete and adult-biased. With this in mind this section looks at each dimension of the Assessment Framework and considers what information should we be seeking from the child?

### DOMAIN: CHILD'S DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

The key focus of this domain is to establish the child's functioning in each of the dimensions. How are they doing and where is the child in respect to their developmental needs?

#### Health

Key questions relevant to this dimension are whether the child is healthy and whether they have, or have had any health problems? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- Is the child healthy? What health problems do they have? What are they? Have they experienced any in the past?
- What are the child's memories of illness?
- When was the last time they were ill? Seek details – what, when, did they see a doctor? Were they given medicine? If so, what?
- Who looks after the child when ill? How?
- Have they ever been to hospital? Why? Memories?
- Where there are concerns about physical injuries seek the child's accounts of how they occurred? Who did they go to for help? What did other people say about the injuries? What did their parents do or say? What did they / their parents say to the doctor?
- Explore the possibility of coaching – e.g. what did their parents tell them to say about these injuries / cause for concern / the assessment / seeing you?
- What do they remember about the last time they went to the dentist / optician?
- Do they have any concerns about their health?
- For children with disabilities ask them to tell you about their disability? What do they know about it? Who told them about this? How does this affect them everyday? What help (if any) do they need? Who helps them? What do other people (at home, school, in the community say / think about their disability?

- What do they want to know about their health / disability?
- Explore dietary issues – what is their favourite food? Ask them to describe a daily / weekly account of what they eat at home.
- Who shops, cooks, prepares food? How often do they eat fast food?

## **Education**

The key issue to explore in this dimension is how the child is doing at school? Are they achieving educationally at the level expected for their age and stage of development, or do they have educational difficulties. If so, what are these difficulties and what affect are they having upon the child and the family? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, teachers and other professionals assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What do they think about school? What is it like for them there?
- What school activities, clubs or societies are they involved with?
- What is their perception of their relationships with teachers?
- What do they think their teachers think about them?
- Who are their friends at school? How many? Names? Ages?
- How do they think they are doing at school?
- If they have changed schools, their perception as to the reasons for the changes?
- Have they been in any trouble at school? Their account of this?
- What does their family think about the school?
- Is there anything they would like to change at their school?
- For children with attendance problems, what is the child's version of why this is?

## **Emotional and Behavioural Development**

The key question relevant to this dimension is whether the child's level of emotional and behavioural development is expected for their age? Are they showing emotional or behavioural difficulties? If they are, what form do these take e.g. depression, aggressive behaviour or problems in social communication? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, teachers and other professionals, assessors should make use of the Department of Health Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and The Adolescent Wellbeing Scale. Information to explore and obtain from the child directly could include the following:

- How does the child understand and express different emotions?
- What words does the child use for different feelings?
- What things make them happy, sad, angry, scared, lonely, frustrated, and worried?
- What do they do when they have these emotions?
- How do their mum / dad / others react in these situations?
- What is their happiest, saddest memory?

- What does the child do when they have a variety of emotions?
- Who helps them with they have these emotions?
- What things to do they get in trouble with at home and school?
- When was the last time they were in trouble / told off at home or school? What for? What happened? What did other people say about this?
- What worries do other people have about their behaviour?
- What do they think about these issues?
- Do they think they have any problems?
- What help do they think they need?
- Any problems with aggression, conduct problems, criminality, drugs, alcohol, sexual behaviour?
- Any signs of depression, self-harm

## **Identity**

This dimension should explore the child's sense of self esteem and self worth. How do they express their thoughts, feelings and wishes? What sense do they have of themselves as a person? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What is the child's view of themselves and their place in their family, school, community?
- How do they think other people in their family, school and community view them?
- What is the child's perception of their faith, religion and community?
- Do they to church / chapel / synagogue / mosque / temple etc?
- What does their faith teach them about (family, community, adults, children, people from a different religion, love, respect, sex, touching ...etc
- What do their mum / dad / sisters etc tell you about your religion?
- What do other children / people say about your family / faith / religion / dress etc ...
- What is the child's view of sexuality and their own sexual identity?
- Repeat similar questions about disability / ethnic background /other areas of diversity.
- Explore the child's perception of how children / people in the neighbourhood would respond to a hypothetical child who was seen as 'different'. Then explore the child's own experiences

## **Family and Social Relationships**

The key focus of this dimension is to obtain evidence about the quality of the child's relationships with other family members. Also, do they have any difficulties relating to their peers and others in their social network? If so, what are they? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What are the child's views about different people in their family network?
- What do they like best / least about them?
- Who are they closest to in the family? Who are they not so close to?
- Who do they think sets the rules in the family?
- What happens when someone is naughty? What are the forms of punishment?
- What do their parents like to do together?
- What do they fight about? How do they fight?
- What is like for them living in their home?
- Who do they have the most arguments / fights with? What about?
- How do the people deal with disagreements / arguments / conflict in their family?
- How do people in their family show their feelings to each other Anger? Love? Closeness? Sadness?
- What would they like to change in their family?
- What would they like to change about family members?
- What did people in their family say to you about .... (the problem / reason for the assessment – e.g. coming into care, the sexual behaviours etc)?
- Who is their best friend?
- How often do they see them? What kinds of things do they do together?
- What kind of things would they not be able to talk about with them?
- Whom have they told about ... (being in care, problems at home, why social workers are involved, their family problems etc)?
- Are they teased or bullied?
- How do they spend their time e.g. favourite things to do on a Saturday afternoon?
- What teams, clubs, and groups do they belong to?
- How many hours a day do they spend watching TV? What are they watching?
- How many hours a day on average do they play video games? Favourites
- How many hours a day do they surf the internet? Favourite sites

### **Social Presentation**

This dimension attempts to explore how the child presents themselves in different social situations. Is it appropriate to their age and development? Is their dress in keeping with the settings in which they live? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What do other people at school, clubs, in their neighbourhood think about them?
- How do they think they are similar or different from other young people of their age?
- If they could dress / be different – how would they change themselves? Why?

- Do other people say things about them or their family that they do not like? What do they think about this?
- Explore these issues in respect to appearance, their culture, faith, sexuality or disability?

### **Self-Care Skills**

The Key focus of this dimension is to identify how the child cares for him or herself. This includes washing, personal hygiene, travelling or managing issues such as drug and alcohol use? Are they able to care for themselves at a level appropriate for their age and development? Do they take inappropriate responsibility for self-care skills? Are they more self-sufficient than is appropriate at their stage of development? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What are their routines regarding washing, bathing dressing in their family?
- What happens at mealtimes?
- Who cooks, cleans, and fixes things in the house?
- What jobs or chores do they have in the family?
- What jobs or chores do other people in the family do?
- What does mum and dad think about their skills in these areas? What do they say?
- What skills do they think they need to learn?
- What do they do if/when their parents go out?
- Explore the time they go out, where, with whom, their use of money, transport?
- What would they do if they were in trouble when out / lost / scared etc – explore use of phones. Do they know telephone numbers, address, who to turn to in the community?

## **DOMAIN – PARENTING CAPACITY**

The key focus of this domain is to explore the nature of the parenting that the child is receiving. What are the parents or carers doing in terms of the care they provide for their child (ren) on each dimension of parenting capacity?

### **Basic Care**

The key question for this dimension is how the parents attempt to make sure the child is safe? What about when the child is not at home? What happens if there is domestic violence? What protection do they provide from contact with individuals who may pose a risk to them? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- Explore with the child when their understanding of 'safe' and 'unsafe'
- When do they feel safe / unsafe?

- Explore theoretical risks from hot water, electricity, car accidents, unsafe adults before transferring concepts of safety to their home / family
- When do they feel scared or frightened? When, how, what happens and who helps them with these times / feelings?
- What are the routines in the house regarding mealtimes, washing, bathing, bedtimes?
- Link to the 'causes for concern' and seek their views as to how their parents deal with these issues
- Explore their reactions / views about exposure to arguments, violence, drugs, and alcohol.
- Who visits their house? Do they know everyone? Which visitors do they like / not like and why? Any visitors make them feel uncomfortable / scared / worried?
- What would they like to change in their family?
- .What do their parents / siblings fight about? How do they fight?

### **Emotional Warmth**

What warmth and affection do the parents show towards the child? How do they respond when the child is distressed? What encouragement, [praise and reassurance do they give in response to the child's emotional needs? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- How do people in their family show their feelings to each other Anger? Love? Closeness? Sadness?
- What do they do their parents / family do when they have these emotions?
- What happens when a child in their family is upset – explore examples such as when a child falls over, is upset by another family member, experiences a loss etc
- Explore cuddles, kisses, hugs in the family

### **Stimulation**

A key area relevant to this dimension is how the parents talk to the child. Is this in a way likely to promote their development of language? What social and learning opportunities do they provide inside and outside the home? What help do they give with reading and homework and how do they encourage their child's learning and development of social skills? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What help do parents / family members give with reading and homework?
- What play / games / activities do they like to play or engage in with their parents? How often and when was the last time?
- What toys / games / toys do they have at home?

- Explore an activity the family did together recently and seek a script about what people did, said, or behaved?

### **Guidance and Boundaries**

This dimension aims to identify how the parents manage the child's behaviour. What guidance do they provide and how? How do the parents set boundaries for the child? What rewards and sanctions do they use? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What rules do they have in their family?
- What rules are there about bedtimes, arguments, what they can watch on TV / DVD, using the internet, where they can play, what time they have to be in at night?
- What do their parents think about drugs, alcohol, stealing, when children can have boyfriends / girlfriends?
- What are the rules about how long they can stay out, staying at friends houses, going to parties?
- What happens when someone breaks these rules?
- What happens when someone is naughty? What are the forms of punishment?
- What do they not tell their parents about?
- How do people deal with disagreements / arguments / conflict in their family?
- How many hours a day do they spend watching TV? What are they watching?
- How many hours a day on average do they play video games? Favourites
- How many hours a day do they surf the internet? Favourite sites

### **Stability**

This dimension explores what steps the parents take to maintain a stable home and family life for the children. In what ways do they promote the development of secure attachments in the child? How do they help them cope with any moves, separations or losses? It is important to understand the course of parenting throughout the child's life. In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- Explore child's memories and feelings about changes in home, school, family structure
- Who do they miss? Who would they like to see more of?
- What do their parents / siblings think / say / feel about these changes?
- Who helps them with these feelings?
- Who do they talk to about them?

## **DOMAIN: FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

The key focus of this domain is to identify what family and environmental factors which may be influencing parenting and impacting directly on the child's development?

### **Family History and Functioning**

This dimension seeks to identify the nature of relationships within the family. How does the family function as a unit? In what joint activities do they engage? Is there any conflict or domestic violence? Has a parent a mental health problem or difficulties with substance or alcohol misuse? What changes in family composition have there been in the child's life? How have family relationships changed? What is the nature of the links between previous partners and children now? What significant events, relationships or circumstances from the past has each family member experienced? Which of those is still affecting them now and how? Are there specific behaviours and interactions between family members that may reflect the impact of family history on current individual and family functioning? What are they? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What is the nature of relationships within the family?
- What activities do the family do together?
- What happens when family members argue, are in conflict, fight?
- Is anyone in their family unwell / sick (emotionally and physically)?
- Knowledge of drugs and alcohol (in and outside of family)?
- What changes in family composition have there been in the child's life?
- How do people in your family show their feelings to each other Anger? Love? Closeness? Sadness?
- Who do mum / dad / each sibling get on best with?
- What was it like being a small child in your home?
- Who was special to you, who cared about you?
- Siblings – how did you get on with them when you were growing up (each one)

### **Wider Family**

This dimension aims to identify members of the wider family. Which of these people is particularly significant to the child or family? What contact do the child and family have with them? How do members of the wider family support the child or family? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- Who are the members of the wider family?

- Which of those people is particularly significant to the child or family?
- Who do they like / not like and why?
- What contact do the child and family have with them?
- What activities do they do with these family members?
- What do their parents / siblings think about these family members?
- Is there anyone in the family who does not like them? Why?
- How do members of the wider family support the child or family

## **Housing**

In this dimension assessors seek to identify the nature, size and location of the family's accommodation. Does the available space reach the standard required by the housing regulations? What specific housing needs of the family are provided for e.g. adaptations, access and number of rooms? What is the nature of the neighbourhood in which the child is living? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What does the child think about where they live?
- Where do they / other family members sleep?
- Who shares with whom?
- For children with physical disabilities explore any difficulties / mobility / risk issues?
- What does the child think about their neighbourhood? Do they feel safe? Dangers, risks and threats?

## **Employment**

This dimension seeks information about whether members of the family are employed. What is the nature of their work? What are the hours, conditions, locations of their work? How does this affect family activities and interaction? If the adults are not in employment, how does this affect the family? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What jobs do their parents / siblings / other family members do?
- What do they know about this work?
- What do they say to the child about their work?
- What hours? How does this affect the family activities and interactions?
- If the adults are not in employment, how does this affect the family?

## **Income**

In this dimension assessors seek to establish what level of income the family has. How do they manage financially on that income? Is the family in debt? What welfare benefits and allowances are they receiving? What are they eligible for? In addition to information obtained from

parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What do mum and dad say about money?
- How does the family get money to buy food, clothes, toys etc?
- Do they get pocket money? If so how much?

### **Family's Social Integration**

This dimensions aims to evaluate what links the family has with their local neighbourhood and wider community? What friends and neighbours can they talk to and access support from? How is this family involved in local social, leisure, sporting or other activities, groups and organisations? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What links do the child and their family have with their local neighbourhood and wider community?
- What friends and neighbours can they talk to and get support from?
- What is their involvement local social, leisure, sporting or other activities, groups and organisations?
- What is their involvement of other family members in local social, leisure, sporting or other activities, groups and organisations
- What teams, clubs, and groups do they belong to?
- Do they and their family go to church / chapel / synagogue / mosque / temple etc?

### **Community Resources**

Assessors need to evaluate what resources and services are available for the family members in the local community? What relevant specialist services and provision is out there? How accessible are they? How do the family use the services and support that might benefit them? If not, what are the barriers to their accessing them? In addition to information obtained from parents/ carers, professionals and from any records, assessors should seek to explore and obtain the following information from the child:

- What clubs, activities would the child like to get involved in?
- Do they know where and how to access these?
- What is stopping them accessing these things? Money, availability of resources, permission from home, support, disability or other reasons?

### **3. POLICY AND PRACTICE ISSUES**

#### **Where and when to see the child or young person**

Decisions about where the child should be seen should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the suitability of the venue and whether it is safe enough to see the child at home. The work should take place in a child-focused setting in which the child feels both safe and comfortable. The space should be private, should not be visible from the street and should not be a place where people can walk through or where there are repeated interruptions. Ensure there is wheelchair access for those who need this or that the environment is suitably quiet for those with hearing difficulties.

Some assessors might decide to see the child in their home. However this might contain distractions and a lack of privacy which will be unhelpful. Others might choose to see the child at their school, although this setting also needs evaluating in terms of distractions and privacy. Other options include use of a family centre, social services offices or in another community setting. It is recommended that contact with the child involve at least one session in the home they are residing with all family members present so that 'normal' family life can be observed.

Arrangements for when the sessions should take place should take account of the child and family's routines and commitments. You need to think about school, religious observance, transport needs, caregivers' work commitments, family routines or the availability of any interpreter, facilitator or supporter for the child. However sessions should not be dictated by routines, which might need to be adjusted to accommodate the needs of the assessment.

#### **Confidentiality**

All assessors should be familiar with the local and national guidance on Safeguarding procedures and confidentiality. The parent and child must be told that you have a legal responsibility to inform a social worker or the police of any circumstances where information is obtained that a child might be subject to harm or may be causing harm to others. This includes any concerns about the child hurting themselves. The child needs to know that their caregivers are likely to be told too and discussions around the limits of confidentiality must be held with the child and repeated regularly during the course of the assessment.

Many children express and exhibit feelings of anxiety about what might happen as result of such information being reported. It might be tempting to offer the child false promises or platitudes such as 'everything will be all right' when this might not be the case. However you have a statutory duty to report any child protection concerns and cannot promise the child confidentiality, even when you are aware that reporting will have immediate consequences. You need to ensure that you are honest with the child and let the child know you will do the best to support them and help with what happens next. There is always the risk that reporting any such concerns could breach the child's trust in the worker and be seen as a betrayal. This has to be acknowledged and

addressed sensitively with the child by helping the child understand your role and responsibility in protecting children.

### **Sharing information with the parents and others**

When considering sharing information the worker must weigh up the needs and advantages of open communication against any concerns or disadvantages that might result from this sharing. The general rule is that a parent has a right to know what a child is doing in the sessions, unless providing this information could place the child at physical, sexual or emotional harm. However there are always grey areas. For example, when you think it is important for the parent to be aware of information obtained during a session, but where you judge this information should be held for a while until further sessions are undertaken to explore the issues further and prepare the child (and parent). One option here is to inform the parent of the topic of your work on that day, noting that it brought up some difficult feelings for the child, and that you would like to explore them further with the child at the next session before giving any detailed feedback. Most parents are accepting of this as long as there is not immediate information the parent needs to ensure the child's safety.

If there is evidence or a suggestion of immediate child protection or safety concerns workers must share this with their managers and the social work case manager as soon as possible. Practitioners must also be aware that other professionals e.g. solicitors, courts, Guardians and those attending child protection conferences might ask about the child's progress during the assessment. It should always be borne in mind that a Court can order access to any of your notes and work produced during the session that you have.

### **Record keeping**

Practitioners must follow departmental procedures regarding any Safeguarding/ child protection matters, including keeping detailed summary notes of the work undertaken in the sessions and any observations. It is advisable that any allegations and/or disclosures made by the child should be recorded verbatim by the worker at the time they are made or as soon as possible after the sessions. These should include writing down any questions you asked or any responses you made. Pictures and worksheets should be treated in the same way. These will serve as your contemporaneous notes and could be requested by investigating professionals or by the Court.

### **Support and supervision**

Direct working with children, young people and families can at times be emotionally demanding even for the most experienced practitioner. Supervisors and managers need to ensure that their staff are aware of this and have the opportunity to explore any of these issues prior to undertaking the work.

## **Gender & ethnicity of workers**

The gender of workers is a much debated subject amongst those that work with children and young people who might have experienced physical or sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or exposure to domestic violence. Some would argue that workers should be the same gender as the child, whilst others would argue that the gender should be the same as the child or that gender is or should be irrelevant. Sometimes the child's parents or main carer will have a view on who should and should not work with their child. This might be a reflection of their own abusive experiences, or a reaction to what an abuser has done or what their child has experienced. It is advisable not to accept automatically a parent or carer's views without first exploring the source and reasons with the carer, recognising that their views might be based on a good understanding of their child and some real concerns. However, where the parent/carer's views are intransigent it may be unhelpful to force the issue as their opposition to the choice of facilitator based on gender could undermine the therapeutic relationship. Where such issues arise, joint work by two people of different gender might be an option where resources permit.

There have been similar debates with regard to issues of ethnicity and faith. Work around Black identity formation (Cross 1971; Maxime, 1986) has assisted in the understanding of links between racism and the development of a continuum of positive and negative identities, which can account for different people's need for, or rejection of, workers from a similar ethnic background. In a study of the experiences of Black and Asian children who had received intervention because of their sexually harmful behaviour (Mir & Okotie, 2002) issues of language; having a common understanding of cultural and religious practices; having a common understanding of racism and oppression; and having an opportunity to openly discuss issues relating to culture and religion were important, particularly in facilitating the engagement relationship. Family members and professionals also reported similar advantages.

Facilitators also need to think about whether issues of ethnicity, culture, faith and identity are strong protective factors in this family or whether they have been used as a feature of the offending dynamic, perhaps part of any grooming process or as a factor in how the offender has attempted to prevent the child from telling either family or professionals. The identity of the offender can have implications for how the child internalises their own identity, their family, their community, their faith and how they perceive working with someone from the same or different background as themselves.

However, this is not to suggest that all children and families should in all cases have a worker of the same faith, ethnicity or culture background or that a specific gender can be assured. In reality, the gender and cultural background of the worker is often determined by worker availability. The resolution of these issues is beyond the scope of this guidance and there is no simple answer to this issue. However it does indicate the need to consider these issues in allocation and methods of work and the need to consider the use of informed consultancy on working with diversity.

**The use of interpreters and communication facilitators**

Consider the need for interpreters or workers who are trained in assisted communication for children whose first language is not English, who have speech or hearing difficulties or who require assisted communication. Do not rely upon relatives, other children or people in the parents' social network to interpret. Only interpreters from approved organisations should be used, preferably with experience of working with children and young people. Practitioners should confirm that interpreters are familiar with any dialect the family use or use the specific sign language used by the child (e.g. Makaton or BSL).

## 4. PRACTICE TIPS ON COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN

This chapter outlines some of the key practice principles involved in undertaking communication with children and young people and sets the context for the work undertaken in the sessions.

### **Child-centred communication**

In many instances you will be communicating with a child with attachment-trauma difficulties. Such children can display poor attention, low self-esteem, difficulties having fun, trouble recognising or expressing feelings appropriately, lack of trust, problems with basic cause and effect or with logical & abstract thinking, confused thought processes, or problems expressing themselves verbally. In addition they may have developed a series of coping mechanisms which have served to keep them physically and psychologically safe, For example their use of trauma-responses such as of denial, minimisation, projection, repression or isolation of affect, depression, dissociation, avoidance or withdrawal. These difficulties in turn may be affected by the messages they received from an offender as part of any grooming, abuse or attempts to prevent disclosure, which can cause a range of thinking errors, cognitive distortions and distorted belief systems. Clearly such difficulties and defences can impede your attempts to communicate with children and it is important to use communication methods that help bridge these defences in safe ways. To do this you need to take account of knowledge about how children communicate, as well as recent knowledge about the impact of trauma upon children, particularly with regards the implications for how this affects communication.

In respect to communication methods we need to acknowledge that children communicate in a different way from adults. Adults use language but young children primarily communicate through play. Whilst older children and adolescents begin to learn the art of conversation to communicate, this is not yet fully developed and they often struggle using words to explain complex, painful or confusing ideas and emotions and still benefit from the use of creative activities. Creative methods can facilitate a child's communication and expression; can allow for a cathartic release of feelings, frustrations, fears, wishes and tensions in a safe way; and can reduce frightening and traumatic events to a manageable level for the child. The worker can often understand more about the child's world by observing or interacting with the child via creative engagement than through an entirely verbal discussion.

This use of creative communication is also informed by our understanding of the impact of trauma upon children, particularly upon the child's ability to process and communicate. Recent work on how the brain works and neurological processes informs us that therapeutic approaches must appreciate the persistent fear state that some traumatised children experience and that our approaches need to be directed at the areas of the brain which mediate this alarm – fear – terror continuum. In particular we need to be mindful that cognitive & verbal interventions are unlikely to

affect these parts of the brain and that traumatic memories are often held in the visual, as opposed to verbal domain, making it easier for a child to draw or play than talk. Furthermore very early life memories appear encoded on a sensory-motor level. For these reasons many of the activities described in the modules involve creative activities such as drawing, play activities, role play or hypothetical stories suggesting that interventions such as drama, movement, play may be indicated.

In general terms a child-centred atmosphere can be best facilitated by the use of a selection of creative communication techniques such as using toys, drawing materials, worksheets, puppets, etc. Clearly the choice of media will be dependent upon a range of factors such as the age, developmental functioning and personality of the child, but also upon the nature and impact of any trauma-responses. The use of such tools and techniques takes advantage of the child's communication methods and can help breach their defences in safer ways to facilitate more effective communication. It is for this reason that the programme utilises a range of activities to help facilitate this communication. However, to focus on toys, activities and resources would be to miss the key point of essential communication with children. It is the process of communication between you and the child that is important. You are the main tool. You can tune into a child's agenda by listening, reflecting and given total attention, whether for five minutes or one hour, whether in the home, office, in the car or the playroom. It is use and presence of these core skills that will have the most effective impact on the quality of your communication and which will allow you to meet the aims and objectives of the programme. The following sections identify some key issues which will facilitate your development of these skills.

### **Avoiding Replication of Abuse Dynamics**

Discussions with children who have been exposed to abuse, whether directly or indirectly, can be experienced as a repetition of the abusive dynamics, involving 1:1 interactions containing elements of intimacy, power, invasiveness and a re-experiencing of feelings felt prior to, during or after the abuse. It is important therefore that workers seek to ensure that these dynamics are countered and that the child is not made to feel further powerless, marginalised or under threat and that any feelings of guilt and responsibility for the abuse are not communicated. It is crucial therefore that any work undertaken with a child is built around a foundation of openness, involves clear explanations about the purpose and aims of the work, is direct and focused and involves firm rules and boundaries that ensure the child remains safe and contained.

### **Being clear and specific with the child**

Workers need to be clear, direct, open and specific with children about who you are, your role and your ability to do the job. The simple rule here is that you should never see a child without explaining your role and why you are there. The child needs to know a little bit about the purpose of the work, what the topics of different sessions will be, how many sessions they are likely to attend

and what the rules are regarding boundaries and confidentiality. These need to be explained in ways the child will understand.

It is also important that the child is aware of your confidence and experience in undertaking such work. You may have seen or spoken to many children who have been abused or subject to an intrusive assessment process but the child does not know that. It is useful therefore that in your initial discussions with the child and parent, that you emphasise your experience and comfort level around difficult topics. For example by using phrases such as *“I see lots of children who live in families where there have been worries about (insert causes for concern)”* or *“I see lots of children with muddles about (insert causes for concern)”* or *“many children I see are nervous about talking to me about (their family / problems / things that have happened to them and their family) but they find it a lot easier after we have got to know each other better”*. The specific phrasing of course needs to reflect the age, developmental functioning, unique circumstances and the knowledge of the child at that time about the events. The key point here is that you need to make statements which convey the message that they are not the only ones this has happened to and that you have experience of talking to children about such issues. This can help reassure a child and reduce feelings of guilt and responsibility. In addition naming the key issue can help remove some of the power from the word and reduce the child’s anxiety about a topic rarely talked about. Guidance and suggestions on phrases to help you impart such information are provided in a later chapter ‘Preparing for the Work with the Child’.

### **Being alert to the child’s meaning and being cautious about interpretation**

Effective communication requires that workers are attentive to the possible meanings behind what a child says, whilst at the same time being wary of making precipitate assumptions and interpretations of what the child has said before you have had a chance to clarify the meaning. For example a child who tells you that *“mummy shouts at me all the time”* might trigger concerns, particularly if there is a known history of problematic parenting or emotional abuse in the family. However the child might be giving a generalised statement shortly after being told off for running across the road without looking or for hitting a sibling. The child might also make comments that are worrying because they relate to sexual issues or appear to be beyond the child’s level of understanding. For example this author has experience of an 8-year old child referring to mum and dad *“sexing”* in front of her, which upon further clarification referred to her mum and dad kissing each other in the kitchen, with the child’s use of words reflecting terminology used in the school playground to describe kissing and cuddling. Clearly such expressions need to be clarified and workers should attempt to encourage the child to describe the context of the event or words.

This need to explore meaning and avoid interpretation too early also applies to children who communicate important issues via play or through drawings. For example, consider the situation whereby a worker directly observes or hears reported play or drawings which includes a fictional character who is being hurt, touched, abused or treated badly. Whilst play, stories or

drawings may include a factual representation of real events, or how the child perceives events, it can also involve the use of fantasy or symbolic elements woven around real incidents or concerns. Caution is therefore needed in interpreting or making direct causal links between a child's play and actual events. In exploring such issues, especially where a specific allegation has not been made, it is important to give the message that you have heard what they are saying, whilst avoiding making any link between the activity and real life. You should ensure that you explore the issue further at the level of the child and retain the essence of what they have said, played, written or drawn, indicating that what they have said is sufficiently important to continue talking. For example if a child relates a story about a character being kissed, touched or hurt in a bad way causing the character to run away, you could explore ways in which this character can get help, who they can tell and what might happen if they did tell. Only after some discussion of this can you ask a direct question such as *"has anything like this happened to you"*. However workers should always keep in mind evidential issues and the need to avoid leading questions and control any interviewer bias (see later section). In assessment work or where new information about a possible incident or offence emerges, workers should avoid using pretend or fantasy activities to explore the exact nature of these and should ensure that they make clear to the child or clarify as to what aspects of the activities and conversations that are 'play', 'pretend' or 'part of the game' and what are 'real life' and 'actually happened'.

### **Consideration of the child's agenda**

Some of the children you see will have been subject to a number of prior interviews and conversations as part of previous investigations or assessments. Their experience might well have one of being interviewed by an adult in an interview room, sitting down in adult sized chairs and being asked probing questions via the use of adult language and concepts. Interviewers are often trying to do this with a child whom they do not know; who may be in denial; whose inner world may be in chaos; whose underlying state is heavily defended; who may be subject to pressures from the offender, family and others about what they should or should not say; who have been on the end of the offender's implanted messages and distortions; and who may continue to be unsafe. Such children may have regarded the interviewer as a source of terror and anxiety rather than a source of help and relief. A key task of communicating therefore is to ask to ask yourself 'what does the child see as the reason for your contact?' Is it *"to find out how naughty I am ... to find out things and tell my parents/carers... to punish me... trick me... to find out things to hurt my mum and dad... to find out what the 'special games' me and dad played? Does he/she want to play 'special games'?"* Such questions and agendas are going to have an impact upon how the child views you and will inevitably affect the communication process between you and the child.

You also need to consider the possible reasons the child may have for not telling about what has happened to them or what has taken place within the family. Ask yourself what the child may perceive as the costs and risks of them telling? For children who have been abused common

causes include shame, fear of social stigma, embarrassment, difficulty in discussing sexual issues, fear of consequences (to self & family), difficulty divulging family secrets, preservation of self-esteem / self-image, or traumagenic responses such as severe emotional pain, memory blocks or dissociation. Similarly for children who have not been abused but who have a family member accused or convicted of abuse or asked to leave the home because of safeguarding concerns, you need to consider the reasons they might refuse to believe what has happened and what the costs would be were they to accept the reality of the abuse. They might also have a fear of social stigma, embarrassment, social isolation and family break-up and the impact of events upon family and peer relationships. However they also have to face the prospect that the person who they close to, perhaps an attachment figure responsible for their safety, care and protection is not the person they thought they were. Believing that this person is responsible for abuse could threaten not only their present relationship with this person but could undermine their view of their past relationship with him / her. These fears and agendas are also going to have an impact upon how they view you and affect the communication process.

Not surprisingly the children that you see are often in the middle of a great big muddle of agendas which might still be present at the time when you begin to engage with them. What is likely is that the child has not been given any choice about seeing you. They live in an adult world where adults make the rules and may have been abused by adults or experienced significant changes in their lives due to the decisions that adults have made about them. For these children, grown-ups, especially professionals, are people who need to find things out, who come along and probe and ask questions and they represent a threat to the child's inner world. It is not surprising therefore that in the face of all this that they find ways to defend themselves against these probing and questions. This could lead to responses such as withdrawal, refusal to talk, denial, minimisation, other blaming, diversion, hyper-arousal, anger or challenging behavioural responses.

Considering the child's thoughts, feelings and agendas is an important part of the process in responding to and dealing with such defences. Providing clear explanations about who you are, your role and the purpose of the work will go a long way to help address these challenges. Prior to and during your contact with the child you need to use your supervisor and colleagues to plan how to address these different agendas with the child. Think about how you can let them know that you are aware of their agendas. A simple but useful strategy is to talk about the types of fears and worries told to you by other children you have seen and then enquiring whether any of these might apply to them. It can also be helpful to ask them what their thoughts and feelings were about attending the session and what the views were of other family members. These types of enquiries might provide you with an insight into their agendas. Alternatively you could undertake a focused activity around their fears and worries at the start of the work which could provide similar information.

Often parents and carers can be of significant assistance here. In the presence of the child (but ideally after preparation with the parent) the parents can be asked what worries, fears or

thoughts they think their child might have about attending the session, what worries they have about their child and what help they think they need. Such conversations can elicit information or statements from a parent such as *“I am worried she is keeping her feelings about what her dad did deep inside and is very sad”* or *“I am worried she has lots of questions about what has happened in the family and is afraid to ask in case she upsets me”* or *“I think he is angry at me for what happened but is worried about telling me”*. These provide opportunities for the parent to provide supportive messages about seeing you and permission for the child to engage or talk about such issues, thereby addressing the child’s unspoken agendas and perhaps removing some of the blocks to their participation.

Hypothesising about and exploring the child’s agendas is a crucial part of your work. It offers you the opportunity to identify some of the agendas that could impede effective communication and thereby restrict the opportunities for the child to make use of and receive benefit from the programme. Practitioners not to under-estimate the power of being able to label such agendas for the child as they are often surprised that you might know what they are thinking and feeling and this can enhance their confidence in your abilities. When combined with a message that these agendas are similar to many other children you have worked with this serves to reassure children and potentially reduce any sense of isolation.

### **Consideration of the parent / carer’s agenda**

In addition to the child’s agendas you need to think about what the parent or carer’s agendas might be. Do they want the work to help the child cope with what has happened, to have someone tell their child what has happened, to get their child ‘fixed’, to change their behaviour, to find out information about what happened or do they see the sessions as threatening to them or their family? These issues will need to be explored during the preparatory session with the parent(s). However you should also be mindful of the possible parental agendas before, during and after sessions. You will need to ensure that the sessions are not being used by the parent to offload any anxieties, frustrations or anger about the child. It is recognised that a parent might have a genuine need to do this but this should take place in a forum away from the sessions. The parent needs to be made aware of this and workers should ensure that parents are directed to the people best able to respond to these issues.

It can of course be useful to speak to the parent before and after sessions, either face-to-face or by telephone, to provide them with an opportunity to express their agendas as this could help reduce any contamination of the planned sessions with the child. However it is important that workers and parent remain focused on the aims and objectives of the assessment and not have these overtaken by other agendas. Having said this, if there is an important concern or issue from the parent that needs addressing there and then, workers should allow for flexibility to change the focus of the session away from the planned work to help address the issue at hand. The problem is where this becomes a regular feature of the sessions and is interfering with the progress of the

work. Where this happens firm boundaries need to be placed around the content of the sessions or in some cases consideration will need to be given as to whether the sessions should be suspended until the issues are addressed or until the child and parent are ready.

### **Consideration of worker and agency agendas**

In addition to considering the agendas of the child you should consider what agendas you are taking into the interaction with the child. What are you hoping to obtain from the session? You need to constantly ensure that your agendas are in line with the aims and objectives of the planned session. Many practitioners find themselves diverting from their planned work. For some, they may feel pressurised by agency agendas or the agendas of other professionals to undertake enquiries or work on their behalf, perhaps to address immediate behavioural concerns (e.g. protective behaviours work). You need to ask yourself whether this fits into the role of the assessment or whether this is intervention. You need to remain clear that the purpose of your work is to contribute to the core assessment. If other work is requested or needed you should consider whether this should be undertaken by someone else, another agency, whether it should wait until your assessment is complete or whether your assessment work should be delayed until this other work is completed. By digressing away from your role and the stated objectives there is a danger the work will lose focus and that you will undermine any relationship you have developed with the child.

You also need to be alert to the influence of your personal agendas and how this could impact upon your communication with a child. Issues such as personal or family problems, ill-health or being consumed with thoughts about another case when you enter a session can easily affect the communication between you and the child. Children who have been subject to abusive dynamics are often acutely attuned to the behaviours of others, developed as part of their early warning system for impending abuse. They often pick up upon any verbal and body signals indicating you are not totally attentive to what they are doing or saying and could misinterpret this as anger, disappointment, lack of interest or a host of other emotions. You need to ensure that before you enter a session you identify the possible personal agendas you might be carrying into the session with you and mentally prepare to focus on the child's agendas. This very act of preparation and attuning your mind is often sufficient to ensure you do not impose your own agendas on the child (even indirectly) and that you are ready to tune into their agendas. The use of a 'time for you, time for me approach', as described in the next section, is a technique that can assist with this

### **Using a 'Time for you / time for me' approach**

A basic but very effective strategy to assist you in developing rapport with a child and ensuring the interaction is child centred but also goal-focused is the use of the 'time for you, time for me' approach. This approach attempts to assist workers in obtaining information and to

undertake specific tasks, whilst also recognising the benefits of adopting a child-centred approach which involves developing a relationship with a child to counter the resistances and communication difficulties often presented by children with attachment-trauma difficulties.

'Time for you' involves the use of techniques taken from co-counselling or non-directive work. This involves becoming disciplined and practised in switching off your adult agenda and switching into the child's world and agenda; switching off your need to advise, control and direct; ensuring you are child-centred; respecting the child's issues and pace; using the child's language (which is often play); giving total attention; and using basic observation, reflection and active listening techniques whilst the child engages in play, activities or conversations that are initiated and led by them and not the result of adult-led interactions. With the gift of unconditional total attention children find it easier to relax and explore their thoughts, feelings and issues without battling against the adult's directing, controlling and advising stance. Children frequently love this and will come back for more. You should not underestimate the power of play or child-focused activities. Children's preoccupations will often emerge and you often gain insights that would not have emerged via adult-led interactions. For this to work you need to be self-disciplined and learn to trust this process and avoid seeing it just as step before the focused work.

The 'Time for me' part of the session should come after the 'time for you' phase. This where the worker can undertake the focused work identified in the module sections and is where attention should be given to achieving the aims and objectives identified.

A child who is introduced to these concepts appreciates the worker's ability to tune into their world, which enhances the chances of developing a therapeutic alliance and reduces the chances that the child will need to rely on the same level of psychological defences they have previously relied upon. However they also often appreciate some direction and structure in the sessions on issues as this conveys the message that you are comfortable and used to talking about such difficult issues and have thought and come up with ways to do this.

## **Boundaries**

Giving the child total attention in 'Time for you' does not mean the child has freedom to do anything he or she likes. There still must be boundaries and rules. These will differ according to where you are and what the purpose of your work is. In a formal session you need to set boundaries for damage, danger and impropriety. For example, by saying *"We will start with time for you. You can do whatever you like with the toys and I will make sure you don't damage anything or hurt yourself and that everything is okay. I'll just be with you. Later, when I get to know you a bit better we will have some time for me to do some talking, playing and drawing"*

## **The Use of Counselling / Active Listening Skills**

A key factor in communication is that the child feels they are getting your undivided attention and perceive you as being able to hear about and talk about any difficult issues. Children

will look for clues that you are interested in them, are listening closely to what they are saying and are confident with the topics discussed. They will take these clues via your body language and your comments. Sitting awkwardly, having a tense posture, looking at your watch, leaning too far forward in an overly intense way or being hesitant and indirect with your explanations, introductions or comments can carry problematic messages. Adult interviewers often have a tendency to fill in silences by talking, repeating a question or by adding further questions. Alternatively they fill silences by reframing the question too quickly, giving the child multiple questions and thereby confusing the child. This can place the child under additional pressure. Children need to be given time to think about and consider their responses. Allow silences and give the child a chance to think, to clarify if they do not understand and to compose their responses. A simple reassuring message such as *"take your time"* or *"it's OK, you are doing well"* can help. What follows is a summary of some of the key skills and issues to consider which will facilitate your communications skills.

- a) *Matching body language* - Matching body language, eye contact and tone of voice in a natural and comfortable way can give the child a message that you are listening. The child may later match your body language, allowing you some control over the interactions and can manage the child's anxieties.
- b) *Use of observation* - You should continually observe and monitor the child's play, general appearance, behaviour, mood, affect, thinking process, use of speech and language, choice of play and the way they interact with you.
- c) *Use of minimal responses* - Keep verbal responses to a minimum to help the child to continue to tell their story. You should avoid too many questions at the early stages and use minimal responses such as *"yes"*, *"ah-ha"*, *"OK"*, *"right"* or longer phrases such as 'I understand. However you need to ensure that you avoid giving minimal responses too often. It is important to avoid communicating approval or disapproval and you should be conscious of both verbal and non-verbal responses.
- d) *Use of reflection* - The child needs reassurance that you have heard and understand them. This can be achieved by reflection of content and reflection of feelings. Reflection of content involves literally reflecting back content of what child has said (not parrot fashion but by paraphrasing) picking out key aspects of what child has said or played. This helps the child know you are listening but also increases their own awareness. Reflection of feelings involves reflecting back information about the feelings the child is having e.g. *"It sounds like you are feeling"*; *"that mother sounds very angry"*. This allows the child the chance to express and experience feelings
- e) *Use of statements* - This entails factually describing what the child is doing or saying to show them that you have heard them. Statements can be used to give the child permission to show feelings, to float ideas, to highlight significant events in the play, to give back feedback about the play or to raise the child's awareness of what is happening. For

example “*when I am angry I talk in a loud voice*”, “If I were you I might feel scared”, “It is hard for you to chose a toy”, “I see that you have chosen a ..., that lion is hiding. I wonder if he is scared”

- f) *Use of open questions* - You should avoid asking too many questions and imposing your agenda too soon, as this may lead the child to shut down or withdraw. You should use open questions designed to elicit an expanded response rather than closed questions which lead to short and limited responses. For example sentences beginning with ‘what, when, where, who, how, tell me about...’
- g) *Use of summarizing* - This involves reflecting back information obtained from a number of statements made by the child, drawing together the main points of content. This form of summarising helps puts information into an organised format and can help with termination of a discussion. You should attempt to avoid interpretation and just summarise content.
- h) *Adopting a neutral Stance* - You should avoid the temptation to advise, interpret, praise or express too much emotion when the child is in their story-telling phase in an activity.
- i) *Communicating respect* - Take the child’s story seriously and communicate respect for it, even if unreal or factually wrong

### **Types of Questions**

Inevitably the sessions will necessitate you asking a number of questions about the child’s circumstances, views, thoughts and feelings and given the focus of the sessions, you might hear about and need to explore information about their lives. It is important that workers pay attention to the types of questions they ask. This is important not only to enhance the communication with the child but also for evidential reasons should new information emerge that could result in an investigation or later court proceedings. The following is a guide to the different types of questions that workers might use with comments about the advantages and disadvantages of their use.

- a) *Broad open questions* - These are the best type of questions to use with children and young people, especially when exploring events that could result in further investigation. These questions usually start with ‘who’, ‘where’, ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘why’ or ‘how’ or with phrases such as ‘tell me about’. They promote free recall & increase the reliability of responses and can help interviewer to assess child’s vocabulary, intellect, developmental functioning or attitude. You need to be cautious with the ‘why’ question as this can be perceived as accusatory & encourage guilt feelings.
- b) *Closed or Direct Questions* - These types of questions can be used for clarifying a point and normally involves a obtaining a ‘yes or no’ answer - e.g. “did s/he..”, “was it ..”, “were you ...”. These types of questions yield little information and the use of open questions (see below) are preferable. When using closed questions the interviewer must take care not to lead the child and they must be followed up by open questions

- c) *Multiple Questions* - This involves asking two or more questions at once. These types of questions should not be used as they are confusing.
- d) *Fantasy Questions* - These involve questions involving words such as 'lets pretend' or 'imagine' etc. They should never be used in assessment or investigative work as they confuse both child & interviewer as to what is real & what is pretend and carry the danger of undermining the credibility of the child in a court context.
- e) *Leading Questions* - This is where an interviewer directs a child's response by providing information not yet stated, providing or suggesting the answer within the question. This form of questioning may be appropriate in some forms of therapeutic intervention, for example when using assumptive interviewing techniques when undertaking treatment with young people with harmful sexual behaviours. However generally, the use of leading of leading questions is frowned upon by courts and could make the interview inadmissible in court. It can also increase the likelihood of causing false positive allegations.

#### **Evidential issues to consider when asking questions**

##### **Questions must not contain the answer**

###### Leading

- Did it happen at your house?
- Was your mum there?
- Did he tell you not to tell anyone?

###### Non-Leading

- Where did it happen?
- Who was there?
- What was said to you?

##### **Questions should give a choice of answers**

###### Leading

- Was he wearing pants or shorts?
- Were you sitting or lying down?
- Were you scared, angry or sad

###### Non-Leading

- Tell me what he looked like?
- Where were you in the room?
- How did you feel?

##### **Do not name suspect before child**

###### Leading

- Was it your dad who caused the bruise?
- Did mum tell you to keep it a secret?
- We've been told you've been having a problem with your uncle

###### Non-Leading

- How did you get the bruise?
- Has anyone asked you to keep a secret?
- Do you know why you are here?

##### **Questions should not contain offence details**

###### Leading

- Did he make you rub his penis?
- Did white stuff come out of his penis?
- Which finger did he use to hurt you?

###### Non-Leading

- What did he do next?
- Then what happened?
- What was it that hurt you?

##### **Avoid interviewers assumptions**

###### Leading

- We are going to ask you some questions about what happened to you

###### Non-Leading

- Do you know why you are here?

Practitioners should also think about the type of questions appropriate to their age and stage of development. For example:

##### **Children aged 2-3 years**

- Cannot answer open-ended questions
- Memory through demonstration
- Expect child to answer with 1-3 word sentences
- Child unlikely to know colours

##### **Children aged 4-5 years**

- Some ability to answer open-ended questions
- Expect multi-word sentences
- Children know colours

##### **Children aged 6-8 years**

- Can provide open-ended questions & provide a lot of descriptive detail

- Can identify people who have a significant relationship
- Child can consistently & reliably identify significant persons

### **Some developmental issues**

Children up to 4 - Generally it is accepted that very young children are unable to give clear verbal accounts of abuse-related events and so questioning or talking to them is unlikely to provide information that on its own will be evidently secure. When such children do give verbal comments suggesting abuse, they are likely to be via short and direct comments, usually related to how they felt with comments such as “*daddy hurt my wee wee*”. They are unlikely to be aware of the consequences of telling or able to keep secrets. Children of this age group tend to think in an egocentric way whereby they are conscious of themselves and see the world existing only within their own experiences. They think in concrete ways and have little concept of other people’s feelings, perspectives or intentions. They can recall events but get confused about time, space and sequence of events, which makes it difficult to obtain information to corroborate abuse. They often have a poor attention span which can affect attempts to obtain specific information from them about abuse-related events and children of this age tend to communicate their thoughts and feelings through the language of play and via their behaviour rather than through verbal language. They are more likely to give indications of abuse via behaviour which are linked to their abuse experiences. For example showing fear or anxiety in a situation or setting associated with their abuse or displaying sexual behaviours or a sexual knowledge beyond that usually seen for children of their ages (a document relating to sexual behaviours has been included in the appendix). Other alert signs are medical signs such as urinary tract infections or soreness in the genital areas and somatic signs such as headaches, stomach aches or nightmares, although these can also be related to non-abusive causes.

Primary age children (4-12 years) - Children at the younger end of this age group still think in concrete ways but they are now beginning to learn concepts such as time and space and are beginning to learn about sequencing of events and cause and effect thinking. However children of this age are still highly dependent upon their family are not in control of events around them. As a result events that confuse, hurt or frighten them can be all the more threatening because they are beginning to understand the context and sequence of events but are powerless to change them. Children of this age are beginning to learn how to keep secrets and the consequences of not telling secrets. Direct allegations or disclosures are less common than for pre-schoolers or teenagers and they often use less-direct ways to tell via drawings, writing or play, which offers some perceived protection. Children often use these mediums to test out adult reactions or to tell in a safer way. They might use metaphor using stories or drawings to depict a frightened, hurt or abused child. This allows them to hide behind the pretend nature of the story if the adult responds in the wrong way. As noted earlier, adults can listen to and communicate children by helping the child identify the worries and problems of the person in the story or by drawing and exploring practical ways the person can get help or be kept safe, then proceeding to explore whether the child shares any of

the problems depicted. Children of this age find it hard to talk about sexual activities as they begin to internalise society's attitudes towards sexual matters. They often need reassurance and time to talk as they are more aware of the real and imagined consequences of telling. Adults need to directly address these children's fears and anxieties about talking about sexual activities, reinforcing the inappropriateness of certain types of touching, the adult responsibility for this, and providing clear but simple explanations about what happens next, the role of police and social workers, and who tells mum etc. Similar to younger children, observation of a child's behaviour and presentation is also important, looking for signs of behavioural change, fear and anxiety with certain people or situations and for medical signs.

Secondary school age children (12+) - Adolescence is a period of significant social, emotional, physical and hormonal change. Intellectually the teenager is developing their capacity for abstract thinking and they begin to develop and explore concepts such as trust, loyalty, identity, belonging, responsibility. They are developing and exploring skills in perspective taking and more advanced cause and effect thinking, working out for themselves issues of right and wrong, appropriate / inappropriate behaviour and questioning the behaviour of others, especially adults. For children who have experienced prolonged abuse they often start to analyse their experiences and behaviours and begin to question their own responses and reactions, leading to feelings of self-blame and guilt. This can be compounded by any implanted messages used by the offender or by any messages about the consequences of telling. The costs of telling can become overwhelming, threatening not only their immediate family relationships but leading to fears and anxieties about loss of family, friends, independence and feelings of betrayal, stigmatisation and marginalisation from others. This is often heightened in adolescence when issues of identity and belonging are so important. Young people of this age might show signs of their abuse and trauma in negative behavioural ways such as depression, suicide, substance misuse or via aggression, sexual behaviours or other risk taking behaviours. However they also find indirect ways of telling, such as referring to a television programme that contains abuse-related content, writing or drawing a piece of fiction about someone who has been hurt or abused, or referring to a 'friend' who has been abused. For such young people it is important to let them know that they have been listened to and heard and that the topic is important enough to continue to talk. For example by using the TV programme or fictional character as a basis for communicating the message that abuse should not happen to children, that children who are abused should be listened to and exploring practical ways to help the child. This can often help them think about making a personal allegation / disclosure. Older children may have already tried to tell someone via a partial disclosure but were not heard, were not believed or were misunderstood. Such children will often have internalised feelings of guilt and shame and be very aware of the potential consequences of telling. Their accounts might be characterised by minimisation and rationalisation and they will often require educational input on sex offending dynamics to help reframe some of these messages, hence the inclusion of this on the programme.

## Ensuring your work takes account of diversity

In work with all children it is important to have an awareness of the power differentials. This need is heightened when working with children from ethnic or religious minorities where this power differential is likely to be enhanced by virtue of structural oppression such as racism, which can be reinforced by workers coming from a different ethnic background. Just as in all areas of social care practice, it is therefore essential that professionals have an understanding of, and take personal responsibility for, the use and development of anti-oppressive concepts and style of work, which has recognition of oppressive dynamics, empowerment and cultural diversity at the centre of their practice.

One of the key aspects of working with children is to ensure that your sessions are *individualised* according to the person's *specific* needs. This requires that practitioners have regard to the specific ethnic and religious context of a child's life and how this impacts upon the child and family. For example, practice indicates that different families within different communities have different experiences, expectations, needs and strengths. Furthermore if we accept that notions of identity, belonging and social connectedness are important components in the development of problematic behaviours, then it is crucial that we assess these aspects not only in respect to family and peer networks, but also in respect to how these issues might be affected / experienced by being a child and family living in a particular family or community. In essence your intervention must take account of a broad range of diversity issues.

In undertaking work with children and families from different cultural, ethnic and faith backgrounds you need to be aware of the following types of false assumptions (*adapted from Begum Mantra 1995*)

- That speaking 'some' English implies the ability to understand or express complex psychological issues
- That western dress implies a grasp of western ideas, beliefs and systems
- That wives/mothers who do not speak in the presence of husbands are necessarily timid and lack power
- That non verbal communication has the equivalent meaning across cultures
- That western patterns of thought such as introspective and hypothetical questions are universally applicable, relevant or even comprehensible to other cultural groups
- That western style 'liberation' is universally desirable, especially for females. N.B. Exaltations of well meaning professionals may be experienced as coercive, & threaten alienation from the individual's group.
- That interpreters have the necessary knowledge about the beliefs of the child care culture
- Be cautious of carrying assumptions that invitations to clients home, offers of food etc are insidious attempts to manipulate or bribe

- That all black staff are equally interested in cultural issues and willing to enter areas of conflict
- Be wary of making generalisations about a culture e.g. "Asian families all ..." "in Black families we know that..." etc. Whilst there may be many commonalities between ideas, beliefs, customs and practices, there are also many differences between families and individuals of the same culture or religion. You need to ask, what are the experiences, beliefs and values of *this particular family*.

In addition you need to ensure that your intervention takes account of the following types of issues:

- Think about the power dynamic between worker and 'client', the value base and assumptions of self, family agency & wider community
- Consider your intervention in the context of family's experience of racism & oppression
- Has your intervention taken into account the impact of racism upon this child / family?
- Do your interventions reports contain any explicit or negative stereotypes?
- Have you considered the needs of the child/ family based on their experience & reality?
- Have you taken account of the strengths of children, family, community as well as problems & needs?
- Have you taken into account of the cultural expectations & aspirations of the family?
- Have you considered the cultural implications of your intervention?
- Is your intervention hindered due to lack of resources
- Have you sought advice, guidance & consultation from someone with expertise of working with families from this culture?
- What are the attitudes, values, beliefs and meaning given to sexuality & abuse in this particular family / child
- How does this particular family / child explain the influence of culture, religion & racism upon the child's behaviour & on their views of future action / help needed?

Practitioners must be cautious against not assuming certain practices, beliefs and attitudes apply to all families from a certain faith or culture. Whilst there may be some commonality between families their may also be distinct differences. What is important is for workers to establish the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of this particular family and individual. For example in sexual abuse cases this requires openly but sensitively trying to understand the normative sexual atmosphere and behaviours in the culture of that individual. In doing so workers need to understand the difficulties families may have discussing sexual matters and may need to consider co-working with someone of a different gender and/or ethnic background to ensuring that we minimise the degree of resistance or embarrassment to male and females in such families. What does seem important is that workers have access to consultation to someone who has an expertise or extensive knowledge of culturally-specific issues in respect to family dynamics and trauma-abuse issues.

## 5. PREPARING FOR THE WORK WITH THE CHILD

**Useful information to have or to consider before starting the work with the child**

***(i) Details about the concerns or about any known or alleged abuse, offence and any offender*** - It is important that you collate as much prior information as you can about the specific details and dynamics relating to any known or alleged abuse prior to the sessions (if known). This will assist you in hypothesising the types of implanted messages, thinking errors, perceptions and agendas of the child. In effect such information will give you clues as to how the child might see

you, the offender, their non-offending parent, themselves and the world in general. It will also help you consider what parts of the core assessment sessions are most relevant, what activities to use and what questions to ask. The following checklist is useful to consider prior to the sessions:

- What has been alleged or disclosed? Who, what, when, where, duration, frequency?
- What information, if any, has been confirmed or denied about the causes for concern?
- What information, if any, has the child directly given to the parent, caregiver or others about the causes for concern?
- How was the information about the concerns been disclosed / alleged, when and to whom?
- What were the immediate reactions of family members and other significant people to the allegations / concerns?
- What has been said to the child by family members and professionals?
- What were the child's reactions to the concerns?
- Is there about the use of any grooming strategies used to gain the child's compliance in the abuse and prevent them from telling?
- What information is known about what messages the offender gave the child about the abuse?
- Is the known or alleged offender any form of contact with the child? Is s/he aware of the work with the child? If so, are they likely to undermine the child's involvement in the programme, if so, how and what needs to be done to prevent this?

**(ii) Current safety & protection** – practitioners need to ensure that they have liaised with the child's parents/carers and with other agencies and professionals to seek information about current levels of protection and the presence of any risks, including whether the child is still subject to any inappropriate, harmful and distorted influences from a known or alleged offender. The following is a checklist of questions and issues to consider:

- Is there still contact with the known or suspected abuser?
- If so what level and form of supervision is there?
- Is the child at risk of further direct abuse?
- Is the child at risk of receiving threats, distorted messages about the alleged abuse or at risk of having the work sessions undermined by a known or alleged offender?
- Is the offender able to manipulate the child's situation in any way that could jeopardise the child's safety?
- If a child is having supervised contact with a known or alleged offender is the child's safety ensured during these times?
- Is the child exposed to any pressure, threats, coercion, manipulation or distorted messages about or on behalf of the abuser?
- Is there anything in this background information that leads you to believe this screening process should not lead on to the next stage of direct work with the child? If not, why not? This should be discussed with the case manager / your manager.

**(iii) Information about the child** –It is not expected that you will have access to all the information about the child at this stage as parallel work with the parents and other professionals is designed to gather this information. However, this notwithstanding it is still worth checking whether the following information is available prior to your sessions, as this will help with your planning:

- Has the child been a victim of sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect?
- Has the child witnessed / continue to witness domestic violence?
- Does the child have appropriate peer relationships or is the child isolated and /or lonely?
- Does the child perform at school to his or her appropriate level?
- Has the child developed age-appropriate social skills, problem-solving and coping skills?
- Does the child have difficulties with impulse control?
- How does the child show or manage their different emotions?
- Does the child display problems with his/her behaviour?
- Does the child present with aggressive behaviours?
- Has the child been formally diagnosed with any conduct disorder, developmental disorder, mental health difficulties, hyperactivity or attention difficulties?
- Does the child display any inappropriate sexual behaviour?
- Any difficulties sleeping or night tremors?
- Any eating difficulties?
- Any signs of dissociative behaviours ('spacing out', withdrawing into a dream world or 'shutting off' from conversations)?
- Any self-harming or risk-taking behaviours?
- Does the child show signs of severe anxiety?

**(iv) Sex related issues** – (*sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of sexual behaviour cases*) - It is important that workers seek any available information from the parents / carers or those working with them about the normative sexual atmosphere of the family (attitudes, values, knowledge, language and boundaries around sexual issues). Also any information about any sexual behaviour problems and what words they are familiar with to describe body parts and/or the abuse events). Further information is contained in a later section on preparatory work with parents / carers.

**(v) Inter-agency consultation** - Check what other professionals or agencies are involved (e.g. social services, CAHMS, police, school, health visitor, school nurse, GP health professionals / GP, others). It is important that other agencies' views about the appropriateness of the work and that they are aware that the work is about to start as they will be key parts of the support/monitoring network.

**(vi) Investigation & legal status & involvement of other professionals / agencies** - If an investigation is ongoing you should not proceed with the sessions until this is completed or until you have permission from the investigating officers, as work at this time could compromise any investigation. Similarly in the case of ongoing or imminent care proceedings seek the views and advice of your legal advisors about any legal issues before proceeding with the work.

## **Explaining the work to parents / caregivers**

Parents need to be informed of the aims and objectives of your work. It is expected that those working with the parents will have already explained the core assessment process to them. The way this is done varies from case to case and worker to worker; some give information about the domains and dimensions of the core assessment and others given more general explanations. For example, explaining how the assessment attempts to obtain an understanding of how their family works; how the parents grew up, the effects their parenting; their child's strengths, difficulties and needs; an understanding of any risks to their child and how these can be reduced or managed; what kind of parent they are and to work out what kind of parents they are capable of being. These explanations can be used to explain your work with the child. In effect parents / caregivers need to be aware that you are seeing the child to obtain the child's contribution to the assessment.

However many parents / carers will be anxious about any work being undertaken with their child and some level of reservation, anxiety, resistance and confusion is expected. The agendas of such parents are likely to be varied and will differ from case to case. For example:

- Some might be worried that any work will upset their child, will be distressing and that they will be exposed to inappropriate information about family matters.
- Some will be anxious that it might cause or re-stimulate behavioural difficulties, might negatively impact upon their relationship with their child or might affect family dynamics and the child's relationship with others.
- Some might still be in a state of shock and denial and might not want the child to be exposed to information about things that have occurred in the family, about which they themselves are still not ready to accept.
- Others might have a view that 'what the child doesn't know won't hurt them', or they might want to keep the matters secret from other family members because of their embarrassment, fear of what would happen if others know or as part of their coping mechanisms they have used to deal with the impact of the events upon them.
- Some might want you not to see the child in order to avoid information being disclosed.

Parents/carers are therefore likely to have a myriad of questions and feelings about the proposed sessions with their child. They might rightly ask questions on what the content of the work is, what their child will be asked, what information will be told to their child, what involvement or control they have over the process, what the possible impact will be upon their child and on their relationship with the child and most importantly why such work is deemed necessary. These questions need to be addressed before the sessions with their child start. For example:

- Parents/carers need to understand that some children display some behavioural changes during the course of such work. They might need help in understanding that such behaviours can be the way a child communicates their underlying feelings, particularly as they are unlikely at their age to have the words or strategies yet to explain their feelings.

- Some parents might think that connecting with such feelings could be bad for the child or that it is better not to dwell on such matters to help the child forget. The worker may need to discuss with parents how feelings associated with abuse / causes for concern can emerge via other problematic ways if the child does not have a chance to connect with and express their feelings.
- The worker should ask the parent/carer how their child copes with and manages their emotions. This can be put in the context of how some children internalise and repress their feelings, which if left unaddressed can lead to emotional or social withdrawal, depression or self-harm and in some more extreme cases dissociation, whilst others can externalise their feelings through tantrums, aggression, anti-social behaviours or via sexual behaviours.
- The worker should explain to the parent/carer that any such reactions are also likely to be minimised and manageable if there is good communication between themselves and the parent/carer during the period of the work. If the worker is kept closely informed about the child's moods and reactions this can allow them to pace the work appropriately and to know when to slow down the work, when to take a break or when some additional work is needed to help the child and parent/carer work through and manage any such reactions.
- Parents/carers must also be made aware of the limits of confidentiality.
- Some parents may remain resistant to the idea of anyone working with their child. In such situations it should be recognised that parents and carers who retain parental rights cannot be forced or instructed to allow their child (ren) to attend the sessions. In sexual abuse cases it must also be recognised that to do so would undermine their parental authority, which may have already been compromised as a result of the offender's abuse patterns.

Parents and caregivers need to be informed that that the work with their child is a statutory part of the overall core assessment process. Ideally they should be encouraged to see this as a positive part of the process, ensuring that the child's wishes and agendas are taken account. However, in the absence of any cooperation in allowing their child to be seen caregivers might need to be informed that a failure to allow their child to take part or any attempts to undermine the child's participation might lead to further statutory of legal action.

### **Helping the parent / carer prepare their child for the sessions**

In most cases the assessment will take place whilst the child is living with their parents. In such situations the worker's initial contact with the child is often assisted if the parent/carer is helped to think about what they could say to their child prior to them meeting the worker. Some children will have a clear understanding that the worker's visit relates to the recent events that have occurred in their family. However, in many cases they may have no real understanding as to what has happened, having been given either inaccurate or no explanations about the concerns. It is in these situations that parents/carers are more likely to become anxious about the proposed work with their

child. This will require particularly careful preparation and discussion with the parent/carer(s) before meeting the child. It is crucial for the worker does not undermine the parent/carer and allow them time to think about what, how and when the child needs to be told. A parent/carer cannot be forced or instructed to tell the child before you see them.

It may be helpful for the worker to spend time with the parents discussing the short and long term consequences for the child and family of not having the problems known, named and discussed and whether they would like some assistance with telling their child (ren). The main point is to obtain an agreement about the types of phrases and words that they could use with the child to explain the work and who you are. Suggested phrases include:

- *"We are going to see someone called Rob. He helps children and families who have had worries and problems in the family".* The parent / carer could be helped to adapt the words according to their specific situation and using words that might already have been used in the family or that fit the age and level of understanding of the child. For example ...*"he helps children and families who have worries and problems about... (getting drunk, people taking drugs / medication , people getting angry, people losing their temper, the grown ups getting ill and finding it hard to look after their children,*
- *"... when parents and other grown ups are worried about their children"*
- *"...when parents and other grown ups are worried about a child's behaviour / about them being sad / angry / mixed up inside" etc*
- *"...when children are being called names by someone or bullied and feel upset or scared"*
- *"... when children have been hurt by someone and has to go to hospital / get bruises "*
- *"... when children are not be looked after or cared for properly (or specifically... when they do not have enough food to eat ... do not have enough clothes to keep them warm ... hurt themselves ... are left alone ... are allowed to stay out on their own at night without an adult making sure they are safe .... or left become ill)*
- *"... when children have been sexually abused by someone"*
- *"... when someone in the family has been touched in their privates by a grown up"*
- *"... when someone has touched a child on their privates"*
- *"... when families have problems about someone in the family giving children Not OK touches (or sexually abusing someone)*

If such events have not been confirmed or are refuted by a parent then you need to adapt these phrases to reflect this. For example you could discuss with the family how they (or you in their presence) could explain to the child that sometimes grown ups such as teachers, doctors, neighbours, social workers and the police are told (or are worried) that a child is being hurt /not being looked after properly/ unhappy / hurt / not safe etc. They could explain that when this happens a grown up has to go and speak to the child's parents and also to the child to make sure they are safe / OK. Sometimes the grown ups find out that everything at home is OK. Sometimes they find

out that there are some problems at home and that the child and their parents need some help. Sometimes they have to make sure the child does not get hurt / is safe.

It is always helpful if the parent / carer can label the issues as a 'family problem' and not the child's problem. It would help if the parent / carer were able to tell the child that she is also seeing someone to discuss the problems / worries / other people's worries. For example "*Mummy and daddy have been seeing someone to talk about these problems / worries too* (naming the person who they see). Encourage the parent to let the child know that the grown ups want to talk to other people in the family (including the child in question) and that they think this is a good idea as they know what it is like in the family too. Where the parents have acknowledged a problem and want some assistance they could be encouraged to use phrases such as:

- "*mummy / daddy wants the family to get some help with the xxx problems*"
- "*The xxx problem has caused lots of worries, muddles and problems for... (you, us, everyone in the family). Now that mummy / daddy have spoken to the social workers about these problems it is your turn to be spoken to*"
- "*mummy / daddy wants someone to help you. Everyone in the family needs help with this family problem too so that we can all work together to make sure it does not happen again*"

Clearly the types of statements need to be adapted to the individual's age, level of understanding and unique circumstances and use the words most appropriate. Workers should draft out some ideas before they speak to the parent to agree a suitable wording with them before meeting with the child to explain the forthcoming work.

There will be times when you do not trust the parents to have this discussion in an appropriate way. You will have to make a judgement about whether you need to write a script for the parents / carers; whether you need to be there when the parent has this conversation; whether you should have this conversation with the child directly with the parent or carer there; or whether you should have this conversation away from the parent. Every case is different and you will need to decide what, when and how before you meet the child. You should plan this you're your manager, consulting where necessary with other agencies to ensure that you are not compromising any evidence or are putting the child at additional risk.

The parent / carer needs to be prepared that the child's initial reaction is that they might not want to attend. It should be emphasised that this is an expected and normal reaction but can be bridged. One way to do this is to refer to it as a '*family problem*' and not to define it as a problem with which the child needs help with. It would be useful also for the parent/carer to tell the child that, following events in the family they all need help to come to terms with what has happened; that the parent(s) are also seeing someone to talk about the problems; and that s/he wants the child to have a chance to say what they think. The explanations discussed above might assist with this.

In cases involving sexual abuse or behaviour problems or it is essential that workers use simple, straightforward and child-centred language to talk to the child. The language that you use

will of course be dependent upon the nature of their specific difficulties. It is useful to find out from the parents/caregivers specific words that they have used (if at all) with the child to describe the abuse / sexual behaviours, as these may need to be the initial words you use to ensure that the child understands what you're talking about. However practitioners need to be aware that the words used by parents with their children may be accompanied by some negative messages about their sexual behaviours, and as such the child may have a negative meaning from the outset in response to the words that you use. Practitioners need to decide upon an appropriate use of words and terminology to using their sessions, which accurately describes the nature of the sexual behaviour, whilst ensuring that there are no negative all distorted messages attached to such terms. For example, you may want to talk to the child about their 'touching problem', 'touching worries' or 'touching muddles'. If information emerges that suggests concern about inappropriate sexual behaviours, advice should be sought from the manager and where appropriate the programme consultant to ascertain whether a specialist assessment is required. For children in substitute care similar steps should be undertaken with their current carer.

### **Conducting the initial interview with the child & parent**

Introductions to the child are clearly an essential part of the assessment process. You need to be clear about who you are, why you are seeing them, when you will be seeing, and what is likely to happen during the sessions. The initial part of the interview is also an opportunity to establish a level of rapport with the child, to help reduce the child's level of fear and anxiety and to undertake an initial assessment of their current functioning to help you plan the following sessions.

As noted in the previous section, it is desirable that initial introductions take place in the presence of their current carers. This can help reduce caregivers' anxieties, gives them an opportunity to observe your approach and if possible, can reassure the child that the process has the approval of carers and receives permission for then to talk to you. In addition the caregivers may assist with initial rapport and confirm the reasons why you are seeing the child. Your prior meeting and planning with the parents help you with your planning of what words or expressions you could use to explain the assessment to the child.

You must be mindful about how to handle initial explanations and introductions, especially when the child is still residing with an adult about whom there are concerns or where there are suspicions that the child may be subject to grooming, abuse, manipulation or is at risk of being 'shut down' by an adult. You may decide that it is preferable to undertake introductions in the presence of another adult such as a social worker and not provide explanations until you see them for the first session. Good practice is that introductions should take place in the presence of the carers, unless there is a good reason not to. This is ultimately a practice decision which should be made in consultation with your managers.

When seeing the child for the first time it is often useful to ask the child if they know who you are and seek their views about why they think you are seeing them, prior to giving any

explanation of your role. This can elicit interesting information about their perceptions of the assessment and what they have been told by others. Exploring the source of these views and what people have told them can highlight what the adult agendas are and identify possible sources of distortion or bias. It also offers you an immediate opportunity to correct any false assumptions or distortions they may have received.

The initial contact with the child provides an important opportunity for the worker to establish an initial rapport with both child and carer. It is likely that the child will be anxious about meeting the worker and it will be important for the worker to convey an interest about the child and their world, showing an interest in their talents, hobbies, school and family. The parent can be primed to assist with this discussion.

Issues of confidentiality and what will happen to any information you obtain will need to be made clear, explaining clearly that anything they say or play will be written down in a report which will be seen by other adults (or if appropriate the Judge) to read in order to help him or her make decisions about the child's future and what help, if any, they need. This should involve being clear that their parents and social worker may also get to see what you write. Whilst this may serve to restrict what the child will tell you we cannot under any circumstances give the child a false impression about what will happen with the information.

It is important to be open, honest and direct with children about the reason you are undertaking work with. This needs to be done in a way which communicates our concern in the child in a way that is not made them feel ashamed guilty of allowing their behaviour. It will be important to convey that this is a family problem and not just a problem relating to them that the whole family will be receiving help to solve this problem.

There are numerous ways you can explain your role and the purpose of the assessment and this will depend upon the child's age, their developmental functioning and the nature of the assessment. It is important that workers are mindful of evidential issues with regard to how they undertake introductions. In cases where no specific allegation has been made by the child or where the child's allegations are contested and not proven, we cannot identify the specific concerns in detail at this stage in case this causes bias and leads to criticism of leading the child. It is important that the worker maintains a neutral stance to any concerns and remains open to a variety of alternative explanations and findings.

For specific ideas as to what phrases to use with the child see the previous section on planning introductions with the parent / carer.

It will be useful to emphasise that you have worked with 'lots and lots' of children and families who have similar worries and problems as they have. This emphasises they are not the only child with such a problem, but also emphasises your experience. If the child is immediately denying the presence of any problems or worries or refutes the causes for concern, then you could emphasise that you have worked with children where the concerns are true and also with children where you found the concerns were not true.

In addition to providing explanations and setting the context for the assessment the initial meeting with the child is also crucial in helping a worker undertake an initial assessment of the child's communication and cognitive abilities in order to help you decide what methods and techniques will obtain the information you seek. You need to explore the child's understanding of time, numeracy, colour, relational concepts, comprehension & use of language. In addition, similar to the guidance issued in Achieving Best Evidence. It is recommended that we explore the child's understanding of truth and lies and their ability to distinguish fact from fiction, but this is best left until the formal sessions with the child.

### **Preparation Checklist Prior to Undertaking the Direct Work Sessions**

- a) *Inter-agency consultation* – Have you checked what other professionals are involved and sought their views about the appropriateness of the work and the child's functioning? Have you informed them of dates of sessions so they can be ready to provide support / monitoring?
- b) *Investigation & legal status* – Have you checked whether there are ongoing criminal or care proceedings and sought information from the investigating officers / legal advisors about any legal issues before proceeding with
- c) *Details about any known or alleged abuse, offence and any offender* - Have you sought information about implanted messages, thinking errors, perceptions and agendas of the child as a result of any abuse dynamics (see earlier section on 'Useful information to have before starting the work with the child: Details about any known or alleged abuse, offence and any offender)
- d) *Current safety & protection* – Have you liaised with other agencies and professionals about current levels of protection and the presence of any risks, including whether the child is still subject to any inappropriate, harmful and distorted influences from a known or alleged offender?
- e) *Information about the child* – Have you sought basic info from parents / carers / other professionals / those working with the parents about the child's current functioning (see earlier section on 'Useful information to have before starting the work with the child: Information about the child)
- f) *Support and monitoring available during the assessment* - Ensure that the child will be safe during the intervention and is appropriately supported and monitored. Who can do this? Are they aware of the work? How will people communicate and share concerns?
- g) *Information to the parent* – Have you provided information to the parent(s) / carer(s) about the direct work with the child. Have you listened to and attempted to answer any questions and anxieties
- h) *Information to the child* - Have you provided information to the child about the direct work? Have you listened to and attempted to answer any questions and anxieties?

- i) *Practicalities* – Have you clarified the practicalities with the child, parent, school, others (i.e. where, when, transport (if necessary))
- j) *Should the work proceed?* - Is there anything in this background information that leads you to believe you should not proceed to the next stage of a direct interview with the child? If not, why not? This should be discussed with your manager and the case manager.

### **When is it not appropriate to undertake direct work with the child?**

The underlying principle of this guidance is that all children should be seen as part of a core assessment and that their views should be recorded alongside those of their parents / carers in all parts of the assessment. However there are some situations where a child's involvement in this process might not be possible or appropriate and the following factors are not supportive of proceeding with the direct work with the child at this time:.

- Child presents with significant fear or anxiety about the work, to the extent that there are fears about his or her mental health
- Child has no available support system and has no one to turn to when they need help or support;
- Child's behaviour currently unmanageable, dangerous to self and others and is not containable;
- Child is under medication that impairs their ability to concentrate or comprehend effectively;
- Child has serious developmental delays that impair their ability to contribute and there is not an available worker with specialist communication skills (the agency needs to seek specialist input and advice)
- Child is experiencing significant trauma reactions and is at risk of being further traumatised by involvement in the work at this stage;
- Child has no effective strategies or supports to cope with and deal with ordinary powerful and difficult thoughts and emotions;
- Child is living with a parent/carer who blames and or punishes the child (physically or emotionally) for any family or legal problems and is at risk of further abuse if they attend or disclose information during the work
- Parents/carer is unwilling to acknowledge or consider how their own issues are affecting their child, to the extent that they will be unable to support the child through the process
- Parent/carer is unable to meet basic needs of child and refuses any assistance;
- Parent/carer is unable to maintain the child's physical and emotional safety;
- Parent/carer likely to sabotage intervention by professionals working with the child
- Parent/carer remain overwhelmed by events / mental health / substance issues to the extent that they are unable to provide support for their child during the programme.

In the event of such circumstances the worker should consult with their manager / case manager / legal advisors to discuss whether formal direct work with the child should proceed at this point or whether further protective measures are required prior to such work starting.

## 6. DIRECT WORK SESSIONS

### Overview of the sessions

Chapter 2 of this Guidance highlights the type of information we should be seeking from a child or young person during a core assessment, reflecting the different domains and dimensions of the Assessment Framework. It would be too complicated to devise specific sessions for each dimension of the assessment, particularly as there is a lot of overlap between the various areas. In order to avoid duplication, to keep the work child-focused and to help make the work manageable for the child and the worker, the assessment sessions have been divided into a number of key areas. These are as follows:

- Why am I seeing you?
- All about me
- My emotions and feelings
- My world
- My home and family
- My life story
- My worries, muddles, problems and fears
- My behaviour
- Why people are worried
- What I want to happen – my views
- Staying Safe (optional)

These should not be seen as single sessions but as themes or components of a session. Some children might complete a number of these themes within a single session, whilst others

might only complete one or two. It is difficult therefore to predict how many sessions will be needed but the author of this guide usually covers these areas in 3-6 hours of direct work.

### **The use of activities, worksheets and handouts**

Later sections of this chapter describe the content of each area of the assessment, with ideas for activities to use and the types of questions to ask. The designated worksheets and handouts can be found on your accompanying CD. Whilst most of the activities are accompanied by worksheets, this is not to imply that the work with the child should be worksheet-led. Not all children like to work this way and communicate better via direct conversations, using a computer or when engaged in play or leisure activities. However the worksheets can provide workers with ideas and could function as a prompt for them to use when talking to the child as they engage in other activities (e.g. play, drawing or craft activities)

### **Starting sessions**

At the beginning of every session it is recommended that you allow a space for rapport and for checking in with the child and getting an update on how their week has been. This helps the child focus their mind on the work, develops a safe routine to the start of the session and communicates to the child that you are interested in how they are doing between sessions. It is also an opportunity to gauge their reactions since the last session, to obtain information about important or significant events that might be happening outside of the session and allows you to monitor their general wellbeing during the assessment. Additionally it provides a forum to focus upon any issues raised by the child from the previous session, review the learning they recall and to answer any questions they may have.

Ideally such an update could be initially done with the parent / carer present, encouraging and modelling an atmosphere of open communication and sharing of purpose. However it is important that this time does not become dominated by adult agendas, either of the worker or the parent, and should not become a forum in which the parent can report to the worker in front of the child all the behavioural problems displayed by the child during the week, or a space where a carer needs to offload any personal or parenting stresses. It is recognised that the parent or caregiver might need a space to offload and discuss such issues but this should not occur in the presence of the child right at the beginning of the session, as this could undermine and contaminate the rest of the session. It is therefore recommended that the parent / carer's agendas are better dealt with via communications between the parent and worker between or before the sessions, when the child is not present. This should be discussed and agreed with the carer before the work starts so that they understand the purpose of any initial update discussions at the beginning of the session. Exceptions to this are when the behaviour or issues raised are topics that require immediate attention, for example reports of unsanctioned contact with an offender or recent news about court, the offender or significant family issues that need addressing.

It is important to remind the child every week of the rules and boundaries you have established (see session on rules and boundaries). Always check with the child whether they think any need changing. This can be done verbally, by reading the rules and boundaries sheet or by asking the child to recall them. This activity can be made into a game, perhaps by guessing how many rules they can remember this week, by telling the rules to toys in the room, by the children acting out a teacher role or just via humour. It can be useful to do this with the parent / carer present as this reinforces the need for boundaries, consistency and openness.

### **Ending sessions**

Towards the end of each session it is recommended that the worker encourage the child to summarise the things they have done in the session. It is also a good idea to encourage the child to identify the feelings and thoughts they had about the session, perhaps using the worksheet 'Feelings about today's session'.

### **Involvement of parent / carer in sessions & feedback**

Good practice would indicate the need to encourage and promote the involvement of the parent or carer in some of the work and to provide feedback of how the sessions are going. Whilst there is a requirement to see the child on their own they could be involved in some sessions or in at the start of end of sessions. The parent/carer's involvement can help reduce the impact of secrecy and any feelings of shame and can help reduce both the child and parent's resistance and lessen the likelihood of sabotage. Crucially the carer's involvement is needed to enhance the protectiveness of the child. However the decision about what sessions to involve the carer in and to what extent will vary from case to case and needs to be dependent upon the needs and risks of each individual case. This reinforces the needs for initial screening and the need to discuss and plan for a parent / carer's involvement with your supervisor / manager (see earlier chapter on 'Preparing for the work with the child').

Whilst the parent's involvement is to be encouraged, there is a need for seeing the child without a parent or caregiver present, especially in cases where there are concerns about possible harm caused by a caregiver. Clearly some parents are understandably cautious about their child being seen alone by a stranger and might be anxious about what will be discussed with their child. It is important therefore to spend time discussing the content of the programme with the parent and inform them of the reasons for this. This is also dealt with in the earlier chapter 'Preparing for the work with the child')

Sometimes it is the child who would prefer their parent to be present in the sessions, perhaps because they are scared or anxious, or perhaps because of a fear about what they might say. You should not force a child to see you alone if they are displaying significant resistance or anxiety and the parent should be present for as long as needed to help build the child's trust and reduce any resistance. The parent can provide a crucial role here in informing the child that they

have already met you, have checked you out as a safe adult and support the child being in a session with you. The minimal involvement of the parent in sessions should be whereby you provide feedback to the parent at the end of session or, if they are not in attendance, by phone. It is recommended that the following issues are considered when feeding back to the parent / carer

- highlight the positives, such as how hard the child has worked and emphasise the child's strengths during such difficult work
- report any immediate safety / protection issues to be addressed by carer / parent
- Identify any difficult emotions that the child might have displayed during the session or any possible mood changes that the child might have after the session. Discuss what might help with these feelings and what activities might help.
- identify any strategies needed for the child after the session (e.g. nice time)
- confirm arrangements for next session

### **Recording sessions**

Best practice would be to write any comments made by the child during the session and not wait until afterwards. Ideally these should be written directly on their drawings or in your notes (verbatim and in quotation marks where possible). In order to protect yourself from allegations of bias it is also useful if you record the questions you asked which elicited any significant information. The original worksheets and drawings must be kept and not given to the child. These, together with your notes might be requested by a Court or legal personnel at a later date. Ensure that the date is entered on any work done by the child and where possible get them to sign them. It is recommended that after each session workers should write a record of the session to help them organise their mind, to reflect on and analyse the information they have obtained and to plan for the next session. This should be taken from the contemporary notes made during the session and from any information contained in the child's worksheets or drawings. These post-session recordings should note:

- a) The focus of the session
- b) The activities used
- c) Any information provided by the child
- d) Observations of the child's emotional and behavioural functioning
- e) Observations of conversations or interactions of the child with their parent / carer.
- f) Any information about imminent risk or harm that needs to be passed to others
- g) Any opinions, thoughts, questions or working hypothesis should be recorded
- h) Ideas / focus of the next session

The following pages outline the content of each area of the assessment and the activities you could use. The areas covered include:

- Why am I seeing you?

- All about me
- My emotions and feelings
- My world
- My home and family
- My life story
- My worries, muddles, problems and fears
- My behaviour
- Why people are worried
- What I want to happen – my views
- Staying Safe (optional area)

Further specialist areas are currently being written. This includes specific guidance on questions and activities to use for exploring different types of harm.

## Why am I seeing you?

### **Rationale**

Despite the pre-session visit you should have made to the child and their parent or carer (see chapter 'Preparing for the work with the child'), it is important to repeat the explanations as to who you are, why you are seeing them, when you are seeing them and what is likely to happen during the sessions. The child needs to be clear as to how long the sessions will last, arrangements for drinks and using the toilet and where other adults are in the building. You must also be clear about the boundaries and the limits of confidentiality. The initial part of the interview is also an opportunity to establish a level of rapport with the child and parent / carer and to help reduce the expected level of fear and anxiety. This must be done using language the child can understand. The aims of this first session are therefore:

- To clarify the purpose of the work
- To clarify the arrangements for attending sessions, including an awareness of confidentiality.
- To clarify boundaries and expectations
- To clarify support arrangements for the child outside of the sessions
- To begin the process of rapport
- To begin obtaining some basic information about the child or young person

## **Meeting the child and parent / carer**

It is desirable that the initial session takes place in the presence of their current carers. This can help reduce the caregiver's anxieties and give them an opportunity to observe your approach. In addition the parent's involvement can help reassure the child that the session is approved by their parent and helps give them permission for them to see you.

Every worker has an individual style of introducing themselves or meeting and greeting a child. The following comments are written for children who are being seen outside of the home. They will need to be adapted for those you are seeing at home or school.

When you meet the child and carer for the first session it is important that they are not left for very long in a waiting area as this can increase their anxiety and could engender frustration towards you before you start. You need to avoid rushing to the first session from another meeting and can meet them as soon as they arrive. It is likely that you have already met the child and their parent / carer in the initial screening interviews. Ensure that you welcome them to the building and let them know how pleased you are to see them. It is recommended that you immediately take them to the room you will be using, formally stating that this is where you will be seeing them prior to getting any refreshments.

You do not have to proceed immediately into a formal discussion of the sessions. Allow yourself a short time for the child to get used to your presence and familiarise themselves with their surroundings. A simple way to do this is to offer the child and parent/carer a drink when they first arrive in the room. It is a good idea to have the child and parent / carer accompany you to the area where drinks are made. This provides an opportunity for you to engage in light conversation with the child and parent / carer about what they would like to drink, their favourite drink, how they got there today, whether they have visited the building before, whether they were at school today etc. You should avoid firing too many questions at them but you should ensure that your conversation involves the child and contains eye contact. On your way back to the work room ensure you familiarise the child with where the toilets are and what the various rooms are in the building.

When back in the work room, help the child familiarise themselves with the surroundings. Young children may immediately want to investigate the toys. Some parents try and intervene at this point and want the child to sit down and listen to you. Prepare the parent or carer before hand that it is OK for the child to look at the toys and explain how this actually might help with the engagement. However you need to provide an immediate message to the child that they can look at the toys for a while before you, the child, and their carer have a chat, sending the message that you will want to talk to them. In effect you are modelling the 'your time / my time' concept. If they do go off to see the toys accompany them and just be with them whilst they look, engaging in light conversation. In the initial session you should not allow this free period to continue for too long as it is important to address the reasons behind them seeing you at an early stage of the session. However in many cases you could have this conversation whilst the child is drawing or playing.

Older children might not start in this way and might sit closely to their parent and caregiver and be notably nervous. In these situations it is often good to go immediately into a discussion around the reasons for them being there.

**Explanations about the assessment with parent(s) or caregivers who are supportive (or at least do not openly undermine the proposed work)**

As noted above, it is expected that you would have already met with the child in the preparatory meeting and would have given them a brief explanation of who you are and what the assessment sessions are about. However this will need to be repeated to ensure that this is understood. The following points are therefore relevant both to children you have met before and for children you see for the first time.

It is advised you ask the child if they remember who you are and why they think they are coming to see you, prior to you giving any explanation of your role. This can elicit interesting information about their perceptions and agendas of the work and about what they have been told by others since you first met them. Exploring the source of these views and what people have told them can highlight what the adult agendas are and identify possible sources of distortion or bias. It also offers you an immediate opportunity to correct any false assumptions or distortions they may have received. Questions that might assist with this could include any of the following:

- *Can you remember who I am?*
- *Let's see how good your memory is. What did I say about what my job was?*
- *Tell me what you remember about what was said about why you were coming to see me?*
- *Why do you think you are seeing me today?*
- *What have you been told about why you are coming to see me today?*
- *What did mummy (or others) tell you about why you were coming to see me?*
- *Who told you? What did they say?*

Sometimes children give an open, detailed and direct response to such questions. Sometimes you will get limited and vague responses. Do not put the child under too much pressure and ensure that any comment they make is received with enthusiasm and praised. If the child states they do not know why they are there, or give no response, give them time to think about it (leave some silences) and if this is not successful just comment that it must be a bit difficult for them or it must be a muddle, recognising their feelings.

Irrespective of the child's responses it is worth engaging the parent / carer at this point, asking them to tell you what they have told the child about coming to see you (as described above). This allows the parent some control over the process, will help open up the conversation but also gives you useful information about how the explanations have been phrased. You need to make sure the parent / carer's explanations are supported, whilst simultaneously being conscious of any

distortions of vagueness about what they have said. If they are being vague they might need some prompts. Questions you could put to the parent / carer could include

- *“What have you told (the child) about why you and s/he are coming to see me today?”*
- *“What does s/he know about the sessions?”*
- *“What have you told him / her about some of the things we might be doing in the sessions?”*
- *“What do you think about you and (the child) coming to see me today”*
- *“What do you think about (the child) coming to the Staying Safe sessions?”*

Once the initial responses to why they are there are obtained acknowledge these and go on to give your own explanations about why they are there and who you are. What is important is that you are open and honest about who you are and what the purpose of the intervention is. This should be done in a way which does not make the child feel ashamed or guilty. There are numerous ways you can explain your role and the purpose of the assessment and this will depend upon the child's age, their developmental functioning and the nature of the instructions. Your explanations could include phrases such as:

- *“I see and help lots of children where there have been worries or problems in the family....”*  
*[Pause]*

This conveys the message that you are experienced and they are not the only child / family with a problem. If you pause after this initial statement many young children will fill in, describing what has happened to them or their family. You could then proceed with:

- *“... problems like (insert relevant concerns such as fighting, arguments between parents, bad dreams, children getting hurt by grown ups, children who have had touches that are not OK, a daddy having to leave the family”*

Alternative phrases to could include:

- *“... when children and families who have worries and problems about... (getting drunk, people taking drugs / medication , people getting angry, people losing their temper, the grown ups getting ill and finding it hard to look after their children,*
- *“... when parents and other grown ups are worried about their children”*
- *“...when parents and other grown ups are worried about a child's behaviour / about them being sad / angry / mixed up inside” etc*
- *“...when children are being called names by someone or bullied and feel upset or scared”*
- *“... when children have been hurt by someone and has to go to hospital / get bruises ”*
- *“... when children are not be looked after or cared for properly (or specifically... when they do not have enough food to eat ... do not have enough clothes to keep them warm ... hurt themselves ... are left alone ... are allowed to stay out on their own at night without an adult making sure they are safe .... or left become ill)*
- *“... when children have been sexually abused by someone”*
- *“... when someone in the family has been touched in their privates by a grown up”*

- *“... when someone has touched a child on their privates”*
- *“... when families have problems about someone in the family giving children Not OK touches (or sexually abusing someone)”*

Pause again. Many children often volunteer their own problems at this point, sometimes bringing up issues not known to you. By listing several problems, including the reason for their attendance, it gives the message that other children and families have problems in their lives and that you are experienced and used to helping such families. However you need to ensure you do not overwhelm the child with too big a list and ensure that the words avoid defining the child as a problem. Further that you do not communicate any negativity towards any parent / carer or other significant person, in case the child still retains strong positive feelings towards them. Clearly you need to adapt the words you use according to the child's age and understanding and to reflect any words that the child has been told in respect to the problems.

You could then enquire whether his or her family have any problems such as these. Where the concerns have been acknowledged or identified by the family you could go on to confirm your knowledge of events in the family. You could use a phrase such as:

- *“mummy has told me of some problems in the family and that she wants the family to get some help with”* (assuming this is true)

A phrase such as this can reinforce the ‘family’ nature of the problem and help move it away from ‘the child’s problem’. It can also serve to reinforce their parent’s control over the process and that you are seeing them because “mum thinks we need help”. You could then continue by naming the specific problem that has led to the child and their parent / carer seeking help. Phrases you could use could include:

- *“Mummy (or daddy) has told me about the touching problems (or whatever the identified concerns are) that have happened in the family”*
- *“Mummy (or daddy) has told me about the Not Ok touching (or other identified concerns) that have happened”*
- *“Mummy has told me about daddy giving you touches that are Not OK”*
- *“Mummy has told me about fighting that happened between mummy and daddy”*
- *“Mummy told me that daddy (or vice versa) has had to move out of the family because people are worried about him hurting (touching etc) someone”*
- *“Your mum has told me about the sexual abuse (or the sexual touching problem) that has happened in your family (or specifically “that has happened to you”)*
- *“...mummy and daddy have told me about them having problems with (drink, drugs, keeping their temper, looking after the children properly etc)”*

Again you need to adapt these phrases to fit the age and understanding of the child and to reflect words that might already have been used with them and, where possible, have been agreed with their parent. You should pause again at this point to allow the child to add any comments and to agree or disagree with you. You could also at this point check out with their parent / carer whether they agree with this or add anything. These types of sentences can open up the opportunity to note how their parent is also seeing someone. For example:

- *“Mummy and daddy have been seeing someone to get help with this family problem too (or talk about this problem). My colleague (or you) is seeing her when you are at school to talk about the family problems. They talk with workers about what has happened. They talk about their feelings, learn why it happened, how it happened and learn ways to make sure that it does not happen again”*

You can then make individualise these statements by referring to their mother’s wish for them to get help. For example:

- *“Your mummy / daddy wanted someone to help you too. She wanted to make sure you got help with these problems too so that everyone in the family can work together to make sure it does not happen again”*
- *“Mummy / daddy have been going to see someone to get help now she wants someone to help you. And that’s my job”*

You can then move to defining your role and the purpose of the sessions. Phrases you could use include:

- *“My job is to find out about the worries and problems in families so that I can help with any problems”*
- *“A person called (insert name of person doing the parallel parent assessment, or say you if you are also doing this) is talking you your mummy and daddy about the worries and to find out about your family*
- *My job is to get to know you. I will ask questions about your school, your hobbies, the things you like to do, your family and about any worries and problems you have.*
- *“My job is to make sure that you have say about the worries and problems (or the worries that other people have). I will write these down and make sure people know what you think”*

Where the child is aware of ongoing court proceedings and has had conversations with their parent, carer, social worker or Guardian about the Judge and the Court you could use this to assist with introductions. For example, after clarifying whether they are aware of the court and the judge you could explain how mummy, daddy and the social worker are going to see the Judge, who has to do some deciding about where the child should live or what help their parents need to make sure the child is safe. You could then add:

- *“The wise Judge has asked that I see you to find out what you think. S/he wants to know about how you are doing at school, what activities you like to do, what it is like to live in*

*your family and about any problems or worries you have. I will write all these down and will give it to the Judge”*

You also need to inform the child about what will happen in the sessions. For example:

- *“My job is the worker. When you come here to see me we might play part of the time and work part of the time. There will be ‘time for you’ to play games, talk, draw, paint or do some of the things you like. There will also be ‘time for me’ when we do some work’*
- *“When we do work it won’t be all talking. We will do drawing, reading, playing”.*

With teenagers you can introduce the same concepts, referring to how it will not all be talking but they will complete worksheets, use workbooks and other activities that will help them understand what has happened and how you will work on problems together about how to cope with and manage the feelings they might be having as a result of the abuse.

The child or young person would also benefit from knowing some of the topics you will be doing in the sessions. A useful way to do this is to construct an ecomap drawing showing the different areas you might look at, which is described in the activity section below. It is important this is personalised to the child’s assessed needs and does merely repeat the areas of the manual.

It will be important for the child to know the limits of confidentiality with regards to what is told to their parent and to counter the atmosphere of secrecy that might have developed in the family. For example:

- *“. We do not keep secrets in this room about what we do or talk about”. There may be some things we talk about that you are not ready to share with your mum right away and we will tell her that we have something to say after we have done more work”*
- *“If during our time together you tell me something about a child that could be in danger, or who is being hurt, I will need to tell your mum (and /or ) talk to other adults such as social worker or the police”*
- *“If you tell me about a child who has been hurt and the adults do not know about it I will also need to tell people”*
- *“If you give me information to suggest that another child has been abused or is being abused I will have to report it to social services and the police”*

Once the key issues regarding the reasons for the work, who you are and issues of confidentiality have been discussed, the parent could then leave you and the child for the rest of the session. This provides a good opportunity for you to spend some rapport time with the child. Useful activities to undertake during this period include encouraging the child decorate their folder and to make, draw or colour a feelings a feelings box. This can be accompanied by general conversation about their interests, school etc as part of the rapport building process (see later sections).

### **What if the parent / caregivers are not supportive of the assessment?**

When undertaking the types of discussions described in the previous section facilitators must be mindful about how to handle such discussions if the child or young person is still residing with an adult about whom there are concerns, or with whom they have regular contact, particularly where there are suspicions that the child may be subject to or at continued risk of grooming, abuse, manipulation or is at risk of being 'shut down' by an adult. You must also be sensitive to the child's emotional wellbeing and seek to minimise any significant distress, especially if a child has previously displayed post-traumatic, depressive or risk taking symptoms. Examination of the case papers and pre-assessment interviews with professionals and carers will be helpful here.

Of course some parents who do not really want their child to get such help or are anxious about the work (for a variety of reasons) and they might not have not asked for help in the way described above. This will become apparent at the preparatory meetings with the parent and child or in the parallel assessment sessions with the parents. If the causes of concern have not been confirmed or are refuted by a parent then you need to adapt these phrases to reflect this. For example you could explain to the child that sometimes grown ups such as teachers, doctors, neighbours, social workers and the police are told (or are worried) that a child is being hurt /not being looked after properly/ unhappy / hurt / not safe etc. They could explain that when this happens a grown up has to go and speak to the child's parents and also to the child to make sure they are safe / OK. Sometimes the grown ups find out that everything at home is OK. Sometimes they find out that there are some problems at home and that the child and their parents need some help. Sometimes they have to make sure the child does not get hurt / is safe.

In situations where there is concern that the parent(s) or caregiver is likely to undermine the work, or where the child is not currently living with their parent due to the concerns it might be necessary to undertake these explanations about the assessment without the parent present. However it is advisable to undertake the initial introductions in the presence of their current caregiver or with someone they know, trust and who is likely to be protective (social worker, teacher etc).

The topics discussed above could be undertaken by means of simply talking to the child or young person with their parent / carer. You might prefer to undertake these conversations in the context of a general activity such as playing cared, looking through any toys in the room or via a focused activity such as described below. Some workers prefer to continue the conversation about the purpose of the sessions and discuss boundaries and rules immediately after the parent or carer has left. However you need to remember the guidance about using a 'time for you / time for me approach', as discussed in the previous chapter 'Guidance relating to communicating with children'. It might be sensible to begin your individual time with the child with a period of rapport. This could include playing a game, drawing or for older children initiating non-intrusive questions about their interests, school, what they were doing at the weekend etc. Some of the activities described in the later section 'All about me' could be used at this stage. You will need to make your own judgement

based on the presentation of the child. However it is still important to spend some focused time re-visiting the reasons for the assessment with the child alone, while issues are fresh in their mind.

## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

### **Key questions to ask and issues to explore during the activities could include:**

- Why do you think you are seeing me today?
- What have you been told about seeing me?
- Who told you? What did they say?
- Why do other people think you should see me?
- What does xxx think about me seeing you?
- When did you know you were coming to see me?
- What did you think about this?
- What do think we were going to talk about or do today?
- How did you feel when you woke up this morning (or in the car on the) way here and you knew you were coming to see me today. (This may be a good opportunity to the rating scale to measure their anxiety of fears – e.g. on a scale of 0 to 10, 0 = not worried (or scared) and 10 = the most worried you could be. For younger children you could give them a variety of responses to choose from such as not worried, a little worried, a lot worried or very, very worried.

### **ACTIVITY                      WHY I AM SEEING YOU**

Goal: To explain the purpose of the work to the child and ascertain their perceptions

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages (Where appropriate with parent / carer).

Guidance: Read the following sections of the Practice Document:

- 'Helping the parent prepare the child for the sessions' (in chapter 5)
- 'Conducting the initial interview with the child and parent' (in chapter 5)
- 'The first session – setting the scene' (in chapter 7)

Materials: Worksheets No. 1, 2 & 6; pens & paper

#### Instructions

This activity can be used to structure your discussion around why you are seeing the child. One way to discuss and explore the child's perceptions about attending is to undertake an ecomap style drawing entitled 'Why I am seeing you'. This involves writing this as a title on a piece of A4 paper, drawing a selection of circles or shapes on the page and recording the child's views inside these

shapes. Drawing a number of shapes prompts the child to think of more than one reason. When the child has run out of ideas you can then ask their parent for their views about why their child is coming, recording this with a different coloured pen. This activity often engages children in discussion much easier than just conversation and also provides a visual aid to the discussions. A basic template has been provided in the worksheet quoted above. Questions you could use as prompts include:

Child

- *Tell me some of the reasons you think you are coming to see me?*
- *What have you been told about why you are coming to see me today?*
- *What did mummy / daddy (or others) tell you about why you were coming to see me?*

Parent / carer (in front of child, but after preparation with them away from the child)

- *Have you told (the child) about why I want to spend some time with him/her?*
- *What did you say?*
- *What questions might s/he have about seeing me*
- *What questions do you think s/he might have about events in the family?*
- *What problems or worries do you think the family / child need help with?*

The questions about what help the parent thinks the child needs often prompts the child to agree with these or to offer some of their own questions and thoughts. After the parent has answered ask the following types of questions of the child

- *What do you think about what mum says about the help you need / questions you need answered?*
- *Do you agree with them?*
- *What questions do you think you need answers to?*
- *What help do you think you / the family might need?*

See also the phrases and questions outlined in the sections 'Helping the parent prepare the child for the sessions' (in chapter 5); 'Conducting the initial interview with the child and parent' (in chapter 5); 'The first session – setting the scene' (in chapter 7)

Whilst you should not expect too many answers from the child at this stage, children often do give some important information about their anxieties, confusions and agendas via this exercise. Ensure you note them, praise the child for their work and state that you will be helping them with these questions / issues. This ensures that the child's wishes and agendas are heard and that the sessions address the child's agendas. You can then proceed to using some of the phrases suggested earlier to explain who you are and the purpose of the work. Worksheet 2 can assist with this (should edit it if not all the modules are thought appropriate)

**ACTIVITY**

**RULES & BOUNDARIES**

Goal: To construct a list of rules and boundaries to help develop trust and safety;

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages. Adaptive versions might be needed for young children or children with learning difficulties

Materials: Worksheet No. 2, flipchart paper

Instructions

Introduce the exercise by telling the child that a good way to begin working together is to construct some essential rules and boundaries to ensure that you and the child stay safe and that you both know what to expect from each other and from the sessions. Encourage the child to think about some basic rules and boundaries for the sessions. There are a variety of ways you could do this:

- word-storm fashion, writing down what the child says
- encouraging the child to write them in a list
- drawing them on an ecomap style drawing
- encouraging the child to do draw symbols or pictures to represent the different rules (e.g. picture of a child breaking a toy with a cross through it to show no breaking of toys allowed)
- worksheet No 3

The activity is designed to engage the child whilst you discuss these issues and should result in a document or picture that records the rules and boundaries in a way that the child understands and which can be placed in their working file and shared with their parent. This will then be reviewed at the beginning of each session. It is best to start with the child's thoughts and ideas before suggesting any of your own and wherever possible try and use the child's words and support any ideas they have for how would like them to be written or drawn. A simple approach is just to ask the child to list some rules they would like in the sessions. However you could prompt them to think about the issues by asking questions such as:

- *What rules will help you feel safe in the sessions.*
- *What rules do you think adults will want?*
- *What rules would your mum want?*
- *What would not like to happen in the session?*
- *What things do they think are going to be difficult?*
- *What rules do you have at school? Which ones of these should we have?*
- *What rules do you have at home? What ones of these should we have?*
- *Would you feel safe if someone walked into the room without knocking*
- *Would it be a safe place if people lost their temper in the session?*
- *What about rules about hurting?*
- *What about rules about touching? What types of touching are OK?*

You need to ensure the following issues are addressed:

- **Confidentiality** & sharing of information with parents / other professionals. This must be explained clearly and needs to include issues such as how information is recorded, passed on and to whom.
- **Parent involvement** - details of how their parent might be included in some of the sessions and arrangements to feedback important information to the parent
- **Safeguarding / child protection procedures** - this needs to include clear statements of the need to discuss with their parents and/or professionals any information that suggests that they or another child is unsafe, at risk or being hurt in some way.
- **Storage of information** – inform the child about where any written work or pictures will be kept, including explanations about their work book and where you keep any notes or pictures you have (some children need to know they will be kept in a locked cabinet)
- **Behaviours** - You must make clear about what types of behaviour are not appropriate or acceptable in the sessions. You need to consider, discuss and make clear any expectations and rules about swearing **at** someone, name-calling, threats, physical violence, and any sexual behaviours or touching (see note below). You must also spell out to the child what action will be if he uses inappropriate behaviour toward you (e.g. ending session, calling someone for assistance, reporting to parent and other persons). Boundaries such as these can feel very containing for the child.
- **Physical safety** - In addition to rules about no violence you need to reinforce to the child that it is your job to make sure the child does not get hurt during the session and will intervene or stop the session if you think the child is doing something dangerous (e.g. throwing things around the room or hanging out of a window!)
- **Emotional safety** – Whilst later activities will focus more specifically on strategies to help the child handle any difficult emotions but at this stage you need to inform the child that you will help the child if they feel upset at any time and will help them think of ways they can keep themselves emotionally safe)
- **Practicalities** – This includes details about timing, duration and frequency of sessions, toilet facilities and arrangements for refreshments etc.
- **Accountability.** It is good practice to have available a written complaints procedure to give to the young person. He should be made fully aware of how to complain if he feels that he has not been treated well by you. It is an extremely good building block of your work together, to inform the young person that you are accountable to others and that high standards of behaviour are to be expected from you.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of some of the rules and boundaries that might be included:

- no hurting each other
- no touching of each other on any private parts of the body
- all feelings are OK

- Its OK to be upset or angry
- No breaking of toys or damaging the room
- Ask if you need to leave the room (explaining that an adult would need to be with them if they leave the room, toilet excepted)
- \*\* (worker) and \*\* (child) will meet for one and half hours every week. This will include a break for a drink and biscuits.
- \*\* (worker) will talk to mum before every session to find out how things are going at home since the last session
- Sometimes \*\* (worker) and \*\* (child) will share what they have been doing in the session with mum / dad / carer but \*\* (worker) will always talk with \*\* (child) about what information will be shared or discussed beforehand.
- If \*\* tells \*\* about them or another child being hurt, unsafe, or in danger then this might need to be shared with mum and your social worker to help them think about how to keep people safe (the exact words will of course depend upon the child's age and development).

Once the activity and discussion is complete if the rules are not in a clear and attractive format you should seek to put this in a form that can be kept on the child's working file (a list, a chart or a pictorial representation done by you and / or the child. This should be dated and shared with the parent. Remember: You should revisit the list of rules and boundaries at the beginning of each session and ask the child if they want anything added or changed.

## **ACTIVITY**

## **SUPPORT CHART**

Goal: To identify key persons who can support the child outside of sessions during the course of the work; to promote the concept of a helping team around the child who will share information and work together to help the child

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages. Adaptive versions might be needed for young children or children with learning difficulties

Materials: Worksheets 3 & 4

### Instructions

Tell the child / young person that you are going to explore how s/he might be supported in this work in the times in between the sessions. Explain that this is important because some of the work that you do together may raise some feelings that would be easier to deal with if someone was at hand to talk to or to answer any questions s/he might have. It is important to state that whilst family members and friends would want to offer support, this Support Chart is also about people such as their social worker, teacher, support worker and others whom the child is in frequent and regular contact and feels able to talk to. Complete the chart together (example below). Tell the child / young person that you will need to discuss the contents of the chart with the relevant people listed and seek their agreement. Wherever possible, include such people as the young person's

parent, other relatives, social worker, designated school professional, or support worker when completing the chart.

This chart should be shared with the child's non-offending parent and their views and thoughts sought and noted. It is important that the support network is realistic and includes people that would be available if the preferred person is not or in different settings. You need to ensure that the identified person's are safe individuals and does not include any known or suspected offender.

## **ACTIVITY                      RATING SCALE**

Goals: to assess the child's feelings and level of anxiety

Suitable for: all children who understand the concept of scales and numbers

Materials: pen and paper

### Instructions

This activity can be used throughout the programme to assess a child's feelings and reactions to issues. At this early stage of the work it can be used to help the child communicate their feelings about attending the session. Draw a picture of a 0 to 10 scale (a line with numbers, a ruler, or thermometer). Choose a feeling to assess how they might have been feeling about coming (e.g. worried, anxious, nervous or scared etc). If using the concept of being worried for example you could demonstrate how a 0 = 'not worried', 10 = 'the most worried you can be' and the numbers in between represent different grades of the feeling. Ask them to rate their feelings about coming to see you today or about the work. For younger children you could give them a variety of responses to choose from such as 'not worried', 'a little worried', 'a lot worried' or 'very, very worried'. Questions you could ask could include:

- *Tell me why you have chosen this number?*
- *How did you feel when you woke up this morning (or in the car on the way here) and you knew you were coming to see me today?*
- *How did you feel just before you met.?*
- *How do you feel now?"*
- *What would happen if this feeling reached a 10 (ask the same for other feelings)*
- *What would I see if it reached a 10? How would you show this feeling? (It is useful to ask their parent if they are still in the session*

## **ACTIVITY                      QUESTION BOX**

Goals: to provide a way for the child to ask questions in an indirect way at the end of each session

Suitable for: all ages

Materials: an empty box with a slit in the lid; pens

### Instructions

The question box allows children to write questions that they might have but which they felt unable to ask you directly. This needs to be looked at the end of each session and answered at the beginning of the next sessions. In the first session ask the child to decorate the box and explain its use and bring to every session.

## **ACTIVITY**

## **FEELINGS ABOUT TODAY'S SESSION WORKSHEET**

Goals: to provide another way for the child to record their thoughts and feelings about the session, which can be used at the end of each session; to introduce the child to the concepts of worksheets and assess their ability to utilise this approach; an initial indication of the child's emotional language

Suitable for: all ages

Materials: worksheet 5

### Instructions

This worksheet can be used at the end of every session and is an alternative or supplement to the feelings tree. Show the child this at the end of the session and ask them to complete or record for them. Use this activity to assess the child's understanding of feelings words, their writing ability, their concentration and also to assess their recognition of colour. Place in their file.

## All about me

### Rationale

This part of the assessment is primarily aimed at developing a rapport with the child, obtaining basic information about them and providing you with useful information to assess the way they function in the sessions and the types of activities or approaches they might like to use in later work. It is useful to begin the assessment by exploring non-controversial and non-threatening information about the child's current world, seeking basic biographical details or information about the child's interests, hobbies and schooling etc. These details will also assist with your assessment of the child's developmental functioning, help maintain a child-focus to the sessions and can give valuable insights into the child's self-perception, self-esteem and their social world. The key is to have a relaxed but purposeful discussion and not interrogate the child.

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Care</li> <li>• Emotional warmth</li> <li>• stimulation</li> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

### ACTIVITY

### ALL ABOUT ME WORKSHEET

Goals: To build rapport with the child; to engage the child in non-threatening conversations; to find out basic information about the child;

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages. Some might need assistance with writing.

Materials: Worksheet No. 7

Instructions

Prior to the activity you need to have ascertained the child's reading and writing skills. Ask the child to complete the worksheet, or if they are unable to do so, you can act as their helper or secretary. Sitting next to the child and assisting them can help rapport. Do not overburden the child with questions whilst they complete the worksheet and allow silences, perhaps punctuated with the odd supportive and reassuring comment. Help the child get used to a relaxed but supportive atmosphere. After the child has finished the activity practice discussing and reviewing their responses (this will get them used to this process which you will continue to use throughout the later activities). Ask them a variety of questions about what they have written. This not only helps establish dialogue but the use of different types of questions will help you ascertain what styles of questions and types of words and phrases elicit the best responses from the child. Examples of some questions are:

- *Do you like your name?*
- *Do you have a middle name?*
- *Are there any other people in your family with the same name?*
- *What is the best / worst thing about your school?*
- *Tell me about your teacher / favourite teacher?*
- *Who do you do these activities / hobbies with?*
- *What makes him / her your best friend?*
- *What things do you like to do together?*
- *What is your favourite television programme?*
- *Who is the biggest / tallest / oldest / youngest child in your family?*

You can expand these enquiries to follow and explore any topics raised by the child (remember to listen to and follow their agenda). Whilst this activity might raise important factual information the main purpose is one of engagement and it should be done in an enquiring and light-hearted way which conveys to the child that you are interested in them. Some children and young people immediately ask if you want them to write about the abuse or events that have happened in the family. Let them know that they will have a chance to discuss these things at a later date, although if they want to discuss these things now they can. It is important not to push the child / adolescent at this point and allow them to feel in control of what they talk about or reveal. Note which questions the child or young person is too hesitant to answer, or if they show signs of anxiety. Do not attempt to push them or be too inquisitive of these at this point.

## **ACTIVITY**

## **THIS IS ME**

Goals: To assist with rapport; to find out how the child views his / herself

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages.

Materials: Worksheet No. 8 & 13

Instructions

Ask the child to draw a picture of him / herself. The child might require encouragement. Avoid telling the child what to draw or drawing attention to aspects of the picture that are missing and emphasise that they are not being judged on their drawing abilities. After the child has finished the activity ask them to tell you about the drawing. It is sometimes useful to ask them to write comments on the picture or you can do this for them, although this is not crucial. This activity is important to do as you will ask them to do another picture at the end of the programme and the comparison in how they see themselves will be useful. Questions you could use to facilitate further information could include:

- *Tell me about your picture (Allow them to make their own comments before asking any specific questions.)*
- *How do you feel about yourself in this picture?*
- *What are you feeling in this picture?*
- *What are you thinking in this picture? (You could use thought bubbles here to introduce this concept which you might use in later drawings).*
- *How old are you in this picture?*
- *What do you like / dislike about yourself in this picture?*
- *If you described the person in this picture to someone you did not know (an alien?) what would you say?*
- *Would you like the person in this picture to be different in any way?*

You can expand these enquiries to follow and explore any topics raised by the child (remember to listen to and follow their agenda). Whilst this activity might raise important information about how the child sees him or herself it also serves the purpose of assisting with engagement and it should be done in an enquiring and light-hearted way which conveys to the child that you are interested in them.

## **ACTIVITY                      A COLLAGE OF ME**

Goals: To assist with rapport; to help the child express views about him or herself in via a creative medium; to find out how the child views his / herself

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages. Good for children with low self esteem who do not like or fear their drawing attempts.

Materials: various magazines / pictures that be cut up, large sheet of paper, scissors, glue and pens

### Instructions

Encouraging the child to make a collage about his/her self is often a more creative, fun and less threatening way to get them to express feelings and thoughts about themselves. Tell the child that they are going to make a collage of him / herself. Encourage them to think about him/her self and then look through the pictures and magazines and select and cut out any pictures, words or phrases that remind them of themselves. When they have done this get them to arrange these on

the large sheet of paper and glue them down in any way s/he likes. After the child has finished the activity ask them to tell you about the collage. Questions you could use to facilitate further information could include:

- *Tell me about your collage* (Allow them to make their own comments before asking any specific questions)
- *Tell me about this part of the collage (go through each section)*
- *How does this remind you of your self?*
- *Which part of the collage do you like best?*
- *What part of the collage do you like least?*
- *How do you feel about yourself when looking at this collage?*
- *Would you like the collage to have different pictures or words in it?*

### **ACTIVITY**

### **ALL ABOUT ME UNFINISHED SENTENCES WORKSHEET**

Goals: To build rapport with the child; to engage the child in non-threatening conversations; to find out basic information about the child; to assess the child's use of therapeutic methods

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages. Older children and adolescents can fill in the sheet themselves. Some prefer you to write their answers in. Younger children and children with learning difficulties often do better when you read the beginning of the sentence out and ask them to finish the sentence. However for younger children start sentences beginning with 'I' such as "I wish ...." They can answer the question as if they were thinking about what you might wish for. For young children it is therefore suggested that the sentences begin with the child's name.

Materials: Worksheet No. 9

#### Instructions

Ask the child to complete the worksheet, or if they are unable to do so, you can act as their helper or secretary. After the child has finished the activity help them process their responses.

### **ACTIVITY**

### **MY 3 WISHES**

Goals: To allow the child to express any key wishes, hopes or agendas at an early stage in the work;

Suitable for: Any age child. Young children might need you to write for them or they can use the adapted versions of this exercise.

Materials: Worksheet No. 10. Magic wand can be used as an alternative.

#### Instructions

Ask the child to write or draw a picture of their 3 most important wishes. Alternatively use a magic wand. This activity can uncover some important information about how the child sees their current situation, their hopes, worries and dreams. It can also sometimes give clues to a child's sense of powerlessness, hopelessness, their underlying emotional state or their sense of pain. Questions you could use to facilitate further information could include:

- *Tell me about this wish?*
- *What do you think about this wish?*
- *What do you feel about this wish?*
- *What do think might need to happen for this wish to come true?*
- *What would other people in your family think about this wish* (naming specific family members)

This activity can often provide opportunities again for you and the child to discuss the reasons behind the sessions. For example a wish about wanting dad to return to the family might lead you to ask '*what have you been told about why dad is not living with you*' or indirectly via asking the child what other people think about this wish. It is possible that such an activity can lead the child to relate information relating to any abuse-related circumstances. If this occurs allow the child to relate their agenda and demonstrate interest but do not respond with too many questions or enquiries at this stage.

If the child accompanies this activity with questions about whether you think their wishes will happen (e.g. accompanying a wish such as 'for dad to come home and for us all to be a happy family again) you need to be cautious against giving the child any false information or false hopes. You should acknowledge their feelings for any wish, that it is very important to them, perhaps acknowledging this muddle and stating that you will be looking at this issue together later on in the sessions. You could ask the child what they think about this wish, or what the views of other people in their family are. You need to ensure you do not fob the child off and make bland general statements that everything will be OK etc but show the importance of this by stating that they should place it carefully in their file for you to come back again when you have had a chance to do some work on the reasons for this muddle (i.e. why dad is no longer in the family).

## **ACTIVITY                      THINGS I LIKE ABOUT MYSELF**

Goals: To allow the child to consider and express positive statements about him or her self; to find out how the child views his / herself and offer initial information about the child's self-worth;

Suitable for: Any age child. Young children might require you to write for them.

Materials: Worksheet No. 10

### Instructions

Ask the child to write down the things he or she likes about them self. Some children with significant low self-esteem might have difficulties identifying any attributes and might need encouragement and prompting. Allow them to verbalise their difficulty and reflect how hard it is for them. Also allow them to include things that might not be true at this stage. Workers should avoid over doing the praise, as for a child with low self-worth this can result them in not believing or trusting you. It is best in such activities just to reflect what the child has told you. For children who have difficulty identifying any point out some of the positive attributes you have seen in them. Once the activity is complete get the child to read out or you read out each statement to reinforce what

they have written. Ask the child what feelings they had during the activity and about which statement they like best.

## **ACTIVITY IF I COULD CHANGE**

Goals: To explore whether there are things that the child would like to change about themselves or their life; to identify any underlying hopes, anxieties or agendas the child has; to help the child identify some goals that might be able to be addressed in the intervention;

Suitable for: Any age child. Young children might require you to write for them or they can use the adapted versions of this exercise.

Materials: Worksheet No. 20

### Instructions

Ask the child to think about and write or dictate 5 things they would like to change about them self or their world. Children sometimes identify changes they would like other people to make. These should be listened to and respected but you should gently encourage the child to focus on changes in self and not on changes they would like to see other people make. After the child has finished the task you could ask questions such as:

- *Tell me a little bit about each thing you want to change?*
- *What change is the most important?*
- *What needs to happen for these things to change?*
- *Who can help you with these changes?*
- *What might get in the way of these changes happening?*
- *Do you think these changes are possible / will happen?*
- *What would other people in your family say about these changes?*
- *Are there any changes that you think I (i.e. the worker) can help with?*

This list could be used to identify some goals that you, the child and the parent could focus upon in the intervention. These changes (goals) could be used as motivators for future work i.e. depending upon the changes identified; the goals could form a justification for undertaking some of the subsequent modules. For example, if the child was not living at home and identified a wish to go home, the work on understanding what has happened or undertaking protection work could be seen as one of the steps towards achieving this goal. Alternatively a wish to get rid of the bad feelings could be attached to the need to understand why s/he feels how she does and learning ways to cope with these thoughts and feelings. However workers need to be careful not to promise that the work will ensure the child will achieve these goals – false promises are not helpful.

## **ACTIVITY WHAT I WANT TO HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE**

Goals: To encourage the child to identify their wishes, feelings and goals; to identify underlying agendas of the child.

Suitable for: Any age child. Young children might require you to write for them or they can use the adapted versions of this exercise.

Materials: Worksheet No. 22, 23

Instructions

This is similar to the last exercise about changes the child wishes to make. Ask the child to think about and write, draw or dictate some of things they would like to happen in the future. Some of these might not be realistic, attainable or possible but it is important to give the child a chance to identify them. After the child has finished the task you could ask questions such as:

- *Tell me a little bit about each thing you want to happen?*
- *What one is most important?*
- *How can this thing happen?*
- *Who can make these things happen?*
- *What might get in the way of these things happening?*
- *Do you think these changes will happen?*
- *What would other people in your family say about these changes?*

Similar to the last activity, this list could be used to identify some goals that you, the child and the parent could focus upon in the intervention. These changes (goals) could be used as motivators for future work i.e. depending upon the changes identified; the goals could form a justification for undertaking some of the subsequent modules. Once again workers need to be careful not to promise that these events will happen.

## My Feelings

### Rationale

An important part of an assessment is to assess how the child expresses, understands and manages their emotions. Young children are likely to have a very limited language around feelings – when asked how they feel they often respond with a few basic emotions – however if you ask them what they are thinking you often get a more detailed response that gives you indications about their underlying emotional states. What is important is to develop an individualised understanding as to how this child experiences and manages different emotional states. Do they have a language for and informed understanding of emotions? How do they experience different emotions? How do they show their emotions? What do they think about different types of emotions – do they see them as normal, natural, strength or a weakness? How do they manage these? What are their self-soothing or coping mechanisms? How do other people react to their emotions? What messages do they get from others about different emotional states? What feelings or emotions are not being met appropriately? Clearly most of this information will come from the family or school. However it is still useful to have a discussion with the child about how they cope with different emotions as their responses can sometimes be surprising and illuminating. This type of information not only gives useful information about emotional literacy and emotional regulation, but may also provide important clues as to what basic emotional needs are not being met and what unmet needs may be fuelling their problematic behaviours (i.e. what unmet need was being met through their behaviour?)

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Care</li> <li>• Emotional warmth</li> <li>• stimulation</li> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>

### ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

**Key questions to ask and issues to explore during these activities could include:**

- What words does the child use for different feelings?
- What things make you most angry? What do you do with your anger in these situations?
- How do your mum / dad react in these situations? Others?
- How do others know when you are angry?
- What is your saddest memory?
- How do others know when you are sad?
- What is your happiest memory? Why?
- How old were you the first time someone close was ill / died (perhaps use a memory of an animal first)? How did you cope?
- What do you do to make yourself feel better?
- Repeat these questions for other types of feelings states such as loneliness, jealousy, fear, boredom, stress, anxiety etc depending on what emotions the child has identified they know
- In all activities / worksheets and exercises used in other parts of the assessment, continuously ask questions about feelings and attach feelings faces to these pictures as a way of getting the child used to this type of discussion

## **ACTIVITY**

## **FEELINGS CHARTS & FEELINGS DRAWINGS**

Goals: To assess the child's emotional literacy skills; to help the child identify different types of feelings to assist with communication about emotions both in and outside of sessions; to develop a common terminology between the child, worker and parent about feelings to assist with later work; to familiarise the child with concepts and work ideas that can be utilised in later work topics.

Suitable for: Young children and children who are emotionally immature or emotionally illiterate. Adolescents could also undertake many of these activities although some might find it too immature for them and might benefit from the other activities or direct conversation.

Materials: Worksheet No's 24 42. Use any feelings books and feelings materials you have available (see book list).

### Instructions

There are numerous worksheets, feelings charts and feelings-related games to assist in your work on this area. They are too numerous to describe individually and workers should spend time before the module deciding which specific activities might be best suited for the child. One option, which helps the child feel a sense of control over the work, is show the child the various worksheets and let them choose the ones they would like to try in the session. The types of questions you could use with these worksheets could include:

- *Tell me about this feeling?*
- *What do think about this feeling?*
- *Tell me about a time when you have had this feeling?*
- *When was the last time you had this feeling?*

- *How often do you get this feeling?*
- *What do you do when you have this feeling?*
- *How do you know when you have this feeling?*
- *How does this feeling show itself?*
- *How do you act when you have this feeling?*
- *Where in the body do you feel this feeling?*
- *What does your head (or brain) tell you when you have this feeling?*
- *What thoughts in your head cause you to have these feelings?*
- *Which feeling do you most like?*
- *Which feeling do you not like?*
- *How often do you have this feeling?*
- *Which picture / worksheet was easiest for you to do? Why?*
- *Which picture / worksheet was hardest for you to do (or made you feel most uncomfortable)? Why?*
- *What does your mum/dad/other family members do when you have these feelings*
- *What worksheet / feeling chart (if any) would be helpful for you to use when we discuss feelings in later sessions*
- *Are there any worksheets or charts that you could use at home to help you let other people know how you are feeling?*
- *Which one shall we give to mum (or other family member) at the end of the session to practice using with you*

## **ACTIVITY                      FEELINGS COLLAGE**

**Goals:** To encourage the child / young person to think about and identify different feelings in a creative and non-threatening way

**Suitable for:** All children

**Materials:** various magazines / pictures that be cut up, large sheet of paper, scissors, glue and pens

### **Instructions**

Ask the child / young person to think about the various feelings and experiences they have had. Tell him / her that they are going to make a collage of their feelings. Encourage them to keep these feelings in mind as they look through the magazines and pictures and cut out any words, phrases or pictures that they associate with these feelings. It is recommended that you keep them focused on selecting and cutting the pictures before arranging them on the collage as this will keep them focused on their feelings states. When they have finished cutting ask them to arrange the cut out pieces on a large piece of paper and glue them down. After the child has finished the activity ask them to tell you about the collage. Questions you could use to facilitate further information could include:

- *Tell me about your collage* (Allow them to make their own comments before asking any specific questions.)
- *Tell me about the different feelings expressed?*
- *Tell me about this part of the collage* (go through each section)
- *Which part of the collage do you like best?*
- *What part of the collage do you like least?*
- *How do you feel when looking at this collage?*
- *Would you like the collage to have different pictures or words in it? What?*

## **ACTIVITY: COLOUR YOUR FEELINGS**

**Goals:** To help the child try out alternative ways to explore their feeling states; to demonstrate that people often can have multiple and contradictory feelings about an event (which will be useful when they later discuss the confusing feelings they might have about an offender or the non-offending parent).

**Suitable for:** All children. Some younger will find the concept a little difficult to grasp and might need assistance.

**Materials:** worksheets No. 30, coloured pens and paper; a pattern book can be a useful alternative

### **Instructions**

Ask the child / young person to make a list of different types of feelings they have and make a colour key of these feelings). Draw a pattern outline on the paper (e.g. a grid that contains sections that can be coloured in or use worksheet 30). Tell them that this pattern represents the child / young person. Ask the person to think about a recent event in their lives (or 'something that has happened to you in the last week). Tell them they are going to show all these feelings by colouring in the pattern with the colours represented by the feelings. Let the person know he/she may have more than one or many feelings at the same time. The stronger the feelings, the more of this colour should be used on the grid. For example if they had lots of angry feelings this should be the predominant colour on the grid, and less strong feelings should cover less of the grid. It is best if you demonstrate the activity first, using a hypothetical example of how to complete the exercise e.g. how someone may have felt if they had been burgled or had a minor crash in a car. You need to demonstrate how someone can have more than one feeling about an event. You can then ask them to show all the different feelings they had about the event they were thinking of by colouring in the grid.

- *How many different feelings did you / do you have about this event?*
- *Tell me about this feeling* (selecting a particular colour)
- *What was the biggest / strongest feeling you had?*
- *What was the smallest weakest feeling you had?*

The learning point of this exercise is to emphasise that an event can cause someone to have a lot of different feelings at the same time. Whilst this can cause people to be confused and muddled,

having lots of different feelings is normal and to be expected. You can also explore how the strength and presence of different feelings change over time. This activity can be particularly useful at a later date when you attempt to identify and explore the different and sometimes contradictory and confusing feelings a child has about abuse. For some children the presence of different feelings can lead to feelings of guilt and they need to understand that it is OK and natural to have a variety of different reactions to the events.

## **ACTIVITY** **FEELINGS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE**

Goals: To explore how the child feels inside and presents him or herself to others; to introduce the child to the concept of internal and external feelings; to convey to the child your awareness that people often try to keep their feelings hidden; to introduce the child to an activity that might be of use in later sessions when exploring coping mechanisms, unexpressed emotional states and looking at the child's self-concept.

Suitable for: All children. Some younger will find the concept a little difficult to grasp and might need assistance.

Materials: pens, paper or preferably card.

### Instructions

Fold some paper in half like a card. Suggest that the child / young person draws a picture of himself/herself on the outside of the card the way he/she thinks everyone sees him/her. This should give clues about their perception of their public image, or how they would like people to see them. Then suggest the person draws a picture of him/herself the way he/she feels on the inside and show what is really happening, not just what other people see. This helps express feelings and generates discussion and can be compared with later drawings. Questions you could use to develop and explore this further include:

- *Tell me about the 'outside you' – the you that other people see (or the you like to show people)*
- *What do people see when they see this part of you?*
- *Tell me about the inside you? What is this person like?*
- *What are the feelings you keep inside?*
- *How did you feel doing this card?*
- *Who sees these inside feelings?*
- *How hard is it keeping these feelings inside?*
- *What would happen if you showed these feelings?*
- *How might other people react?*
- *What is the worst thing that could happen if you showed these feelings?*
- *Do you want any help with these feelings?*

## **ACTIVITY** **FEELINGS MASK**

Goals: To explore how the child feels inside and presents him or herself to others; to introduce the child to the concept of internal and external feelings; to convey to the child your awareness that people often try to keep their feelings hidden; to introduce the child to an activity that might be of use in later sessions when exploring coping mechanisms, unexpressed emotional states and looking at the child's self-concept.

Suitable for: Young children might find this activity difficult, although it could be fun. Good for teenagers.

Materials: Two paper plates, glue, ice-cream sticks or gardening sticks, pens or paints.

Instructions

Ask the young person to draw on one of the plates how he or she feels most of the time on the inside. Then ask them to think about how others see him/her on the outside and draw this facial expression on the other plate. Stick the backs of the two plates together, placing the stick between the two plates to act as a holder. After they have completed the activity explore the different feelings they have on the outside and inside. Questions to ask could include:

- *Tell me about the feelings you have drawn on your plates*
- *Which one is the 'inside you'?*
- *Which one is the 'outside you' – the one that other people see?*
- *What do people see when they see this part of you?*
- *Tell me about the inside you? What is this person like?*
- *What makes it difficult to show the inside you?*
- *What are the feelings you keep inside?*
- *Who sees these inside feelings?*
- *How hard is it keeping these feelings inside?*
- *What would happen if you showed these feelings?*
- *How might other people react?*
- *What is the worst thing that could happen if you showed these feelings?*
- *Do you want any help with any of these feelings?*

**ACTIVITY**

**FEELINGS PUPPETS**

Goals: To use a non-threatening way to explore the child's feelings via the safety of play; to help the child learn how to express feelings via use of puppets or toys

Suitable for: Young children mainly but can also be used with teenagers

Materials: papers bags or plain socks, pens, puppets

Instructions

Ask the child to take the paper bags and draw different feeling faces on one side of the bag to show how the puppet feels. Ask them about the feelings or suggest that they act out a play about how these different puppets feel. Sometimes it is worth just doing a play concentrating on one

puppet whilst sometimes using all the different feelings puppets can be useful. Possible questions to ask could include:

- *Tell me about your puppets and how each one is feeling?*
- *Why are they feeling like this?*
- *Which one do you like most? Why?*
- *Which one do you like least (or do not like)? Why?*
- *How could use these puppets to show / express your feelings?*

If the child appears to engage well in the use of puppets you could set the task of making some puppets over the next sessions with cloth or socks. An alternative use of puppets is to use ready made puppets. You could encourage the child to put on a puppet show, suggesting that the child practice using feelings words about the puppets. You could also make suggestions about the characters, for example suggesting that one character is a lonely person, another is scared, and another is strong and powerful. This can be used to explore concepts that you think relate to the child's experience or mirror aspects of their lives in a broad sense. The worker can then ask questions about the feelings and thoughts of each character. Puppets can also be used in direct conversations with children as a facilitative communication tool. For example a puppet who knows a lot about children's problems and worries or knows a lot about children's feelings,. The worker can directly ask these toys to help them find out about the child's feelings. The toy can then whisper responses to the worker's or child's ears, encouraging the child to be the animal's voice. Alternatively the puppet could be used to ask the child questions about feelings or events.

It is tempting to regard such tools as only useful for work with younger children. However they can also be useful for work with teenagers and adults, especially with people who have difficulties verbalising their thoughts or who have communication difficulties. The use of such props can provide opportunities for you and the person you are working with to explore topics through the use of hypothetical, representational or symbolic means. The key difference in the way you use them with teenagers and adults, as compared to their use with children, is the way these props are introduced to the person. Clearly it is important to avoid a condescending approach and it is recommended that they are introduced as an alternative way to explore ideas and to communicate, avoiding the word 'play'. When one of the authors uses them with older people he refers to how some people are talkative or verbal people, whilst other people have a visual brain and like to illustrate their ideas through pictures or the use of props. Their use can dramatically alter the dynamics of an interaction. They can help promote humour; may remove the intensity of constant eye contact often found in formal interviews; and is a form of communication unusual to many adults, thereby reducing the possibility of pre-rehearsed scripts. Such factors can help in breaching the defensiveness and denial inherent in many interviews. You could also use miniature animals and other toys in the same way as using the puppets

## **ACTIVITY**

## **MY DEFENCE SHIELD**

Goals: to provide an initial explanation about coping mechanisms in a child-centred way; to help the child think about some of the coping mechanisms they use when under stress

Suitable for: all children.

Materials: worksheet No. 42

Instructions

This is another way to teach the child about coping mechanisms.

1. Using the worksheet as a reference, refer to the figure in the picture and point to the fire. Ask the child what would happen if this child put their hand in the fire (they will probably refer to getting burnt).
2. Describe how when the hand gets burnt the hand sends a message up to the brain and says *"it hurts, help!"* The clever brain then sends a message back to the hand and says *"Take your hand away"* (You are in effect giving a simple explanation of neurological responses in the body via the transmission of electro-impulses and chemical reactions).
3. Emphasise how the job of the 'clever brain' is to keep this person safe and that the child you are working with also has a clever brain that tries to keep them safe from pain or tries to lessen the pain.
4. Point to the trauma shapes. Explain these as some of the things that might have happened in the life of the child represented in the picture. Give some examples of trauma events that mirror the child you are working with e.g. being hurt, touching, parents splitting up, going into care etc)
5. Explain how these events cause the child to have lots of different feelings (point to the feelings box), some that feel really bad and hurt them. Ask the child at this point for some feelings that the child in the picture might have inside them as a result of these trauma events.
6. Explain that just like with the burnt hand, when someone feels pain inside a message will be sent to the brain (draw a dotted line from the feelings to the brain to show this) about how painful these feelings are. The clever brain then comes up with some ideas and 'tricks' to try and stop the child hurting so much.
7. This is the point when you can note some of the common mechanisms that children can use to deal with their inner pain. For example you could point to the shield around the child, noting that for some children it is like they have invisible force field around them. Some children...
  - a. ... use this force-field to keep people away from them, as the last time they got close to someone they ended up hurting (this can help explain oppositional and fight-type behaviours to others, or flight responses such as withdrawal behaviour or a failure to engage emotionally with someone).

- b. Alternatively the force-field can try and protect the child from feelings, events and situations in their lives – they try and avoid these things affecting them (avoidance behaviours and flight-type behaviours).
  - c. For others the force-field tries to keep their thoughts and feelings buried inside as they might be frightened to show them to others or they might hurt more when they let their feelings out all at once (internalising feelings and behaviours such as withdrawal, depression etc)
  - d. You can also use this to describe behaviours such as self-harm, sexual behaviours, oppositional behaviours etc, reframing these an inappropriate ways the brain has tried to reduce the child's inner pain
8. You can then explore what coping mechanisms the child you are working with might have used in the past. For children who have openly acknowledged their trauma ask them what coping mechanisms they might have used after the trauma.
  9. You can then emphasise how their brain was very clever to come up with these temporary solutions – it helped reduce the pain a little and gave. However where some of these responses are causing problems you need to emphasise how that now that the trauma has stopped (assuming it has) the child can find new ways of coping which do not cause them or others problem. You can explore which coping responses they currently use and which ones cause them some difficulties with their lives and which ones they would like to change (for example a child who has been externalising their anger at their experiences and where this is causing them and others problems can be told that this was one of the easy their brain tried to keep them safe but now they are ready to learn new ways to deal with their anger that would not cause them so many problems.

This activity is an attempt to educate the child about coping responses and prepare the way forward for work on enhancing their coping repertoire. For some children you can use this at this early stage to help plan short-term management strategies. For others it would be too early to undertake this task at this stage and should be left until the later sessions on coping mechanisms. This activity is repeated in a later section and there is no harm repeating it at a later stage.

## Me and My World

### Rationale

This section of the assessment is designed to evaluate the child's social and world and their support networks and identify existing or potential areas of strengths and weaknesses (you may already have this information from earlier work). Assessors should aim to seek information about the child's peer relationships and wider attachments, their interpersonal relationships, their social skills, their hobbies, interests and social outlets and their general level of social competence. The purpose of such enquiries is to help understand the nature, quality & strength of the wider support network and how these may act as potential precipitating, maintaining or protective factors. In addition it can help us identify any other possible sources of exploitation, abuse or negative influences. It also allows us to identify any unmet needs and gain additional insight into how the child perceives or experiences their social world.

In addition assessors should seek to explore the cultural, religious and spiritual beliefs of the child. This is important for so many reasons. It ensures that you consider the child in a holistic way and serves to convey your respect for them and a desire to find out about things that are important to them. It helps you understand their connectedness to other people and the community and may help identify strengths and weaknesses in their support network. It may provide insight into the child's experience of racism or prejudice and highlight significant stressors or contextual factors to their lives. It may provide you with a better understanding of their beliefs, values and attitudes, which in turn may assist your understanding of their responses, their agendas and their behaviours. Further, it may also assist you to understand both their and their family's normative values about issues such as gender, relationships, sex, sexuality; their agendas and fears about the assessment; possible reasons for denial and apparent distortions; and help clarify their perception of you to them. It is vital that assessors ask how issues of culture, religion, racism and oppression affect this particular child and his family and avoid assumptions based upon stereotypes or commonalities. Similar enquiries should be undertaken about issues of disability if this is pertinent for this child / family, as this might give some clues in respect to issues of identity, discrimination and the presence of stressors or strengths.

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Care</li> <li>• Emotional warmth</li> <li>• stimulation</li> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

### **Key questions to ask and issues to explore during these activities could include:**

#### Education

- Tell me about your school? What is it like?
- What school activities, clubs or societies are you involved with?
- What are the teachers like? How do you get on with them?
- How would your teachers describe you?
- How do you spend your time at break times? Who do you spend this with?
- Who are your friends at school? How many? Names? Ages?
- How are you doing at school? Are you towards the top, middle or bottom?
- What schools have you been to before? Reasons for any changes?
- Have you been in any trouble at school?

#### Social Relationships

- Who is your best friend?
- How old is s/he?
- What is their last name?
- How often do you see them? What kinds of things do you do together?
- What kind of things would you not be able to talk about with them?
- How many *really* close friends would you say you have – people you can talk to about almost anything?
- Whom have you told about the (sexual behaviours using the child's word for it)?
- Most children / children get teased when they are younger and some kids can be mean; what did other children tease you about (in past / currently?). How did you / do you feel about this? What do you do when this happens?
- When you are feeling lonely what helps you to feel better?
- If your best friend was sitting here now how would s/he describe you to me?

#### Social Integration / Guidance and boundaries /

- What are your favourite things to do if you have a free Saturday afternoon?
- What teams, clubs, and groups do you belong to? Past? How many hours a day, on average, do you spend watching TV? What are your favourite TV programmes? Movies?
- How many hours a day on average do you play video games? Favourites
- How many hours a day do you surf the internet? Favourite sites

## Identity

- Do you go to church / chapel / synagogue / mosque / temple etc?
- What does your religion teach you about (family, community, adults, children, people from a different religion, love, respect, sex, touching ...etc
- What do your mum / dad / sisters etc tell you about your religion?
- What do other children / people in your school / street say about your family / faith / religion / dress etc ...
- Tell me about your disability (or whatever word the child / family use). Look for strengths, difficulties, positive and negative attitudes, lack of information or distortions etc.
- What do you think I need to know about this?
- What do you want to know?
- Explore what is like managing any special needs, accessibility or communication issues at home and school
- Explore any medical / care needs / routines and management /independence issues

## **ACTIVITY**

### **MY WORLD ECOMAP**

Goals: To obtain an overview of family relationships, attachments and dynamics; to identify and explore any stresses and supports in the child's life; to identify unmet need and gaps in the network; to help the child and parent develop insight into family relationships and the child's social network.

Suitable for: all children.

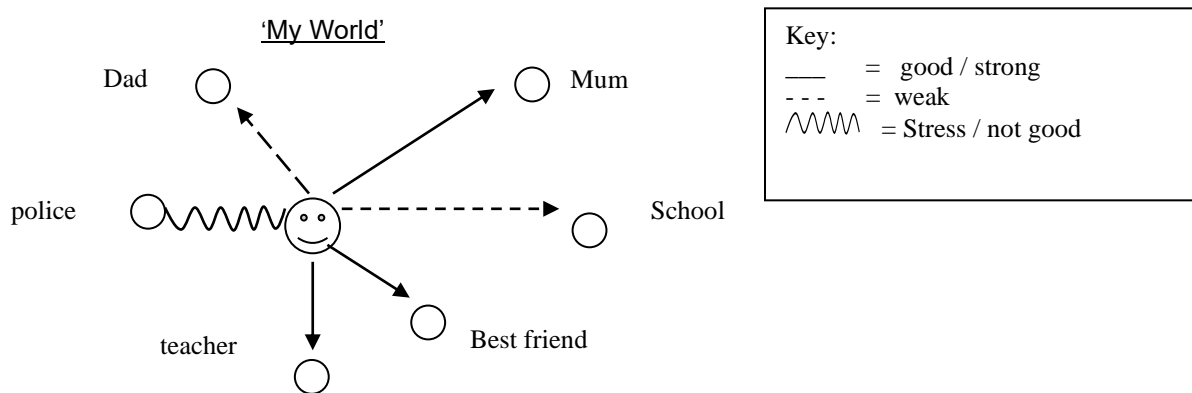
Materials: pens and paper. Worksheets 43, 44 & 45

#### Instructions

An ecomap is a diagrammatic way to represent the network of support around a child and the type and nature of the relationships within that network. Introduce the activity by explaining that they are going to do an activity called 'my world' that will help you find out more about them and their world. It is often useful to demonstrate the basic concept of an ecomap by drawing an example first, illustrating the use of circles and the different types of connection lines you will use. Many practitioners prefer to undertake this exercise on a piece of flip chart paper but you may wish to use a piece of A4 paper as the drawing can be easily copied and added to their working file to assist them with any homework or to assist with any discussions with their parent / carer. You could think about doing the drawing on a computer. Templates for an ecomap are shown in Worksheets 38-40. However the exercise works better if you get the child to draw their own version and choose what circles to put in and personalise the shapes and colours.

Ask the child to draw a circle at the centre of the diagram to represent themselves with their name written on. Then encourage the child to draw circles (or other shapes the child has chosen) to represent the key people, organisations, activities in their lives. Do not at this stage prompt the child as to whom or what they should include – allow them to choose. Children often begin by drawing significant family members they are close to and omit people who they are not

close to, do not like or who they are worried talking about. Such omissions are often as instructive as additions. Do not comment on the omissions at this stage as you can return to this later. Encourage the child to add any non-family members, friends, or other significant people and suggest they include any activities, hobbies, organisations (e.g. school, social services, faith groups, police etc) which are involved in their lives). Encourage the child to draw lines to represent the nature of the relationship. This can be illustrated by the colour or type of line drawn between them. For example an unbroken line (or perhaps a red line) can represent a strong or good relationship. A line of dashes (or perhaps a blue line) can illustrate a weak relationship and a jagged line (or perhaps a black line) can represent a stressful or bad relationship. It is helpful to draw a key to show what each type of line represents. An example is shown below:



After the child has completed the task spend time discussing the contributions and obtaining as much information as you can about their world. You could write their comments on the picture if there is room or get the child to do this. Sometimes it is better to write on a different sheet in case there are any comments that might cause the child problems when the activity is fed back to their parent. This sheet can be kept on file for later reference but not included in the workbook they take home. Questions that could assist with this discussion include the following

- *Tell me about your school? What is it like?*
- *What school activities, clubs or societies are you involved with?*
- *What are the teachers like? How do you get on with them?*
- *How do you spend your time at break times? Who do you spend this with?*
- *Who are your friends at school? How many? Names? Ages?*
- *How are you doing at school? Are you towards the top, middle or bottom*
- *What schools have you been to before? Reasons for any changes?*
- *Have you been in any trouble at school*
- *What are your favourite things to do if you have a free Saturday afternoon?*
- *What teams, clubs, and groups do you belong to? Past? How many hours a day, on average, do you spend watching TV? What are your favourite TV programmes? Movies?*

- *Do you go to church / chapel / synagogue / mosque / temple etc?*
- *What does your religion teach you about (family, community, adults, children, people from a different religion, love, respect, sex, touching ...etc*
- *What do your mum / dad / sisters etc tell you about your religion?*
- *What do other children / people in your school / street say about your family / faith / religion / dress etc ...*
- *Repeat similar questions about disability*
- *Who is your best friend?*
- *How old is s/he?*
- *What is their last name?*
- *How often do you see them? What kinds of things do you do together?*
- *What kind of things would you not be able to talk about with them?*
- *How many really close friends would you say you have – people you can talk to about almost anything?*
- *Who knows about (substitute words to describe the specific situation of the child e.g. 'the sexual abuse that happened to you', 'the sexual abuse that has happened in your family', 'the sexual touching that your dad did / been accused of', 'about why your dad cannot live with you etc)*
- *Who have you told? What have you told them? What did they say? How did they react?*
- *Who would you talk to if you had a problem or worry?*
- *What if you could not talk to them? Who else could you talk to?*

Ask the child young person to take a look at the whole picture and not say *"This is a picture of your world. What does your world look like / feel like"*. Often children make comments such as *"it looks a mess ... lots of stress... lots of wavy lines"*. This can stimulate discussion about how the work you and the child and their parent are doing is about finding out what stress there is in their lives (or lack of support) and to find ways of replacing the stress lines with positive lines. This can help the child see that the work is about helping them and their family improve their lives. For older children this can stimulate discussion about what knowledge or skills they need to learn to make these changes. It is useful if you help the child realise that the modules in the programme are attempts to provide them space to consider what might help and to provide them with some of the skills they need. Try and link the topics and aims of the modules with attempts to strengthen their world and put more positive lines on their ecomap.

#### Alternative or Adapted Versions

For young children, for children who have difficulties with reading or with charts, or for children who operate better with drawing activities you could encourage the child to draw pictures of the people on the picture. Alternatively encourage the child to select a toy to represent each

person in their lives and then distribute them around the room. The child could then be encouraged to go round to each toy and post each of them a letter. The letter could be a note with comments about each person. Alternatively the letter can just comprise of a score number of 1-10 to show how they rate each person.

A good activity for younger children is to construct the child's world using an assortment of buttons or other items that are shiny and interesting to look at and touch. Get the child to spread these items out on the floor or table. Ask them to pick an object to represent themselves, each member of their family and anyone else they would like to include from their social network. Ask them to think carefully about each individual and to place the buttons representing them into a pattern, with people close to themselves or to each other placed together and those who are more distant placed further away. The pattern can be any shape – circular, linear or perhaps a collage. The size, shape, colour and texture of the item chosen is often very significant and discussions regarding their choice of objects can provide a lot of information and insight to the worker, child and the parent / carer. One child I worked with chose an open safety pin to represent a relative who had abused her. Another child, a fourteen year-old girl living with a foster family, also chose a safety pin, but to represent herself because *"I don't feel part of the family – I feel a different size and shape and I know sometimes I can be a bit sharp at the edges."* The position of the buttons relative to the person and other people is also very significant, allowing the worker to see how the child perceives relationships and attachment within his/her family.

### **ACTIVITY                      HOW CLOSE ARE PEOPLE TO ME ECOMAP**

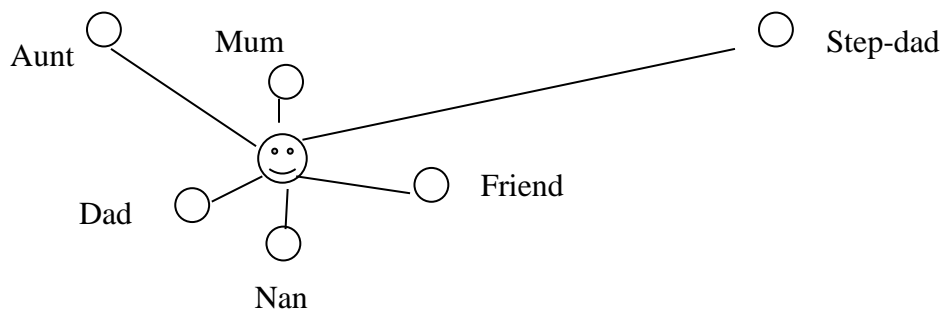
Goals: To obtain an overview of family structure, relationships, attachments and dynamics; to identify and explore any stresses and supports in the child's life; to help the child and parent develop insight into family relationships and the child's social network;

Suitable for: all children.

Materials: pens and paper.

#### Instructions

An alternative ecomap that you could use in this module or later in the session on 'my family' (relationships) is to encourage the child to put people on the drawing in a place that illustrates how close they are to them. The person they feel closest to or who gives them most support is placed close to the child's own circle and those they are less close to are placed further away, as indicated below. With younger children you need to test out their understanding of the word 'close to' and might need to use other words such 'how important they are to you'. It is best to demonstrate the exercise briefly first to ascertain the child understands.



An adaptation or alternative to this activity is to encourage the child to select a toy to represent them and then select toys for each person in their lives, placing them around the room. The most toys representing people they feel closest to are placed nearest the toy representing them. The toys they feel less close to are placed furthest away from the toy representing them. Questions you could use could include

- *Same types of questions as listed in the 'My world' Ecomap*
- *Who is the person closest to you?*
- *Who is the person furthest away. Tell me why they far away in the picture?*
- *Who would like to be closer to you?*
- *What needs to happen to make them closer?*
- *If you had drawn this picture a year ago would the positions be different? What has changed?* (It can be very instructive to ask children where they would have placed people before any abuse was believed to have started, after the allegations or abuse were discovered, when they found out about any abuse and now to show the possible changes that have taken place over time).

## **My Home and My Family**

### **Rationale**

This part of the assessment attempts to explore the composition, structure interactions, relationships and dynamics of the child's family, which may help place the problems or concerns

which led to the referral in a wider context. It seeks to obtain the child's perception of their relationships; obtain a sense of what it is like in the family now; to gain insight into the dynamics that contributed to the development of concerns; to assess what needs have / have not been met; to explore significant attachment relationships; and to assess family strengths, weaknesses and supports. In effect you are beginning to explore how this family works.

Key areas to explore include family composition; the child's perceptions of family life and events; family rules, secrets, boundaries & dynamics; the quality & strength of family life; the child's views about family attachments; and the child and family's view of alleged abuse / assessment. Clearly workers need to be conscious of the skewed and distorted perceptions a child may have about a family member as a consequence of the abuse and any grooming and manipulation that may have occurred. Look for indications of cognitive distortions, implanted messages from the abuser or the non-protective parent or signs of anxiety, fear or resistance to any of your enquiries.

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Care</li> <li>• Emotional warmth</li> <li>• stimulation</li> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

### Key questions to ask and issues to explore during these activities could include:

- Who are you closest to in your family? Why? Who next?
- What did people in your family say to you about the sexual behaviours?
- Who sets the rules in your family?
- What happens when you are naughty? What is your punishment?
- What do your mum and dad like to do together?
- What do they fight about? How do they fight?
- What is like for you living in your home?
- Who do you get on best with?
- Who do you get on least with?
- Who do you have most arguments / fights with? What about?

- How do the different people deal with arguments / conflict in your family?
- How do people in your family show their feelings to each other Anger? Love? Closeness? Sadness?
- Who do mum / dad / each sibling get on best with?

## **ACTIVITY**

## **FAMILY TREE (GENOGRAM)**

Goals: to assist with discussions around family composition, structure and relationships; to help the child discuss their feelings about different family members; to construct a visual diagram which can be used throughout the programme to assist with discussions about the family.

Suitable for: All ages, using adapted versions according to child's age and development. Young children are likely to require your active help with the drawing

Materials: coloured pens, paper or family tree computer programme (e.g. Smartdraw); worksheets No. 46, 47

### Instructions:

There are numerous ways to construct a family tree with a child some examples can be found in the worksheets noted above. Pre-printed versions could be used although the exercise is much more interactive if you help the child do their own drawing. It is often useful to do the drawing with the child on flip chart paper, allowing you space to include all the family members and to record any comments the child (or parent) makes as you discuss the picture. You can then either transfer this into a more child friendly version that can go into the file or set the child or copying the picture onto A4 paper (just recording the people) so that this can go into their workbook and can be used for discussion at home between the parent and child. Alternatively you could set the parent and child the homework task of drawing their family tree on an A4 sheet which can be kept in the child's file. The advantage of keeping the initial drawing you do in the session separate from any copy that goes into the workbook is that the former can record any comments the child makes, which they might not be ready to share with their parent at this stage.

It is recommended that you construct your own draft of a Genogram before the session as this will help you visualise the possible shape of the diagram, will identify any gaps in the information and will help you note what family members the child might have excluded from their diagram. It is worth considering whether to involve the parent in this exercise. Not only will this help with obtaining accurate information but it provides an opportunity to observe family interactions and observe any family scripts about family. However in some families parents might have information about family members that they have not shared with the child (e.g. identity of birth parent, other children). If you have time it is worth constructing a family tree with the parent beforehand.

When undertaking this task with the child it is recommended that you start with the child's immediate family and then add on other relatives. Include parents, grandparents, uncles aunts, nephews and nieces as well as any of their parents previous relationships and half or step-siblings. It is worth drawing on the different people before asking too many questions about the people

represented. When the picture is completed you can ask a variety of questions to explore family structure, relationships and interactions. It is recommended that you start with some simple enquiries about each person represented, asking the child to describe them to you, what the child thinks / feels about each person, what they like / don't like about them and exploring what type of contact they have with them. You can build up these questions into a more detailed exploration as you proceed to other activities about their family. However the family tree can be a tool you continually come back to. Some questions to think of using at this initial stage could include:

- *Tell me about this person (go through as many as you can)?*
- *What do think about this person?*
- *What things do you like about them?*
- *What things do you not like about them?*
- *What do other members of your family think about this person?*
- *How often do you see them?*
- *When was the last time you saw them?*
- *Who do you get on best with on the family tree?*
- *Who do you get on least with?*
- *Who do you have the most arguments / fights with? What about?*
- *Who do mum / dad / grandparents / each sibling get on best with?*
- *Who in the drawing knows about the sexual abuse?*
- Where you know there are concerns about abuse in respect to other family members, gently explore what the child knows about them. For example ask “*what has mum (and others) told you about this person*” or “*what have you heard why you can't see / don't see this person?*”

This activity provided you with opportunities to discuss abuse-related events. If a member of their family has left the home show this by an arrow moving person to another part of the page and use this explore the reasons why they are no longer in the family. For children where abuse has happened and is known, make explicit references in your comments to this being the person who abused or hurt the child (or another person). You can later return to this drawing to explore abuse issues in later sessions.

## **ACTIVITY                      PICTURE OF MY FAMILY**

Goals: To assist with rapport; to find out basic information about family members and relationships; to find out about and assist the child in how they see themselves in relation to their family

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages.

Materials: Worksheet No. 48

Instructions

Ask the child to draw a picture of his or her family: Do not prompt the child as to who they should include as their choice of who to draw and who they leave out might provide some interesting information. Remember you are asking them to draw who is in their family and not who they live with. Some children will ask you who they should include, particularly children who come from separated families or when they currently living apart from family members. This could lead to a discussion as to what a family is. Make sure the child labels the people in the picture. The quality of the picture is not important and even stick people or scribbles are OK – it is the discussion and comments that accompany the activity that are important. After the child has finished the activity ask them to tell you about the drawing. Do not at this ask too many probing questions and keep the activity light-hearted and child focused. Ensure that you do not convey any criticism or negativity towards anyone in the picture, even offenders. It is sometimes useful to ask them to write comments on the picture or you can do this for them, although this is not crucial. Questions you could use to facilitate further information could include:

- *Tell me about this person*
- *What is this person thinking? What is this person feeling?*
- *Is there anyone in your family you have left out or did not want to draw? (if the child appears relaxed and chatty you could ask them why but do not push them at this stage)*
- *How do they think about each other?*
- *Who is the strongest / weakest?*
- *What do you think are the secret wishes of each person in the family?*
- *What would happen if they told?*
- *If you had fallen down and hurt yourself as a little child who would you have gone to?*
- *Would this be the same person that you would go to now if you were hurt / upset?*

You can expand these enquiries to follow and explore any topics raised by the child (remember to listen to and follow their agenda). Remember that the main purpose of this activity is to assist with rapport and obtain some basic information about the family and is not intended to obtain detailed information from the child about their family relationships or lead into discussions about the abuse. However it is possible that this picture could lead the child to relate information relating to any abuse-related circumstances. If this occurs allow the child to relate their agenda and demonstrate interest but do not respond with too many questions or enquiries at this stage.

## **ACTIVITY      FAMILY ACTIVITY DRAWING**

Goals: To assist with rapport; to find out basic information about family interaction and relationships

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages.

Materials: Worksheet No. 49

Instructions

Ask the child to draw a picture of his or her family doing something together. Ensure that the child includes themselves in the picture. After the child has finished the activity ask them to tell you about the drawing. Do not at this ask too many probing questions and keep the activity light-hearted and child focused. It is sometimes useful to ask them to write comments on the picture or you can do this for them, although this is not crucial. Questions you could use to facilitate further information could include:

- *What is happening in this picture?*
- *Who is in it? (label)*
- *How old are you in this picture?*
- *What are the different people doing?*
- *What is this person thinking? What is this person feeling?*
- *What happens next in the picture?*
- *Is there anyone in your family you have left out or did not want to draw? (if the child appears relaxed you could ask them why but do not push them at this stage)*

As stated in the previous activities you can expand these enquiries to follow and explore any topics raised by the child (remember to listen to and follow their agenda). Remember that the main purpose of this activity is to assist with rapport and obtain some basic information about the family

#### **ACTIVITY: MY ANIMAL FAMILY**

Goals: To assist with rapport; to find out basic information about family by allowing the child to label family members as animals

Suitable for: Young children, children who are emotionally immature. Children who cannot draw animals could the alternative version with toys

Materials: Worksheet No. 50. Toy animal figures for adapted version

#### Instructions

Ask the child to draw a picture of each member of the family as an animal. Ensure they also draw themselves as an animal. After the child has finished the activity ask them to tell you about the drawing. You might learn a lot about how the child sees themselves and their family such as how they see themselves in relation to others and highlighting themes of conflict, power, dominance, submissiveness etc. However you should be cautious about over-interpretation as the child might be showing you their fantasy or projected views rather than a real perception. Do not at this ask too many probing questions or suggestive or leading questions and keep the activity light-hearted and child focused. It is sometimes useful to ask them to write comments on the picture or you can do this for them, although this is not crucial. Questions you could use to facilitate further information could include:

- *Tell me about this picture?*
- *Who in your family is this animal meant to be? (label)*
- *How is this animal like your (name the person represented)*

- *How does this animal act? What is this animal thinking?*
- *Who does this animal get on best with?*
- *Who does this animal get on with least? (check out their understanding of these terms)*

#### Alternative or Adapted Versions

Variations to this activity are to ask the children what animal each family member reminds them of as opposed to drawing them. Alternatively have the child pick the animal from a selection of toy animals.

### **ACTIVITY                      FAMILY DRAWINGS**

Goals: to provide child with an opportunity to connect with, externalise and explore their feelings about people in the family and family dynamics; to help identify any worries, fears, agendas; to assist in identifying family awareness and views about the abuse; to help identify supportive and non-supportive family members

Suitable for: all ages

Materials: worksheets 51- 57

#### Instructions

Encourage the child to complete the drawings on individual family members. Older children may prefer to write about them and young children may prefer to draw a picture. The benefit of doing individualised drawings is that this focuses the child's mind on individuals. Additionally the sheets could be used for later activities where you might wish the family members to be separated to encourage the child to think about each in turn. After the child has completed the drawings you could ask them a variety of different questions to help them explore their thoughts and feelings about this person. These could include questions such as:

- *Tell me about this person?*
- *Choose 3 words to describe this person?*
- *What is his / her favourite thing?*
- *What does he / she like to do / hobbies / interests etc?*
- *What makes him / her happy?*
- *What makes him / her sad?*
- *How do you know when s/he is happy / sad?*
- *What makes him / her angry?*
- *What does s/he do when s/he is angry?*
- *What things do you like to do with this person?*
- *What things do not like to do?*
- *What do think about this person?*
- *What things do you like about them?*
- *What things do you not like about them?*
- *What do other members of your family think about this person?*

- *What do have arguments and fights about with this person?*
- *Who does this person get on best with in the family?*
- *Who does this person get on least with?*
- *What does this person think about the abuse / events that have happened in the family (choose the words that you have been using to describe the abuse :remember it is best to use the correct words such as sexual abuse or sexual touching )*
- *What have they said to you about the abuse?*
- *What does this person want to happen in the family (relate to abuse-related issues)*
- *What does s/he think about you coming to see me?*
- *What have they said to you about coming here?*
- *On a scale of 0-10 how would you rate this person?*

### **ACTIVITY: PILES OF LOVE**

Goals: to assess the child's relationships and attachments ; to help the child identify and explore their feelings towards different family members and how these have changed over time; to identify any supportive or dysfunctional relationships in the child's family network

Suitable for: children of most ages. Very young children might have difficulties with counting and might benefit from the adaptive version. Where there are concerns about developmental or intellectual difficulties it is important to check that the person understands concepts such as more, less, bigger, smaller.

Materials: flip chart paper, pens and counters, buttons, dried macaroni pieces or similar small objects to use as counters.

#### Instructions

On a large piece of flip paper, get the child / young person to draw circles to represent the main people in their lives (past and present, people they like/don't like). You want the circles to be of equal size as those of unequal size can cause the child putting more counters in the bigger circles. Encourage the child to put the names of the people underneath the circles (don't put names inside the circle as these will be covered up later in the exercise). Then introduce a large pile of buttons, counters or some equivalent. Tell the person that this is their 'pile of love' – the love they have inside them that they can give out to all the people in their lives. Ask them to decide how much love they want to give to each person and distribute this amongst the circles. Allow them opportunities to change their mind and then clarify who gets the biggest and next biggest piles and so on. You can then photograph this as a record or alternatively write down the numbers of counters for each person in the middle of each circle so that you have a permanent record of how much love they have allocated. It is suggested that this exercise be repeated at a later date to assess any changes. Test out before starting the exercise. When the child has finished the exercise ask questions around the reasons they have allocated different amounts of love to people. It is useful to ask the child to show you whether the amount of love allocated would have been differently

a day, month or year ago. Alternatively at time intervals such as 'when dad lived with you', 'before the abuse started', 'during the abuse', before the abuse was discovered', 'after the abuse was discovered' etc to evaluate changes over time. When doing this ask them what has happened to change their views (this can sometimes lead to conversations about the abuse)

## **ACTIVITY                      HOLIDAY CAMP,**

Goals: to assess the child's relationships and attachments ; to help the child identify and explore their feelings towards different family members and how these have changed over time; to identify any supportive or dysfunctional relationships in the child's family network

Suitable for: all children

Materials: none

### Instructions

Ask the child / young person to think of a lovely place they would really like to go to, where they can have a wonderful holiday. They can stay in any type of accommodation they want and can have whatever they want there e.g. swimming pool, cinema etc. It is a very special place. It is so special that they can even take people who are no longer alive, or whom they do not see any more, and they can stay for as long as they like. Ask them the following types of questions: -

- *Who are you going to take with you?*
- *Where are they going to sleep (tent, chalet, and mud hut)?*
- *How many rooms or tents are there?*
- *How many people in a tent/room?*
- *Who are you going to put in which rooms?*
- *You won't all fit in – whom will you leave out?*
- *Who is in their room?*
- *Who definitely isn't coming? (Can ask about people missing) and explore significant people*
- *Were there any surprises?*
- *Was there anyone you didn't want to take?*

Then inform them that the hotel manager or owner of the accommodation has told them that as they are full up they would have to send two people home. Ask them to identify whom they will send. The manager keeps returning and asks the person to send two more home, until there are just two left at the hotel with the child. On completion you could encourage the child to draw a picture of their holiday. They can draw part of it or all of it. Give the child time to finish the drawing and stay silent whilst they do this. You then need to help the child process his / her experience by asking one or two questions about the drawing and their journey. For example

- *What can you tell me about your holiday?*
- *What was it like to go on the holiday?*
- *What was it like when people left?*
- *What was it like to stay there when different people left?*

- *Would you have liked to have done anything different on your holiday?*
- *Did this holiday remind you of something that has happened to you before?*
- *What do you feel now about this holiday and the people in it?*

Information may emerge that connect the journey, or parts of it to a real experience from the child's life. This might provide an opportunity for them to tell you this real account. If the child does not wish to or cannot draw a picture then proceed directly to the questions. If the child does not wish to share anything then this should be respected, as it still may have been therapeutic.

## **ACTIVITY                      FAMILY PLAY**

Goals: to provide child with an opportunity to connect with, externalise and explore their feelings about people in the family and family dynamics via a fun medium

Suitable for: all children

Materials: selection of toys such as people puppets or miniature people

### Instructions

Ask the child to present a play with the toys about their family. It is best to use people puppets or miniature play figures as this keeps the child focused on thinking about real people. Use of animal toys or fantasy figures can encourage the child to engage in pretend or fantasy play. Whilst this is useful in any 'Your time work', for the purposes of this exercise it is best to encourage use of people figures. Some children throw themselves into the play without any prompting. Other children need some suggestions or prompting and you might need to suggest a story line. As this module is attempting to look at the family as they are now and not so much on past events, suggest a theme such as 'a typical day in my house', or 'my house yesterday' or 'going shopping' or 'a family day out'. Allow the child to play out the scene without asking any questions or interrupting. When the play is reaching a conclusion, losing energy or has finished you can then ask questions. One option is for you to introduce yourself to the characters and ask each some questions.. Alternatively you could ask the child questions about the play. Select any questions from the other activities described and try and focus on the different thoughts and feelings of the characters, how they feel about each other and what they would like to say to the other characters. After the play you could ask the child whether this was similar to how things are in their family and seek similarities and differences.

## **ACTIVITY                      MY FAMILY - AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY**

Goals: To help the child think about and express family relationships and dynamics; to help the worker identify any issues that will need further work with the child and / or parent.

Suitable for: older children and adolescents. Not suitable for young children or children with literacy or learning difficulties. However adapted versions could be useful for these children.

Materials: worksheet No 58

### Instructions

A very simple but effective activity for older children and adolescents is to simply ask them to write an essay entitled 'My Family'. They could use the handout provided which contains some ideas and prompts of some of things they could talk about. After they have completed the activity discuss what they have written and help the child identify any concerns and worries that they might want help with. During the discussion explore the views of different family members to the abuse / events that have happened in the family. Ask the child to come up with some thoughts about what needs to happen in the family to help with any problems, issues or worries identified.

#### Alternative or adaptive versions

For young children, those with learning difficulties and those who have literacy difficulties you could ask the child to give a verbal story of their family, with you acting as secretary. Children often like to see you write the words as they talk so sit near to them. Other options include giving them a Dictaphone to use or get them to play the story out with toys (see earlier activity 'Family Play').

## **My Life Story**

### **Rationale**

This section of the assessment seeks to obtain information on the child and family's developmental history from the perspective of the child. Simply put it aims to encourage the child to tell the story of their life or to provide an account of significant events that have occurred. This can help in the identification of any predisposing, maintenance, protective and precipitating factors which need to be considered in the development of any problematic dynamics and behaviours in the family. Information obtained from the child can supplement, confirm or contradict information about the child's development obtained from the case papers and from interviews with family members and other professionals. It can also serve as a useful template and framework from which

the assessor can explore the matters under investigation with the child and can provide a context for your future enquiries with the child.

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Care</li> <li>• Emotional warmth</li> <li>• stimulation</li> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

### Key questions to ask and issues to explore during these activities could include:

- Where did you first live?
- What is your earliest memory? What are feelings connected to it?
- What was it like being a small child in your home?
- Who was special to you, who cared about you?
- Siblings – how did you get on with them when you were growing up (each one)
- What was your place in the family
- How did your parents treat each of the children?
- How did your family show feelings towards each other? Anger? Love? Closeness?
- How did your parents get along with each other?
- What did they enjoy together?
- What did they fight about? How did they fight? What effect did their relationship have upon you?

### ACTIVITY TIME LINE / ROAD MAPS

Goals: To provide an ordered and visual structure that will assist with the identification and exploration of key events in their lives, including any trauma / abuse concerns, both in this and later sessions. To open up discussion of abuse-related events

Suitable for: all children. The adapted versions can be used for younger children or children with learning difficulties or literacy problems.

Materials: pens, paper (A4 or lining wallpaper) Worksheet No. 59, 60, 61 & 62

## Instructions

The most effective method to explore these issues is to construct a time-line or 'road map'. These are diagrammatical ways to explore the significant events that have taken place in the child and family's life over a number of years. It can be used as an indirect way to obtain information about the abuse or to identify what the child's understanding of the concerns is. In doing so it can also assist workers in identifying the sources and structure of any cognitive distortions, wrong thinking or implanted thinking used by the offender. Additionally it is useful tool for cross-checking information gained from various sources. In effect a timeline is an essential tool in helping the worker, child and family to identify and understand the range of predisposing, maintaining, precipitating and risk factors in a child's life over time. It can be an invaluable way to help the child understand what has happened to the family, why things have happened and what the concerns are. It provides a simple structure to record key events, thoughts, questions and confusions and is also an excellent tool visual tool to use as framework and reference point for all later sessions. As such it is one of the most important tools in the programme.

Tell the child that you are going to do a drawing to help you understand how they became the person they are now, a way of telling their life story. The drawing can be done on a series of A4 sheets of paper (which has the advantage of being able to be placed in the child and workers file); or on a larger piece of paper, or a roll of lining paper / wallpaper; or alternatively drawn on a computer. The time line can be drawn as a simple linear line, a road map, a river or a similar route, with the child's birthdays drawn on at regular intervals on the line. Invite / assist the child to write down significant events in their life against the appropriate date / age. Initially these should be non-threatening and events such as birth, starting school, moving house, birth of siblings and achievements / happy events. Encourage the child to tell you something about each event and record this in writing on the picture (or do it for them). It will help if you already have some dates ready from the file information to add in case the child has difficulty recalling specific dates or events. For people with difficulties with reading or with memory problems it can be useful to annotate the diagram with pictures and drawings – e.g. sketch in previous homes/houses, separation experiences, relationships and other significant events. Seek further additions regarding significant loss or trauma events, including any details regarding any abuse. Clearly the way in which you explore such events will be determined by the specific circumstances of the child and is dependent upon whether they were victims of any abuse, what they have been told or indeed whether they have been told at all. For children who are aware of sexual abuse concerns you can directly seek information as to when the onset or discovery of abuse, when social services or the police became involved, when an offender left the house, was in court or was sent to prison etc. For children who are aware of the concerns but are non-believing of any abuse you can still explore these dates in terms of exploring the 'allegations', or 'what others have told you', or 'what you have heard' etc, using any words or phrases the child has used to describe what the concerns of others have been. For children who are not aware of the specific concerns around sexual abuse your initial

enquiries might need to be couched in terms such as when the family member moved out of the family, when social services became involved and using any words or phrases that have been used by their family or professionals to account for any events that have occurred in the family.

When first undertaking work with such a child it is important to start from the position of the child's current understanding before offering any counter-suggestions or telling them specific details. It is important to be as accurate as possible about dates and sequence of significant events as this might make a difference to your and/or the child's understanding as the predisposing and precipitating factors behind a specific event or trauma. In the early stages workers should just concentrate upon entering factual data without seeking too much descriptive detail or discussing their thoughts or feelings.

When a reasonable chunk of information has been gathered you can then attempt to seek some additional information about their memories of the events and explore the child's feelings and thoughts about each. As part of these discussions explore whether the child has any questions about the events, whether they have any questions they would like ask people, what people have told them and what confusions, worries or muddles do they have about the events. These enquiries can help you understand the child's depth of knowledge and level of understanding they have about events, whether they have any distortions or wrong thinking about what has happened, what gaps there are in their knowledge and what underlying issues need to be addressed in later sessions. You do not need to answer these questions at this stage but can note that these are important questions and that you will try and help answer these during the sessions with them and their parent. Ensure that these questions, thoughts or feelings are recorded on the time line as a record. It is useful to record these in a different colour and highlight them, emphasising the importance of their contributions and how importantly you regard their views and questions. It is also useful to record the child's sense of injustice, unfairness or anger or upset about events, recording their specific words on the paper

It is useful to project the time-line or road map into the future to allow the child to identify any hopes or wishes they have about the future. It can be useful in such discussions to encourage them to think about what they think needs to happen to achieve these expressed goals, which can provide the opportunity for you to emphasise the importance of the work with them and their mother. In some instances this can lead to the child identifying their hopes and wishes about future contact with the offender/ abuser and expressing views about reunification. Such views should be acknowledged and recorded with sensitivity and respect, but caution is needed in ensuring you do not give the child false or unrealistic hopes. It might be necessary at a later date to provide the child with information and explanations about the reality or likelihood of any such hopes but this should come at a later point in the programme and not until it has been discussed with the non-offending parent.

It is advisable to check the time line for accuracy and any significant omissions by referring to the parent(s) or to records. Where and when appropriate the information gathered from both the

parent and the child can be shared in a parent/child sessions allowing relevant information to be shared and developing a shared understanding as to the issues of concern.

### **ACTIVITY                                      AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY (The Story of my life)**

Goals: To provide the child with a way of telling their life story and noting key events and questions they. To open up discussion of abuse-related events

Suitable for: good for older children, adolescents who are literate.

Materials: worksheet No. 61

#### Instructions

You could encourage the child to write or do drawings of their life history. This is often helped by an accompanying prompt sheet for the child asking them to record changes in home, school, births, deaths, separations, happy or sad events or major events they can recall. Alternatively see use the worksheet cited above. Utilise the questions noted in previous exercises

### **ACTIVITY                                      PROJECTIVE PLAY**

Goals: To provide the child with a way of telling their life story and noting key events and questions they. To open up discussion of abuse-related events

Suitable for: young children and those with learning difficulties or literacy problems. Some adolescents also like to do good for older children, adolescents who are literate.

Materials: selection of puppets and toys (best to use people figures to keep the child focused on real life representations.

#### Instructions

An alternative method, useful for younger children or children with literacy of learning difficulties is to encourage the child to tell the story of their life by using toys. You can write down their story as they play it out. When the play is reaching a conclusion, losing energy or has finished you can then ask questions. One option is for you to introduce yourself to the characters and ask each some questions. Alternatively you could ask the child questions about the play. Select any questions from the other activities described and try and focus on the different thoughts and feelings of the characters, how they feel about each other and what they would like to say to the other characters. Try and ensure there are references to the abuse or trauma events that have happened. You might need to prompt the story by asking questions to the characters or to the child about why social workers visited, about why a family member left home, and then asking the characters about their thoughts and feelings about this. Alternatively just directly instruct the child to tell you the story about the abuse / daddy leaving home / why you went into care / etc. Sometimes a direct instruction gets the best response. Like the road map and ecomap exercises this can identify some key confusions, questions, agendas and the worker can let the child know that s/he will help the child with these muddles.

**ACTIVITY****ADAPTED 'ALL ABOUT ME WORKSHEET'**

'All about me' style worksheets or unfinished sentence sheets (see section 'all about me for description of these activities) can be adapted to ask specific questions about the child's history e.g. 'when I was a baby I...', 'when I was a 5-10 I felt (thought)... 'My first school was ...', 'dad left home because ...', 'when I was naughty my mum ....'

**ACTIVITY****DRAWINGS OF EVENTS IN THE PAST**

It can be helpful to ask children to do a drawing of specific events in their life. For traumatised children visual activities are likely to access their visual memory, which might be stronger than their verbal memory and might help stimulate a better quality of discussion and insights from the child

**Other activities**

- Ecomap style drawing labelling a variety of related areas in the child's history which can help discussion, for example drawing circles for areas such as 'happy events', 'sad events' 'scary times', 'my health', 'my school', 'my past worries', 'things I would have liked to be different', 'social services', 'places I have lived', to name just a few. Such a drawing can be adapted for each child.
- Genogram – a family tree documents the family structure but also enables you and the child to look at the family over time. Using this alongside a road map can help chart significant changes in family structure and is a useful template to explore events and changing relationships with the child over time.
- Autobiographical essay, encouraging the child to write their own account of their life history. This is often helped by an accompanying prompt sheet for the child asking them to record changes in home, school, births, deaths, separations, happy or sad events or major events they can recall.
- Projective play – encouraging the child to tell the story of their life by using toys to tell the story. You can write down their story as they play it out.
- 'All about me' worksheets (worksheet No.7 & 8) or unfinished sentence sheets (worksheet No. 9) can be adapted to ask specific questions about the child's history e.g. 'when I was a baby I...', 'when I was a 5-10 I felt (thought)... 'My first school was ...', 'dad left home because ...', 'when I was naughty my mum ....'
- Drawings of events in past life

## **My Worries, muddles and problems**

### **Rationale**

Children's perceptions and preoccupations are not always the same as the adults and activities on these topics can provide some very useful insights. Frequently in such activities children identify the key issues relating to the assessment in a very direct way e.g. identifying worries or problems such as "a touching worry", "worry about dad's drinking", "worries about me being naughty", "missing my family worry", "will I go home worry" etc. This can be a useful way of allowing the child to bring up the key issues which need to be explored during the assessment without accusations of leading. What is important is to respond to each of the child's worries with equal interest and concern, even if their worries appear minor or unrelated to the assessment. This helps values the child's contribution and again minimises the risk of bias or leading the child by use of verbal or non-verbal messages.

Exploring the child's fears and worries provides assessor with information about the insight of the child into their current circumstances. It can give the child the chance to identify their main

agendas and any confusions, anxieties, fears, or any unanswered questions they may have about past, current and future circumstances. It also allows the assessor to gain some insight into what information the child has or has not been told, how they perceive the events that are happening around them and can give clues as to what adult agendas have been imposed upon the child / young person. Sometimes it enables assessors to explore whether the child has been coached, prompted or told what to tell / not to tell. It is accepted that many of these may be inaccessible to the assessor in the current circumstances, as the cost of disclosing their thoughts may be too great. However it is surprising how often a child will respond directly to such enquiries, as it is often the case that no one has asked them directly.

Another advantage of explicitly exploring their fears and worries is that at a later point the assessor can ask the child to use similar activities and concepts to identify the fears and worries of other people in their family or network. Familiarisation with a specific assessment technique means it will be easier for the child to understand. Such information can provide useful information about family dynamics, scripts, roles, relationships and can sometimes uncover information in respect to any coaching, prompting or family agendas. In effect these factors can help you identify any possible predisposing, maintaining, precipitating and protective factors which relate to the referred problem or concern.

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Care</li> <li>• Emotional warmth</li> <li>• stimulation</li> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

### Key questions to ask and issues to explore during these activities could include:

- What things are you worried about at the moment?
- What muddles do you have?

- What are your the main problems at the moment?
- Rate worries on scale of 1 -10
- Feeling faces to attach to worries
- Who knows about this worry?
- What do other people think about this problem?
- What worries do mum and dad have?
- What worry would you like to sort out most?
- Who helps you sort out worries and problems?
- Who could help with this problem?
- What help do you need to sort this worry out?
- What worry do you not want to talk about?
- What would happen if you spoke of this worry?
- Further ideas are contained in the handout 'Creative ideas for communicating with children and adults'

## **ACTIVITY MY WORRIES, PROBLEMS AND MUDDLES**

Goal: To clarify the child's current worries, problems or worries

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages.

Materials: Worksheet No. 17-20

### Instructions

Ask the child to fill in the worksheet about any current worries, problems or muddles they have. Help them write it if necessary. Some children might say they have not got any – if they persist with this ask them about worries they had at the beginning of the work or when you first met them and explore what has changed to get rid of these worries. If they still say they have none suggest some to them based upon your understanding of their situation (e.g. worries about mum, dad, family, social services, court, the sessions, 'the things that have happened to me etc). Explore these and make use of the following questions and comments

- *What things are you worried about at the moment?*
- *What muddles do you have?*
- *What are your the main problems at the moment?*
- *Rate worries on scale of 1 -10*
- *Who knows about this worry?*
- *What do other people think about this problem?*
- *What worries do mum and dad have?*
- *What worry would you like to sort out most?*
- *Who helps you sort out worries and problems?*
- *Who could help with this problem?*
- *What help do you need to sort this worry out?*

- *What worry do you not want to talk about?*
- *What would happen if you spoke of this worry?*

For younger children you could read 'The Huge Bag of Worries' by Virginia Ironside. This can be done in the session or the book could be left with the carers to read with the child at home. The child could then draw their own Bag of Worries'

### Other activities you could use

- For children who have difficulties verbalising their worries this exercise could be done using representative toys or in an indirect way for different toys. The same note of caution about use of toys and play needs to be adopted as identified earlier.
- Use of unfinished sentences worksheets – e.g. 'I am worried about ...', 'I get worried when ...', 'I have muddles about ...' 'my mum is worried about'..., 'my biggest problems are ....

## My Behaviour

### Rationale

A holistic assessment into a child's needs should include an examination of any problematic behaviours, particularly as this can impact upon social relationships, peer relationships, family stress and can inform us about the child's general attitudes and values, etc. This section of the assessment should explore issues relating to substance abuse, interpersonal aggression and impulse control, fire setting, cruelty to animals, gang involvement, cruelty (physical and verbal) to siblings or other children, offending behaviour, contact with police, truancy and family reactions to these.

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> </ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Care</li> <li>• Emotional warmth</li> <li>• stimulation</li> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>
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## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

### Key questions to ask and issues to explore during these activities could include:

- Tell me about your good and bad behaviour
- What do you do that sometimes gets you into trouble (at school, at home, when out of the house?)
- What would your teachers say about your behaviour?
- What would your parents say?
- If a specific behaviour problem has already emerged during the assessment just ask them directly to tell you about this behaviour.
- Explore what, when, who, how and how often about the behaviour
- How does this behaviour affect you / parents / siblings / others?
- Why do you think you do this behaviour / what causes it?
- What do your parents / carers / siblings / teachers say to you when you about this behaviour?
- Would you like help with this problem?

It is often useful to use assumptive questions, as illustrated below.

- When was the last time you got involved in a fight with another young person? Details?
- How many fights do you think you have been involved in the last two years?
- Does your group of friends have a name? Are you a member of a gang?
- How old were you when you first got into trouble with the police?
- What were into trouble for? Explore consequences.
- How old were you when you first played with matches or lighters? How many fires have you set?
- How often did you set the fires on your own? With peers? How do you think it affected others?
- How old were you the very first time that you shoplifted? How many times a week? What did you usually take?
- How often were you caught? Reaction of others? How did it affect others?

- How old were you when you first tried alcohol? How many times a week? Currently?
- How old were you when you first tried drugs? What type of drugs? How many times a week? How did you get hold of them? Current use?
- Parents' knowledge / reactions?

## **ACTIVITY MY BEHAVIOUR ECOMAP**

Goal: To help understand a child's behaviour or a specific event

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages.

Materials: pens and paper, any previous ecomap drawings or drawings of their worries

### Instructions

Return to and add to the ecomaps you have previously drawn, adding areas relating to any concerning behaviour. Alternatively or draw another ecomap or list entitled 'My Behaviour' or 'Things I do that get me into trouble' or 'Things I do that make other people worried'. Explore these and make use of the following questions and comments

- If a specific behaviour problem has already emerged during the assessment or they have identified some behaviour issues on the ecomap, just ask them directly to tell you about this behaviour.
- Explore what, when, who, how and how often about the behaviour
- How does this behaviour affect you / parents / siblings / others?
- Why do you think you do this behaviour / what causes it?
- What do your parents / carers / siblings / teachers say to you when you about this behaviour?
- Would you like help with this problem?
- Tell me about your good and bad behaviour
- What do you do that sometimes gets you into trouble (at school, at home, when out of the house?)
- What would your teachers say about your behaviour?
- What would your parents say?

It is often useful to use assumptive questions, as illustrated below.

- When was the last time you got involved in a fight with another young person? Details?
- How many fights do you think you have been involved in the last two years?
- Does your group of friends have a name? Are you a member of a gang?
- How old were you when you first got into trouble with the police?
- What were into trouble for? Explore consequences.
- How old were you when you first played with matches or lighters? How many fires have you set?

- How often did you set the fires on your own? With peers? How do you think it affected others?
- How old were you the very first time that you shoplifted? How many times a week? What did you usually take?
- How often were you caught? Reaction of others? How did it affect others?
- How old were you when you first tried alcohol? How many times a week? Currently?
- How old were you when you first tried drugs? What type of drugs? How many times a week? How did you get hold of them? Current use?
- Parents' knowledge / reactions?

## **ACTIVITY                      STRIP CARTOONS**

Goal: To help understand a child's behaviour or a specific event

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages.

Materials: pens and paper

### Instructions

One way to explore possible time lines, thoughts, feelings or behaviours is to encourage a child to illustrate their story (or a specific incident) in comic strip form, using speech and thought balloons and also feelings faces. This is a useful way to obtain an account of any behaviour, event or a trauma incident. It can help you evaluate the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviours; identify distorted thinking patterns; and can help you evaluate the child's empathy and perspective taking. Importantly it can help you understand the different stages or time line in an incident and identify any triggers. It is of particular use with young people who have behaved badly, have committed an offence or show behavioural difficulties. It allows you to separate the thoughts, feelings and behaviours and develop a sequence behind the behaviour patterns

Draw a comic strip box containing 9 or more boxes (ensure that there is a space or box below each frame to allow you or the person to write an account to accompany the picture. Ask the person to draw their story of account in picture form (stick figures for people are OK). It is suggested that you encourage them to start somewhere in the middle of the cartoon strip boxes, as this allows you to encourage them to draw what happened prior to their account in order to explore any pre-offending behaviours, thoughts or feelings. It is often helpful to work alongside the person, using the activity to facilitate discussion i.e. "What is happening in this picture?" "What were you thinking when this happened?" "What was said?" Some people work better if you do the writing whilst others prefer to do this themselves. Encourage them to complete speech and thinking bubbles. In addition you can encourage them to draw a feelings face or record their feelings alongside the picture to illustrate how they were feeling at the time.

This approach can also be used to record the perceived actions, thoughts and feelings of others people. Drawing a separate cartoon can help explore and record the perceived thoughts,

feelings and behaviours of the victim, co-offender or non-offending adult. Comparison of the different cartoons can help identify any incongruence, distortions or errors.

## **Why are people worried?**

### **Rationale**

In many cases the child will not be ready to discuss the specific causes for concern until late into the assessment sessions, after you have developed a relationship with them (if at all). However in some situations the child's comments in response to questions for the other areas may dictate that this takes place quite early in the assessment. It is not unusual for example that early discussion about the reasons for the assessment or about worries and muddles to result in younger children immediately referring to abuse issues. In such cases it might be appropriate to explore the nature of the concerns at this early stage, as not to do so risks communicating to the child that you are not willing or wanting to discuss such difficult issues. Having said this, for many children the reasons for the assessment are the last thing they wish to discuss and spending time on the other areas of the assessment first may allow for the building of rapport which will assist discussion of

later difficult material.

In many of the cases you are involved in there is concern that the child is, or has been exposed to some form of abuse or trauma in their lives, particularly as abuse and trauma are often predisposing factors in a wide range of behaviours and problems that triggered the assessment. Exploring a child's abuse or trauma experiences may help you understand why the child behaves the way s/he does & broaden your assessment of behaviour. It may provide signposts & clues to possible abuse and help in the identification of the underlying / internal issues that may fuel behaviour. It may also help you structure and focus later intervention to address their underlying needs / distortions. It is therefore important that assessors explore the presence and impact of such trauma.

However a key question child practitioners have to ask before they undertake such enquiries is "what is it that I have been asked to assess – what are the questions I have been asked to address". This can be easily forgotten when we are talking to the child about abuse issues and can lead us to ask inappropriate questions, to miss others questions, or can even lead to poor interviewing or contamination of future evidence. For example:

- a) Are you being asked to explore whether the child has been sexually or physically abused? If so, is this an old allegation that has already been investigated or is it an unconfirmed suspicion that has not yet been explicitly stated or investigated?
- b) Are the concerns already known to the child, whereby your role is one of ascertaining the child's views and perceptions of an event that has already been investigated?
- c) Are you being asked to seek information from the child to corroborate other people's accounts?

These questions need to be clarified before you undertake more specific sessions with the child about specific incidents, as they will determine the nature, scope and methods of your questioning. For example, if it is a new allegation you must adhere to evidentially secure interviewing techniques and ensure that you are not communicating any professional bias (this should be done in all cases). You may have to stop questioning at the point that an allegation is made and refer to the matter on to the agencies responsible for investigating child protection matters. However if the matter has already been investigated and there are no criminal proceedings and you are being asked to assess issues of risk and rehabilitation you may be able to ask more details about what happened in any attempt to gain more information about any offending patterns, risks or implanted messages or cognitive distortions given to the child. Each case is different and it is not possible to give exact guidance to follow in all cases. It is strongly recommended therefore that these issues are discussed with your supervisor and legal advisors prior to the assessment to ensure that you are clear as to the parameters about what type and form your enquiries about their abuse can take.

Information on any abuse or trauma may have emerged in the previous sessions on developmental history and family history, through discussion on fears and worries or from any

discussions around sexual knowledge. However it is worth exploring again in a separate segment of the interviews, as the earlier sessions might have increased the child's insight, confidence or need to disclose more information about their past. It is worth asking specifically about any abuse experiences (bearing in mind the issues raised above). Depending on the nature of your instructions and the purpose of your enquiries the following issues can be useful things to look for:

- Exploration of exposure to trauma events (abuse sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect, loss, etc)
- Whether any allegations / disclosures took place, when, to whom and outcomes
- The response of others to the concerns
- The identity and relationship with any alleged offender / abuser
- The use of violence?
- Any grooming tactics / strategies used by offender / offence patterns?
- The location of any alleged abuser (past and present)
- The impact of the events upon the child. "How has this experience affected you?"
- The reactions of parents / family / significant others / professionals?
- What, when, how, who, where, how often?
- Any attempt to silence a child?
- Exploration of any denial
- Explore alternative explanations for identified concerns or child's perceptions

In respect to the types of methods, activities or specific questions you can use these are also determined by the nature of your enquiries, the nature of the concerns and whether you are exploring a new or old allegation. In general terms practitioners may be helped by revisiting materials, worksheets or discussions they used in previous parts of the assessment. It is difficult to prescribe or suggest activities that can be used in all situations as this depends upon the nature of the assessment. **Once again advice from supervisors, legal advisors or colleagues should be sought to confirm what techniques could be used in specific cases**

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Care</li> <li>• Emotional warmth</li> <li>• stimulation</li> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

### Key questions to ask and issues to explore during these activities could include:

- What do think people are worried about (e.g. social workers / teachers/ your parents /others)?
- Why do you think they are worried?
- Are they right to be worried about these things?
- What do you think about these worries / problems / muddles?
- Tell me about this worry / problem / muddle
- What happened? When, how, who, where, how often?
- What do you think about this?
- What do you think about the person who did this?
- Who have you told about this?
- What did they say or do when you told them?
- What did people say you should say during these sessions?
- How has this experience affected you?"
- Explore whether there are any signs of any attempt to silence a child?
- Explore alternative explanations for identified concerns or child's perceptions
- Any grooming tactics / strategies used by offender / offence patterns?

### ACTIVITY

### WHY I AM SEEING YOU

Goal: To remind the child as to the reasons and/or to state these in a more explicit way

Suitable for: Children and young people of all ages.

Materials: Worksheet No. 1

#### Instructions

Look again at the worksheet 'Why I am seeing you' from the first session'. Do a new one with the child or draw a similar drawing to clarify their thoughts now. Use this exercise to give a clear statement as to the reasons why they are coming. This should be easier after having done the previous work on their life story and their family. Ensure you mention the events that have happened in the family and relate these to worries about the abuse, safety, protection or helping them to understand what has happened and how to cope better with what has happened.

It might be useful to construct a new drawing of 'Why I am seeing you', either using a new version of the worksheet or by drawing an ecomap version.

Use similar but updated questions to those used when you first did this exercise, adapted of course to the age and understanding of the child. For example:

- *Can you remember the reasons for coming to these sessions?*
- *Why do you think you are seeing me every week?*
- *What have mummy and daddy (and/ or others) said to you about why you were coming to see me?*
- What do think people are worried about (e.g. social workers / teachers/ your parents /others)?
- Why do you think they are worried?
- Are they right to be worried about these things?
- What do you think about these worries / problems / muddles?
- Tell me about this worry / problem / muddle
- What happened? When, how, who, where, how often?
- What do you think about this?
- What do you think about the person who did this?
- Who have you told about this?
- What did they say or do when you told them?
- What did people say you should say during these sessions?
- How has this experience affected you?"
- Explore whether there are any signs of any attempt to silence a child?
- Explore alternative explanations for identified concerns or child's perceptions
- Any grooming tactics / strategies used by offender / offence patterns?

## **ACTIVITY**

## **ADAPTED ECOMAP**

Goals: To provide an ordered and visual structure that will assist with the identification and exploration of key events in their lives, including any trauma / abuse concerns, both in this and later sessions. To open up discussion of abuse-related events

Suitable for: all children.

Materials: pens, paper

### Instructions

Another way of exploring and discussing events in the child's life could be by undertaking an ecomap style drawing, focusing on specific areas in the child's history (see module entitled 'My World' for a description of how to do an ecomap). For example drawing ecomaps for areas such as 'happy events', 'sad events' 'scary times', 'my health', 'my school', 'my past worries', 'things I would have liked to be different', 'social services', 'places I have lived', 'ideas about why daddy left home', 'why are social services worried about me', 'the abuse etc. These areas could be the represented by the centre circle on the ecomap. The surrounding circles aim to identify and record

different the views or responses the child has about this problem (in effect a visual list of their thoughts) This can help order their thinking and assists them to process and explore the accuracy of these thoughts and feelings. For example, for a topic such as 'ideas why daddy left home' you can do a separate circle for each reason the child comes up with. These can be looked at in detail, exploring why they think this, where they heard this from and identifying what questions they could ask people to find out if their views are correct. Such an approach is very useful in feedback sessions with the carer. Useful questions to ask for these areas include:

- *Tell me more about this?*
- *Can you list some of the reasons / thoughts / views / explanations you have?*
- *What makes you think this?*
- *What do other people think about this?*
- *Who have you spoken to about it?*
- *What circle is the most worrying / likely/ upsetting etc*
- *What do you think needs to happen about this?*
- *Who do you think can help you?*
- *What questions would you like to ask mum / dad / sibling / social worker about this?*
- *This seems a big muddle for you at the moment. I think we need to do some thinking about this to see if we can sort it out*
- *Let's write a list of the questions we need to look at in future sessions?*

This activity is particularly useful in identifying any false information, confusions or distortions the child might have. Sometimes just sharing the child's agendas with the parent will help promote more open communication or will enable the parent to give permission for the child to learn more. It offers you opportunities to provide corrective messages to the child or deliver messages about abuse or the events that have happened, thereby correcting some of false assumptions they might have. You do not have to answer the child's questions right there and then. If it is a difficult topic and you are not certain how to respond use the tactic of praising the child for their questions, noting them down in writing in front of the child and agreeing that this is something that you will do some thinking about and which you will help them with in future sessions. This allows you to have time to discuss the way forward with colleagues, your supervisor or the case consultant.

## What I want to happen - My Views

### Rationale

It is important to put a separate section in your core assessment that specifically records the child's hopes, wishes or feelings and allows them an opportunity to comment on the causes for concern and their views about the assessment. The child should know this section will contain their views, whatever they say and in whatever way they choose to say it. This section should ensure the child's exact words are quoted. If they do not know what to write you could suggest topics such as what they thought about the assessment, what they learnt, what they learnt to happen in their lives and any views about future intervention.

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health</li><li>• Education</li></ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic Care</li><li>• Emotional warmth</li><li>• stimulation</li></ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li><li>• Wider family</li><li>• Housing</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>
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## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child.

### Key questions to ask and issues to explore during these activities could include:

- How have you found this assessment overall?
- Was it easier or harder than you expected?
- What parts did you find most difficult?
- What parts were the easiest? Which parts did you enjoy most?
- Which bits did you enjoy least?
- What have you learnt from this assessment?
- What have you learnt about yourself
- What would have made it easier for you?
- What parts of the assessment have you talked about with your parents / caregivers?
- What is their view of the assessment?
- If you could change anything about yourself, what changes would you make?
- How do think your parents would respond?

### ACTIVITY MY 3 WISHES

Goals: To allow the child to express any key wishes, hopes or agendas;

Suitable for: Any age child. Young children might require you to write for them or they can use the adapted versions of this exerci

Materials: Worksheet No. 21. Magic wand can be used as an alternative.

#### Instructions

This is an opportunity to return to an earlier worksheet to see what the child's current views are. Ask the child to write or draw a picture of their 3 most important wishes. Alternatively use a magic wand. This activity can uncover some important information about how the child sees their current situation, their hopes, worries and dreams. It can also sometimes give clues to a child's sense of powerlessness, hopelessness, their underlying emotional state or their sense of pain. Questions you could use to facilitate further information could include:

- *Tell me about this wish?*

- *What do you think about this wish?*
- *What do you feel about this wish?*
- *What do think might need to happen for this wish to come true?*
- *What would other people in your family think about this wish* (naming specific family members)

If the child accompanies this activity with questions about whether you think their wishes will happen (e.g. accompanying a wish such as ‘for dad to come home and for us all to be a happy family again) you need to be cautious against giving the child any false information or false hopes. You should acknowledge their feelings for any wish, that it is very important to them, perhaps acknowledging this muddle and stating that you will be looking at this issue together later on in the sessions. You could ask the child what they think about this wish, or what the views of other people in their family are. You need to ensure you do not fob the child off and make bland general statements that everything will be OK etc but show the importance of this by stating that they should place it carefully in their file for you to come back again when you have had a chance to do some work on the reasons for this muddle (i.e. why dad is no longer in the family).

## **ACTIVITY                      IF I COULD CHANGE**

Goals: To explore whether there are things that the child would like to change about themselves or their life; to identify any underlying hopes, anxieties or agendas the child has; to help the child identify some goals that might be able to be addressed in the intervention;

Suitable for: Any age child. Young children might require you to write for them or they can use the adapted versions of this exercise.

Materials: Worksheet No. 20

### Instructions

This is a return to a previous worksheet to see what the child’s current views are. Ask the child to think about and write or dictate 5 things they would like to change about them self or their world. Children sometimes identify changes they would like other people to make. These should be listened to and respected but you should gently encourage the child to focus on changes in self and not on changes they would like to see other people make. After the child has finished the task you could ask questions such as:

- *Tell me a little bit about each thing you want to change?*
- *What change is the most important?*
- *What needs to happen for these things to change?*
- *Who can help you with these changes?*
- *What might get in the way of these changes happening?*
- *Do you think these changes are possible / will happen?*
- *What would other people in your family say about these changes?*
- *Are there any changes that you think I (i.e. the worker) can help with?*

This list could be used to identify some goals that you, the child and the parent could focus upon in the intervention. These changes (goals) could be used as motivators for future work i.e. depending upon the changes identified, the goals could form a justification for undertaking some of the subsequent modules. For example, if the child was not living at home and identified a wish to go home, the work on understanding what has happened or undertaking protection work could be seen as one of the steps towards achieving this goal. Alternatively a wish to get rid of the bad feelings could be attached to the need to understand why s/he feels how she does and learning ways to cope with these thoughts and feelings. However workers need to be careful not to promise that the work will ensure the child will achieve these goals – false promises are not helpful.

## **ACTIVITY**

## **WHAT I WANT TO HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE**

Goals: To encourage the child to identify their wishes, feelings and goals; to identify underlying agendas of the child.

Suitable for: Any age child. Young children might require you to write for them or they can use the adapted versions of this exercise.

Materials: Worksheet No. 22

### Instructions

This is similar to the last exercise about changes the child wishes to make. Ask the child to think about and write, draw or dictate some of things they would like to happen in the future. Some of these might not be realistic, attainable or possible but it is important to give the child a chance to identify them. After the child has finished the task you could ask questions such as:

- *Tell me a little bit about each thing you want to happen?*
- *What one is most important?*
- *How can this thing happen?*
- *Who can make these things happen?*
- *What might get in the way of these things happening?*
- *Do you think these changes will happen?*
- *What would other people in your family say about these changes?*

Similar to the last activity, this list could be used to identify some goals that you, the child and the parent could focus upon in the intervention. These changes (goals) could be used as motivators for future work i.e. depending upon the changes identified, the goals could form a justification for undertaking some of the subsequent modules. Once again workers need to be careful not to promise that these events will happen.

It is recommended that you combine this area of work with activities that mark the end of the work and ensure that it finishes on a positive note. Where possible involve the parent or carer in the sessions. Activities that you could use include:

## **ACTIVITY       REMEMBERING THE GOOD THINGS**

Goals: to help the child focus on positives; to end the assessment on some positives

Suitable for: All children – choose appropriate worksheet for age and development.

Materials: worksheet No. 122 & 123.

### Instructions

Tell the child that they have worked so hard remembering and learning about the worries and problems in the family (or that others have about their family). Emphasise that these events are one part of their life. They should not forget the good memories they have and the good things that have happened in their lives. Tell them that this worksheet is a way of remembering the positive things. After they have completed the activity ask the following types of questions:

- Tell me about what you have written drawn
- How did you feel as you were doing this?
- What was the best thing you thought about whilst doing this. Why?

## **ACTIVITY       MY STRENGTHS AND TALENTS**

Goals: to help the child identify strengths and positive attributes

Suitable for: All children

Materials: worksheet No. 12

### Instructions

Ask the child to list all the things they are good at and like about themselves. Linking the programme to strengths might trigger responses about new talents and skills that extend to their feelings and being strong etc. If they refer only to activities outside the programme allow this to happen, but add your own comments about their emotional strengths after they have done their list. Once again emphasise how their abuse was only one part of their life. There is also a part of their life where they have lots of strengths that can make them feel good about themselves.

## **ACTIVITY       FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES**

Goals: help the child identify how to utilise strengths and interests and set positive goals

Suitable for: All children

Materials: worksheet No. 13

### Instructions

Ask the child to complete the worksheet. Use this exercise to help the child think about future goals and interests and how they can use their strengths to achieve these

## Staying Safe

### **Rationale**

This section is relevant to situations where there are concerns about possible sexual abuse and inappropriate sexual behaviours and has been adapted from specialised assessment and intervention programmes written by the author. These cases often require a more detailed exploration of issues such as the child's sexual knowledge, attitudes and experiences; their understanding of what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate behaviours; and exploration of legal and moral issues around sexual behaviour. Assessors might wish to explore what the child knows, how they know this, what have they been told, what have they seen or heard, what they have experienced and what meaning they give to sex? In doing so practitioners could explore the normative sexual atmosphere of the houses they have lived in. For example, what were the boundaries around privacy, dress, toileting, bathing, access to sexual materials or conversations or to sexual behaviours. In cases where there are concerns about sexual abuse and protection

issues assessors might need to explore their knowledge of general sexual abuse issues. For the older child it might be useful to explore their understanding of different types of harm or abuse and for younger or less mature children this might involve exploring concepts such as OK and Not touching, what behaviours are appropriate or inappropriate and what children should do if they are exposed to such behaviour, who they tell, who they might turn to for help or what they could do.

Obtaining this broad range of information is designed to help you assess what influence their life experiences may have had upon attitudes, knowledge & behaviour. It might provide you with clues to prior sexual abuse, exposure to inappropriate sexual knowledge and behaviours and may help you understand the dynamics involved in any abuse that has taken place. It might of course provide you with no information to support any abuse concerns. In addition such enquiries may help identify some of the underlying factors which fuels their own inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviours, suggesting some of the predisposing, maintenance and precipitating factors that may have contributed to the abuse dynamics within the family. Further, such information may provide useful information to help you identify future therapeutic needs.

The activities in this section are designed to collect information relevant to such issues and deal with topics such as boundaries, personal space, trust, safety, secrets, surprises, privacy, appropriate and inappropriate touching and what constitutes abuse. The inclusion of these activities are not intended to replace the specialised guidance and training on these areas. However, with care use of these activities can provide information which might assist your assessment.

. In undertaking such intrusive work assessors must be clear that there is a good reason for them to explore these topics. Furthermore assessors must remain vigilant to the impact that such conversations and activities may have upon a child and to be vigilant for signs of undue stress or trauma reaction that could cause damage to their mental health, to their current safety or to their placement security. In addition, practitioners need to have regard to the evidential implications of undertaking some these activities and whether their use might compromise future investigations. This will need to be set against the needs of safeguarding. It is advised therefore that before undertaking any of these activities that practitioners consult with their managers, with their legal advisors and the police regarding the appropriateness of such approaches at this time

Areas of a core assessment which might be covered by this area		
<b>Child's Developmental Needs Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; behavioural development</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Family &amp; social relationships</li> <li>• Social presentation</li> </ul>	<b>Parenting Capacity Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Care</li> <li>• Emotional warmth</li> <li>• stimulation</li> <li>• Guidance &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Stability</li> </ul>	<b>Family &amp; Environment Domain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family history &amp; functioning</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Family's Social Integration</li> <li>• Community Resources</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITIES

Activities which can be useful at this point of the interview are listed below and the worksheets can be found on the accompanying CD. Not all the activities need to be used. You need to decide which ones best fit your child. The activities are designed to collect information relevant to such issues and deal with topics such as boundaries, personal space, trust, safety, secrets, surprises, privacy, appropriate and inappropriate touching and what constitutes abuse. The inclusion of these activities are not intended to replace the specialised guidance and training on these areas. However, with care use of these activities can provide information which might assist your assessment.

### ACTIVITY                      BOUNDARIES & PERSONAL SPACE

Goals: to learn the concept of boundaries

Suitable for: younger children, although could be shown to adolescents

Materials: worksheets No. 63 & 64, toy figures or puppets

#### Instructions

Ask the child to connect the dots around the child figures in to form a 'physical boundary' around the figures and colour in the 'personal space' area created between the person and the surrounding line. Use this to introduce and discuss the concept of boundaries and physical space, emphasising that everyone has a physical boundary and a right to their own space. An additional way to illustrate this is to use toys or puppets available (often good to get the child to name them), placing them a piece of flip chart paper and encouraging the child or young person to draw a line around the figures to denote the concepts of personal boundaries and personal space. It is worth undertaking this exercise on a hypothetical person before discussing the child's own boundaries and personal space, as this can distance the exercise from their own experiences of having their boundaries breached, which will better facilitate initial learning. Ask the child / young person to give examples of situations when someone might cross the boundaries of the child figures or the puppets and enter their personal space and encourage them to think about whether this is OK/ Not OK or appropriate / inappropriate. Types of questions you could ask include.

- *Tell me about this person's physical boundaries?*
- *Why does this person have a physical boundary?*
- *Tell me about this person's personal space?*
- *Why do they have personal space?*
- *Can you think of times when someone might cross this boundary and enter their space?*
- *What happens?*
- *What does / would the person / puppet think about this?*
- *How would they feel about someone coming in to their personal space?*
- *What could they say?*

- *What could they do?*
- *Are there times when it might be OK for someone to enter someone's personal space? When? Why?*
- *How would this person let the person know that it is OK?*

Emphasize how everyone has a physical boundary and that they have a 'personal space' which belongs to them and that people need permission to enter the space? Also consider situations where personal space might need to be invaded (e.g. parent stopping a child from running across the road) or when there can be negotiation or permission given for crossing into personal space (e.g. visit to the doctor, hug from safe person etc). The learning here is a person's right to have personal boundaries and personal space which should not be violated unless they give permission or there is an imminent danger requiring breaking the boundaries to keep the person safe.

## **ACTIVITY MY PERSONAL SPACE**

Goals: For the child to gain an understanding of *their* personal space.

Suitable for: all ages

Materials: worksheet No. 64

### Instructions

This activity extends the concepts learnt from the last exercise and applies it specifically to the child / young person you are working with. Ask them to draw a picture of them self and colour in the area around the figure that shows their personal space (see worksheet). Look out for indications in the drawing about their perception and experience of personal space. Drawings with very little personal space might give clues as to their experience of having their space violated or might be indicative of living in a family with lots of physical contact (good and bad). Drawings with very large personal space areas might indicate a healthy concept of space or alternatively might indicate a wish for more space or an anxiety about people around them. You should also consider any cultural influences on personal space issues within this child's family and any physical care issues for children with special needs. Their views of their personal space should therefore be explored. Ask them questions such as:

- *Tell me about your personal space?*
- *How big / wide is your personal space? (it is useful to help the child / young person think of this as being a distance of an outstretched arm).*
- *Is this personal space the same as the other picture you coloured in? You could explore here their views about the size of their personal space)*
- *Why do you have a personal space?*
- *Is your personal space the same with everyone you know or different with different people? Why / why not?*
- *When do people enter your personal space? How do they do this?*
- *What happens when some one enters your personal space?*

- *What do you think about this?*
- *Has anyone entered your personal space when you did not want them to?*
- *What did you think / feel about this?*
- *Are there times when it might be OK for someone to enter your personal space? When? Why? (think of real life examples of when this might happen or be required)*
- *How would you let the person know that it is OK?*

It is likely that there are examples of the child's personal space being violated. This is clearly the case if the child has been sexually abused. You need to avoid communicating any sense of the child being responsible for breaches in personal space and not having kept themselves safe, as this could reinforce feelings of shame and guilt. Ensure that you give the simple message that adults should not invade a child's space (exceptions of risk and safety apart) without permission. The complication here is when an offender has groomed the child so well they the child thinks they wanted this invasion. This will be dealt with in later modules. At this point the emphasis needs to be on the rights to have boundaries and personal space.

## **ACTIVITY                      THE PRIVATE TRIANGLE**

Goals: to understand the concept of the 'private triangle'

Suitable for: young children, although worksheets can be shown to teenagers to illustrate the concept

Materials: worksheets No. 65

### Instructions

The concept of the private triangle is a simple way of introducing the child to the idea of privacy and their 'private parts' (genitalia, breast and anal regions). It is of course recognised that sexual abuse can involve areas outside of this triangle but it represents the first step towards developing the concept of privacy in a way that is not too embarrassing for the child. As shown in the worksheet the inverted triangle covers these parts of the body (front and back). Ask the child to complete the worksheet illustrating this concept.

- *What is the 'private triangle'?*
- *What is important about the private triangle?*
- *What parts of the body are covered by the triangle? (This might get the child to name specific parts but do not push at this stage)*
- *Why do you think it is important to know where the private triangle is? (this might lead to comments about safety or about abuse but ensure you relate it to issues of boundaries, personal space as used in previous exercises)*

Whilst the exercises described above might be seen by older children and adolescents as childish it can be useful to show them to them to illustrate the concept.

## **ACTIVITY                      MY PRIVATE TRIANGLE**

Goals: for the child to apply the concept of the private triangle to their own body

Suitable for: young children although worksheets can be shown to teenagers to illustrate the concept

Materials: worksheet 66

Instructions

Ask the child to draw a picture of him or herself and draw on their private triangle. Some children cover different parts of the body which might give clues about their perceptions or experiences. You could reinforce the concept by making the shape of the triangle by holding your hands together in front of your crotch area explaining that the areas inside space created by your arms constitute the private triangle. Explain to the child that s/he has a private triangle, like everyone else and ask the child to do the same with their arms. Questions you could ask the child could include:

- *Tell me about your drawing?*
- *Show me where your private triangle is on your drawing?*
- *Is this where the private triangle is on your own body?*
- *Is this the same area as the private triangle shown in the last worksheet?*
- *What do you think about this idea of a private triangle?*
- *Has anyone not respected / touched you in your private triangle?*
- *Tell me about this?*

**ACTIVITY IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE & INAPPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES**

Goals: to help the child identify, explore and increase their awareness of concepts of appropriate or appropriate boundaries.

Suitable for: older children and teenagers who can write and have an ability to conceptualise boundaries.

Materials: worksheet 67 & 68

Instructions

Ask the child to complete the worksheets and after they have completed it go through it with them considering the following issues and questions:

- *What makes a boundary of behaviour appropriate or acceptable?*
- *What makes it inappropriate or unacceptable?*
- *Where do young people learn about appropriate and inappropriate boundaries? Consider with the young person the influence of family, friends, the media?*
- *Where have you learnt about inappropriate boundaries noted in the worksheet?*
- *Would your family disagree with some of your answers?*
- *Would your friends agree / disagree with any of your answers?*
- *Have any of these examples happened to you? Which ones. What happened?*
- *What did you think about this at the time?*
- *What do you think about them know?*

- *If your views are different now what has changed your views?*

Ensure that you recognise that many people's definitions of what is appropriate / inappropriate or acceptable / unacceptable can be different for different people, families and communities, dependent upon individual morals, personal experiences and the influences of family, community, faith and culture. Try not to impose your morals but at the same time emphasise when boundaries are clearly abusive.

## **ACTIVITY CASE SCENARIO ON BEING SAFE**

Goals: to learn about the concept of safe

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet No. 69 for younger children and worksheet No. 70 for teenagers

### Instructions

This activity attempts to explore the concepts of feeling safe through the use of a case scenario, which is a safer way to teach and explore these issues than by focusing too quickly upon the child's own circumstances. Workers need to be watchful for any signs of significant emotional reactions from the children and if this occurs this should be explored and a decision made whether to continue at this point. Have the child read the case scenario (or read it out for them). After they have done this go through the questions with them on the worksheet. Specific questions to ask the child have not been detailed here as this depends upon the child's reactions and interpretation of the story. However in discussion you should think about exploring the following areas:

- *What did they think of the story? .*
- *What do they think about the child in the story?*
- *How do they think the child felt?*
- *What might the child have been thinking?*
- *Do they think the child in the story feels safe?*
- *Ask them what 'being safe' might mean to the child in the story?*
- *Seek specific examples of how the child did not feel safe?*
- *Ask whether the child you are working with would be safe in this situation?*
- *Explore reasons for them being safe / unsafe?*
- *How would they know (seek specifics about what thoughts or feelings they might have that would act as a warning signal and where in the body they would have these alarms.*
- *What could the child's parent have done to show her that she was going to be safe?*
- *Seek the child's views on how the child could tell if they were safe?*
- *What might help this child? What could the parent do?*
- *Ask gently whether this story reminds them of situations in their life?*

## **ACTIVITY MY SAFE PLACES**

Goals: to find out where the child feels safe

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet No. 71

Instructions

Encourage the child to come up with as many examples of places where s/he feels safe and enter these on the worksheet. This activity could uncover information relevant to any grooming or abuse committed by the offender and if this occurs you need to explore this further as it might provide concerns about current protection issues in addition to those in the past. Ask the child to think about the places s/he feels safe and then list these or draw them on the worksheet. The following issues and questions could be used during and after the activity:

- *Tell me about these safe places?*
- *What makes them safe?*
- *Do you share these safe places with anyone (explore access to these safe places)*
- *How did you feel when you were drawing / listing these safe places?*
- *What were you thinking about when you drew / wrote*

Follow activity with the one below.

## **ACTIVITY MY SAFEST PLACE**

Goals: to find out where the child feels safest

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet No. 72

Instructions

Whilst this might feel like a repeat of the last exercise it is important to seek the child's views on what their safest place is. This might give you clues as to the child's skills in choosing an appropriately safe place – is it really safe or does the child think it is safe because they have been told that? The activity can also help you assess the child's ability to discriminate between the levels of safety in different places, which is an important part of protection work. Further identifying the child's safest place might prove to be an important part of future work with the parent and could be a useful part of any protection planning. Ask the child to think about all the safe places s/he listed and choose the place where s/he feels the safest. Ask them to write about this place or draw it (even if they are repeating themselves as the drawing provides thinking and feeling time and reinforces learning)

- *Tell me about your safest place?*
- *What makes this the place where you feel the safest? How do you feel safe here?*
- *What makes this place safer than the other places you listed? (this could open up discussion about the relative safety or lack of safety of the other places. You need to try and ascertain what is it that helps the child feel safe – is it the presence or absence of people, the physical environment etc)*
- *How did you feel when you were drawing / listing these safe places?*

- *What were you thinking about when you drew / wrote*
- The next activity is a logical next step

## **ACTIVITY                      UNSAFE PLACES**

Goals: to find out and explore places where the child feels unsafe

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 73

### Instructions

Ask the child to think about the places s/he feels safe and then list or draw them on the worksheet. If they say there is no place where they feel unsafe ask them to write or draw about the place that is the least comfortable for them. The following issues and questions could be used during and after the activity:

- *Tell me about these unsafe places? (go through listed or drawn)*
- *What makes them unsafe?*
- *How did you feel when you were drawing / listing these safe places?*
- *What were you thinking about when you drew / wrote*
- *What place felt / feels the most unsafe?*

This activity does not lead on to another one that asks them to draw or write about the most unsafe place as this might relate to their abuse experiences and the child should not be under pressure to discuss this at this stage. However, if the child appears to be emotionally secure in the session you could follow up a question in this exercise such as:

- *Can you a little about why?*

However you should avoid putting the child under any pressure to answer this and respect and if they wish not to, you should make a comment such as “it sounds like this would be too hard for you to talk about right now”, reassuring them they do not have to discuss this but that you are pleased they were able to say that this was not a safe place.

## **ACTIVITY                      CASE SCENARIO ON TRUST**

Goals: to teach and explore the concept of trust via a case scenario

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheets 74 or 75

### Instructions

Ask the child to read or listen to the case scenario and then complete the worksheet. Discuss the child's responses and consider use of the following questions:

- *What do you think about the story?*
- *What does trust mean to you?*
- *Have there been people you could not trust? Why*

- *Are there people you feel you can trust? Why?*
- *What were you thinking about when you were writing / drawing?*
- *What were you feeling?*

## **ACTIVITY                      PEOPLE I TRUST**

Goals: to continue teaching and exploring issues of trust

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 76

### Instructions

Ask the child to think about a person (s) who s/he trusts and ask them to complete the worksheet. When undertaking this exercise remember that a child might have a confusing understanding about trust, especially if they were subject to grooming or implanted messages from an offender or if they had a close relationship with the person about whom there are concerns in the family. This can be further compounded by any confusion about the non-offending parent. This exercise attempts to explore their sense of trust about specific people and can present you with opportunities to identify any such confusions. Discuss the child's responses and consider use of the following questions;

- *Tell me about your drawing?*
- *What makes you think you can trust this person?*
- *What is it they do that tells you can trust them?*
- *Are there times when you were confused about whether you could trust them?*
- *How do you feel about this person?*

## **ACTIVITY                      BROKEN TRUST**

Goals: to identify ways that trust can be broken

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 77 or 78

### Instructions

This activity lists general ways that trust can be broken as this is less threatening to the child than discussing specific ways at this stage. However workers need to be aware that this activity can trigger memories of times when their trust was breached and therefore attention needs to be given to the child's emotional reactions during the exercise. Try and keep the child focused on general issues of trust rather than specifics of their history. Ask the child to draw or write or list different ways that someone's trust can be broken. You might need to assist the child with this by revisiting the work you have previously done about trust and then help them think about ways such trust can be broken. Discuss the child's responses and consider the following questions as part of your discussion.

- *Tell about your picture / list*
- *Have people broken your trust in them? How?*

- *Did you realise this at the time?*
- *When did you realise that your trust had been broken?*
- *What did you think / feel about this at the time?*
- *How does did it / does it feel to have your trust broken?*
- *What would you like to say to this person now?*
- *What have you learned about trust today?*

## **ACTIVITY                      PEOPLE I DON'T TRUST**

Goals: to identify and discuss the person(s) the child does not trust

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 79

### Instructions

This activity can be combined with the previous activity or done as separate activity. Younger children often find it easier if this activity is separated from the last. Once again workers need to be aware that this activity can trigger memories of times when their trust was breached and therefore attention needs to be given to the child's emotional reactions during the exercise. This activity differs from the last in that it is more specific to the child's personal experiences and actually asks them to identify people they do not trust. As a result this activity might be particularly difficult for some children as they might perceive it as a breach of trust for the offender or non-offending parent and they still might be anxious about the consequences of telling. Whilst you will address this issue again later in the programme it is worth doing this exercise at this point to give the child to give information previously not given. It is important that workers reinforce the boundaries and rules of the session before this exercise, particularly those points emphasising your duty to report any information relating to any new abuse. Ask the child to draw a picture of a person that they do not trust. Discuss the child's responses and consider the following questions as part of your discussion.

- *Tell me about your drawing?*
- *Tell me why you can't trust this person?*
- *How did you feel about doing this drawing?*
- *How do you feel about this person? Why?*
- *How do you feel now?*

## **ACTIVITY                      SAFETY RULES**

Goals: To develop some initial rules that will help safeguard the child from future abuse

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 80

### Instructions

Ask the young person to read the rules on the worksheet. Then ask him / her to list 5 additional ways to keep him or herself safe. The purpose of this activity is to encourage the child to generate

some of their own ideas so you need to resist the temptation to suggest your own at this stage. Rules are more likely to be internalised, recalled and followed if they are invented by the young person. However your comments and responses can help think about certain areas prompting them to come up with a rule without being the result of a rule imposed or suggested by yourself. The following prompts or questions can assist during and after the activity:

- *How do you feel about this list?*
- *Tell me about these rules?*
- *How will these rules keep you safe?*
- *Which of these rules do you already have in place?*
- *Which are new rules?*
- *Which rule makes you feel safest?*
- *Who needs to know about these rules?*
- *What will people in your family think about these rules?*
- *Which of these rules will be hard to put into practice? Why?*
- *Do any of these rules cause difficulties for you / others?*
- *If so which? How can these problems be overcome / solved?*

#### **ACTIVITY: CASE SCENARIO ON SECRETS**

Goals: To introduce the concepts of secrecy via a case scenario

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet s 81 or 82

##### Instructions

This activity attempts to introduce the child to the concepts of safe and unsafe secrets. It is impracticable to tell a child that they should tell no secrets as this is a part of childhood, but there is a need to provide some guidance to children about what secrets are inappropriate, unhealthy and dangerous and those which are safe. As in previous exercises workers need to be aware that this activity can trigger memories of times when they have been asked to keep inappropriate secrets and attention therefore needs to be given to the child's emotional reactions during the exercise. Try and keep the child focused on general issues of secrecy at this stage rather than specifics of their history. Ask the child to read or listen to the case scenario and complete the questions posed on the worksheet. After the activity has finished help the child process the activity and discuss their thoughts and feelings. The following questions could assist with this discussion:

- *What do you think of this story?*
- *What is the difference between safe and unsafe secrets?*
- *Give me an example of one unsafe secret and one safe secret?*
- *What did you think about the secret of the person in the story?*

- *Have you ever had a secret that you thought you should not tell? You will explore their own secrets in a later exercise but if it feels appropriate you could ask them here to tell you about this secret and then process their thoughts and feelings about this secret.*

## **ACTIVITY OK AND NOT OK SECRETS**

Goals: To teach the child the idea of OK and not OK secrets

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 83

### Instructions

This worksheet encourages the child to explore a number of scenarios where secrets are requested. Encourage the child to explore why some secrets are OK (surprises) and whilst other are not. After the activity has finished help the child process the activity and discuss their thoughts and feelings. The following questions could assist with this discussion:

- *So what is the difference between an OK secret and a not Ok secret?*
- *What is the difference between a surprise and a secret?*

## **ACTIVITY SECRETS MAKE ME FEEL ...**

Goals: To express some emotions associated with secrets

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 84

### Instructions

For children who are burdened with difficult feelings associated with keeping a secret, being asked to tell about the secret can trigger powerful reactions such as anxiety and fear and can cause the child to shut down in the session. For children who have been abused the costs of telling their secrets may be perceived as too high, especially if accompanied by implanted messages or threats from an offender. A more effective way to explore or access secrets, or to help a child critically examine their secrets, is to ask them to describe their feelings about a secret without actually asking what the secret is. Ask the child to think about his or her secrets and think about their feelings they have about these secrets. Then ask the child to complete the worksheet asking them to draw or write about the feelings about the secret. Inform them you are not asking them to tell the secret (unless they want to) but to describe the feelings they have when they think about them. After completing the activity discuss this with them. The following questions could assist you:

- *Tell me about your picture?*
- *How did you feel when you were drawing it?*
- *Is this secret a safe secret or an unsafe secret?*
- *Who else knows about this secret?*

- *If they have told someone else ask – what do you think this person thought / felt when you told them the secret?*
- *Were you happy you told?*
- *If the same situation happened again do think you would tell? Who?*
- *What would happen if you told someone (me) about this secret?*
- *What is this secret about?*

## **ACTIVITY                      SAFE PLACES TO SHARE SECRETS**

Goals: To explore places that are safe to share secrets

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 85

### Instructions

This activity encourages the child to explore where it is appropriate for a child to share secrets and personal information. This is aimed at children who have a poor understanding of boundaries and who might share information in inappropriate settings such as in their class or for children whose are worried about sharing their thoughts or feelings with anyone. It aims to communicate the message that there are safe places and times when it is OK to share secrets. Ask the child to think about a place or a setting where s/he feels totally safe and then draw or write about this place(s). After they have completed the worksheet discuss this with them, making use of the following questions:

- *Tell me about your picture*
- *What makes this place safe?*
- *Are there places where you do not feel safe?*
- *What makes these places not safe?*
- *What people are at these places?*
- *Explore the reality of telling people about secrets at this place and the appropriateness of sharing information here.*

## **ACTIVITY                      WHO I CAN TELL**

Goals: To explore who are appropriate and inappropriate people the child can tell

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 86

### Instructions

Children who have been abused or have a family member who has abused another person often have difficulties discriminating between people they can trust and people they cannot trust. This exercise is designed to help the child consider who they can share their secrets or feelings with. Ask the child to think about the person or people with whom they feel totally safe. If they are unable to think of such a person suggest they think of the person or people they feel safest with. Ask them

to write about or draw a picture of a person who has never hurt or abused them and who they would feel able to trust with their difficult secrets. After they have completed this activity discuss the activity with them. The following questions may be of assistance:

- *Tell me about this person (people)*
- *What makes you feel safe with this person?*
- *Are there people you do not feel safe with?*
- *What is it about them that make them unsafe?*
- *What do they do that makes you not feel safe?*
- *Tell me about these people?*
- *Have you told anyone else about not feeling safe with them?*
- *Explore what contact they have with this person, whether they have contact with other members of the family, whether the non-offending parent is aware and what the reality is of any risk issues that will need to be addressed with the non-offending carers & others.*

## **ACTIVITY**

### **MY FRIEND'S SECRET**

Goals: To explore difficult secrets via hypothetical or third person story telling

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 87

#### Instructions

This activity makes use of the technique of helping the child explore their own thoughts, feelings and anxieties through the safety of projection onto hypothetical scenarios. By asking the child to consider the situation of a hypothetical child they have the opportunity to expose or explore their own secrets without having to acknowledge these are their own. This activity can often provide information useful about the underlying reasons for a child not wanting to tell about a secret. For example if the character is anxious about telling because of threats from someone or an anxiety about the reaction of a family member this often mirrors the underlying anxieties of the child in real life. By discussing how the hypothetical child feels, what they could do and how they can be supported, you are in effect helping the child problem solve their own dilemmas and worries. Even if the child recounts a secret that is not one they share with the character the process of discussion is providing a useful model for solving problems and sends the message that secrets can be shared and that support can be provided. Ask the child to think of a child who has a difficult secret. Encourage them to pick a child of a similar age than they are and who has a similar family composition. Begin by encouraging the child to verbalise the story before writing or dictating to you. Once they have created a basic outline for the story are them to write it down or dictate it to you. They could also do a drawing to accompany the story. After the child has finished help them process the content and explore the issues raised. The following questions or comments could be of assistance.

- *Tell me about your story?*

- *How does the person in the story feel about sharing his or her secret?*
- *What might be reasons that the person is worried about telling the secret?*
- *If the character in the story did not tell, what were the reasons that the child did not tell?*
- *What did they think might happen if they did not tell?*
- *Did the person in your story find someone safe to talk to?*
- *Who was this?*
- *What did the child want this person to do after they heard the secret?*
- *What would have helped this child stay safe?*
- *What would have helped them share their secret with a safe person?*
- *How did the child feel after they told?*
- *What do you think / feel about the person in the story?*
- *Are you like the child in the story?*
- *How are you like them?*

### **ACTIVITY: MY HAPPY SECRET**

Goals: To learn about safe and unsafe secrets (or secrets and surprises)

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 88

#### Instructions

This activity focuses upon the difference between safe and unsafe secrets or, phrased in a way the child might better understand, the difference between secrets and surprises. Ask the child to think of a time when someone told them a safe or fun secret. You might need to explain or define this for child – perhaps by referring to it being a secret that did not hurt anyone or make them feel uncomfortable (you will give more concrete examples after the exercise). Ask them to tell you about this. Then ask them to think of a time when they shared a safe or fun secret with someone. Ask them to write or draw about this time on the worksheet. After they have completed the exercise discuss this with them with the aim of helping them learn the difference between a safe secret and an unsafe secret (secret or surprise). The following questions might be of assistance:

- *Tell me about your fun secret?*
- *Who did you tell this fun secret to?*
- *How did you feel when you told them this secret?*
- *How did the friend feel when you told them this secret?*
- *Seek or give the child examples of other types of fun secrets. Whilst doing this also use the phrase 'surprise' where appropriate. For example, suggest a situation where a child tells their brother or sister not to tell their mother what they are going to buy them for their birthday and to keep this a secret. This is a form of surprise that can also be a 'safe secret'. Ask them for other examples.*

- *Reinforce the message that a safe secret is one that does not involve keeping information to themselves that makes the person feel sad, uncomfortable or where someone could get hurt. You will expand on this concept a little bit more in a later exercise.*

## **ACTIVITY MY DIFFICULT SECRET**

Goals: To continue learning about safe and unsafe secrets,

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheet 89

### Instructions

This activity continues discussion on safe and unsafe secrets by focusing on examples of unsafe secrets. As in previous exercises workers need to be aware that this activity can trigger memories of times when they have been asked to keep inappropriate secrets and attention therefore needs to be given to the child's emotional reactions during the exercise. This exercise is not seeking information about any new secrets but focuses upon a difficult secret that they have already told someone about. However workers should be mindful of the possibility that the child could give them a secret relating to abuse which they have not told anyone else about before and they should therefore be mindful of the safeguarding / child protection issues and responsibilities about reporting any new information about risk.

Ask the child to think about a time when someone asked them to keep a difficult or scary secret about something that made them feel uncomfortable or confused. Then ask them to draw or write about a time when they shared or told someone about a difficult secret. If the child says they have never shared a difficult secret then ask them to think about what it would be like to share such information. After they have completed the activity help them process it through discussion. The following questions might be of assistance:

- *Tell me about this difficult secret?*
- *Who did you tell it to?*
- *How did you feel when you shared this secret?*
- *How did the person you told feel when you told them?*
- *Did anyone ask you not to tell about this secret?*
- *Who asked you not to tell?*
- *What did you think might happen if you told your secret?*
- *How do feel now about telling about this secret.*

This secret does not have to be about matters relating to the abuse in the family, as long as the child perceives it as a difficult secret. The message you need to reinforce is that they did the right thing by telling. Some children regret telling, especially if it led to what they perceive as negative outcomes. You will need to acknowledge their feelings whilst helping them understand that they were right to tell and that this was a way in which they kept themselves safe.

**ACTIVITY: GOOD TOUCHES & BAD TOUCHES**

Goals: to help the child (and carer) develop an awareness and understanding of the differences between good touch and bad touch

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheets No 90 - 93

**Instructions**

This exercise is designed to introduce the child to the concepts of good and bad touches using non-sexual examples. It is recommended that facilitators read Worksheet No 87 with the child, which gives a definition of good and bad touch. These can then be followed with the worksheets on good and bad touch. Help the child process these worksheets as they go along. Additional questions could assist include:

- *Name some touches you think are good touches*
- *How does a good touch make you feel?*
- *How does your body tell you this is a good touch?*
- *Where in the body do you feel this touch (try and get to think beyond the area of the body touched and think about nice feelings caused by the touch and where they feel these)*
- *What kinds of touches are bad touches?*
- *How does a bad touch make you feel?*
- *Where in the body do you feel this?*
- *Who decides whether a touch is good or bad?*

**ACTIVITY: SAYING 'NO' TO BAD TOUCHES**

Goals: to help the child (and carer) develop an awareness and understanding of the differences between good touch and bad touch

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheets No 90 - 95

**Instructions**

This activity aims to introduce children to being able to say No and to express their feelings about bad touch, using non-sexual examples. Help them complete the worksheets and process the contents. Additional questions and discussion points could include:

- *Emily was sad at not winning cards. What did Terry do to make Emily happy again?*
- *Do you enjoy being tickled? Why or why not?*
- *At first Mitch liked being tickled, but then he didn't. Why?*
- *If, like Mitch, someone touches you against your wishes, what can you do?*
- *Would it be hard for you to tell someone to stop touching you? Why or why not?*

**ACTIVITY: WHAT'S PRIVATE**

Goals: to help the child (and carer) develop an awareness and understanding of the differences between good touch and bad touch

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheets No. 96-97

Instructions

These worksheets explore privacy and the body, incorporating information the child has learnt about their private triangle and personal space.

- *What parts of your body does a swimming costume cover?*
- *What is the touching rule?*
- *What are some good examples of the touching rule?*
- *How did Mr Jenkins break the touching rule?*
- *Mr Jenkins told Megan not to tell "their secret". How did Megan feel?*
- *These are good secrets and bad secrets. What is the difference between them?*
- *Why isn't it safe to keep a bad secret?*
- *If someone breaks the touching rule, what should you do?*

**ACTIVITY: SOME MORE IMPORTANT THINGS ABOUT TOUCHING**

Goals: to help the child extend the concepts of good and bad touch to touching of the genital areas

Suitable for: whilst aimed at younger children this is useful for older children and adolescents too, especially for those whose abuse started at a younger age

Materials: worksheets No 100 - 103

Instructions

This series of worksheets aims to focus on touching of the genital areas. It encourages the child to identify names for different parts of the body and reinforce previous messages about the body belonging to the child and the need to tell other adults about bad secrets. There is some repetition of previous work but this is deliberate to reinforce the messages. One of the activities in this series of worksheets is to encourage the child to draw a poster with the message 'My body belongs to me. Especially my private parts'. The child might like this poster to be displayed at the centre you work at (if appropriate). This is a useful reference point for later discussions about their own abuse experiences. Alternatively the child could be taken home by them although this needs discussion and agreement with the carer.

**ACTIVITY: BODY MESSAGES**

Goals: to help the child think about how their body gives them 'alert signs' about danger.

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheets No. 104 - 105

Instructions

These worksheets are designed to teach the child how they should trust their feelings and trust what danger signs their body is telling them about different situations. This activity builds upon work done in earlier modules about feelings and coping with feelings and it is often useful to revisit the child's worksheets in these sections to reinforce messages about their feelings being good things that they can use to help them. You are seeking to help the child think about how their body reacts when in dangerous situations. Encourage the child to think about where in the body they get signs that they are scared, nervous or worried (for example goose-bumps, funny feeling in the stomach, heart beating faster and tenseness in the muscles). Encourage them to think of other non-sexual examples when they have had these feelings and then move on to discuss how they could similar warning signs in respect to bad or Not OK touching. Questions that could assist here include

- *Think of a time when you were really scared (non-sexual)*
- *How did you know you were scared?*
- *How did your body give you the message that you were scared?*
- *Where in the body did you get this sign? Repeat for other feelings*
- *Alternatively suggest some situations and ask how their body might react / give them a sign of danger (e.g. bigger child comes over to them and looks threatening, mum getting angry when you have been naughty, facing a scary looking animal etc)*
- *What message is this feeling sending to your brain?*
- *What could your brain decide to do to keep you safe?*
- *What could you do when you get this feeling?*
- *Extend these concepts to sexual abuse and bad touching situations.*

#### **ACTIVITY: DANGEROUS SITUATIONS AND STAYING SAFE**

Goals: to utilise the child's learning to date to different situations and help the child think about and evaluate situations that might be dangerous and what to do.

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheets No 106 - 112

##### Instructions

This group of worksheets is designed to help the child evaluate the appropriateness or dangerousness of different types of situations. It also includes some practical suggestions about warning signs. This series of worksheets end with one which asks the child to record any questions they still have about touching and sexual matters. This might identify specific gaps in the child's knowledge that will need addressing by yourself or by the parent / carer.

#### **ACTIVITY: WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE**

Goals: to introduce the concept of 'abuse' and help the child understand the words for different types of abuse

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheets 113 - 115. It is helpful to have some of the previous case scenarios which you used in previous modules as these contain examples of these types of abuse and could be used to apply these concepts. Also useful is the NSPCC booklet 'In the Know', which can be purchased or downloaded free from the NSPCC website.

#### Instructions

This activity attempts to introduce the concept abuse in its general sense and identify different types of abuse such as emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect and sexual abuse. As in previous exercises workers need to be aware that this activity can trigger memories of their own abuse experiences and attention therefore needs to be given to the child's emotional reactions during the exercise. There are different worksheets available for younger and older children and you need to decide which is appropriate for the child you are working with. There is also an accompanying handout which gives definitions of different types of abuse. It is recommended that workers begin ask the child or young person to complete the worksheet before showing them the definitions sheet. This might provide you with useful information about the child's perception of abuse and how they interpret things they have overheard from others. You can then use the definition sheet to explain the concepts further. However for some children they might have difficulties knowing what to write and may be unable to work out what these terms are. In these cases it might be best to show them the definition worksheet and then ask them to write their own definition. For children who have difficulties with the written word you can write down what they dictate and perhaps ask them to draw a picture to illustrate. After they have completed the worksheet process it through with them. The following questions might be of assistance:

- *Can you give me some examples of this type of abuse?*
- *Have you ever experienced this type of abuse?*
- *If so tell me about this?*
- *For children who have been abused but state they have not you can refer to information you have been given and ask whether this would be abuse*
- *How were you feeling when you were doing this worksheet*

### **ACTIVITY                      WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE**

Goals: to introduce the concept of 'sexual abuse'

Suitable for: all children

Materials: worksheets 116 – 118. Also useful is the NSPCC booklet 'In the Know' which can be purchased or downloaded from the NSPCC website and the video described below. Facilitators should make use of other video resources they have available to them.

#### Instructions

This activity attempts to focus in more detail on sexual abuse. As in previous exercises workers need to be aware that this activity can trigger memories of their own abuse experiences and attention therefore needs to be given to the child's emotional reactions during the exercise. Inform

the child that you are now going to do an activity around sexual abuse but that you are not intending to ask them any detailed questions about what has happened to them. The purpose of this exercise is to give them some information about abuse so that they can understand it better. However they can tell you details of any abuse if they wish to. There are different worksheets available for younger and older children and you need to decide which is appropriate for the child you are working with. You might need to help children complete these or have them dictate their answers to you. Some teenagers may prefer to read the handout themselves and not talk as they do so. Others might need you to work closely with them to help support them in the process. By this stage of the programme you should know your child well and should make your own judgement. After they have completed the worksheet process it through with them. The following questions might be of assistance:

- *How did you feel as you were completing this worksheet?*
- *What were you thinking?*
- *Have some of the things described happened to you? (the young child version asks this on the worksheet but the older child version does not)*
- *If so which ones (they can point to or put a check against the behaviour listed)*

Remember that it is not the purpose of this programme to obtain specific information about their abusive experiences. However at the same time they might be helped by discussing it openly or may wish to talk about it at this stage. Ensure that you give them the opportunity to tell you about any abuse that happened. However you do not have to seek lots of detail about this as a later module gives them another opportunity to discuss it. The key issue is to give them the message that they can talk to you about it and that you communicate the message that you are willing and able to listen to their agendas. You should however ensure that you are aware of your reporting duties in respect to any newly disclosed information and that the child is aware of this at the beginning of the session and at any stage where they wish to tell you further information.

## **ACTIVITY**

## **THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

Goals: to educate the child about the possible effects of sexual abuse; to explore the effects of sexual abuse on this child

Suitable for: young children and adolescents

Materials: worksheets 119

### Instructions

This activity attempts to focus on the effects of sexual abuse, involving both an educational component and an exploratory component to find out more about how the abuse might be specifically affecting the child you are working with. Workers need to be aware that this activity can trigger memories of their own abuse experiences and attention therefore needs to be given to the child's emotional reactions during the exercise. Inform the child that you are now going to do an activity to look at how sexual abuse (or Not OK touching) can affect children. Explain that this will

look at what other children have told you about how they are affected and that you will then look at how it has affected them. It is important to emphasise to the child that finding these things out is a first step towards you and the child finding ways they could cope better with the memories and feelings about what has happened. Ask the child to complete the worksheet. Younger children might require you to write the answers for them whilst they draw. After they have completed the activity process the responses with them. The questions on the sheets are self –evident and will act as prompts to exploring the impact. You should also consider the following suggestions, questions and statements might help.

- *For each question ask them to tell you about what they have said and written and how they felt or thought about it*
- *“What do you do to deal with these” (whatever the behaviour or feeling is they are describing)*
- *“What help would you like with this?”*
- *Ensure that you give them the message that the effects described in the worksheets are from what other children have told us about how abuse has affected them. This is the educational part and helps convey the message that they are not the only one to experience abuse and that any reactions they are having are common for such children.*
- *Then explore what they have said as to how they are affected. You have to be careful that the child is not just ticking boxes to please you, or because they want you to feel sorry for them. Explore how long they have been having such difficulties (before the abuse during or just after)*
- *Be aware that some of these reactions might not be linked to the abuse or the subsequent trauma. For example sleep problems could be due to a noisy house or watching television and not due to anxiety. Explore their responses carefully.*
- *Ask the child and discuss what other experiences besides sexual abuse might cause a person to have the symptoms of post-traumatic stress described in the worksheet (e.g. other forms of trauma)*
- *Keep reinforcing the point that these are problems that the child can get help to cope with. The act of talking about the abuse and talking about the reactions is one way that can reduce these reactions (like a valve or kettle letting difficult feelings out slowly – the image being that feelings and thoughts bottled up will come out some way or another – perhaps via post-trauma reactions as described on the worksheet.*
- *Let the child know that you will be doing some thinking between the sessions about what might help them cope better with these memories and feelings and that future sessions will help them with this.*

#### **ACTIVITY:**

#### **IDEAS FOR HELPING THE CHILD COPE WITH MEMORIES**

Goals: To introduce the child to some basic ideas and techniques that can help them deal with unpleasant and intrusive memories and flashbacks

Suitable for: older children and adolescents

Materials: worksheet No. 120 or 121

Instructions

Explain to the young person that you are going to look at some ideas and tricks that have helped children and young people cope with their upsetting and scary memories about the abuse. Begin by slowly read out to the young person the handout appropriate for their age. These worksheets are intended to be overview handouts. You will need to decide whether to read this handout all at once with the child or just read a bit at a time and stop to practice and work via the other worksheets described below. The activities described on this handout have been broken down into the activities described below

Addendum 1      **Plan for undertaking direct work with the child / young person**

Child's Name: ..... Date of Birth: .....

Type of work:    ☐ initial                      ☐ core                      ☐ LAC assessment / review  
                         ☐ court assessment    ☐ CAF                      ☐ intervention work

Person undertaking the work: .....

Duration / timescales of work .....

Where will the work take place .....

How will they get there.....

Key issues / areas of work / aims (in order of priority)

1. ....  
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2. ....  
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3. ....  
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4. ....  
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5. ....  
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6. ....  
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7. ....  
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8. ....  
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9. ....  
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10. ....  
.....

Hypothesise what agendas the parent or carer might have about you seeing the child agendas might be about you seeing them, which might have passed on directly or indirectly to the child (it is worth asking the parent / carer what they have told the child about who you are, the reasons you are visiting them and about the work you are about to undertake).

1. ....  
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2. ....  
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3. ....  
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4. ....  
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5. ....  
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What explanations or message(s) will you give to the parent / carer about the reasons for the work and what you will be doing with their child? (bear in mind the agendas identified above).

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What explanations / messages would you like the parent / carer give to their child about the work

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What might the or young person’s agendas might be about you seeing them (i.e. their fears, worries or views about you, whether their own or indirectly passed to them by someone else). Write a few of these below

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....
- 4. ....
- 5. ....

What explanations or message(s) will you give to the child about the reasons for the work and what you will be doing in the sessions? (bear in mind the agendas identified above).

Child's development, language, and cultural needs (consider what influence these issues might have upon communication and methods of work. Seek info from parent / carer, school and from observation / initial meeting)

- Child's likes / dislikes / relevant to communication (e.g. do they like writing, drawing, drama, play, using computer or tablet or not wanting to meet in a certain place)

148

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Child's interests and hobbies which might assist rapport / communication

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What methods of work seem appropriate for this child / young person (e.g. writing, drawings, worksheets, play, visual, spoken activities, drama/role play, use of videos or other)

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Resources to be used / needed?

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Evidential / Investigation issues (Is there any ongoing investigation, court or evidential issues to consider when undertaking the work. Ensure you seek clarification / advice on this and note what can and cannot be asked or explored with the child)

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Any other issues to consider

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Addendum 2

**Session Planning & Recording**

Session facilitated by: .....

Date .....

Time and duration .....

Session Number ..... out of how many planned .....

Session Aims / Objectives (numbered list):

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Planned explanation to give to the child/young person about content of the session

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Materials / activities needed in introduction / rapport stage

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Materials / activities / methods needed to address key aims of this session

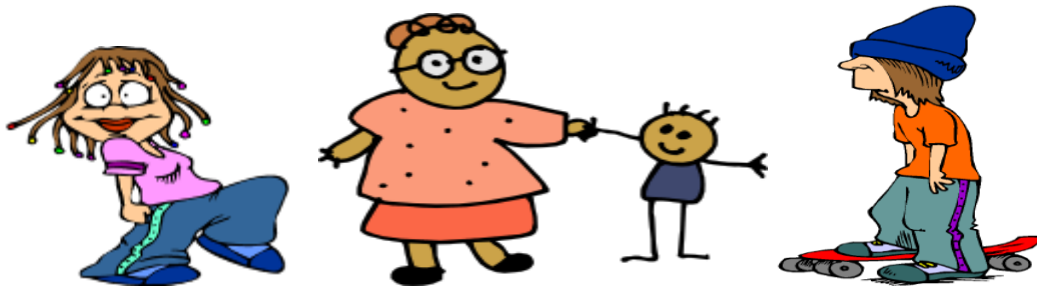
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**Name of Child:**

**Date of Session:**

**Page No.**

Session Topic	Content of Session (provide a summary of child's views and any direct quotes from child to support this. Note any drawings, worksheets used to support this)	Note any drawings, worksheets etc used to support this (number & date)
Any Safeguarding / Protection / Evidential issues		



# **Direct work with Children & Young People for Assessments**

## **Worksheets**



**Robert G Tucker**  
**RGT Training & Consultancy**

[admin@rgt-trainingandconsultancy.co.uk](mailto:admin@rgt-trainingandconsultancy.co.uk)

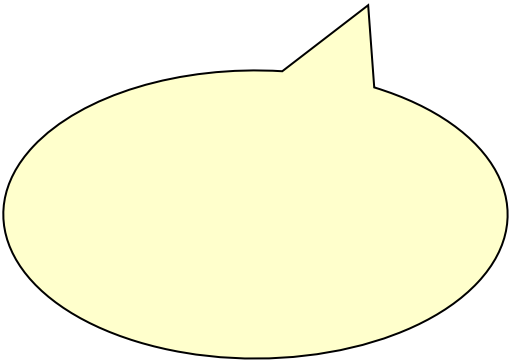
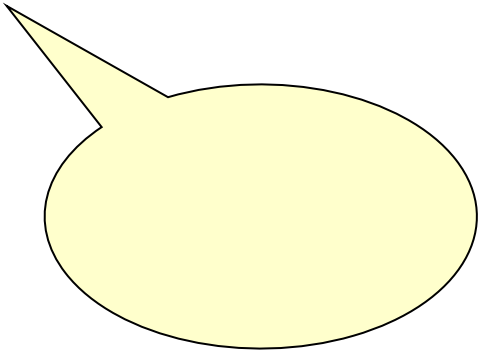
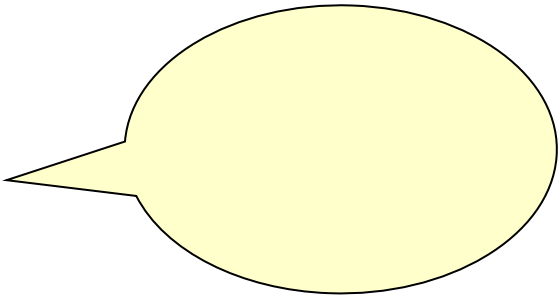
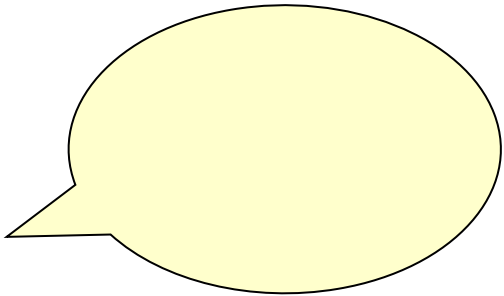
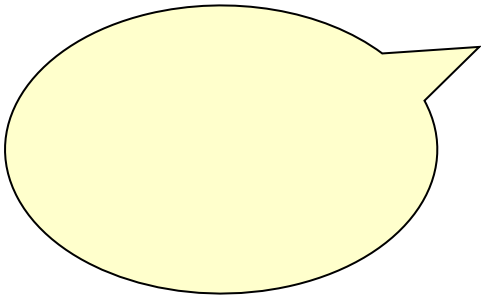
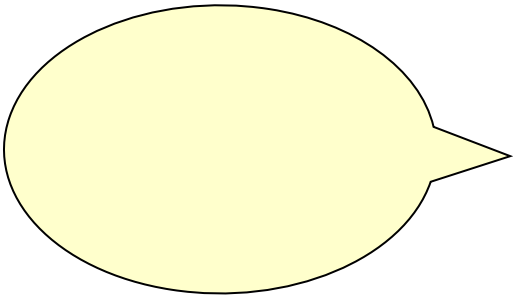
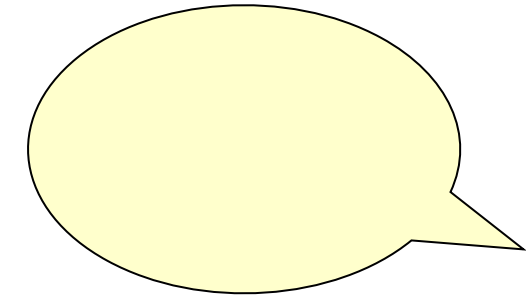
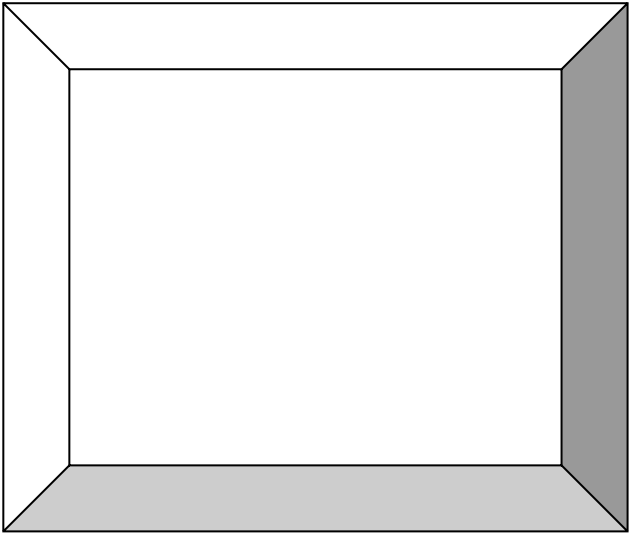
## INDEX OF WORKSHEETS

NO.	TITLE	NO.	TITLE
	<b><u>Introductions / contracting</u></b>		<b><u>My Life History</u></b>
1	Why am I seeing you?	59	Timeline
2	Rules and boundaries	60	Roadmap
3	My support chart	61	Story of my life
4	Support drawing	62	Life Graph
5	Feelings about today's session		<b><u>Protective Behaviours / Keeping safe</u></b>
6	Some of the work we will be doing in the sessions	63	Personal space
	<b><u>All About Me</u></b>	64	My personal space
7	All about me questionnaire	65	Private triangle
8	This is me picture	66	My private triangle
9	All about me unfinished sentences	67	Appropriate & inappropriate boundaries
10	Things I like about me	68	Rules and boundaries in my home
11	What do you dream about at night?	69	Safety case scenario (Jenny aged 7)
12	My strengths & talents	70	Safety case scenario (Sarah aged 11)
13	Favourite activities	71	My safe places
14	When I grow up	72	My safest place
15	Honesty test	73	Unsafe places
16	Something has happened to me	74	Trust scenario (Dean aged 13)
	<b><u>Worries and Wishes</u></b>	75	Trust scenario (David aged 10)
17	My fears, worries & questions	76	People I trust
18	My worry list	77	Broken trust
19	My biggest worry	78	Broken trust (adolescents)
20	If I could change.	79	People I do not trust
21	My 3 wishes	80	Safety rules
22	What I want to happen	81	Secrets case scenario (Nicola aged 13)
23	Things I would like the Judge to know	82	Secrets case scenario (Samantha aged 10)
	<b><u>My feelings</u></b>	83	Secrets
24	What gives you these feelings?	84	Secrets make me feel...
25	Feelings thermometer	85	Safe places to share secrets
26	Feelings toss	86	Who I can tell
27	How I am	87	My friend's secret
28	My feelings – unfinished sentences	88	My happy secret
29	Feelings I have had – happy	89	My difficult secret
30	Feelings I have had - sad	90	Good touches and bad touches
31	Feelings I have had - frustrated	91	It's my body
32	Feelings I have had - angry	92	Story book of good touch
32	Feelings I have had - scared	93	Story book of bad touch
34	Feelings I have had - confused	94	Bad touches – what you could say
35	Feelings I have had - loneliness	95	Fill in the blanks
36	Feelings I have had - proud	96	You're in charge
37	Colour my feelings	97	What's private?
38	Difficult feelings	98	The touching rule
39	Coping with feelings – what I usually do	99	Staying safe
40	What I could differently with my feelings	100	Some important things about touching
41	Difficult feelings (younger version)	101	Body Maps
42	My defence shield	102	OK touches
	<b><u>My world – family &amp; relationships</u></b>	103	Not OK touches
43	My world ecomap 1	104	My body messages
44	My world ecomap 2	105	Danger signs
45	My world ecomap 3	106	Dangerous situations
46	Family tree - example	107	Protecting myself
47	Family tree	108	Keeping safe
48	Picture of my family	109	Things I can do to keep safe
49	Family activity	110	Warning signs
50	My animal family	111	Questions to ask when I am uncomfortable
51	My mum	112	Questions I want to ask
52	My dad	113	What is abuse – your views (younger version)
53	My brother	114	What is abuse – your views (older version)
54	My sister	115	What is child abuse?
55	Other members of my family	116	What is sexual abuse? (younger version)
56	People who care about me	117	What is inappropriate sexual behaviour?
57	Where I live	118	Different types of abuse (older version)
58	My family essay	119	The Effects of Sexual Abuse
		120	Ideas to help with bad memories
		121	Coping with memories, flashbacks & difficult feelings
		122	Remembering the good things (younger version)
		123	Remembering the good things (older version)

# Why I am seeing you?

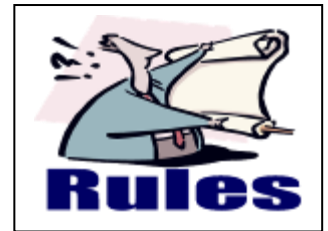
Write down some of your thoughts about why you think you are here.

Picture of me



My name:

date



## Rules and Boundaries

Below is a list of rules and boundaries that you and your worker have come up with to ensure that you stay safe during the sessions. You should keep a copy of this in the workbook and you and your worker should remind yourselves of these before every session.

**My name:**

**My workers name:**

**Date:**

## My Support Chart

Some of the activities or talks you have with your worker might cause you to have some difficult or muddled thoughts and feelings between the sessions. You might feel a little sad, angry or muddled up at times. These feelings are normal and healthy and during the sessions you will learn how to cope with these feelings better. These feelings might be easier to deal with if you have someone to talk to before you next see your worker. Think about which of your family, friends, people at school, and other people you could turn to for support. List these in the chart below and think of the best ways they could help. You should keep a copy of this in the workbook and you and your worker should remind yourselves of these before every session and discuss whether you needed and got their help.

Name of support person	How to contact them	The support I would need

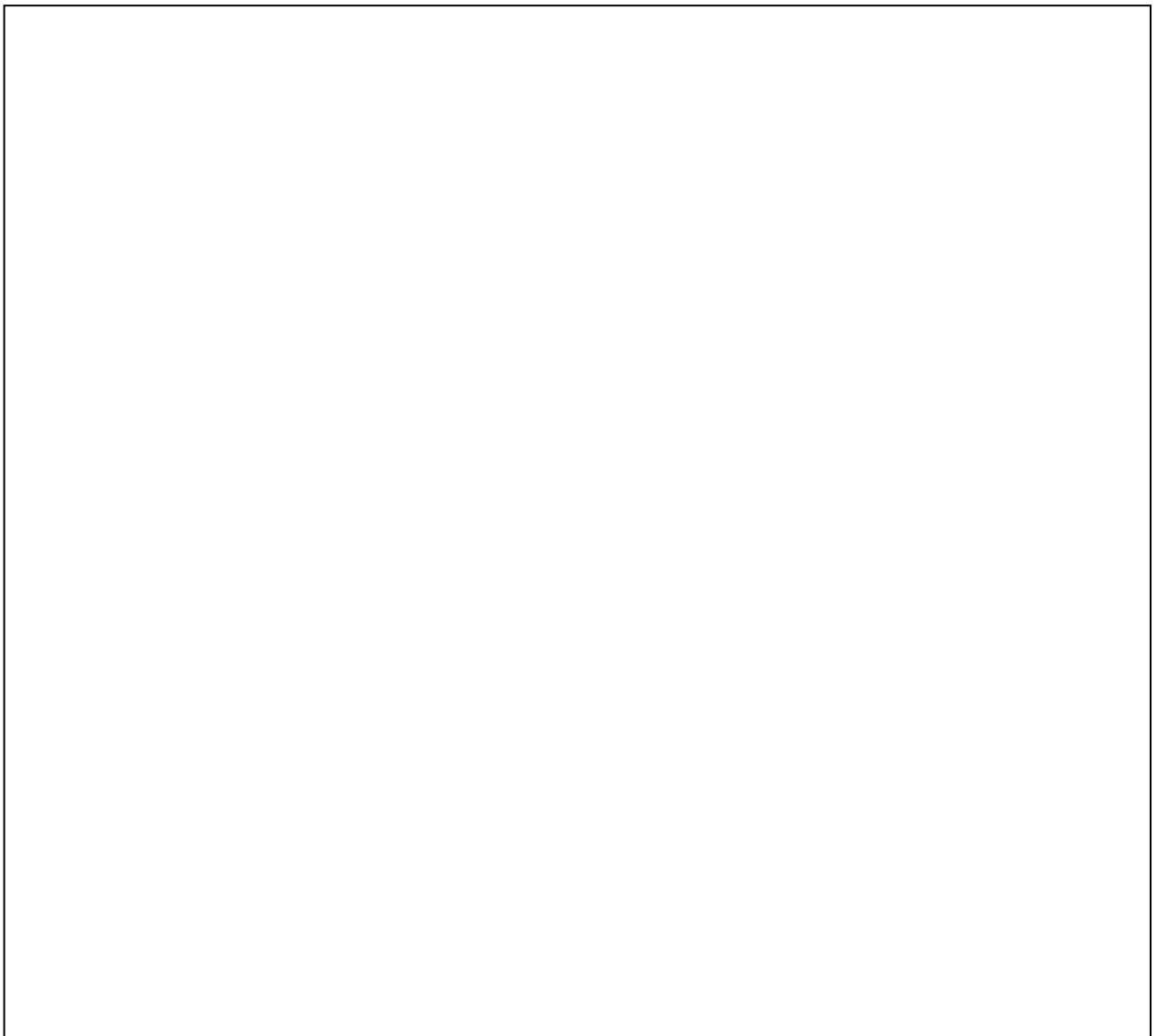
Name:

Date:

## **People that I can talk to or get support from in between sessions**

Draw a picture of the people who you can talk to and who can make you feel better when you feel sad, angry, confused or muddled. These can be people in your family, friends, a teacher or people you like and trust.

Talk you your worker about how they can help you feel better. Put this picture in your workbook



Name:

Date:

# FEELINGS ABOUT TODAY'S SESSION

Write down some of thoughts & feelings you had about today's session



Feeling words

Happy

Sad

Angry

upset

confused

muddled

scared

nervous

wound up

Feelings

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Thoughts

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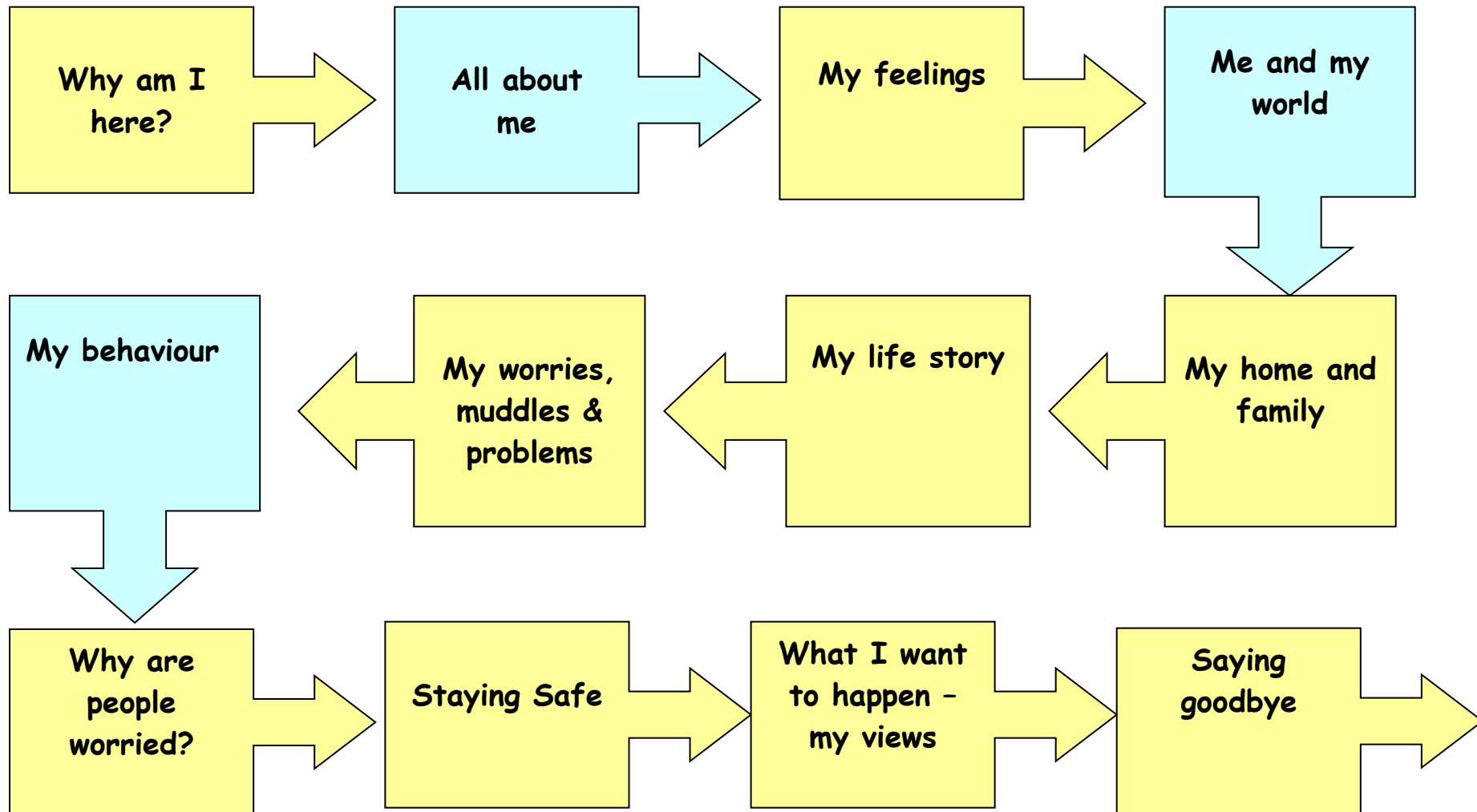
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Name:

Date:

## SOME OF THE WORK WE WILL BE DOING IN THE SESSIONS

You might do work on all of these areas, or you might only do work on some of them.



## ALL ABOUT ME



My name is.....

I am .....years old      My birthday is

on.....

My school is called .....

My favourite teachers name is .....

My mum's name is .....

My dad's name is .....

I have ..... brothers and ..... sisters. Their names are:



.....  
.....  
.....

I live with.....

My pets and their names are.....

My best friends are .....

Things I like to do.....

Things I don't like to do .....

My favourite colour is.....

My favourite food is .....

My favourite TV programme is .....

My favourite music is .....

Some things I think are important to know about me are:



.....

.....

.....



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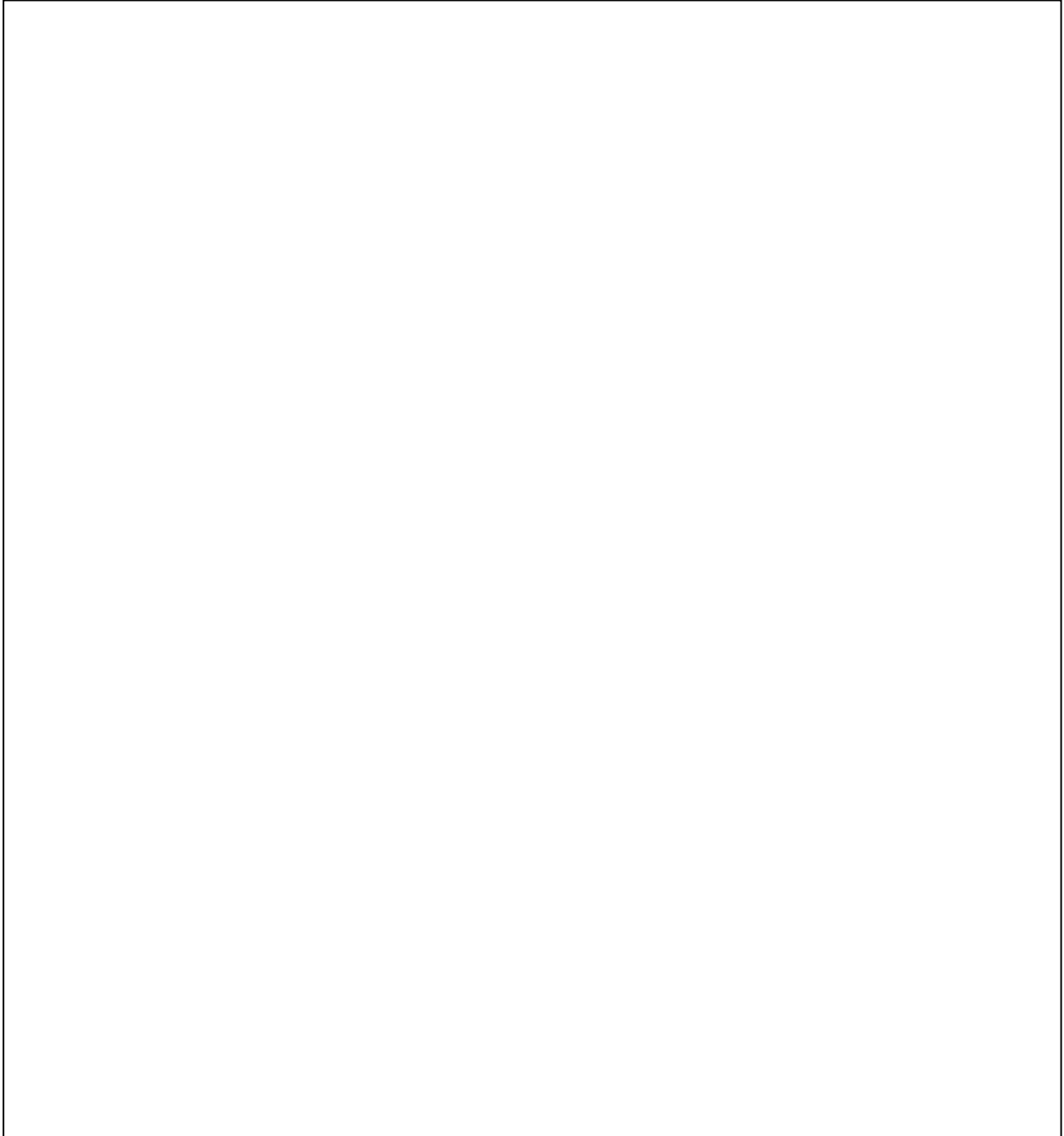
.....

ame:

Date:

## **This is me**

Draw a picture of yourself. If you want to, write some comments on the picture to say something about yourself or ask your worker to write the words for you.



Name:

Date:

## ALL ABOUT ME - UNFINISHED SENTENCES

Complete the following sentences

I like my .....

I would like a big .....

I would not like to live without .....

I hate it when .....

I feel silly when .....

I get angry when .....

I don't like it when .....

I am very good at .....

My mum is .....

I wish people would stop .....

I was very happy when .....

I think fathers .....

I was really scared when .....

I like it when .....

Sometimes I'm afraid to .....

My dad is .....

I feel like crying when .....

I miss .....

Continued next page...

My brother (s) .....

My sister (s) .....

My family .....

My favourite thing is .....

I would like my dad to know .....

I think mothers .....

My best friends .....

I would like my mum to know .....

My best memory is .....

My worst memory is .....

If I had 3 wishes - (1) .....

(2) .....

(3) .....

Name:

Date:

## THINGS I LIKE ABOUT ME

Write down things that you like about yourself

1. ....  
.....  
.....

2. ....  
.....  
.....

3. ....  
.....  
.....

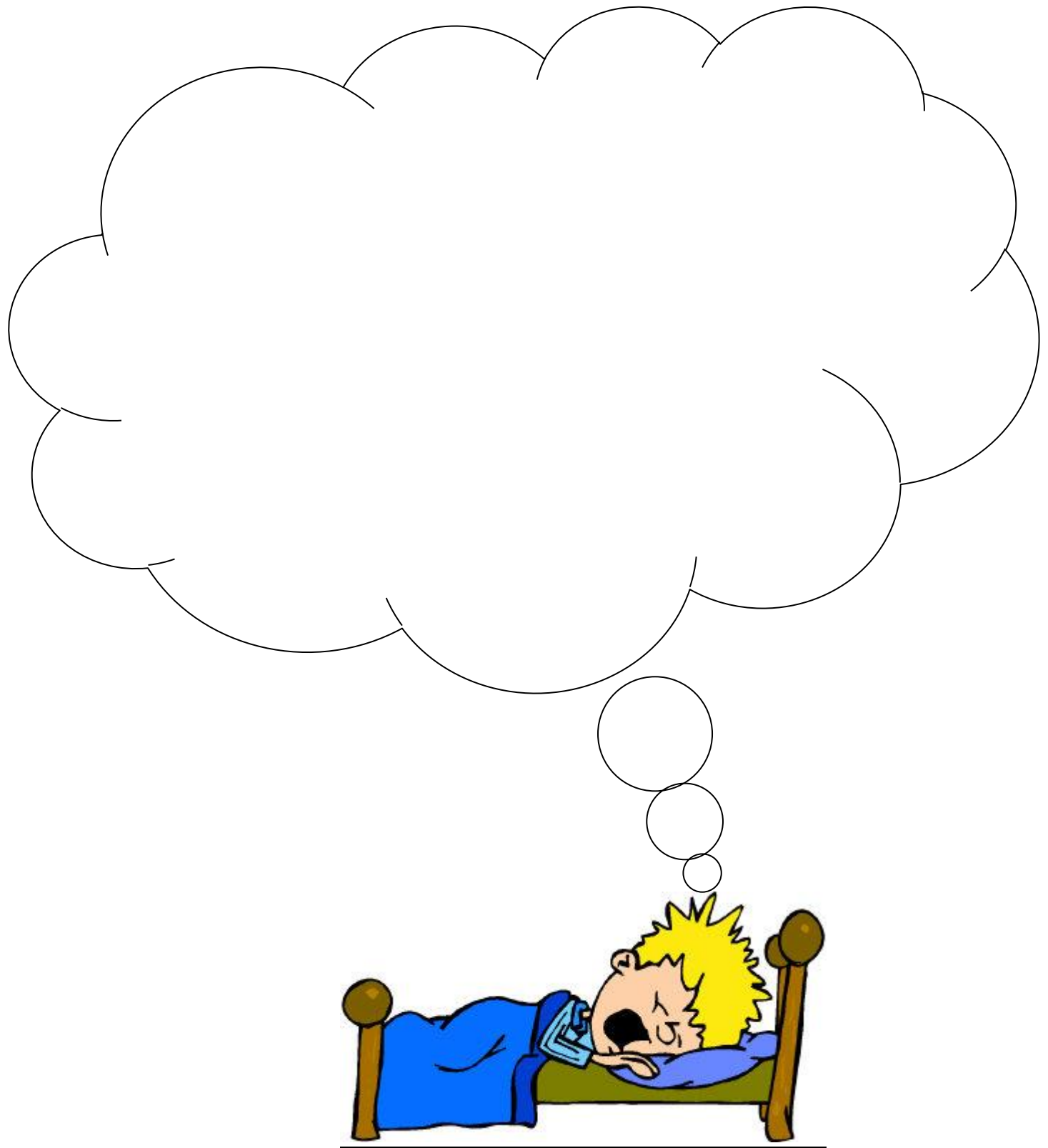
4. ....  
.....  
.....

5. ....  
.....  
.....

Name:

Date

## WHAT DO YOU DREAM ABOUT AT NIGHT?



**Your name:**

**Date:**

## **MY STRENGTHS AND TALENTS**

The things that have happened to you and your family might have caused you to forget about the things that you are good at and enjoy doing. Recognising your strengths and talents and making use of these is an important way to make you feel good about yourself and rebuilding your world. This worksheet helps you think about these.

**List 5 things you are good at**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

**List 5 things that you like most about yourself**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

Name:

Date:

## FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES

List your 5 favourite activities you like to do.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....

Write down when you last did this activity

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....

Write down when you plan to do these again

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....

Name:

Date:

## WHEN I GROW UP

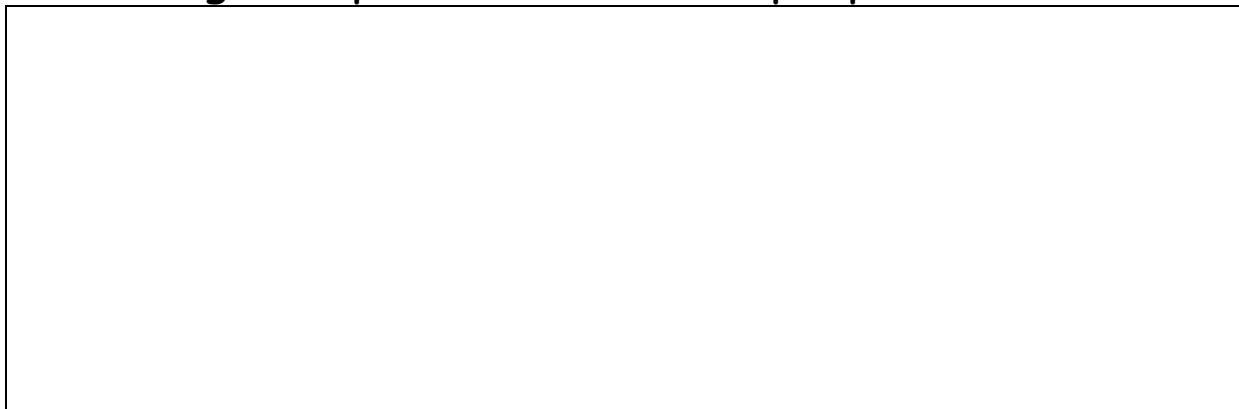
When I grow up I will look like this:



When I grow up this is where I want to live:



When I grow up I will visit these people:



name:

date:

**"HONESTY" TEST**

For each statement tick the box which best describes your thoughts

	Strongly agree.	Agree .	Dis- agree	Strongly disagree.
1. On the whole I am satisfied with myself:				
2. At times I think I am no good at all:				
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities:				
4. I am able to do things as well as most people:				
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of:				
6. I certainly feel useless at times:				
7. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least equal to others:				
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself:				
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel I am a failure:				
10. I take a positive attitude towards myself:				

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....

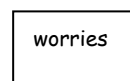
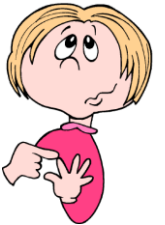
## **SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO ME**

Something has happened to me and I have moved to a new house. Draw or write about what happened.

name:

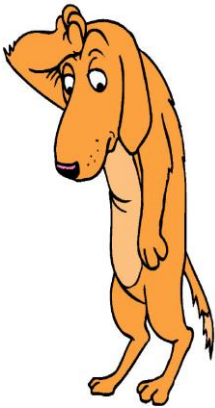
date:

# MY FEARS, WORRIES & QUESTIONS



Draw shapes for your worries, fears & questions and write these in

MY WORRY LIST



Make a list of your main worries, problems or muddles.  
Write something about each.

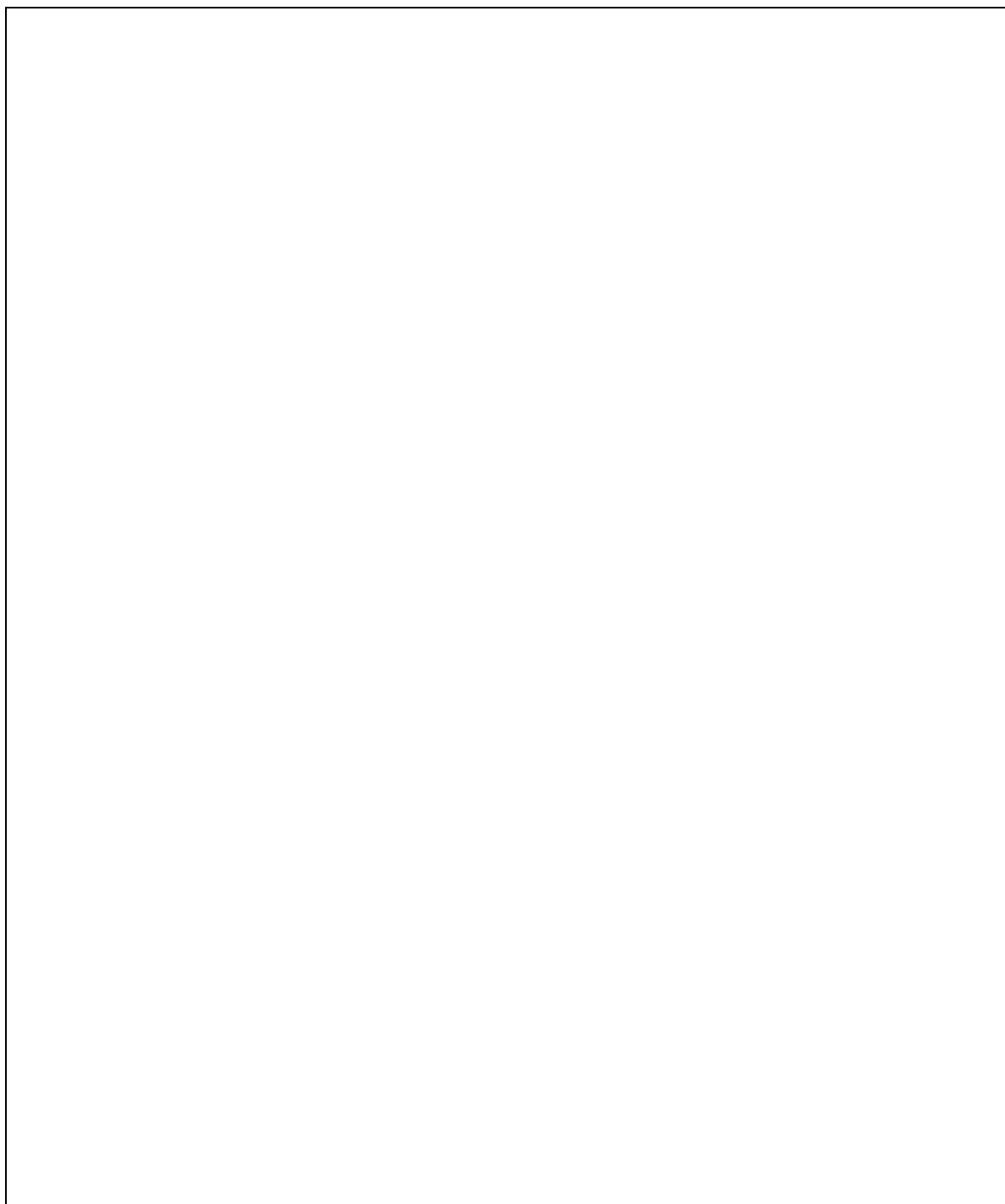
- 1. ....  
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- 2. ....  
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- 3. ....  
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- 4. ....  
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- 5. ....  
.....  
.....

Name:

Date

## **MY BIGGEST WORRY**

**Draw a picture or write about your biggest worry.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write about their biggest worry.

**name:**

**date:**

## **IF I COULD CHANGE**

**Write down 5 things you would like to change about yourself or your world.**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**5.**

Name:

Date:

## MY 3 WISHES

**Write or draw your 3 wishes.**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**Name:**

**Date:**

## WHAT I WANT TO HAPPEN

Write or draw pictures of what you want to happen in the future.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Name:

Date:

## THINGS I WOULD LIKE THE JUDGE TO KNOW



1.

2.

3.

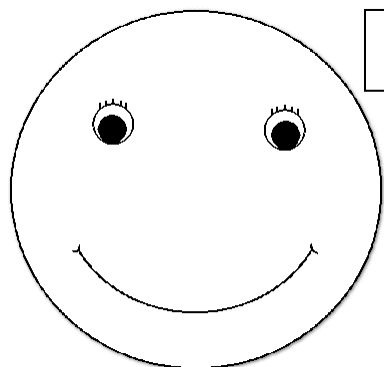
4.

5

Your name:

Date:

## What gives you these feelings?



Happy

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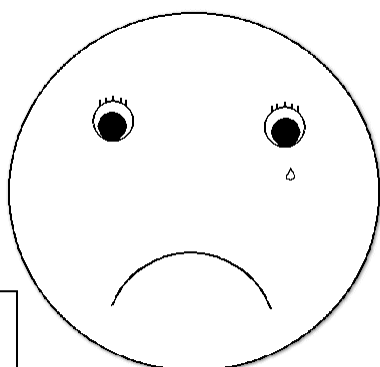
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Sad

[www.childcareland.com](http://www.childcareland.com)

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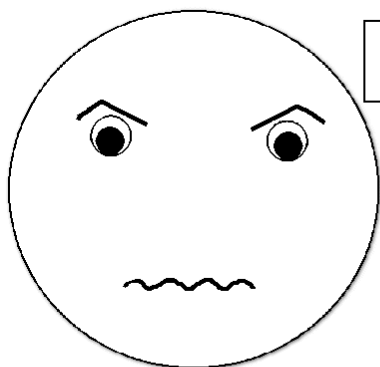
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Mad

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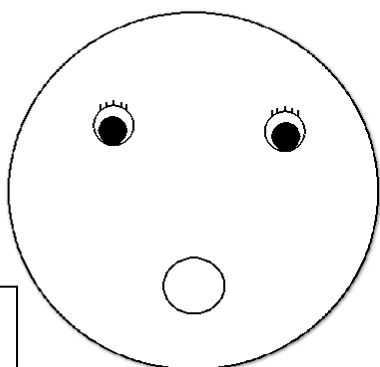
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Scared

[www.childcareland.com](http://www.childcareland.com)

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Name:

Date:

# Feelings Thermometer



Name:

Date:

## FEELINGS TOSS

**Toss a coin onto this page. When it lands on a feeling word describe a time when you had this feeling**

<b>Confused</b>	<b>Hopeful</b>	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Loving</b>
<b>Lonely</b>	<b>Jealous</b>	<b>Excited</b>	<b>Guilty</b>
<b>Frustrated</b>	<b>Sad</b>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Hopeless</b>
<b>Amused</b>	<b>Scared</b>	<b>Worried</b>	<b>Nervous</b>

**What feelings do you have most often?**

**What feelings do you keep to yourself?**

**What do you do when you have these feelings?**

**What feelings do you need help with?**

## HOW I AM

**Circle one on each line:**

I feel scared	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I like myself	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I feel sad	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I feel angry	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I feel happy	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I have nightmares	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I'm shy	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
My family likes me	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I'm afraid	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I feel jealous	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I feel lonely	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I get mad	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I get shouted at	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I feel scared	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never

Name:

Date:

# MY FEELINGS - UNFINISHED

## SENTENCES

I feel happy when .....

I feel sad when.....

I feel angry when .....

I feel frustrated when .....

I feel scared when .....

I feel lonely when .....

I feel confused when .....

I feel jealous when .....

I feel confused when .....

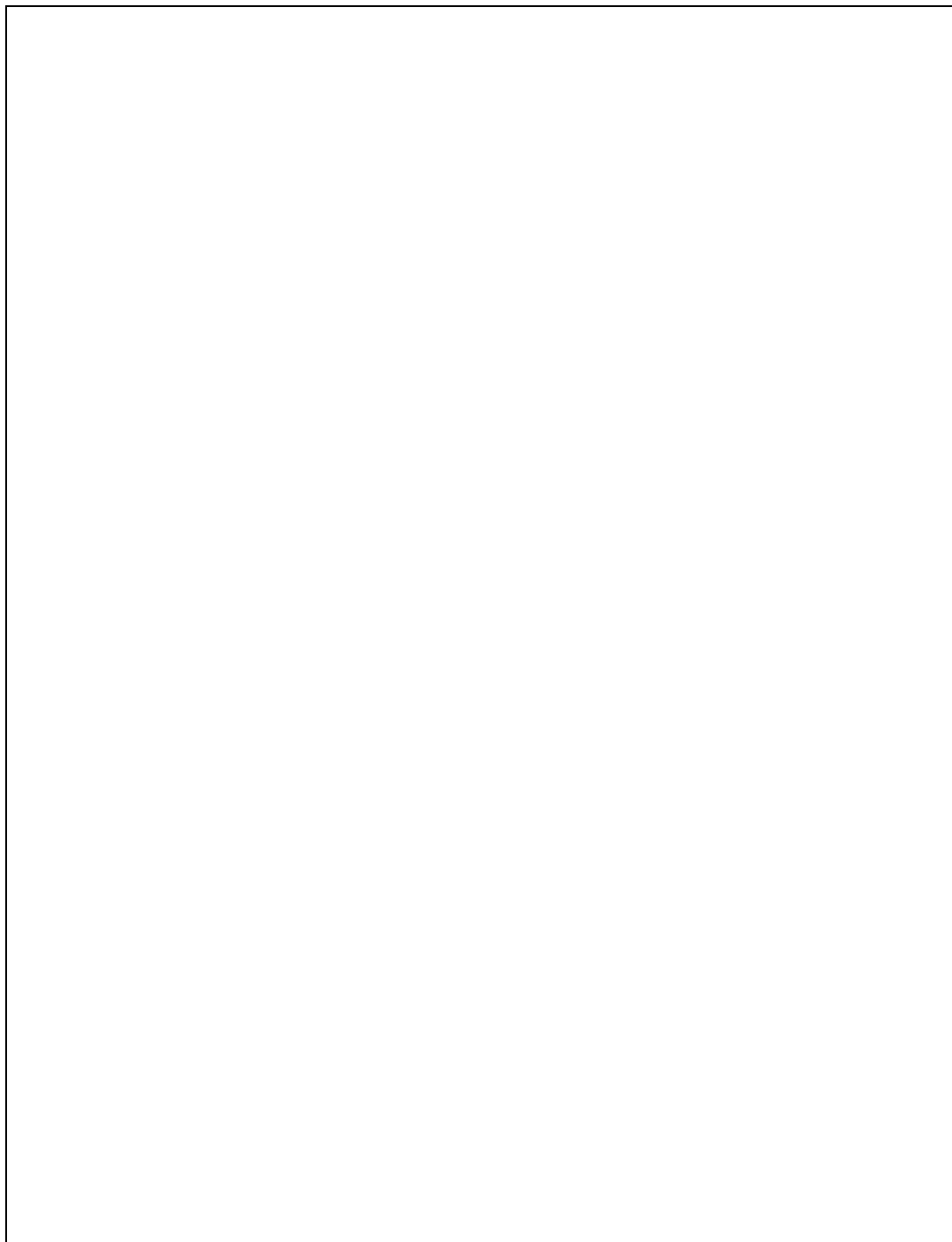
I feel excited when .....

Name:

Date:

## FEELINGS I HAVE HAD - HAPPY

Draw a picture or write about a time when you felt really happy.

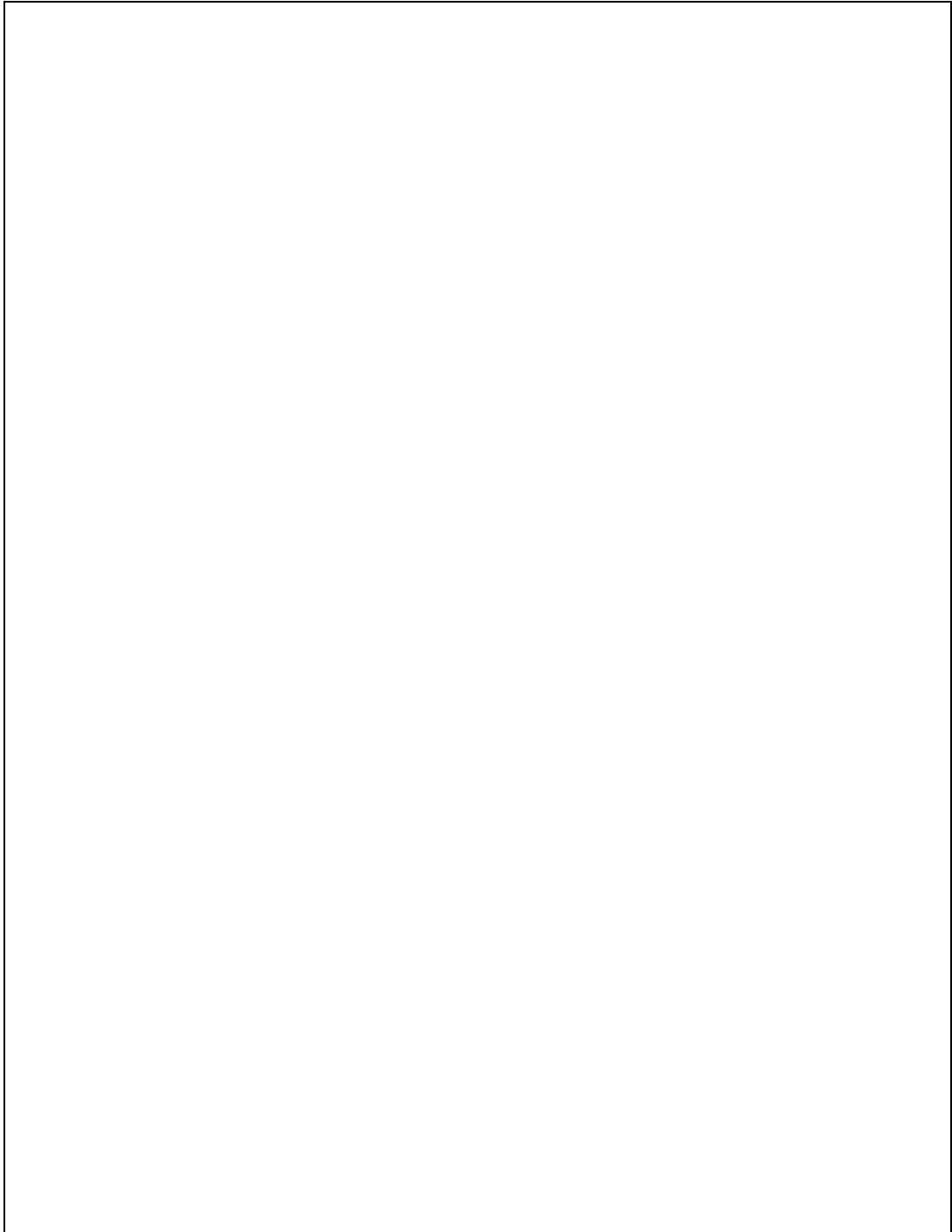
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw a picture or write about a time when they felt really happy.

Name:

Date:

## FEELINGS I HAVE HAD - SAD

**Draw a picture or write about a time when you felt really sad.**

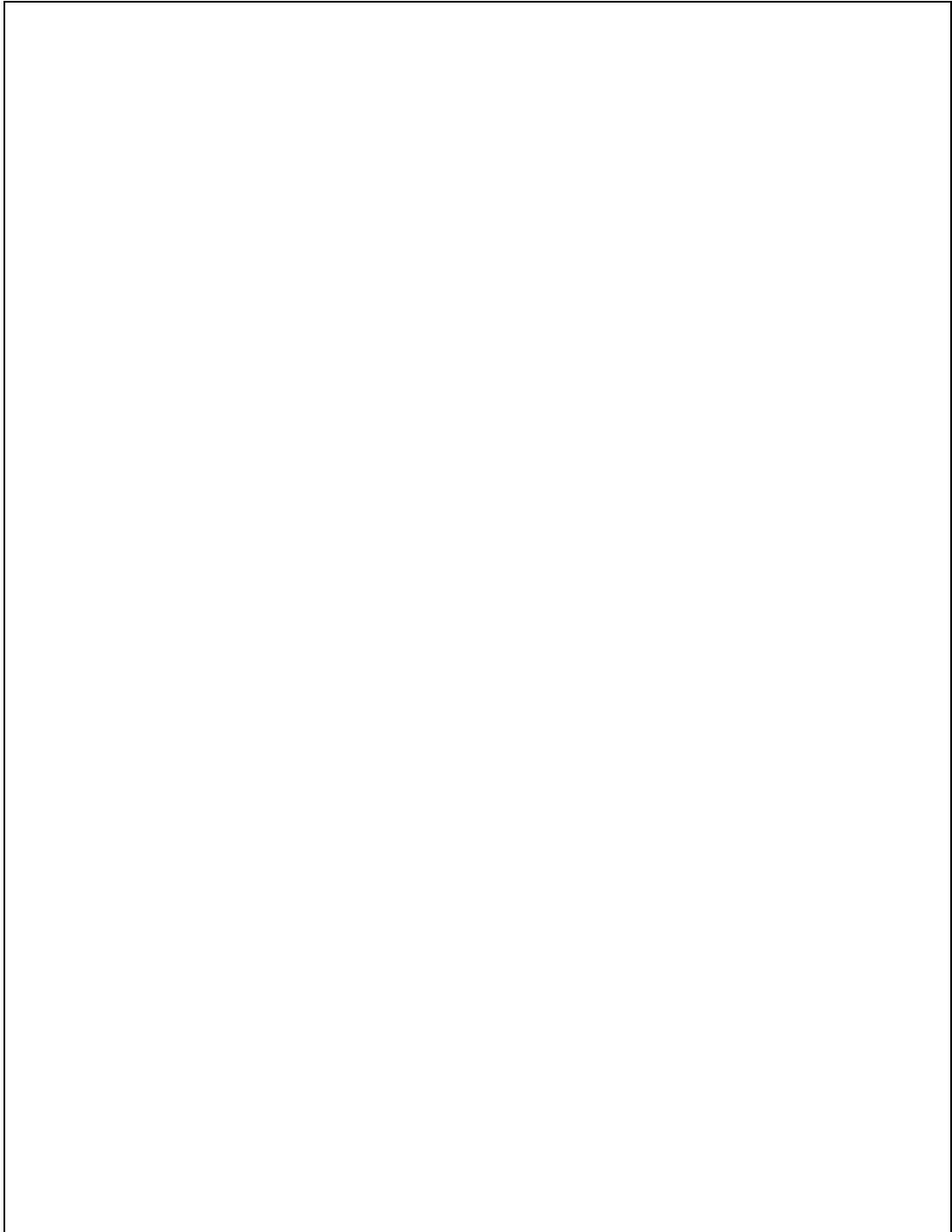
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write about a time when they felt really sad.

Name:

Date:

## FEELINGS I HAVE HAD - FRUSTRATED

Draw a picture or write about a time when you felt really frustrated.

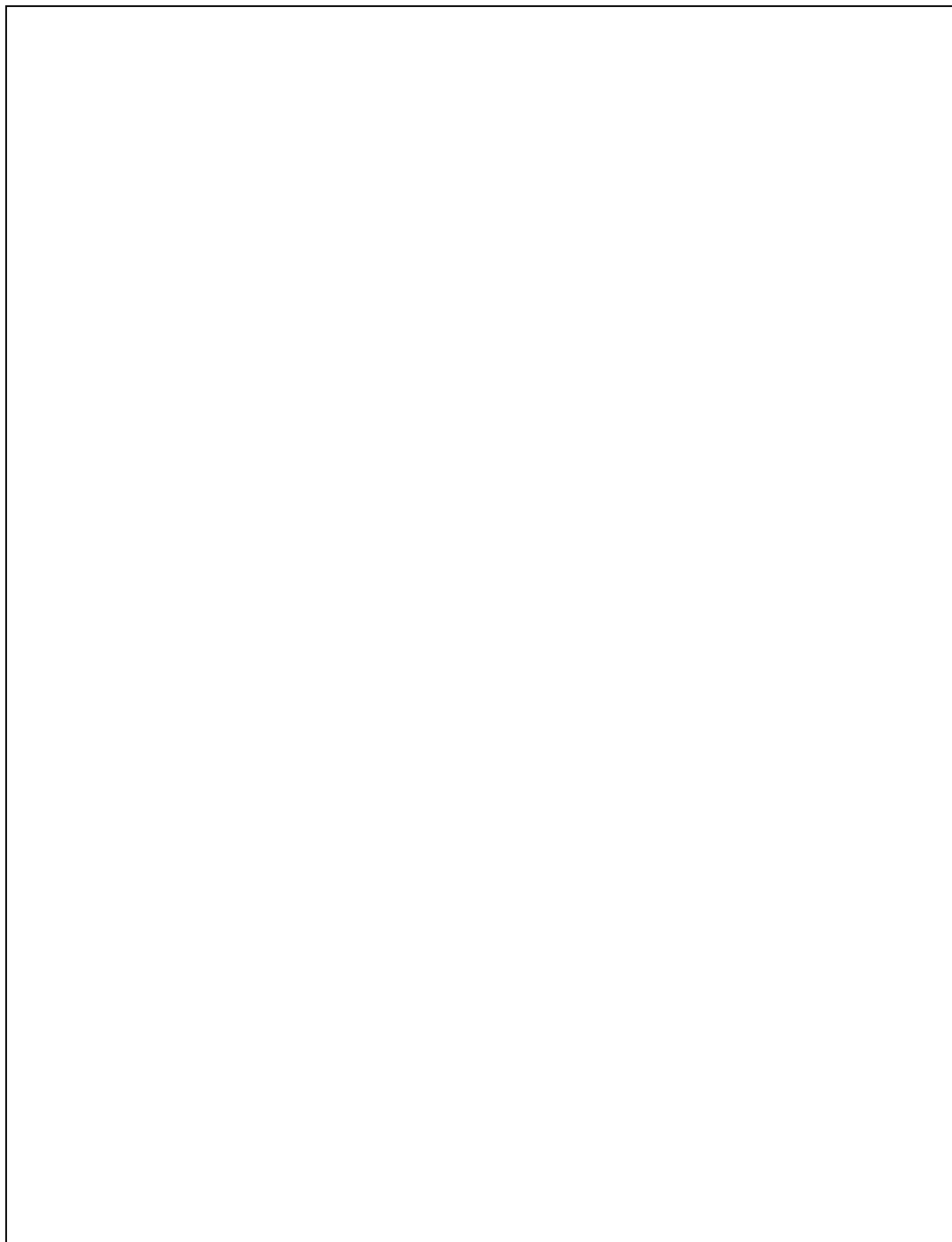
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write about a time when they felt frustrated.

Name:

Date:

## FEELINGS I HAVE HAD - ANGRY

Draw a picture or write about a time when you felt really angry.

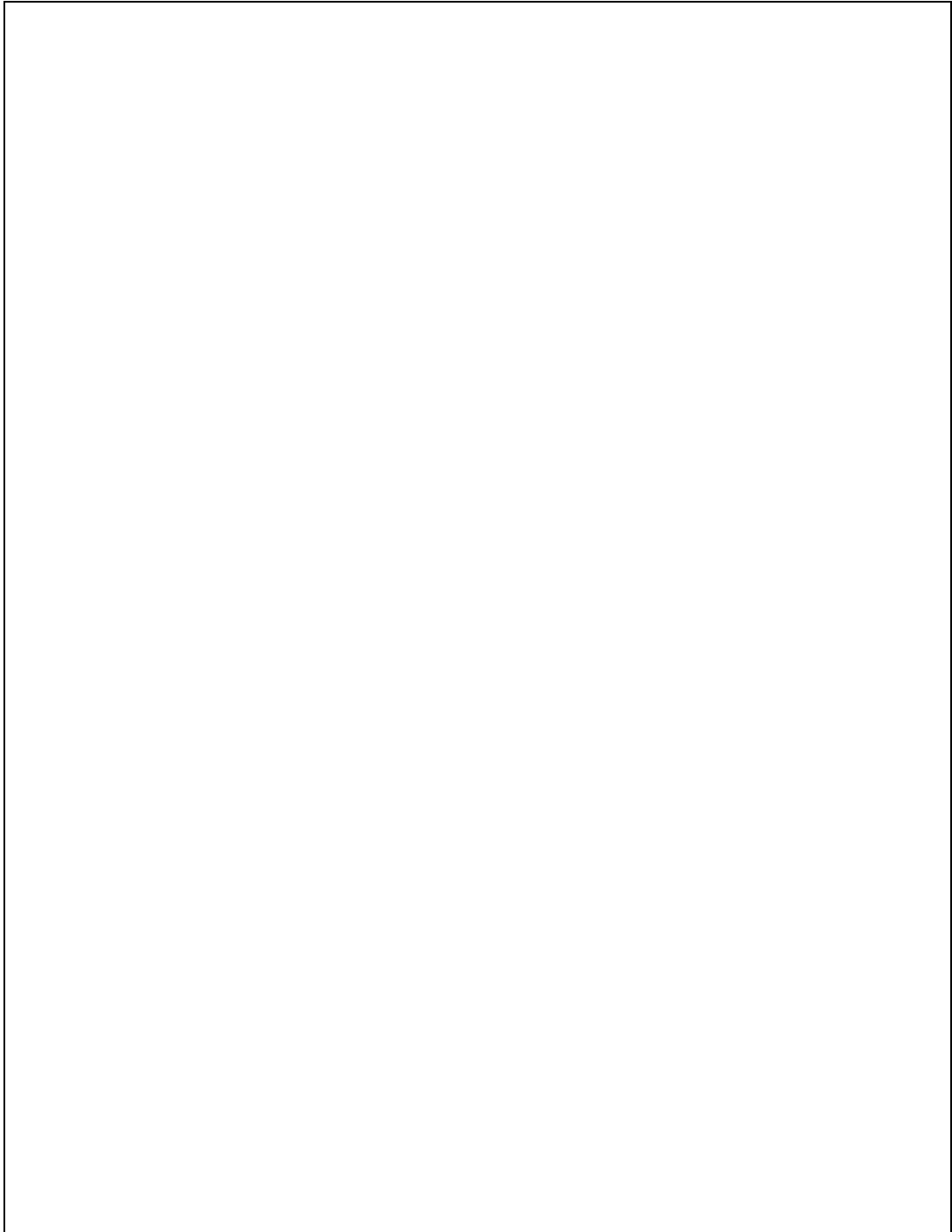
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write about a time when they felt really angry.

Name:

Date:

## FEELINGS I HAVE HAD - SCARED

Draw a picture or write about a time when you felt really scared.

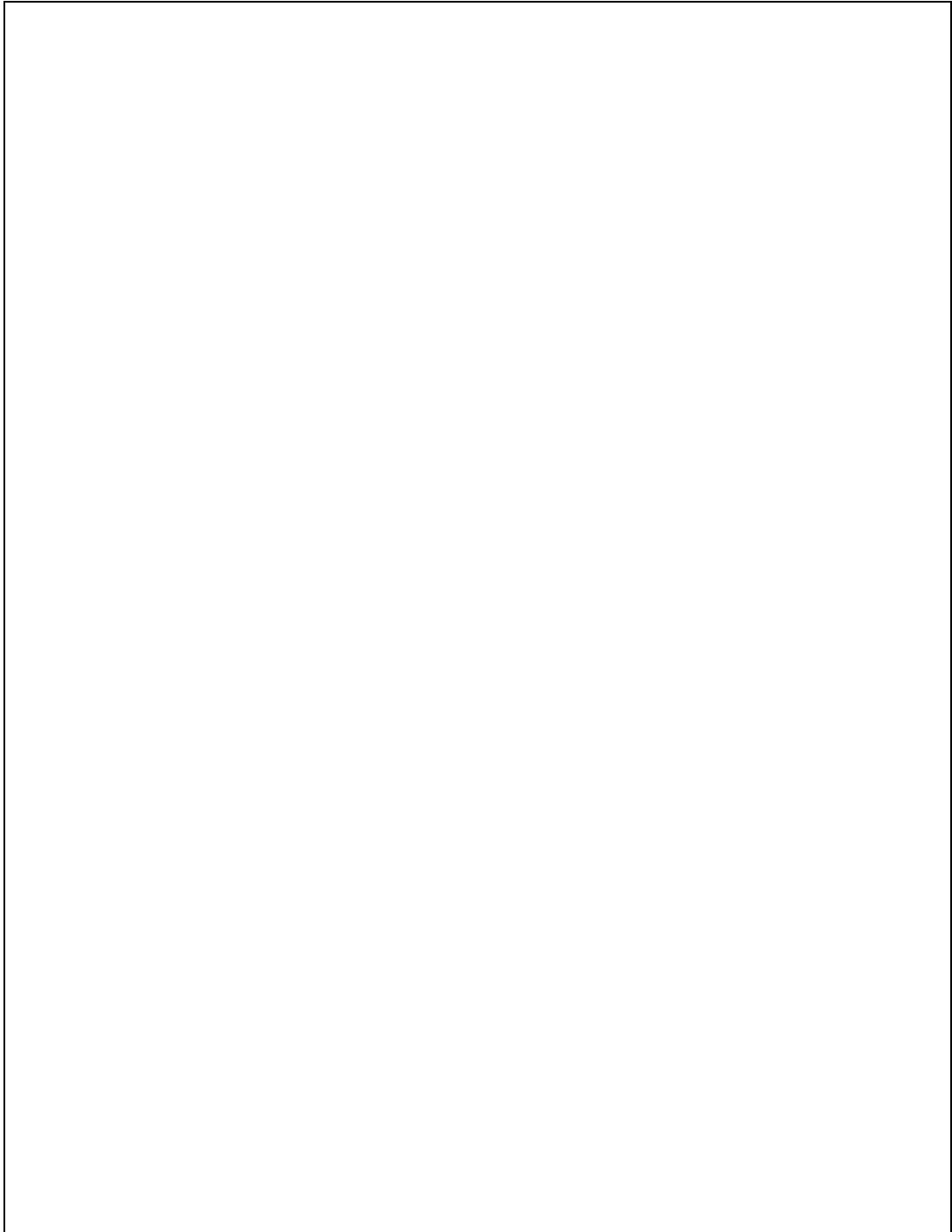
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write about a time when they felt really scared.

Name:

Date:

## FEELINGS I HAVE HAD - CONFUSED

Draw a picture or write about a time when you felt really confused / muddled up.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write about a time when they felt confused or muddled up.

Name:

Date:

## FEELINGS I HAVE HAD - LONELINESS

Draw a picture or write about a time when you felt really lonely.

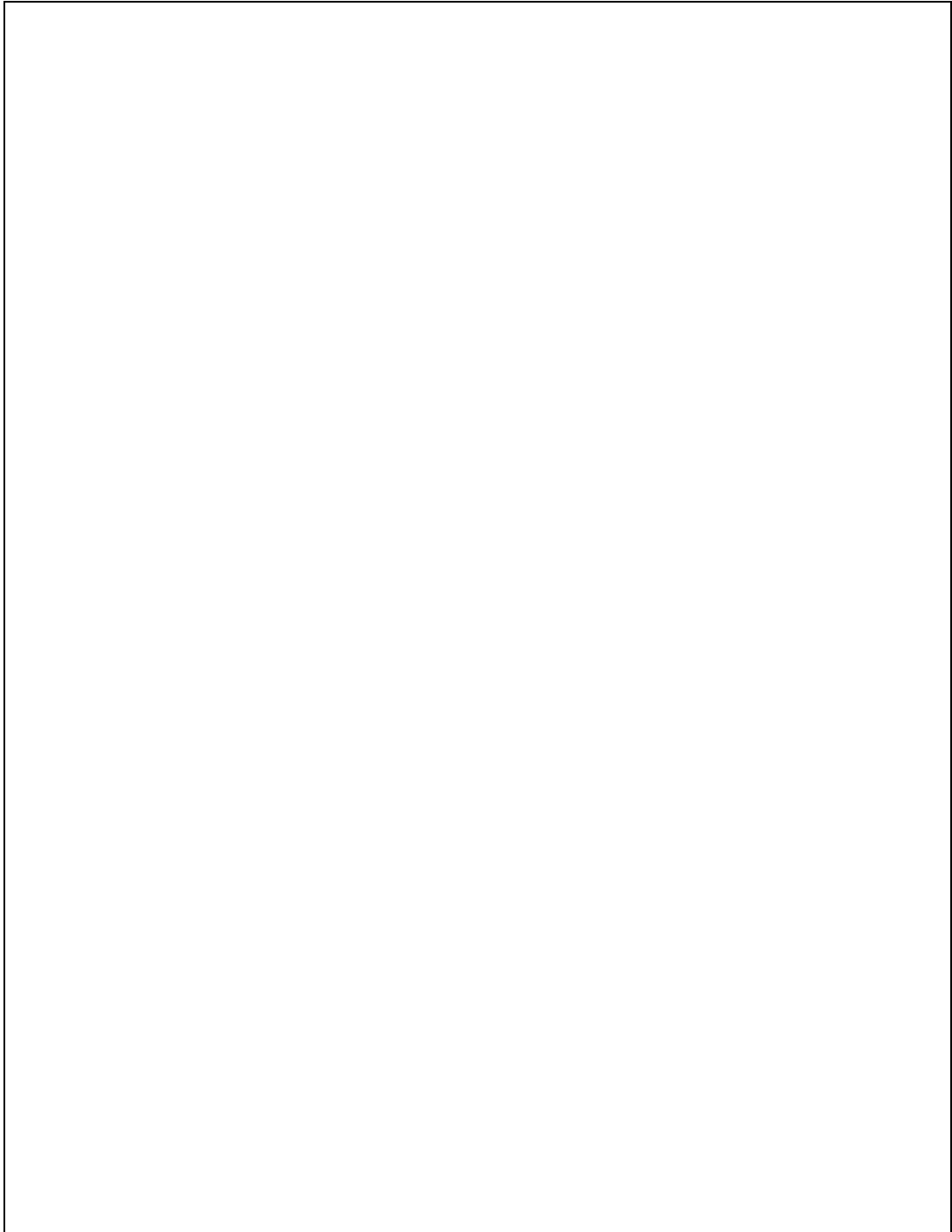
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write about a time when they felt lonely.

Name:

Date:

## FEELINGS I HAVE HAD - PROUD

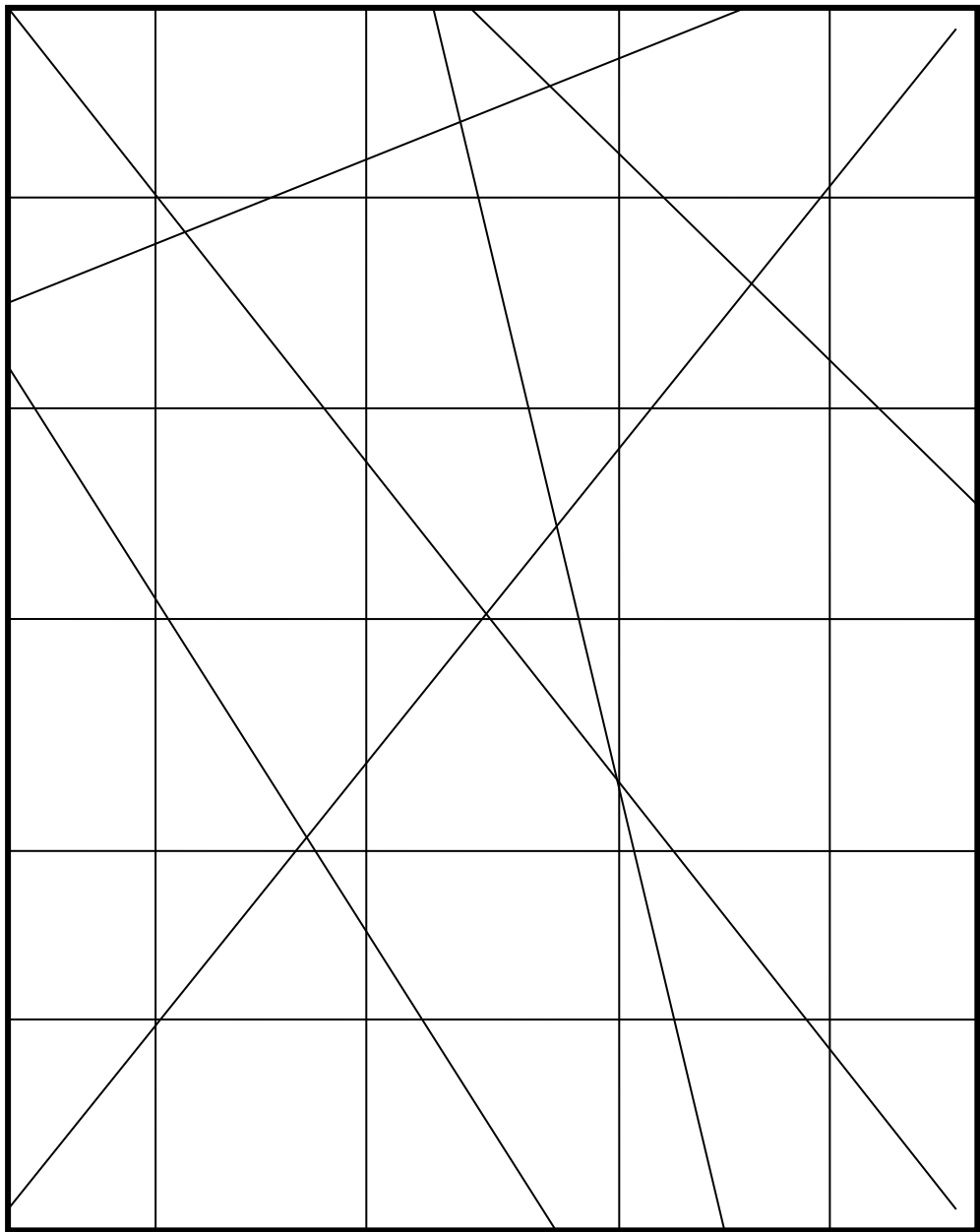
Draw a picture or write about a time when you felt really proud.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write about a time when they felt really proud.

Name:

Date:

COLOUR YOUR FEELINGS



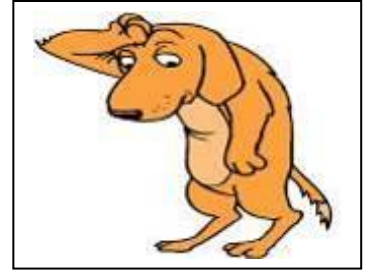
Feelings Key



Name:

Date:

## Difficult feelings worksheet



Can you think of any difficult feelings that might get in the way of you doing the work? List them below or draw some feelings faces showing these feelings.

Talk to your worker about .....

1. the times you get these different feelings
2. what you usually do when you get these feelings
3. what could help you if you get these feelings during the sessions
4. what could help you if you get these feelings at home or at school

**Name:**

**Date:**

## COPING WITH DIFFICULT FEELINGS - WHAT I USUALLY DO

Feeling	Event or Situation	What I usually do

Name:

Date:

**What could I do differently with my difficult feelings?**

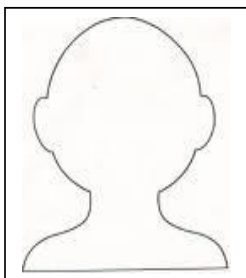
Feeling	Event or Situation	What could I do differently

Name:

Date:

## Difficult feelings worksheet

Can you think of any difficult feelings that you might have in between the sessions? Draw different feelings on the faces.



This is my .....face. I get this feeling when

1. ....  
.....
2. ....  
.....
3. ....  
.....

What do you do when you get this feeling? How do the feelings come out?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

If I get these feelings during my session I could ....

1. ....  
.....
2. ....  
.....
3. ....  
.....
4. ....  
.....  
.....

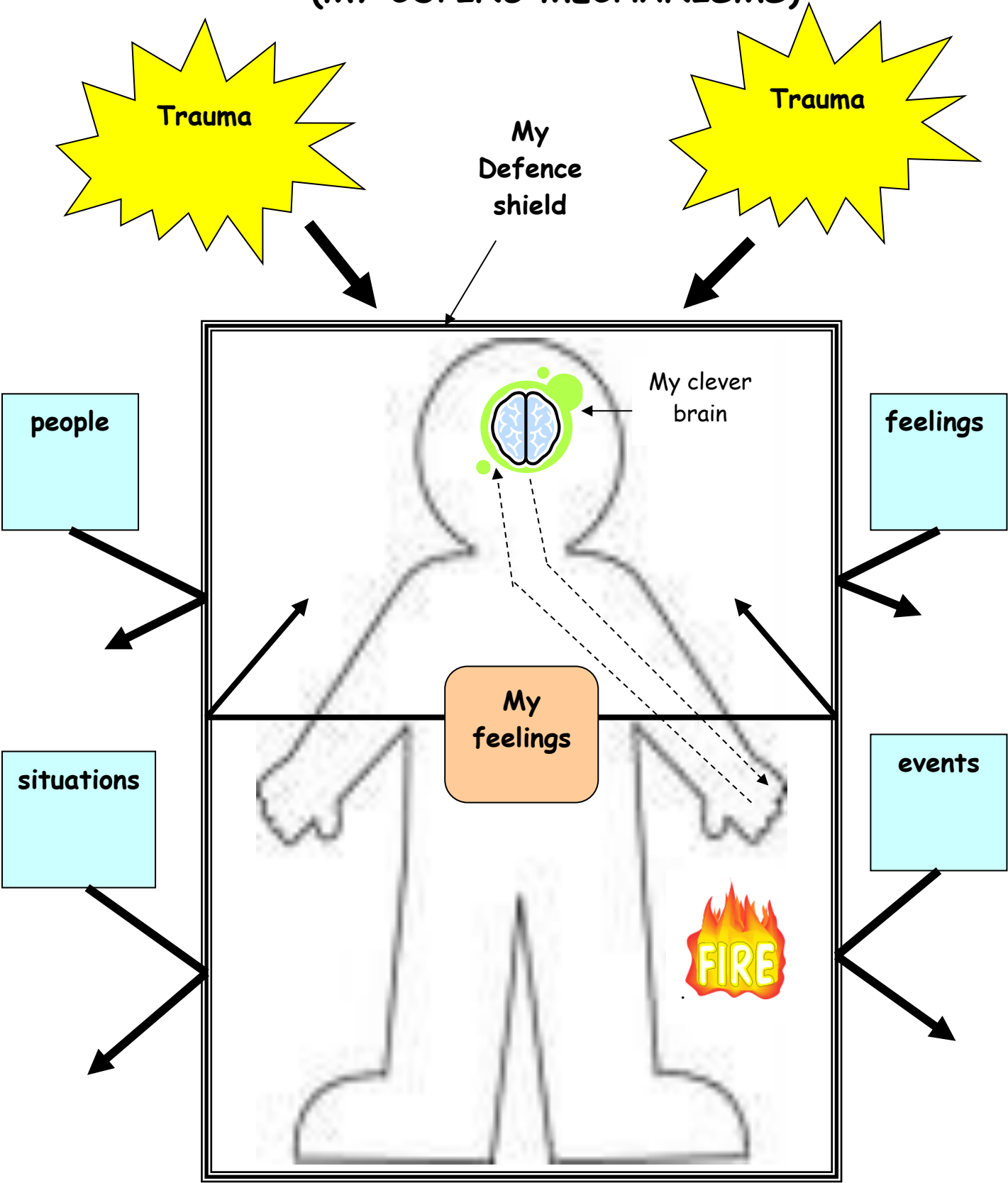
If I get these feelings at home or school I could ....

1. ....  
.....
2. ....  
.....
3. ....  
.....
4. ....  
.....

Name:

Date:

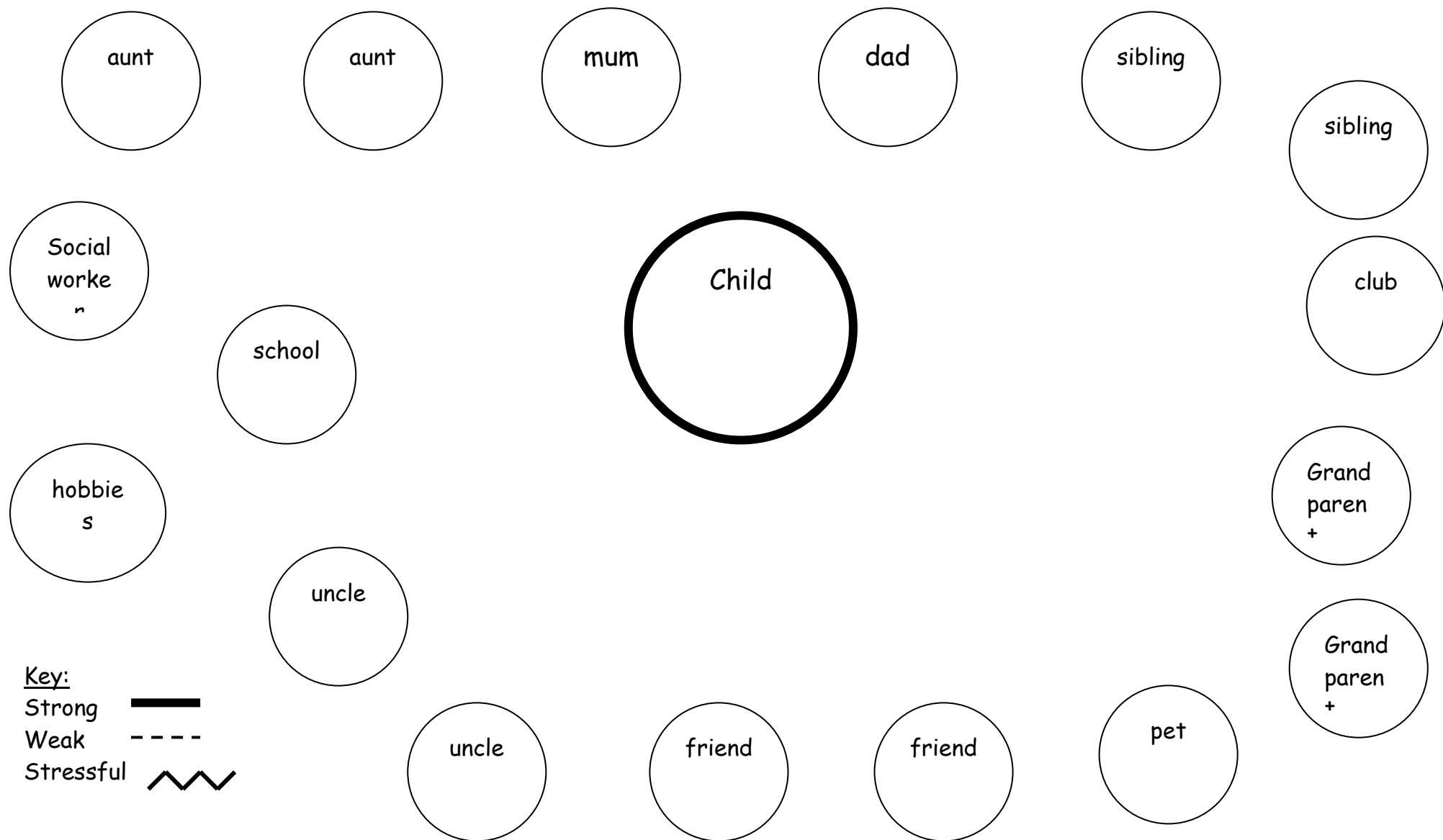
MY DEFENCE SHIELD  
(MY COPING MECHANISMS)



Name:

Date:

# 'MY WORLD' ECOMAP



Name:

Date:

# 'MY WORLD' ECOMAP

**Key:**

Strong ———

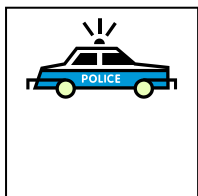
Weak - - - -

Stressful ~~~~~

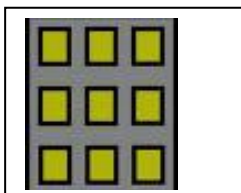
Name: ancy

Date:

# 'MY WORLD' ECOMAP



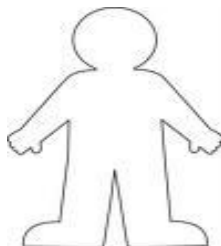
Police



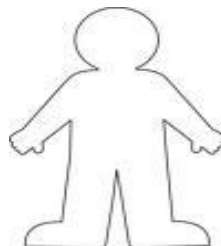
Social services



Moving house



Dad



Mum



My brother



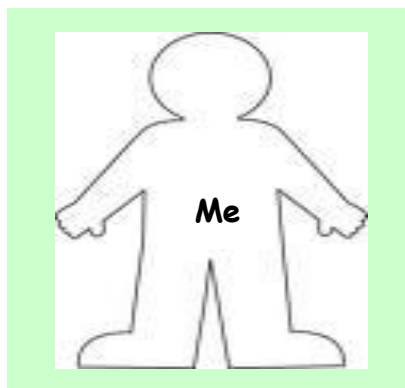
My family



School



My boyfriend



My home



My brother

Key:

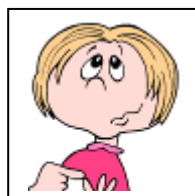
Strong



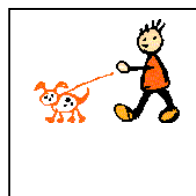
Weak



Stressful



My worries



My pet



My friends



Court



My health

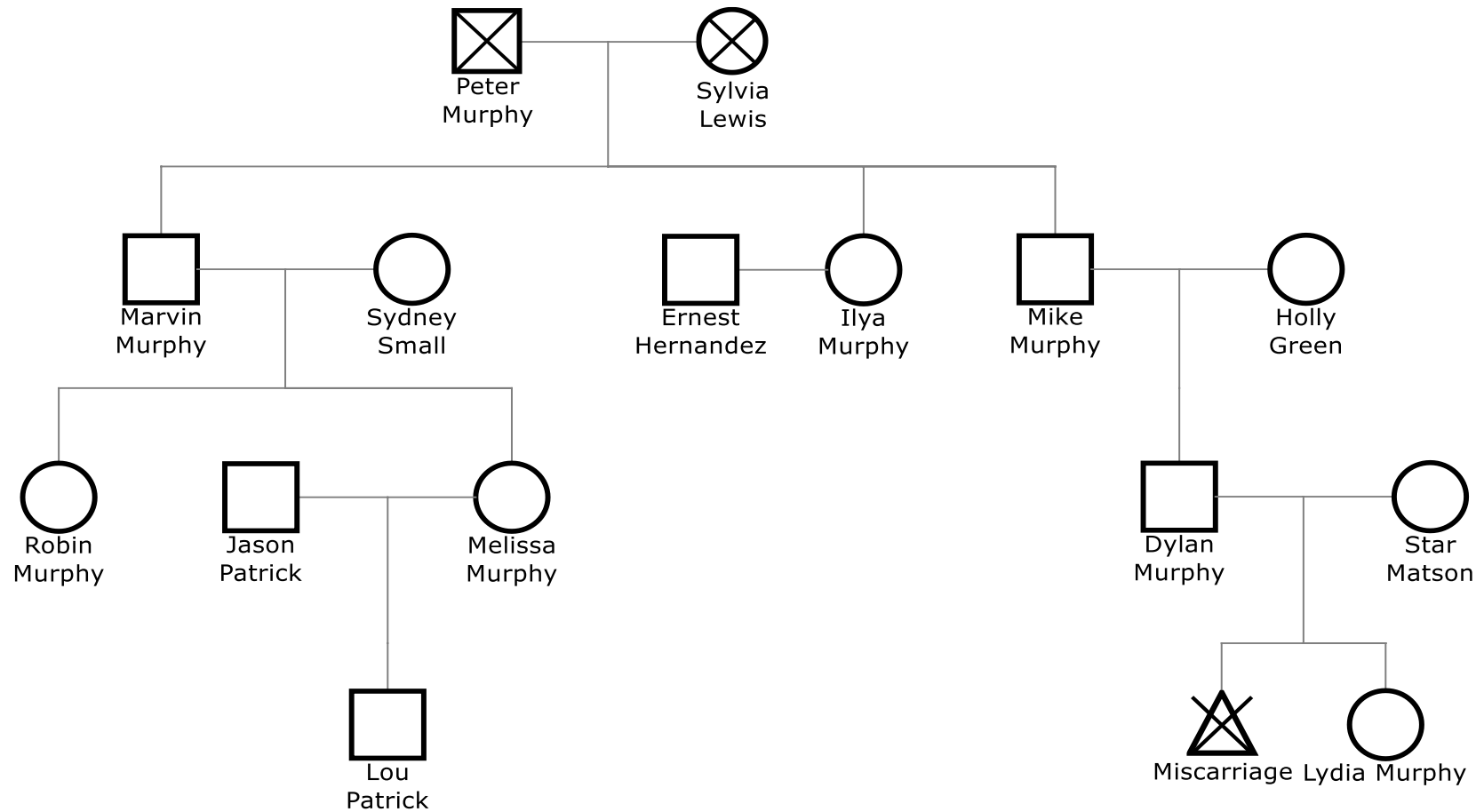


TV & DVD

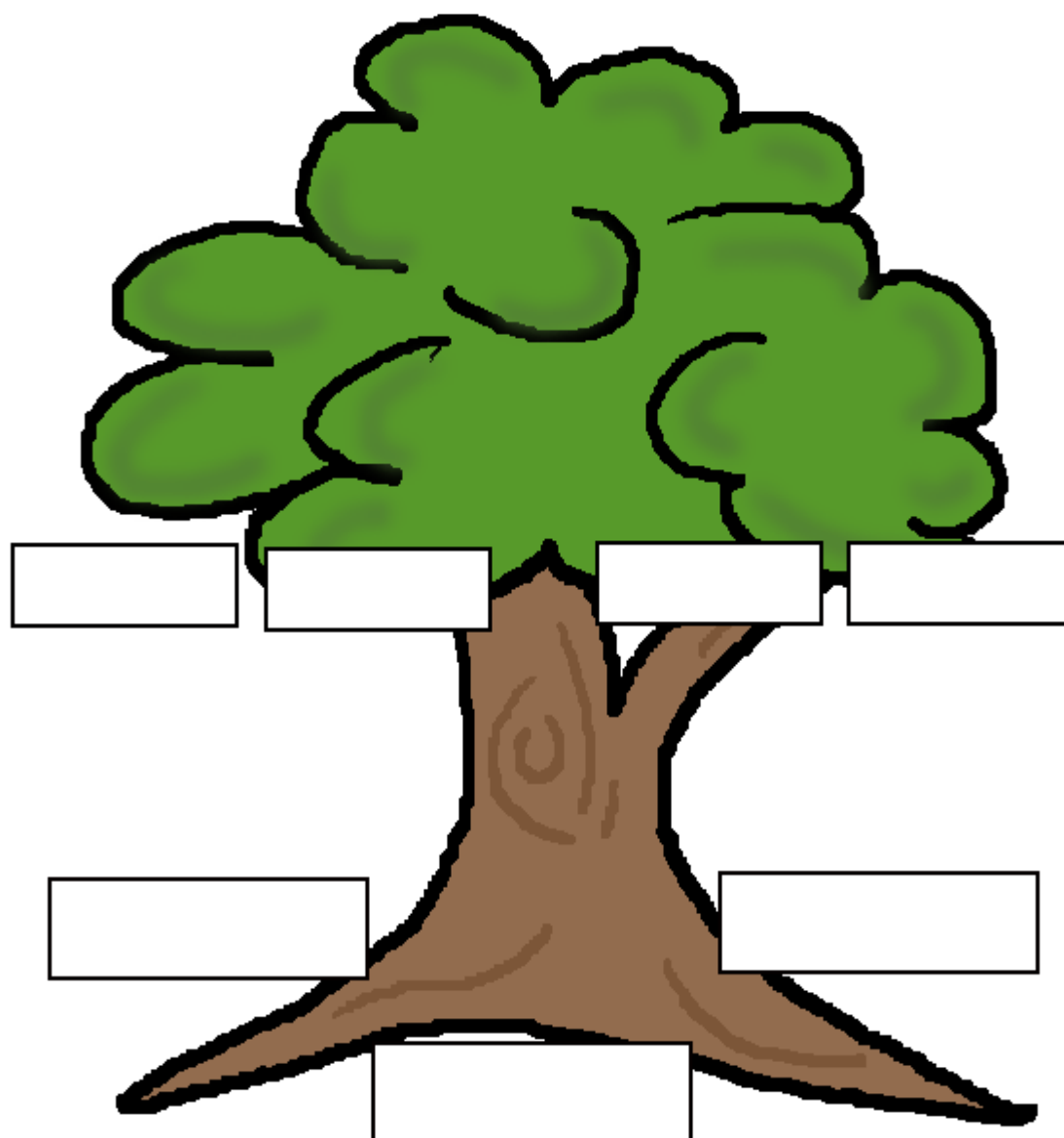
Name:

Date:

### FAMILY TREE - GENOGRAM EXAMPLE



# MY FAMILY TREE

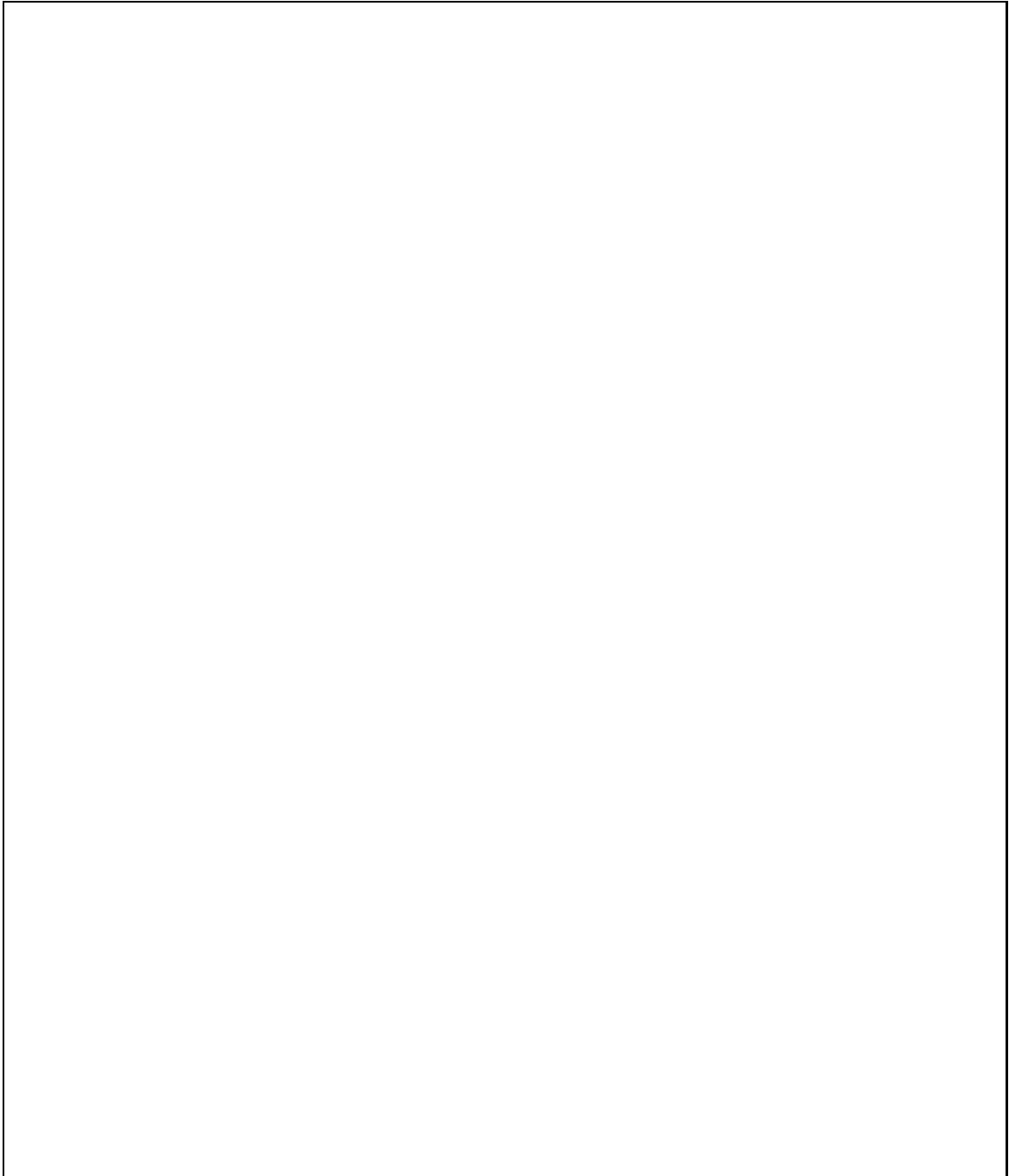


Name:

Date:

## PICTURE OF MY FAMILY

**Draw a picture of the people in your family. Feel free to add any words or comments if you wish.**

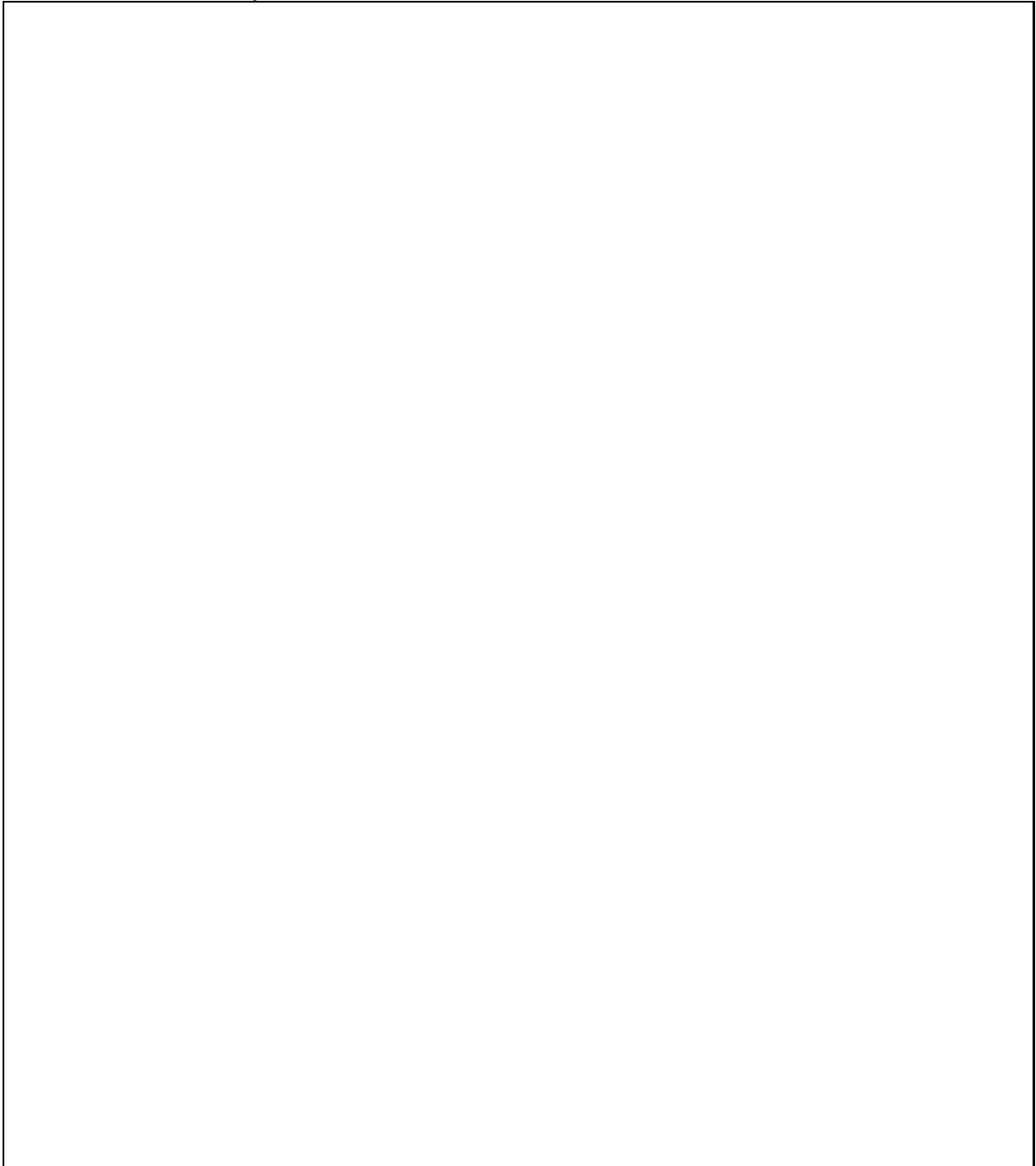


Name:

Date:

## **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

**Draw a picture of the people in your family doing something together. Feel free to add any words or comments if you wish**



Name:

Date:

## MY ANIMAL FAMILY

**Draw a picture of each person in family as an animal. Label what member of your family they are.**

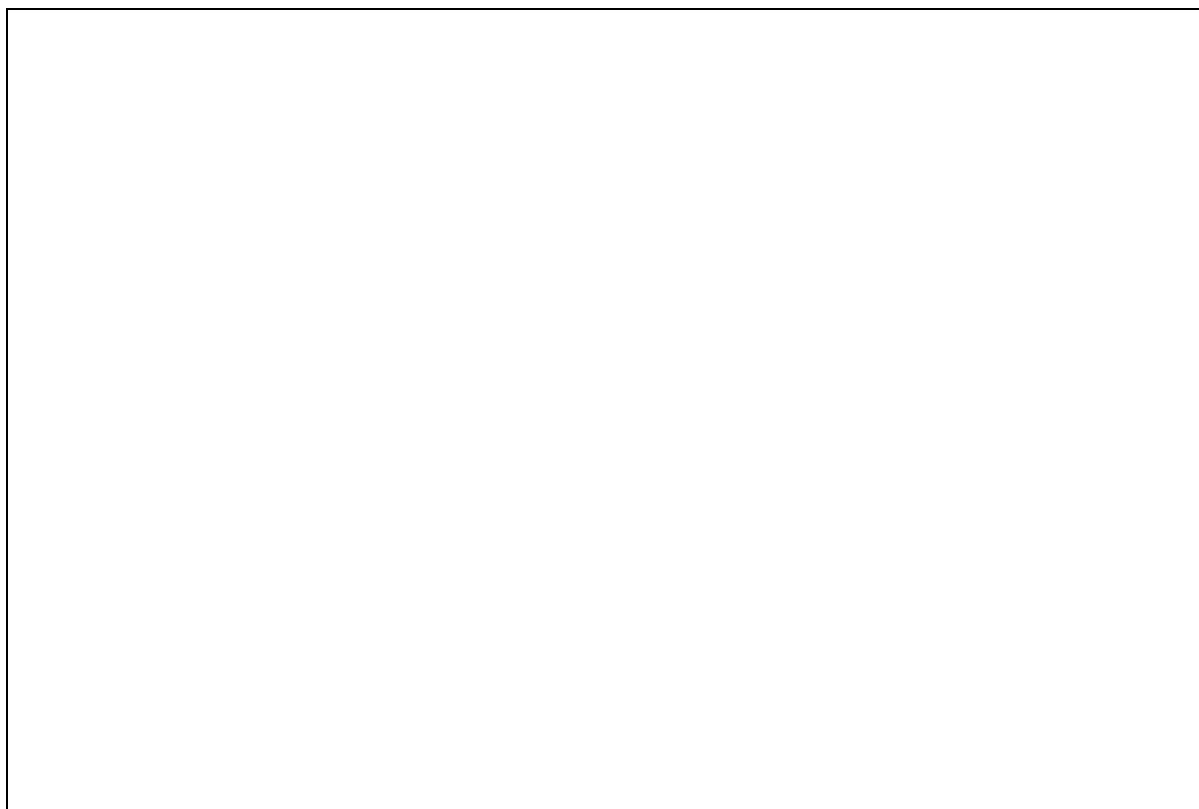
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw their family members as animals. The box occupies the central portion of the worksheet.

Name:

Date:

## MY MUM

**This is a picture of my mum.**



**My mums name is .....**

**My mum likes .....**

**My mum hates .....**

**The best thing about my mum is .....**

**The worst thing about my mum is .....**

**I wish my mum would .....**

**I wish my mum would stop .....**

**I would like my mum to know .....**

Name:

Date:

## MY DAD

**This is a picture of my dad.**



**My dad's name is .....**

**My dad likes .....**

**My dad hates .....**

**The best thing about my dad is .....**

**The worst thing about my dad is .....**

**I wish my dad would .....**

**I wish my dad would stop .....**

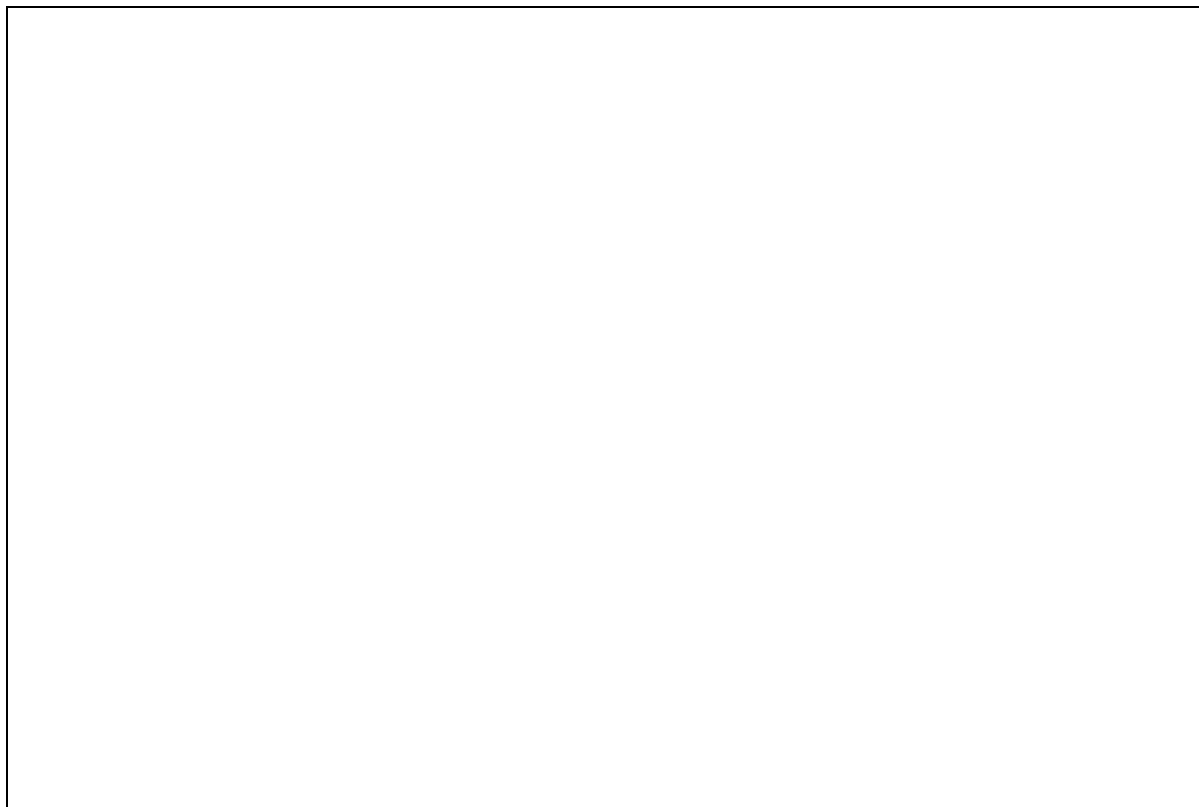
**I would like my dad to know .....**

Name:

Date:

## MY BROTHER

**This is a picture of my brother.**



**My brother's name is .....**

**My brother likes .....**

**My brother hates .....**

**The best thing about my brother is .....**

**The worst thing about my brother is .....**

**I wish my brother would .....**

**I wish my brother would stop .....**

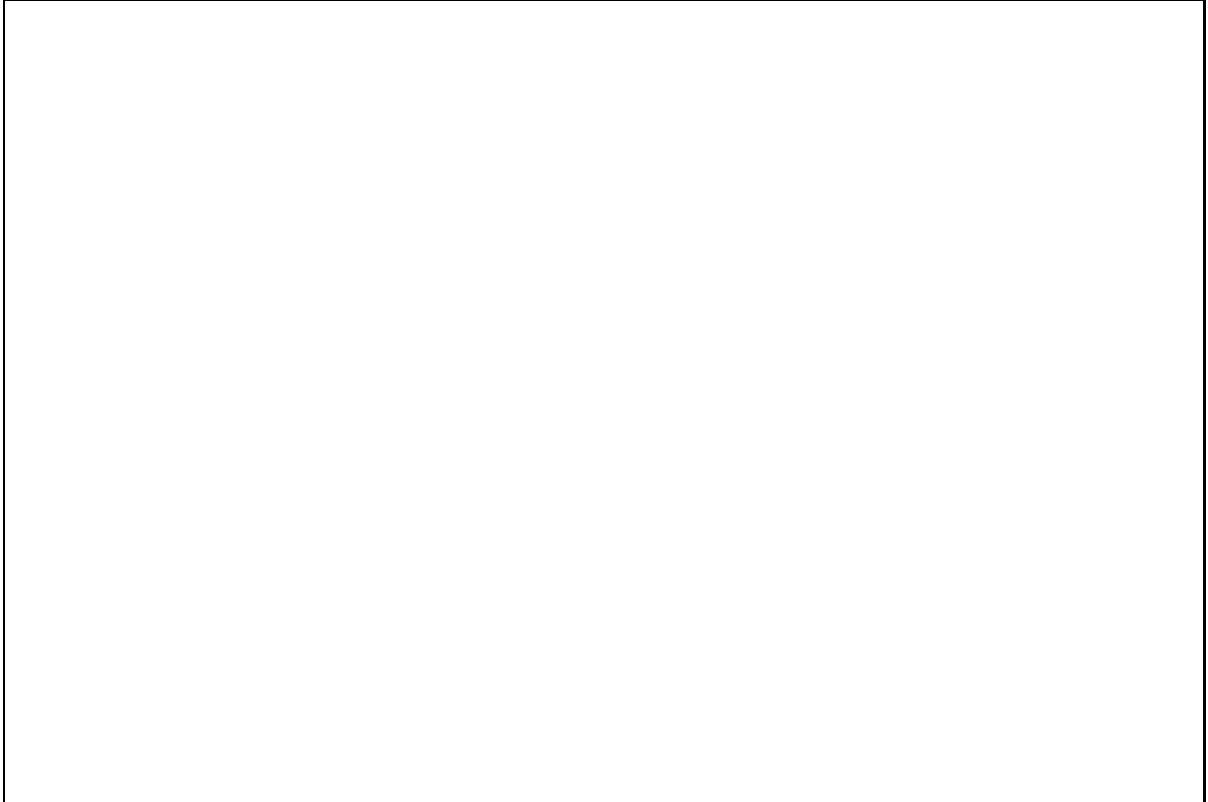
**I would like my brother to know .....**

Name:

Date:

## MY SISTER

**This is a picture of my sister.**



**My sister's name is .....**

**My sister likes .....**

**My sister hates .....**

**The best thing about my sister is .....**

**The worst thing about my sister is .....**

**I wish my sister would .....**

**I wish my sister would stop .....**

**I would like my sister to know .....**

Name:

Date:

## OTHER PEOPLE IN MY FAMILY

**Draw a picture or write some words about other members of your family.**

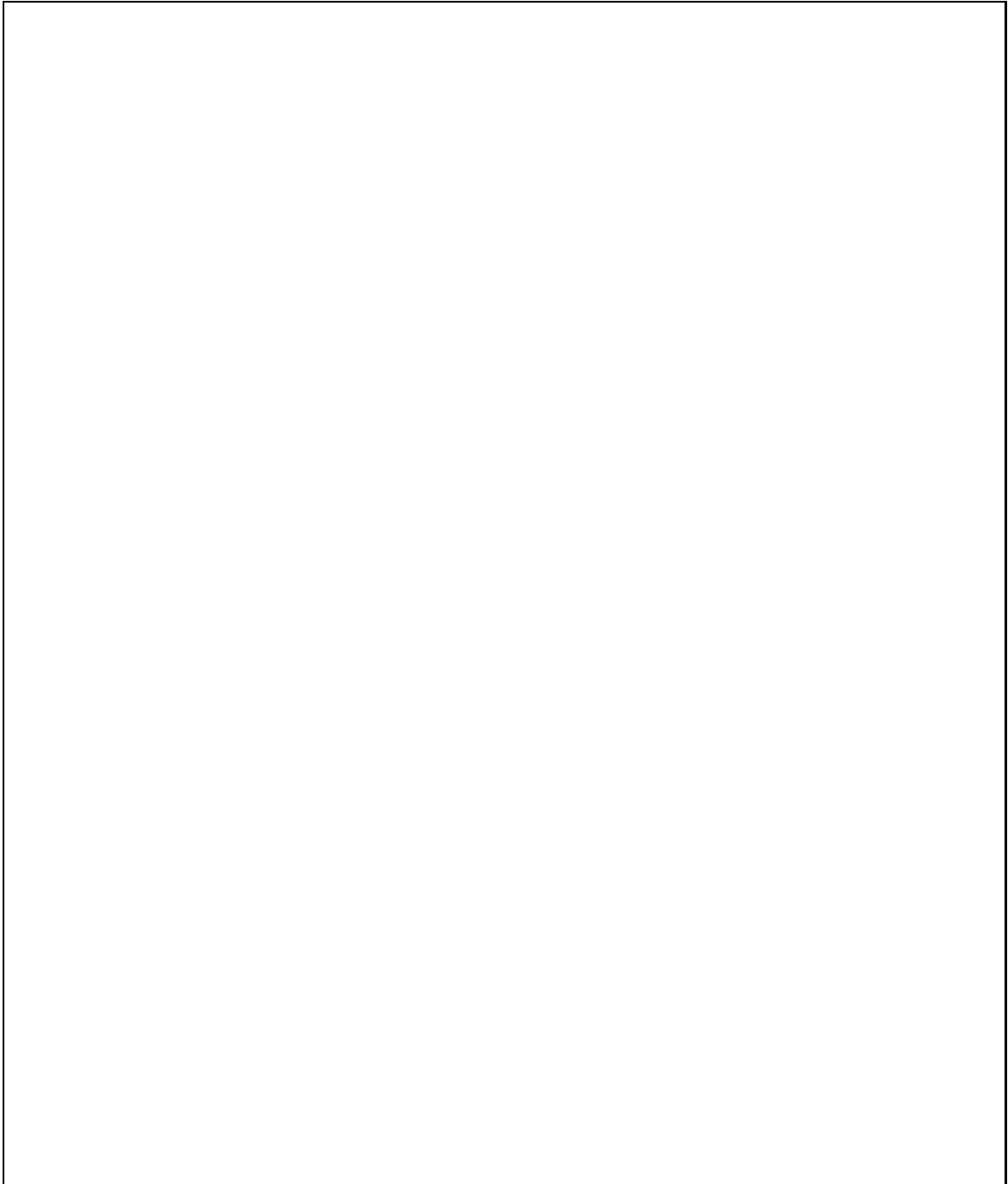
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw a picture or write words about other family members.

Name:

Date:

## PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT ME

**Draw a picture or make a list of the people who care about you.**

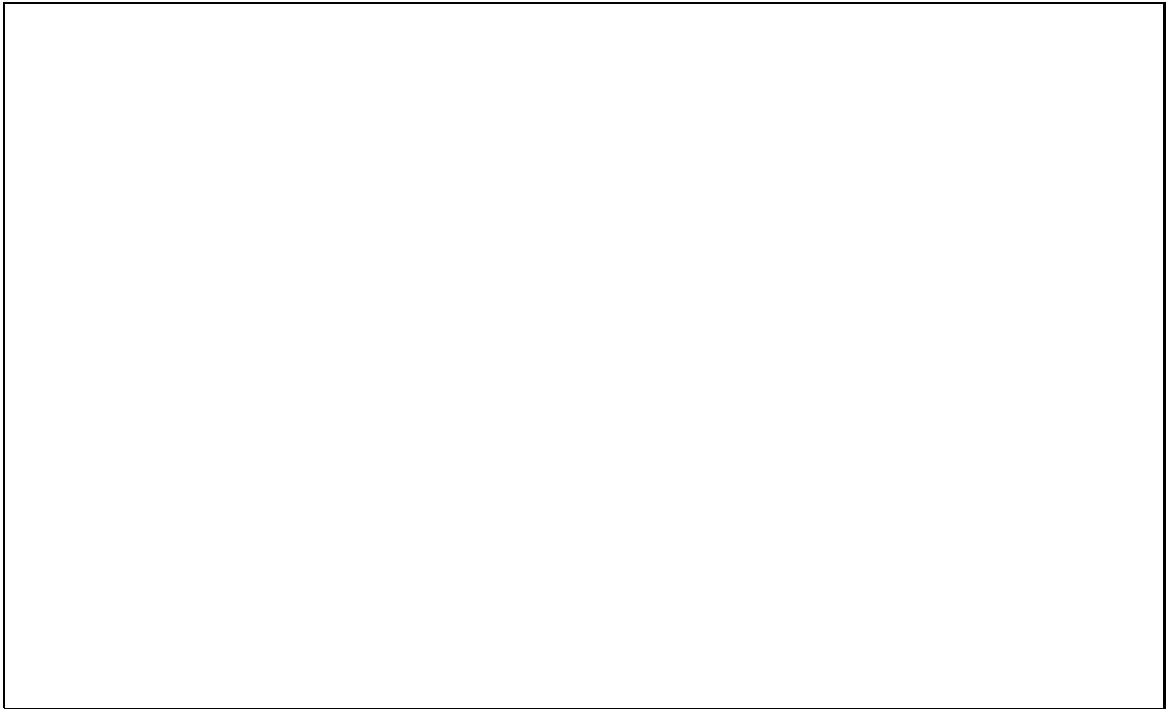
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw a picture or write a list of people who care about them.

Name:

Date:

## WHERE I LIVE

**This is a picture of the home I am living in.**



**These are the people I live with.**



**name:**

**date:**

## MY FAMILY - ESSAY

**Write an essay about your family. You can write whatever you like but use the ideas box to help you think about the things you can include.**

### Ideas:

- Who is in your family?
- What are they like?
- What is it like living in your family?
- Who gets on with who?
- Your views on them?
- Their views about you?
- Things they are currently worried about?
- Do they know about the abuse?
- Their views about the abuse?
- What they want to happen?
- Questions you would like to ask them
- Things you would like to say to them
- Things you do not understand about your family
- Worst things about your family?
- Best things about your family?

Cont....

Name:

Date:

**Ideas:**

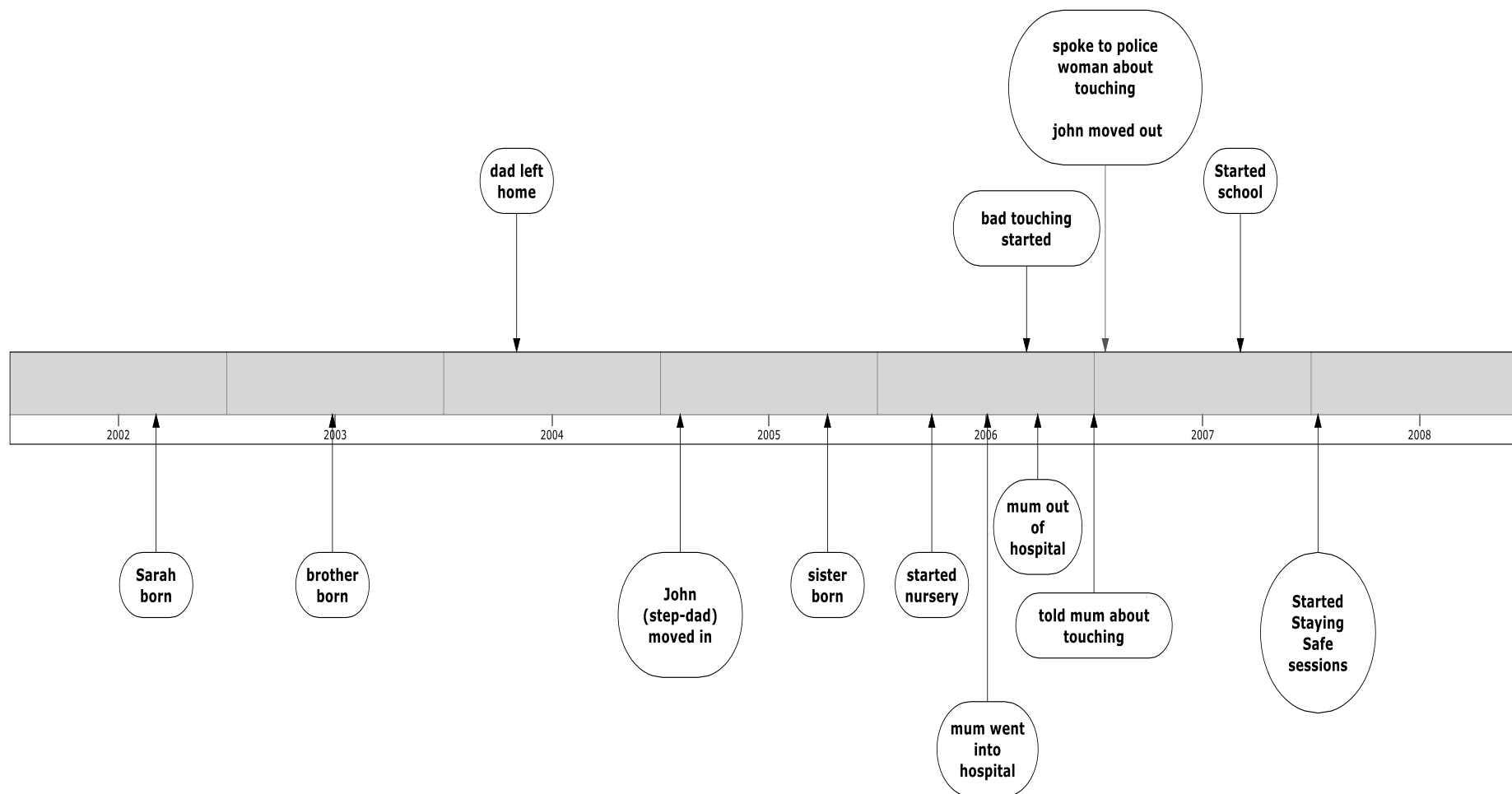
- Who is in your family?
- What are they like?
- What is it like living in your family?
- Who gets on with who?
- Your views on them?
- Their views about you?
- Things they are currently worried about?
- Do they know about the abuse?
- Their views about the abuse?
- What they want to happen?
- Questions you would like to ask them
- Things you would like to say to them?
- Things you do not understand about your family
- Worst things about your family
- Best things about your family

Page 2

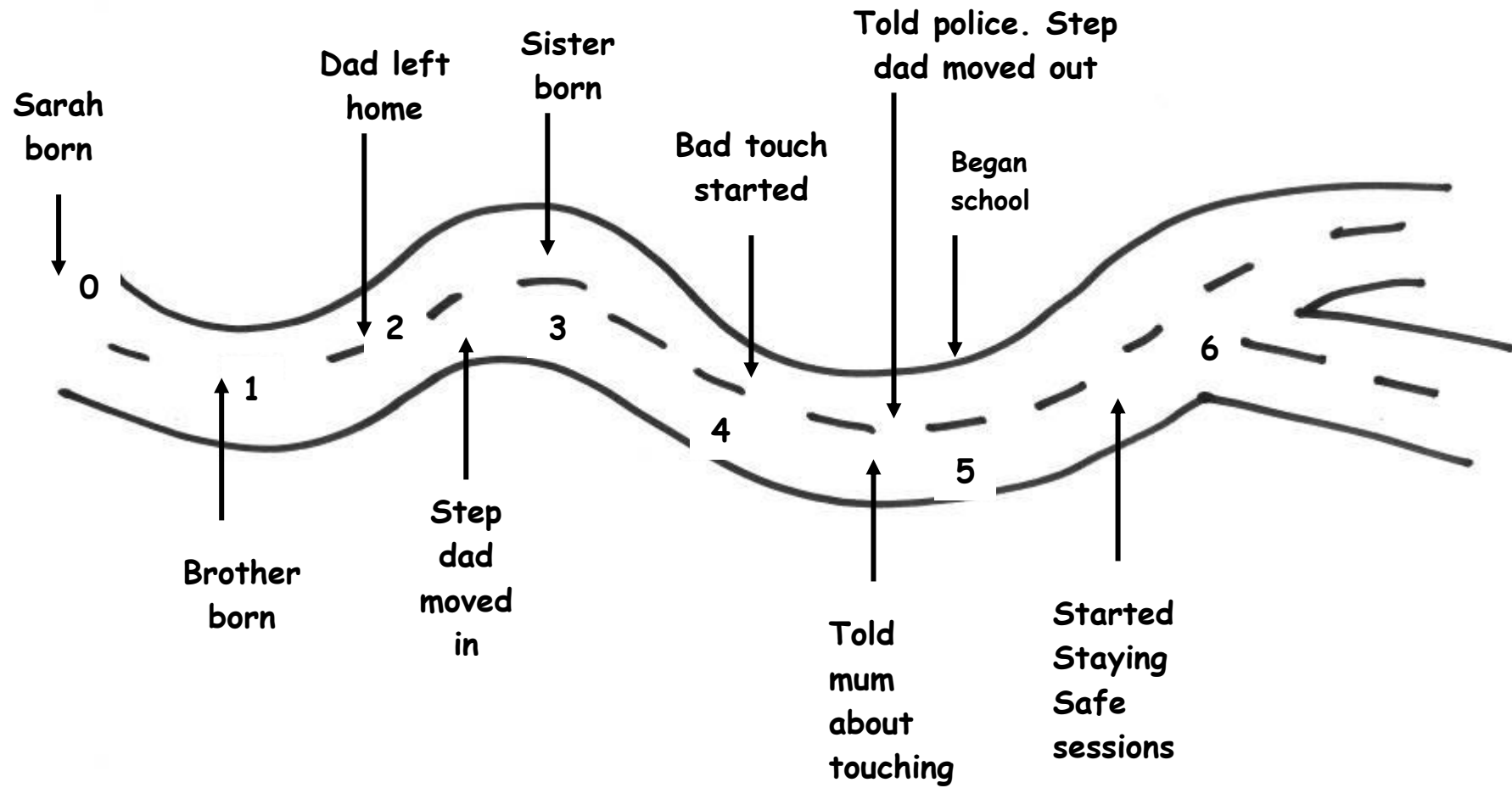
Name:

Date:

## TIMELINE EXAMPLE



## ROADMAP EXAMPLE



## THE STORY OF MY LIFE

**Write the story of your life. Try starting from the beginning right up to now. It is up to you what to write but use the ideas box to help you.**

### Ideas list

- Where born
- Earliest memories
- Schools attended
- People coming into family
- People moving out
- Bereavements
- Changes of house
- Change of who you lived with
- Happy memories
- Sad memories
- Big events
- Involvement of police, social services, court
- Events that have affected you (good & bad)

Cont ...

Name:

Date:

**Ideas list**

- Where born
- Earliest memories
- Schools attended
- People coming into family
- People moving out
- Bereavements
- Changes of house
- Change of who you lived with
- Happy memories
- Sad memories
- Big events
- Involvement of police, social services, court
- Events that have affected you (good & bad)

Cont ...

Name:

Date:

# Worksheet 62

## LIFE-GRAPH

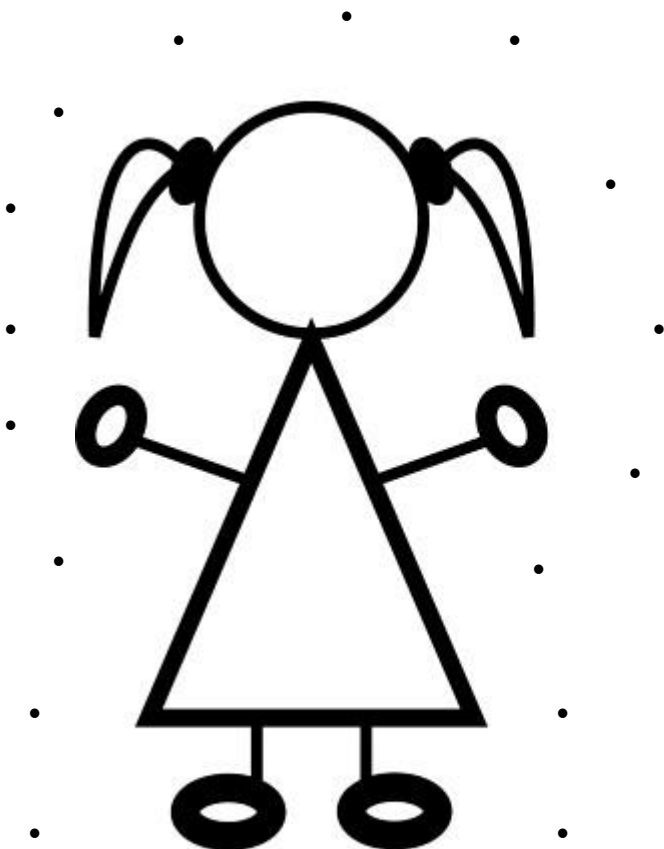
NAME

Very Good	Good	Age	Bad	Very Bad
		0		
		1		
		2		
		3		
		4		
		5		
		6		
		7		
		8		
		9		
		10		
		11		
		12		
		13		
		14		
		15		
		16		
		17		
		18		

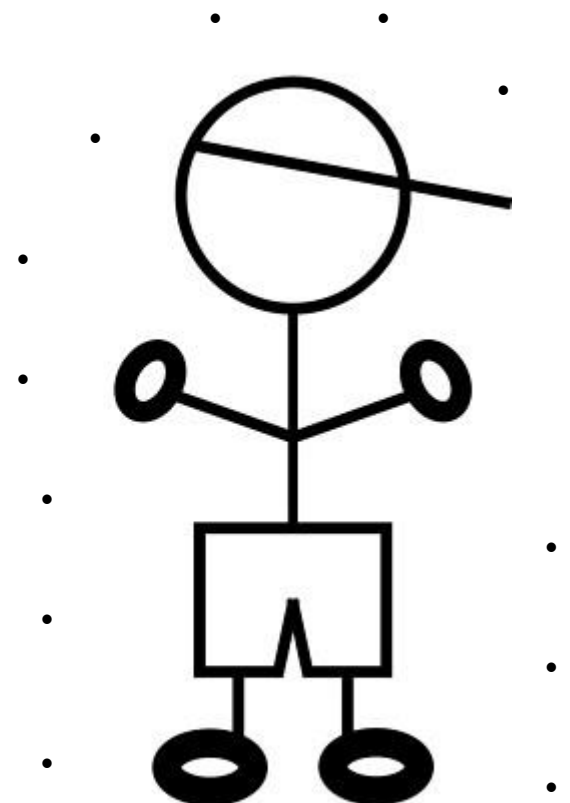
Write in the good, very good, bad and very bad things that have happened in your life

## PERSONAL SPACE

Connect the dots and colour in the personal space.



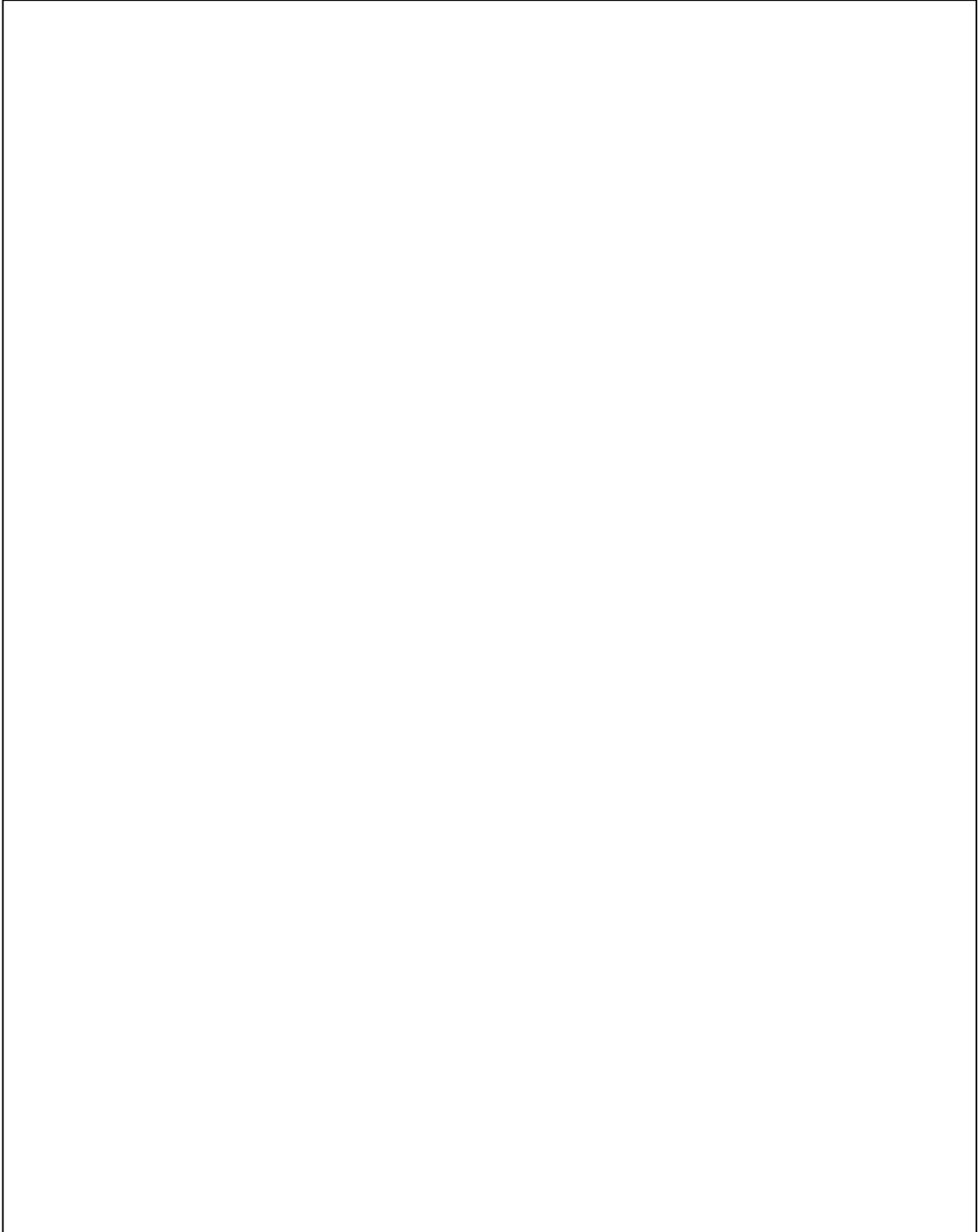
Name:



Date:

## MY PERSONAL SPACE

**Draw a picture of yourself and colour in your personal space**

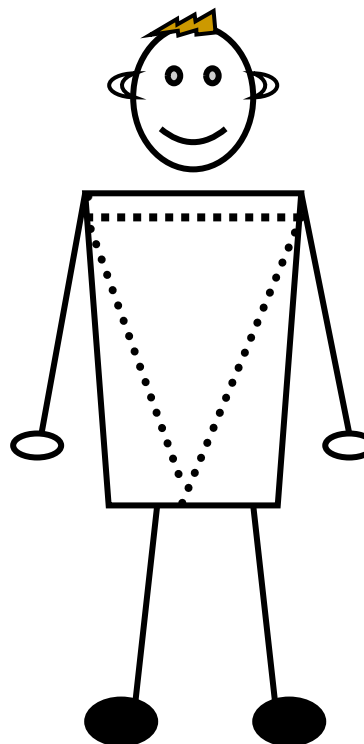
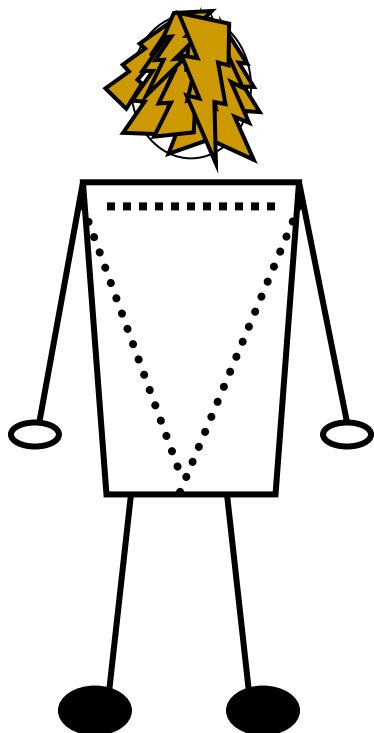


Name:

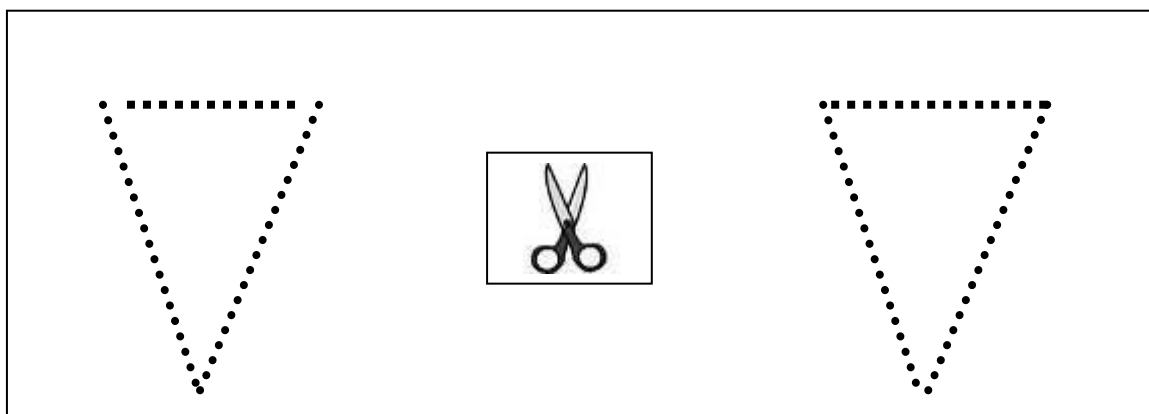
Date:

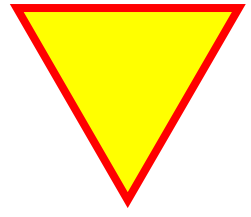
## PRIVATE TRIANGLE

Connect the dots in the picture to show where the private triangle should be...



Now cut out the triangles and put them on the picture where the private triangle is





## MY PRIVATE TRIANGLE

**Draw a picture of yourself and draw in your private triangle**

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a picture of oneself and a private triangle.

Name:

Date:

## IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE & INAPPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES

The purpose of this exercise is to help you think about the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and boundaries. Tick the boxes to show whether you think the following behaviours and boundaries are either 'appropriate' or inappropriate'. Don't worry if you are not sure as some things are not always obvious.

Behaviour	appropriate	inappropriate	Don't know
Telling someone your whole life history	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having sex after going out with someone for a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asking for what you want	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telling an acquaintance at school about the abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knocking on closed doors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Falling in love with anyone who pays you attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being assertive when you want someone to stop sex comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being sexual when you feel like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hitting someone when they wind you up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asking someone if it is OK to give them a hug	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breaking up with someone who is hurtful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telling others no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not saying anything when people make you uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cont...

Now give your own example of an appropriate boundary:

Now give an example of an inappropriate boundary:

Give an example of a boundary that you are not sure about (not one on the list you have filled in)

Write your own sentences about what boundaries and personal space mean to you:

Name:

Date:

## RULES AND BOUNDARIES IN MY HOME

	YES	NO
Is it OK for Kids to walk around the house with no clothes on?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it OK for grown-ups walking around the house with no clothes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it OK for kids walking around wearing only their underwear?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it OK for grown ups walking around wearing only their underwear?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can people going into bathroom when someone is using the toilet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can people going into the bathroom when someone is showering or taking a bath?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do children have to hug all adults who want a hug?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do child have to give a kiss to all adults who want one?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can a child close his or her bedroom door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are adults allowed to swear at your house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are children and teenagers allowed to swear at your house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can children get dressed in private?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can adults get dressed in private?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it OK to ask questions about sex at your house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a place in your house where parents can be alone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a place in your house where children or teenagers can be alone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Is it OK for a young teenager and their boyfriend or girlfriend to be in a room with the door closed?    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do people in your family talk a lot about sex?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do people in your family do sexual things in front of children?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are children in your home allowed to watch adult-rated films?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do people in your home watch films or DVD's involving sex with children present?                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is it OK for people in your house to look at sex pictures or films on the internet?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have access to the internet (by a computer, mobile phone, play-station or other electronic means) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are there any parental controls on your computer, phone or play-station?                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you able to get by these controls?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is it Ok for children to bath or shower together in your house?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do parents need to knock on the door when entering children's bedrooms?                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is it OK for people to look at nude pictures in your house?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is it OK for children and adults to take a bath or shower together in your house?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name:

Date:

## JENNY'S STORY

Read or listen to this story and then answer the questions.

Jenny was 7 years old. She lived with her mother and her two year old brother John. Her mum liked going out to the pub and dancing at a club / disco at the weekends with her friends. She told Jenny that this was her 'grown up time' as she worked hard during the week and needed to have fun with her friends at the weekend.

Jenny's mother did not have enough money for a baby-sitter and told Jenny to look after John while she was out. Her mother would feed John before she went out and asked Jenny to give him a bottle and put him to bed before going to bed herself. John and Jenny shared a bedroom.

Jenny would get very scared at night. Her mummy told her not to answer the front door to anyone and she would hide if anyone knocked at the door. She found it hard to sleep as she was worried by the noises of people walking by the house, sometimes shouting and laughing loudly.

Often she was still awake when her mother came home. At times she had lots of friends with her and they would make a lot of noise and smoke a lot and drink beer. Sometimes her mum would bring male friends home and she would hear laughing and strange noises from the bedroom. On a few times she has heard her mum crying and went to check she was OK. Once she saw a man hit her mum. Jenny got upset and tried to help but her mum shouted at her and told her to go away. Jenny learnt not to open her door. She did not feel very safe and hoped her mum would come in and say everything was OK.

1. What does 'being safe' mean to Jenny?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....cont

2. What does 'being safe' mean to you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Draw a picture of Jenny



Name:

Date:

## SARAH'S STORY

Read or listen to this story and then answer the questions.

Sarah was 7 years old. She lived with her mother and her two year old brother John. Her mum liked going out to the pub and dancing at a club / disco at the weekends with her friends. She told Sarah that this was her 'grown up time' as she worked hard during the week and needed to have fun with her friends at the weekend.

Sarah's mother did not have enough money for a baby-sitter and told Sarah to look after John while she was out. Her mother would feed John before she went out and asked Sarah to give him a bottle and put him to bed before going to bed herself. John and Sarah shared a bedroom.

Sarah would get very scared at night. Her mummy told her not to answer the front door to anyone and she would hide if anyone knocked at the door. She found it hard to sleep as she was worried by the noises of people walking by the house, sometimes shouting and laughing loudly.

Often she was still awake when her mother came home. At times she had lots of friends with her and they would make a lot of noise and smoke a lot and drink beer. Sometimes her mum would bring male friends home and she would hear laughing and strange noises from the bedroom. On a few times she has heard her mum crying and went to check she was OK. Once she saw a man hit her mum. Sarah got upset and tried to help but her mum shouted at her and told her to go away. Sarah learnt not to open her door. She did not feel very safe and hoped her mum would come in and say everything was OK.

1. What does 'being safe' mean to Sarah?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....cont

2. What does 'being safe' mean to you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Is Sarah old enough to baby-sit John?

.....

.....

.....

4. What advice do you have for Sarah?

.....

.....

.....

5. What advice do you have for Sarah's mother?

.....

.....

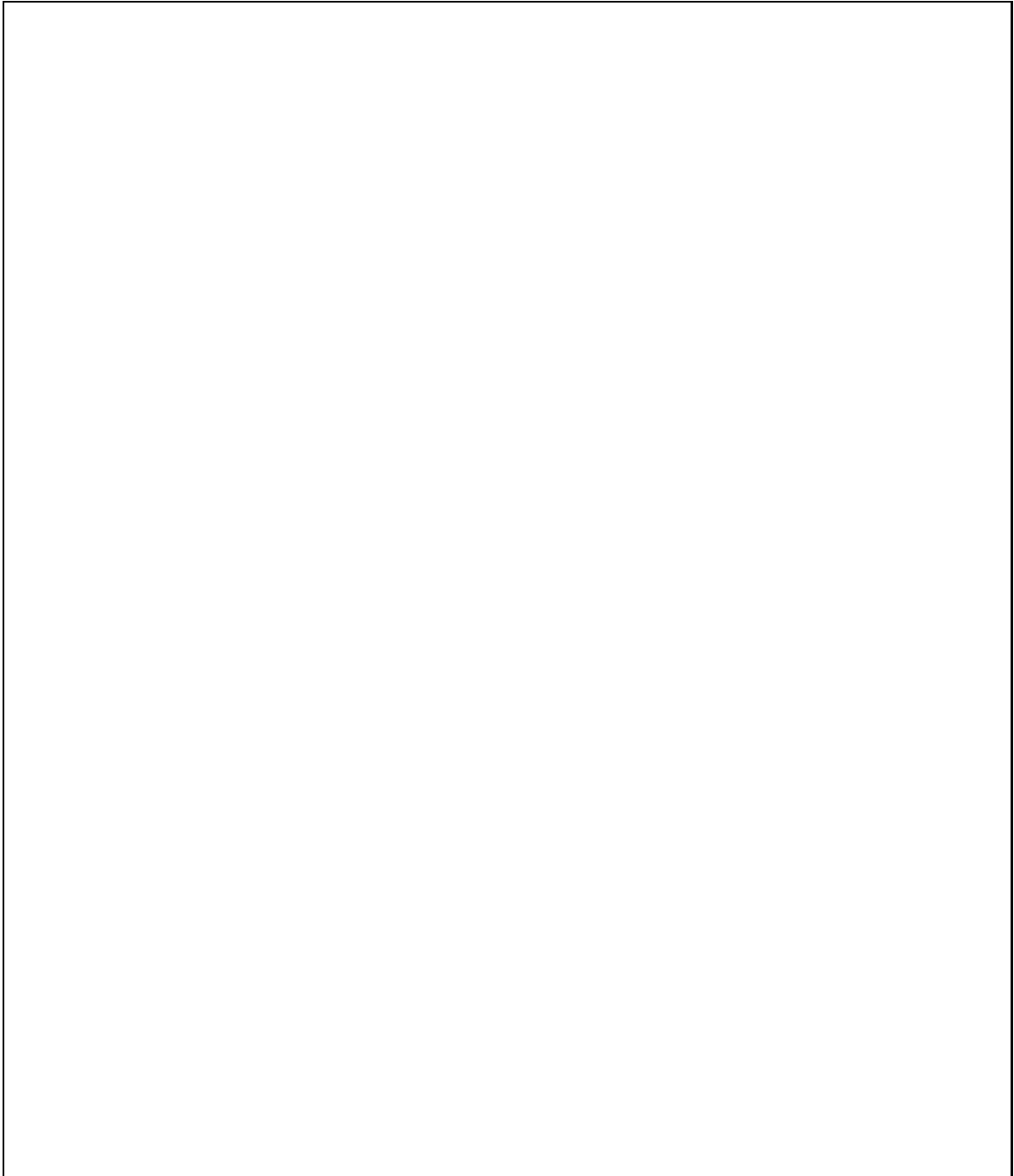
.....

Name:

Date:

## MY SAFE PLACES

**Draw a picture or write about the places where you feel safe.**

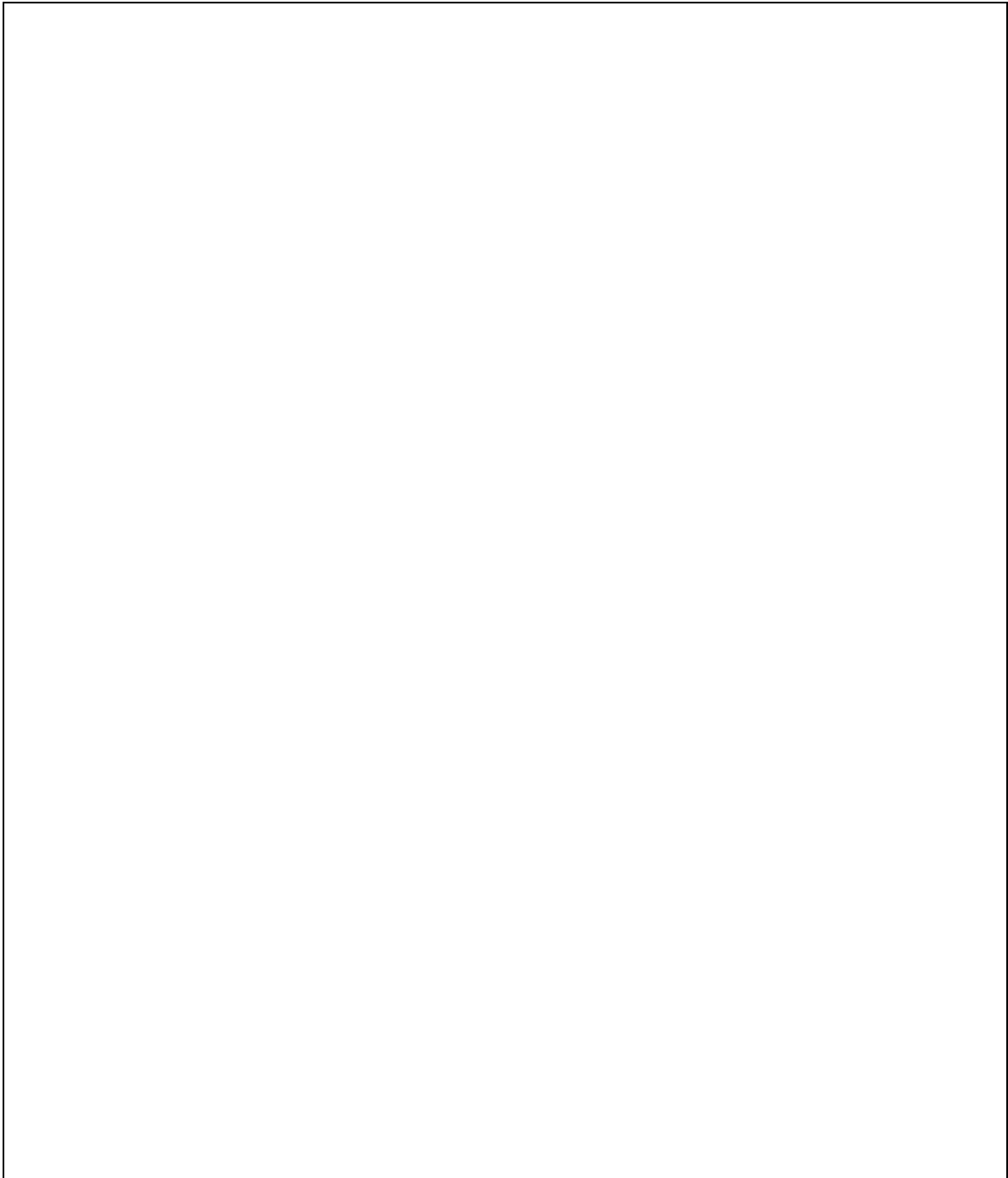
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw a picture or write about safe places.

Name:

Date:

## MY SAFEST PLACE

**Draw a picture or write about the place where you feel safest.**

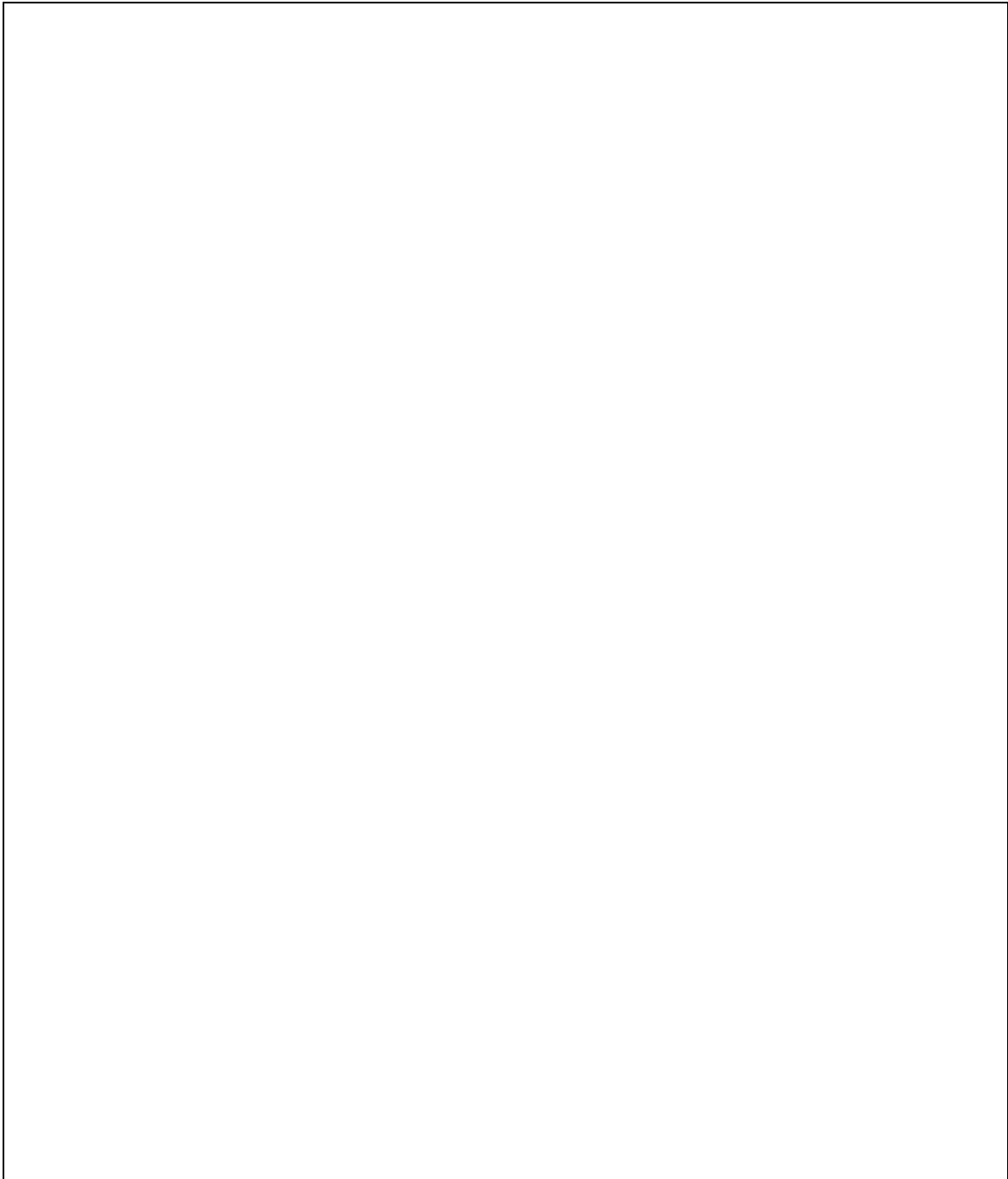
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw a picture or write about their safest place.

Name:

Date:

## UNSAFE PLACES

**Draw a picture or write about the place or places where you do not feel safe.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write about unsafe places.

Name:

Date:

## DEAN'S STORY

Read or listen to this story and then answer the questions.

Dean is 13 years old and lives with his mum, dad and older brother Chris, who is aged 17. Dean did not like it when his mum and dad went shopping or went out to friends for the night because Chris would be left in charge. Chris would boss him about and made him do jobs such as cleaning up the dog mess or putting the rubbish out, jobs that were supposed to be done by Chris. If Dean refused to do then Chris would threaten him or hot him.

One day Dean got really fed up with this and said “No”. Chris started beating Dean up, causing him to have bruises to his head. Chris told his parents that Dean had fallen off his bike.

Dean was afraid to tell. Chris always said he was sorry after a fight and would promise not to do it again, but he would always break his promises.

1. Could Dean trust Chris? If he could say why. If he couldn't say why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. What should Dean do?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Should the parents have known Christopher was hurting dean?  
Why? Why not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Is there anyone you can trust? If yes, who. Why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. What does trust mean to you?

.....

.....

.....

Name:

Date:

## DAVID'S STORY

Read or listen to this story and then answer the questions.

David is 10 years old and lives with his mum, dad and older brother Chris, who is aged 14. David did not like it when his mum and dad went shopping or went out to friends for the night because Chris would be left in charge. Chris would boss him about and made him do jobs such as cleaning up the dog mess or putting the rubbish out, jobs that were supposed to be done by Chris. If David refused to do then Chris would threaten him or hot him.

One day David got really fed up with this and said “No”. Chris started beating David up, causing him to have bruises to his head. Chris told his parents that David had fallen off his bike.

David was afraid to tell. Chris always said he was sorry after a fight and would promise not to do it again, but he would always break his promises.

1. Could David trust Chris? If he could say why. If he couldn't say why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Is there anyone you can trust? If yes, who. Why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. What should David do?

.....

.....

.....

.....

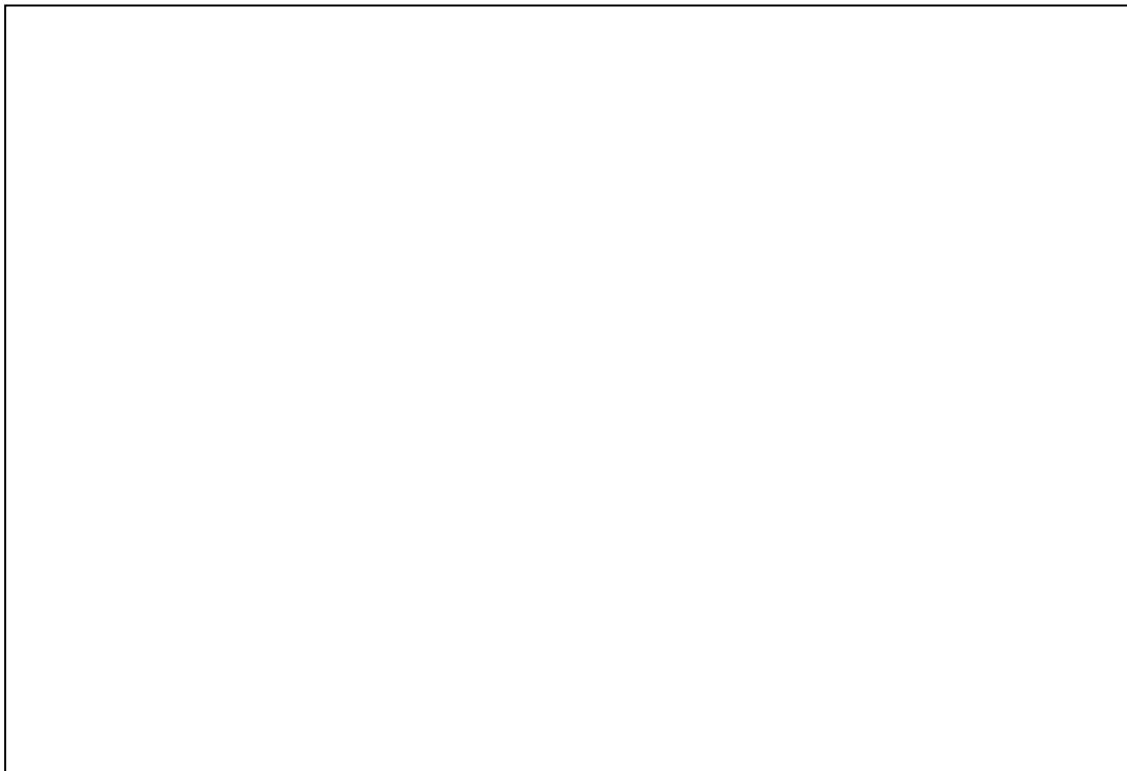
4. What does trust mean to you?

.....

.....

.....

5. Draw a picture of David and Chris.

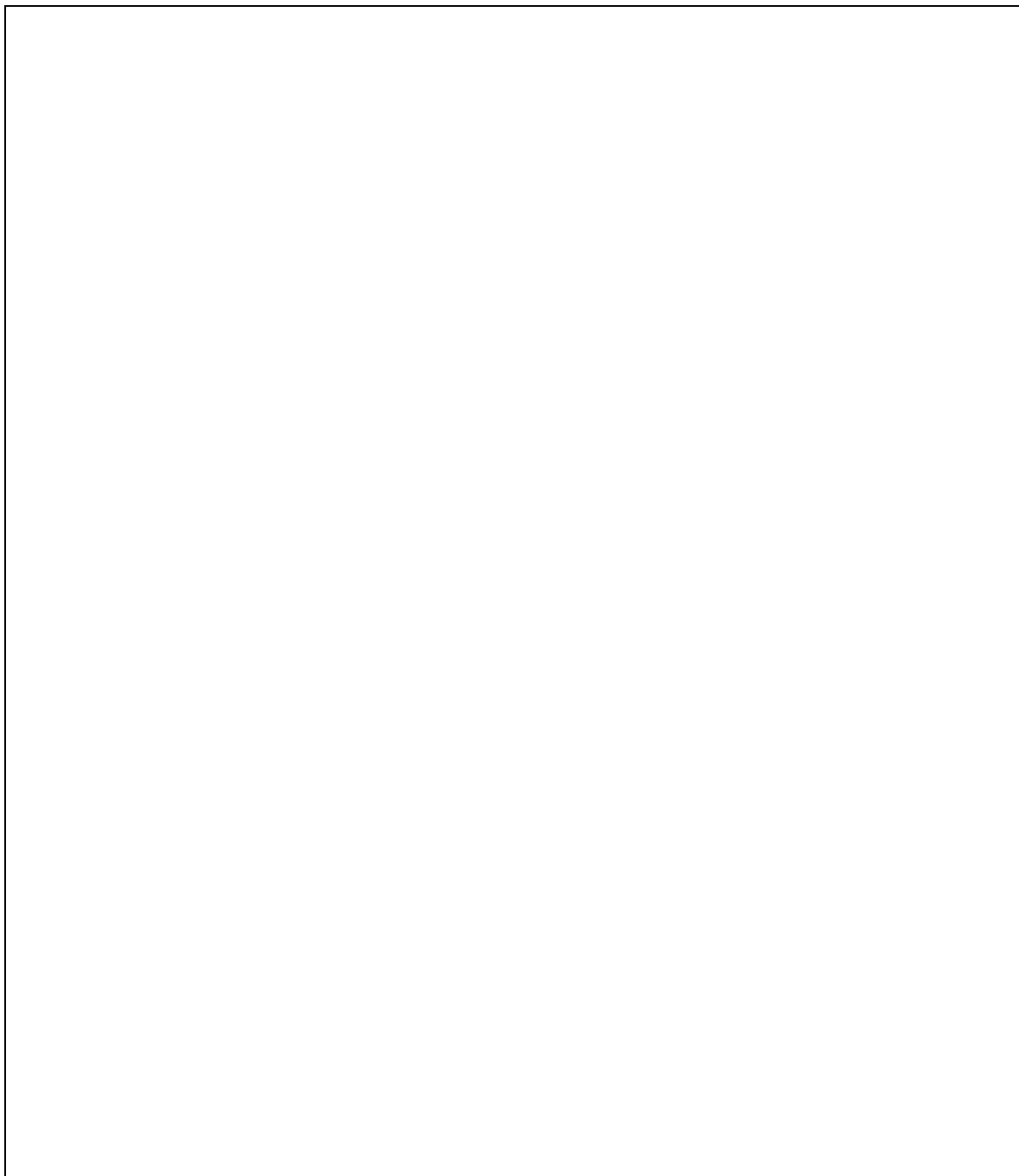


Name:

Date:

## PEOPLE I TRUST

**Draw a picture or make a list of the people you trust.**

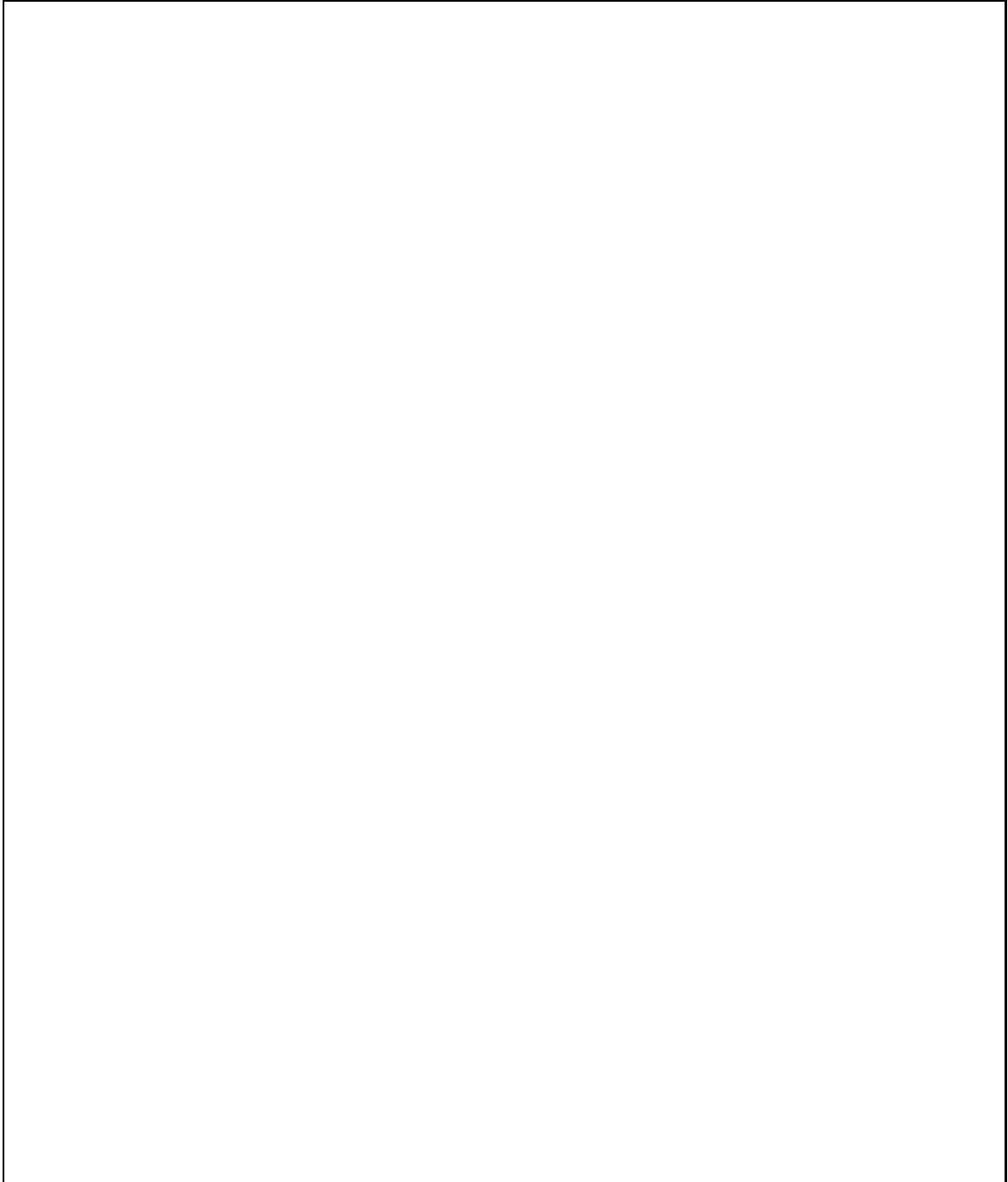
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw a picture or write a list of people they trust.

Name:

Date:

## BROKEN TRUST

**Draw a picture or make a list of the different ways trust can be broken.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write a list of ways trust can be broken.

Name:

Date:

## BROKEN TRUST

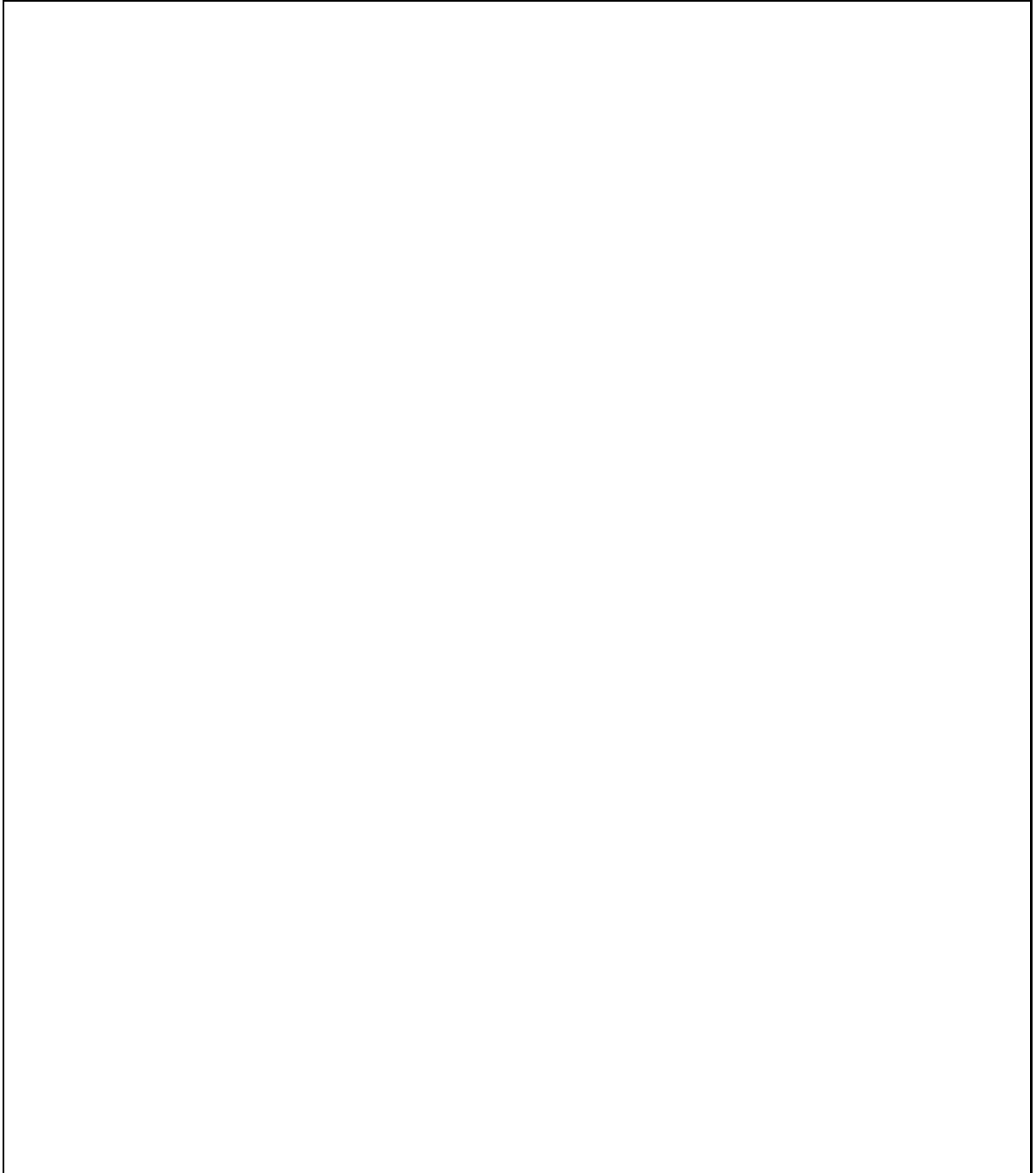
**Write an account of a time (or times) when someone broke your trust.**

Name:

Date:

## PEOPLE I DO NOT TRUST

**Draw a picture or make a list of the people you do not trust.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture or write a list of people they do not trust.

Name:

Date:

## SAFETY RULES

Read the following rules that can help keep you safe.

1. It is ok to say "no" to someone who wants to get into your personal space
2. It is ok to express any feeling, as long as you do not hurt anyone or anything
3. keep a safe distance from people who make you feel uncomfortable

List 5 more ways to keep yourself safe:

1. ....  
.....  
.....
2. ....  
.....  
.....
3. ....  
.....  
.....
4. ....  
.....  
.....
5. ....  
.....  
.....

Remember: While there are many things you can do to keep yourself safe you cannot do it alone. It is also the job of the safe people caring for you to keep you safe

Name:

Date:

## NICOLA'S STORY

Read or listen to this story and then answer the questions.

Nicola was 13 years old. Her parents had just got divorced and her parents said she had to stay with her grandparents again for most of the summer holidays. This made her very upset. She did not like going there anymore. She thought she was old enough to stay at home whilst her mother was out working but her mother said she was too young and had to go and stay with her grandparents. Mum got stressed out a lot since the divorce

Nicola hated leaving home. She would miss her friend Jenny who lived on the same street. She especially hated the "special times" when her grandfather would take her fishing. It was there that he first touched her in her "private places". He told her that it was their "secret" and that no one would believe her if she told. Nicola was all muddled up. She used to like the times they spent together but wished he would not touch her that way anymore.

As Nicola packed to go to her grandparents she wondered if her grandfather did anything like that to her mother, but she did not to give her any more problems to deal with. She also became worried because her younger sister was just coming up to the age when her grandfather begun to touch her. If I tell maybe we won't have to go visit there any more, but if I do what will mum do? Nicola was beginning to get sick as she thought about her secret.

1. What is the difference between safe and unsafe secrets?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....cont

2. What was problem she faced?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. What was the unsafe or difficult secret in this story?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. What do you think Nicola should do?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. What would you do in a similar situation?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Draw a picture of Nicola

Name:

Date:

## SAMANTHA'S STORY

Read or listen to this story and then answer the questions.

Samantha was 10 years old. Her parents had just got divorced and her mum said she had to stay with her grandparents again for most of the summer holidays. This made her very upset. She did not like going there anymore. She thought she was old enough to stay at home whilst her mother was out working but her mother said she was too young and had to go and stay with her grandparents.

Samantha hated leaving home. She would miss her friend James who lived on the same street. She especially hated the "special times" when her grandfather would take her fishing. It was there that he first touched her in her "private places". He told her that it was their "secret" and that no one would believe her if she told. Samantha was all muddled up. She used to like the times they spent together but wished he would not touch her that way anymore.

As Samantha packed to go to her grandparents she wondered if her grandfather did anything like that to her mother. She wondered if she should tell her mother. After all this was not a fun secret like James' birthday party.

1. What is the difference between safe and unsafe secrets?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....cont

Name:

Date:

2. What was the fun or safe secret in this story?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. What was the unsafe or difficult secret in this story?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. What do you think Samantha should do?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Draw a picture of Samantha

Name:

Date:

# SECRETS

**A Secret is something that someone tells you and asks you not to tell anyone else. There are different kinds of secrets. Some are OK and some are not OK. Usually secrets that are not OK make you feel uncomfortable or mixed up. What do you think about the following secrets? Are they OK or not OK?**

Circle - OK or Not OK

1. A friend tells you about a surprise birthday party for a friend. You are asked not to tell.

**OK**

**Not OK**

2. A friend stole something from the shop and asks you not to tell.

**OK**

**Not OK**

3. Someone you know & trust touches your private parts and asks you not to tell.

**OK**

**Not OK**

4. A kid at school cheats at school. You decide not to tell.

**OK**

**Not OK**

5. Your brother or sister buys a present for your mum and asks you not to tell.

**OK**

**Not OK**

6. Someone asks you to touch their private parts and asks you not to tell.

**OK**

**Not OK**

7. A person you know tells you that you will get into trouble if you tell a secret. You decide not to tell.

**OK**

**Not OK**

8. An adult tells you they will buy you your favourite toy or computer game if you keep a secret. You agree and get the present.

**OK**

**Not OK**

9. A man shows you rude pictures and tells you not to tell because he would get into trouble. He buys you a video game you always wanted.

**OK**

**Not OK**

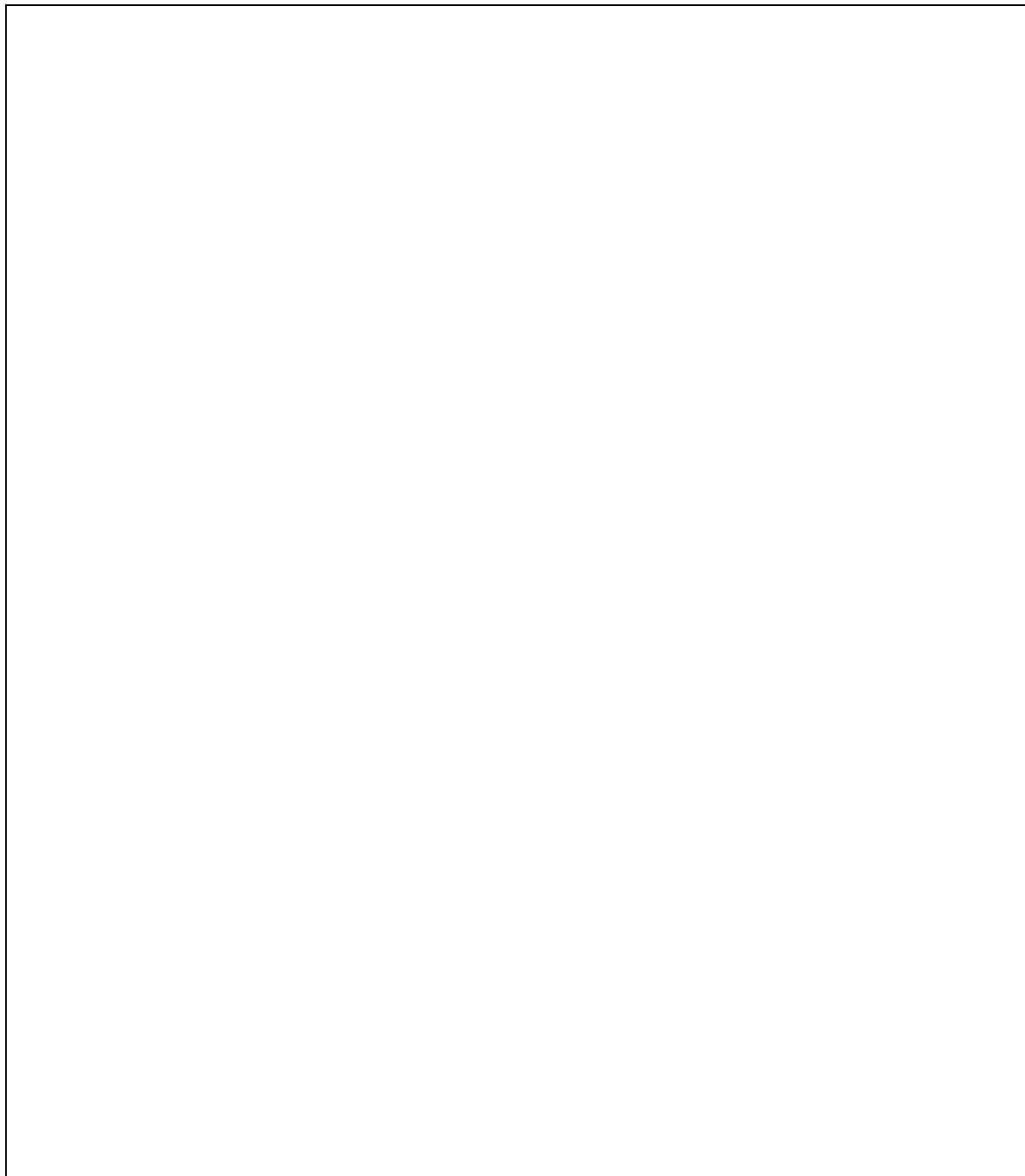
**Can you think of other kinds of secrets? Write them down.  
Are these secrets OK or Not OK?**

Name:

Date:

## SECRETS MAKE ME FEEL ...

**Draw or write about how secrets make you feel.**

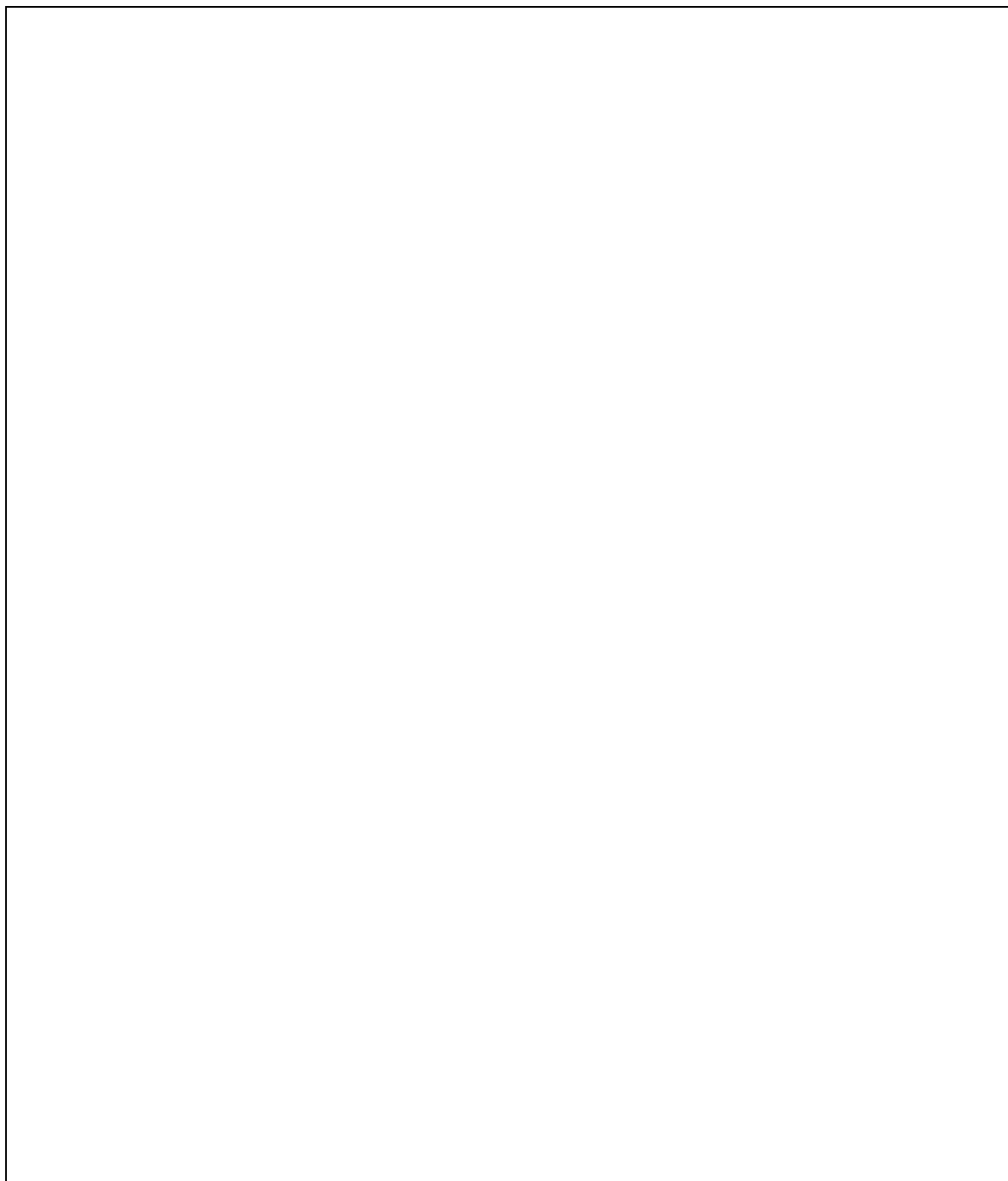
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw or write their response to the prompt.

Name:

Date:

## SAFE PLACES TO SHARE SECRETS

**Draw or write about a place where you feel safe to share difficult secrets.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw or write about a safe place to share secrets.

Name:

Date:

## WHO I CAN TELL

**Draw or write about the people you can share your secrets with.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw or write about the people they can share secrets with.

Name:

Date:

# MY FRIEND'S SECRET

Write a story about a young person who was afraid to tell his or her difficult secret

Once upon a time .....

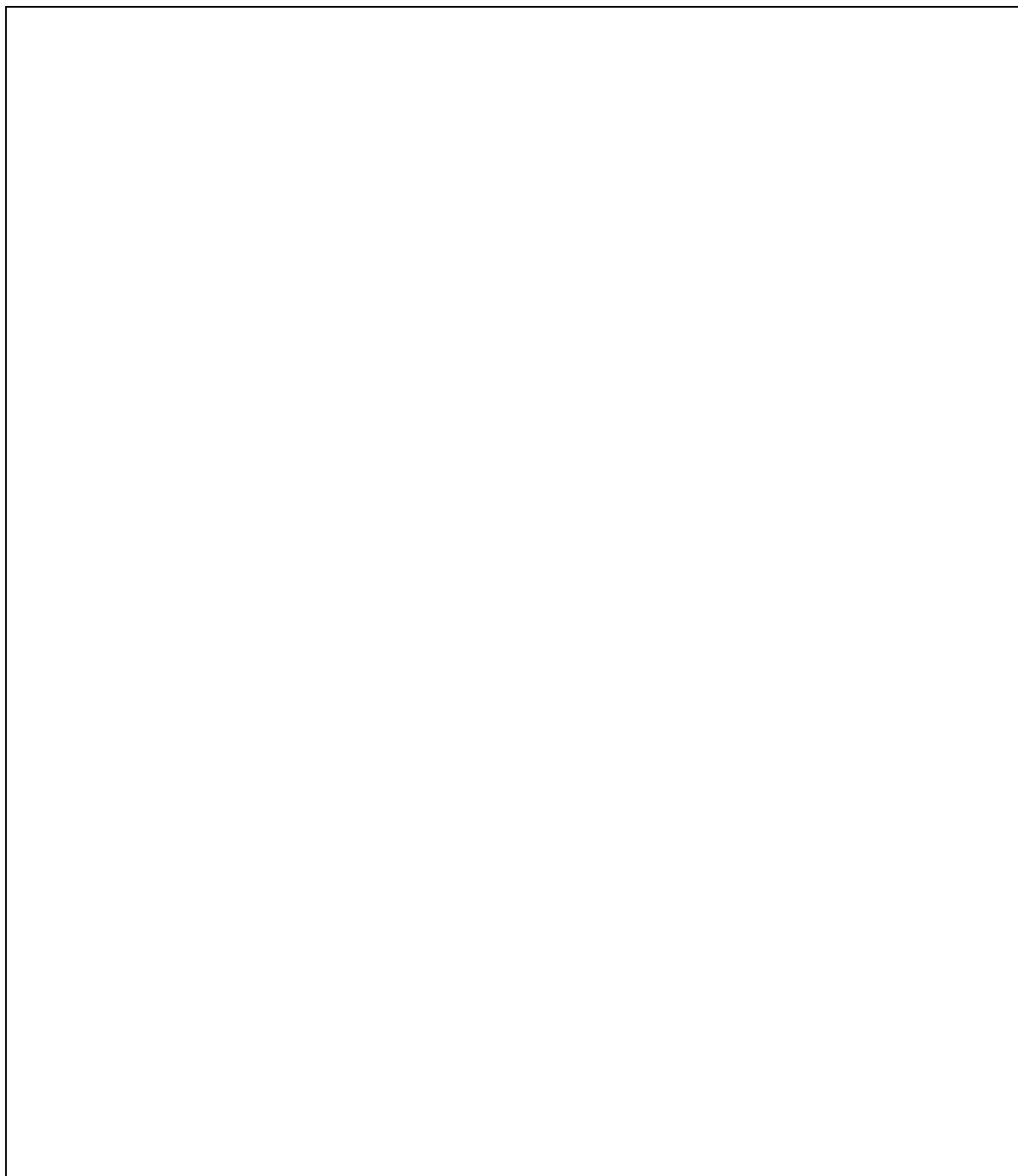
[illegible]

Name:

Date:

## MY HAPPY SECRET

**Draw or write about a time when you told someone a fun secret.**



Name:

Date:

## MY DIFFICULT SERCET

**Draw or write about a time when you told someone a difficult secret.**



Name:

Date:

## ABOUT GOOD TOUCHES AND BAD TOUCHES

The way someone touches us can give us different kinds of feelings. For example Sarah, who is feeling sad after a bad day at school, gets a warm hug from her big sister that makes her feel much better. Stephen and Ben, excited after successfully presenting their school project in class give each other a 'high fives' handshake. Jade, who is nervous visiting the dentist feels better when he mum holds her hands and Daniel, who is feeling unwell snuggles up to his mum on the sofa whilst she strokes his hair. These are examples of good touches.

How can you tell if a touch is a good touch? Good touches make you feel good inside and they only happen when you want them to. Bad touches hurt you or make you feel uncomfortable, weird or scared. Sometimes it is easy to spot a bad touch. For example when Chantelle kicks her brother because she is angry with him or when David is slapped on his face by his step-dad. However, sometimes the person who gave a bad touch did not intend it to hurt. For example Andrew, trying to be funny, pulls his sister's hair and Alison does not like it when her uncle pinches her cheeks as a way of saying hello.

### Question

So who decides whether a touch is good or bad?

### Answer

**YOU DO. IT'S YOUR BODY AND YOU ARE IN CHARGE**

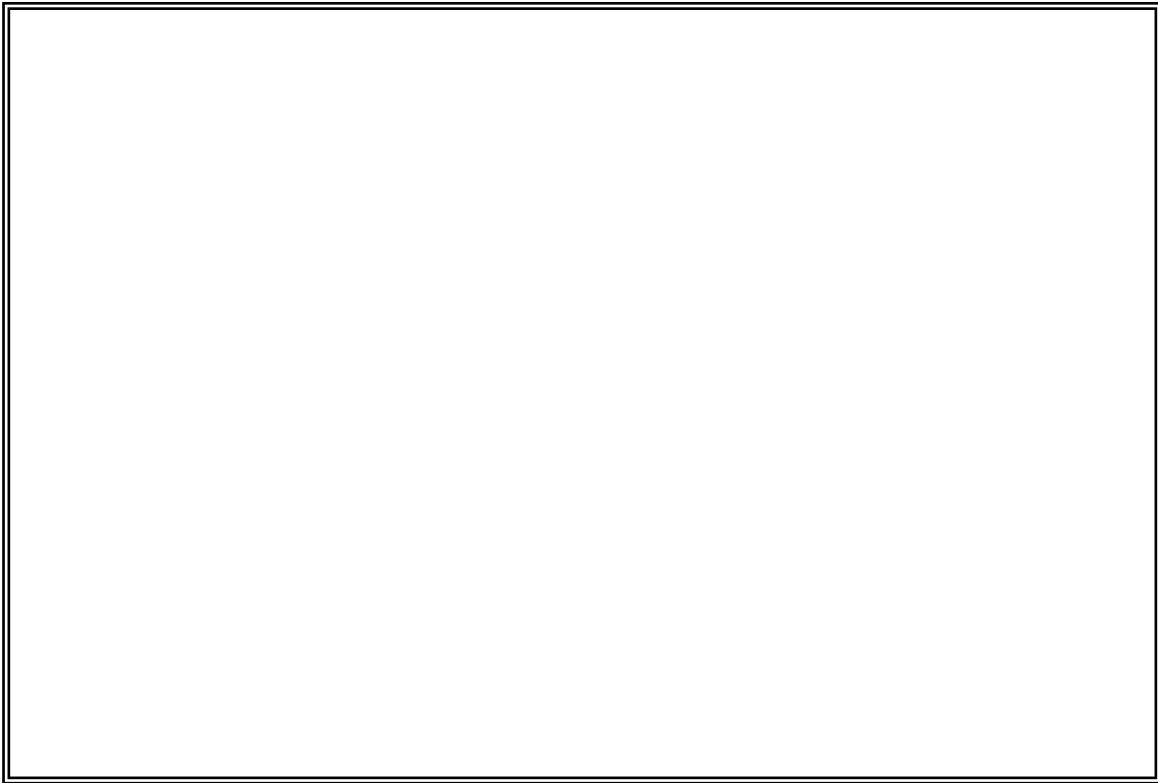
Now try some of the worksheets and activities that will help you find out a bit more about good and bad touches.

Name:

Date:

## IT'S MY BODY

What activity do you like to do most with your body - run, dance, skip, play football? Draw a picture of you doing it. Write or get your worker to write why you like to do this activity.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name:

Date:

## STORY BOOK ABOUT A GOOD TOUCH

Make a story book about how a good touch, the hug that Danielle got from her sister Natalie, made her feel better.

1. Danielle is sad. She had a bad day at school	2. Danielle tells her sister Natalie about the bad day
3. Natalie says "I think you need a hug". She gives Danielle one	4. Danielle is happy again. The hug makes her feel better

Name:

Date:

**STORY BOOK ABOUT A BAD TOUCH**

Make a story-book about a bad touch between two people.


Name:

Date:

## BAD TOUCHES - WHAT COULD YOU SAY?

Bad touches hurt or make you feel uncomfortable. Andrew pulls his sister's hair. An angry Chantelle kicks her brother. Alison's uncle pinches her cheeks whenever he sees her and David's step-father gives him a slap on the face. What could you say if someone gave you a bad touch? Here are some choices

- **Please stop.**
- **No! I don't want to do that.**
- **Stop that!**
- **No, not right now please.**

Using these choices write or get your worker to write what you would say in the following situations.

1. A person in your class sticks out a foot and trips you

.....

2. Your brother keeps teasing you

.....

3. Your uncle wants to pinch your cheeks

.....

4. Someone tickles you too hard

.....

5. Some one at school pulls your hair

.....

Name:

Date:

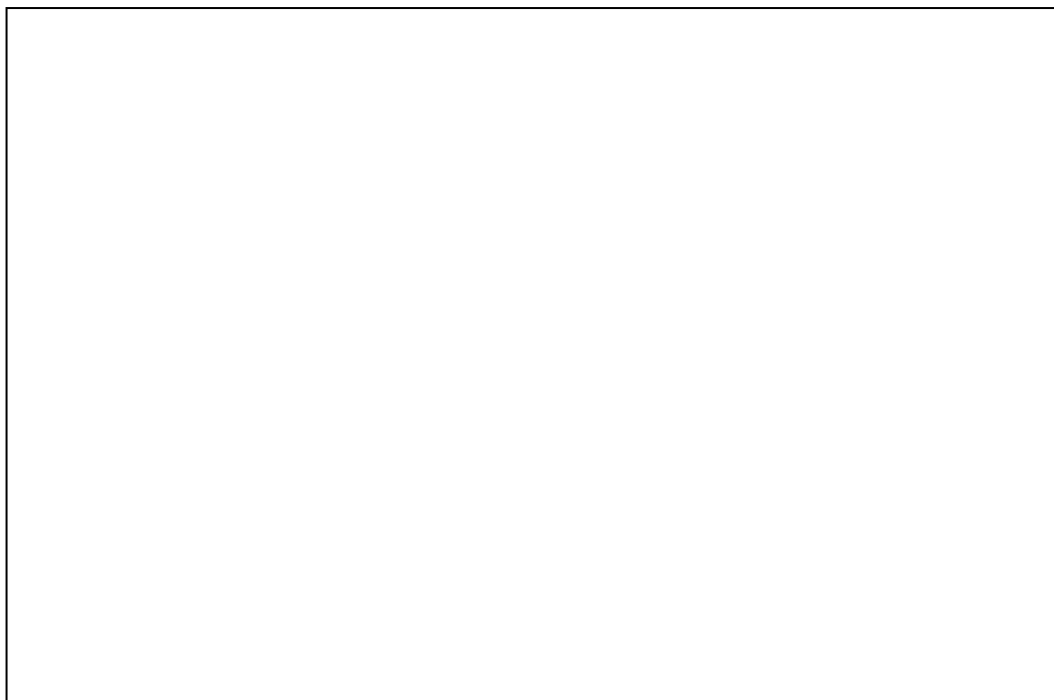
## FILL IN THE BLANKS

Use the words below to tell the story of how Mitch got the baby sitter Terry to stop tickling him

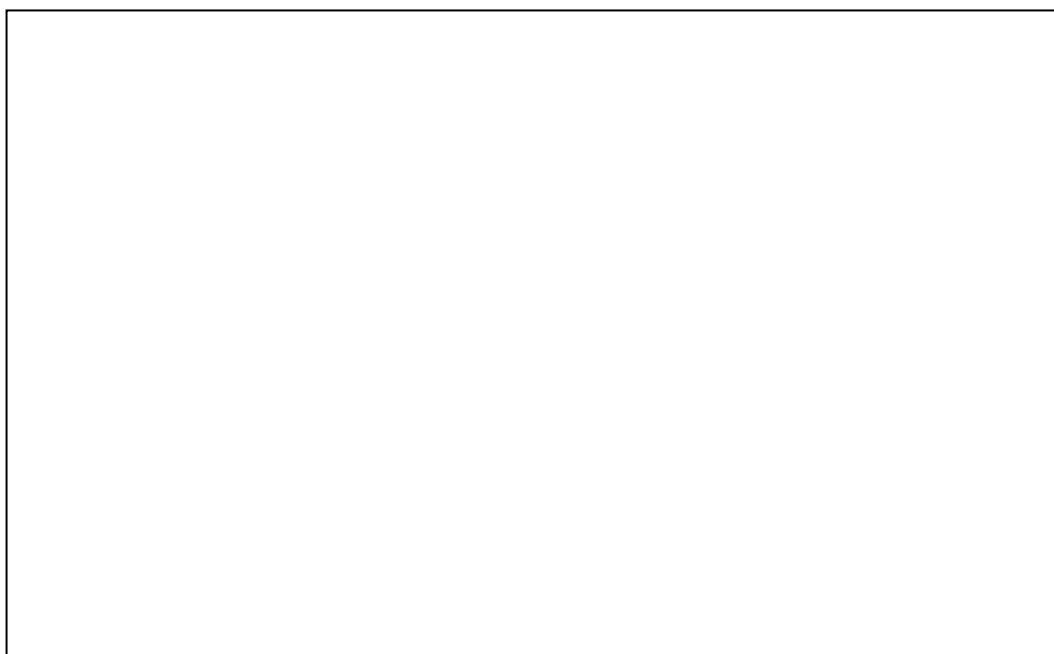
out	little	sad	hard	card	more
sorry	like	win	better	smile	keeps

Terry, Mitch and his sister Emily are playing .....  
games. Mitch ..... winning. Emily is  
..... "I never .....", she says. To  
make Emily feel ....., Terry tickles her a  
..... bit. Mitch feels left ....., so  
Terry tickles him too. Mitch likes it until Terry tickles him too  
..... "Stop, don't do that" Mitch says. "I don't  
..... it anymore". Terry tells Mitch "I'm  
.....  
"I won't do that any ....."

Draw a picture of how Mitch felt when Terry tickled him too hard.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture of how Mitch felt when Terry tickled him too hard.

Draw a picture of how Mitch felt when Terry said sorry.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture of how Mitch felt when Terry said sorry.

Name:

Date:

## YOU'RE IN CHARGE

You and only you are in charge of your body. When someone's touch makes you feel bad or uncomfortable, you have the right to say "Stop. Don't do that!" Write or get your worker to write a short story or a poem about being in charge of your body, using the title "I'm in Charge"

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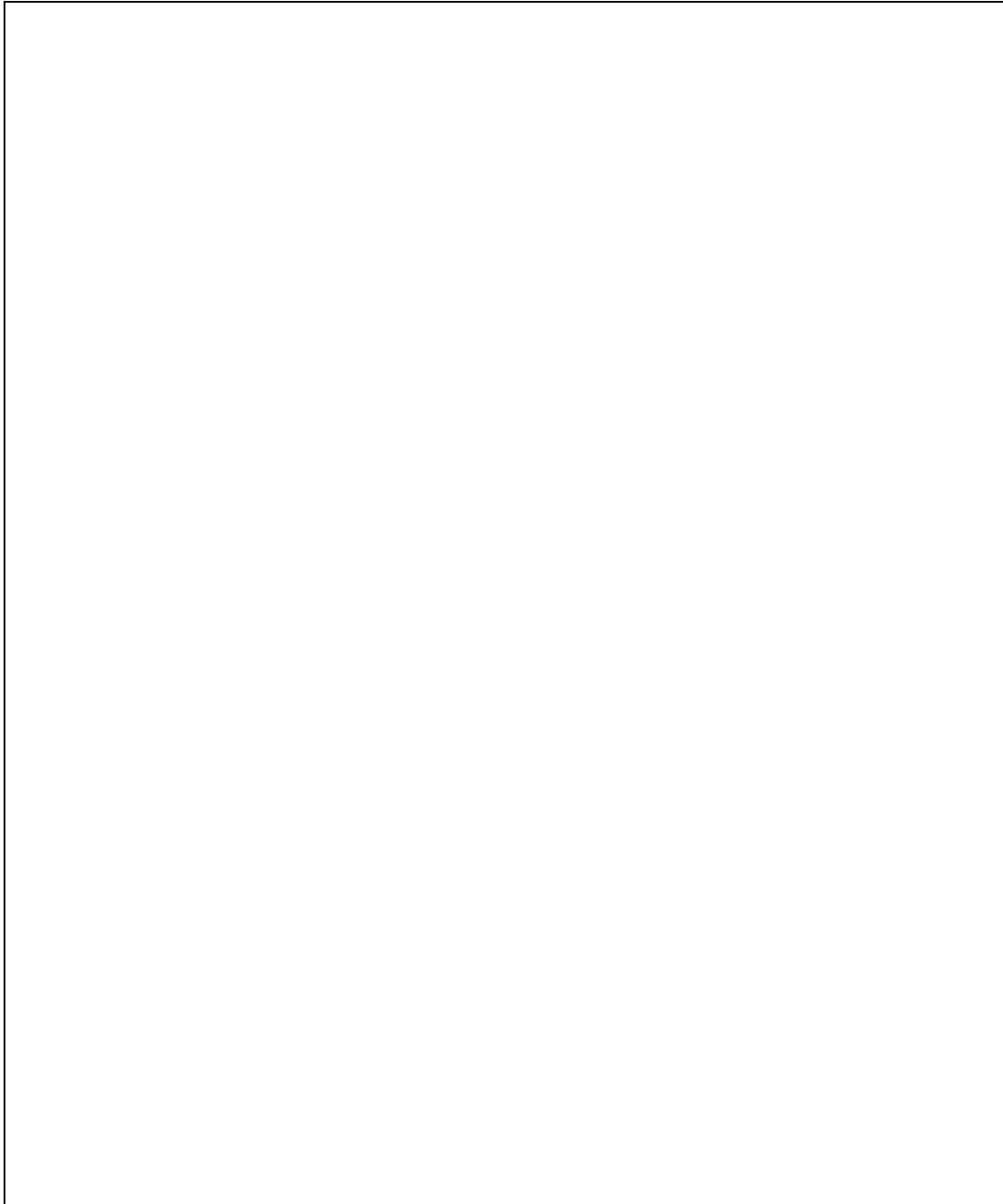
.....

Name:

Date:

## WHAT'S PRIVATE?

Private body parts are the parts of your body that are covered by a bathing suit (the 'private triangle'). Boys and girls have different body parts. Draw a picture of yourself in a swimming costume.



Name:

Date:

## THE TOUCHING RULE

The touching rule says, no one should touch your private parts except to keep you clean and healthy. Draw pictures of them.

A mum is changing her baby's nappy.

A doctor is checking a child's belly. Who else should be there when the doctor is doing this?

Name:

Date:

## STAYING SAFE

Your body is special and you're in charge of it. Anyone who touches you and tells you to keep it a secret is telling you a bad secret. To stay safe, here's what to do.:

Even though people tell you you're not supposed to tell secrets, never keep a bad secret. A bad secret is one that makes you feel bad inside.

Tell the secret at once to a grown-up you trust.

Talk to your worker about some of the grown-up's you can trust and that you can tell about bad secrets. Draw their pictures.


Name:

Date:

## SOME MORE IMPORTANT THINGS ABOUT TOUCHING

Have a look in your work folder and remind yourself of the work you have already done in the session on 'My Personal Space'.

Remember how the private parts of your body are in the area of your 'private triangle'. This is the part of your body covered by your swimming costume. Another name for these parts of your body is your genitals.

People have different names for the private parts of the body. List here the words you use in your family

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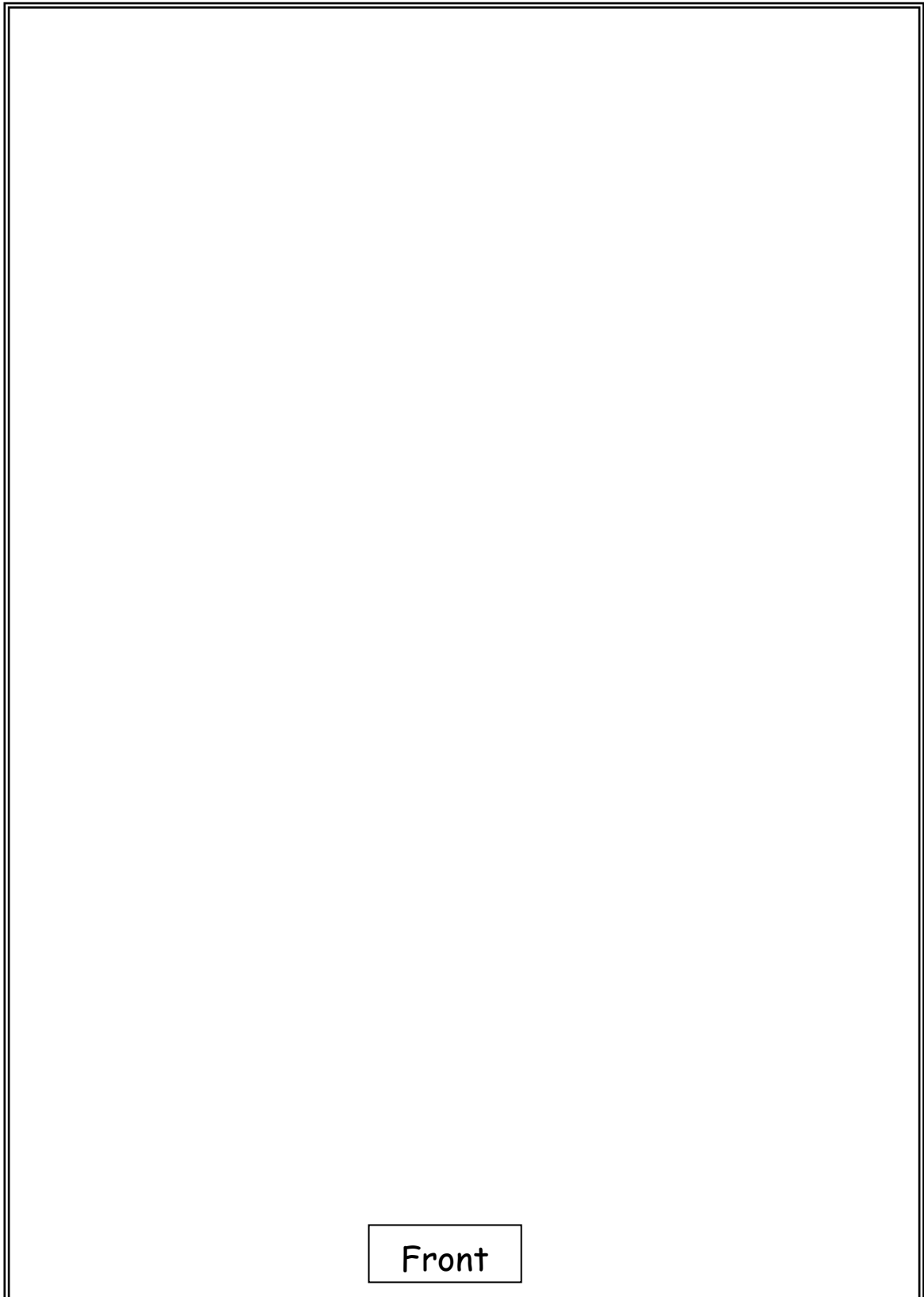
.....

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.....

There are proper words for these private parts. These are the words you have been taught about at school or that you will learn in the future. For boys these private parts are called penis, the bottom or anus. For girls they are called breasts, vagina, bottom and anus.

Draw a picture of the front of your body. Draw lines to different parts of the body, including your genitals or private parts of the body and write the name of these parts at the end of the line



Front

Back

Sometimes adults who are strangers or members of our family may wish to touch parts of our body which are private to us. Remember....

➤ **Your body belongs to you. Especially your private parts**

If someone wishes to touch your genitals and you felt it is upsetting or wrong, or if it makes you embarrassed or afraid it is OK to say NO, even if that person is an adult

If this happens to you it is important that you tell someone you can trust and who you feel OK talking to that it happened.

Even if the person who touched you tells you it is a secret or tries to frighten you it is still better to tell someone you can trust to help you.

Write down a list of the people that you could tell and get help from if someone tried to touch you in your private areas (your private triangle, your genitals or the area of your body covered by your swimming costume)

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.....

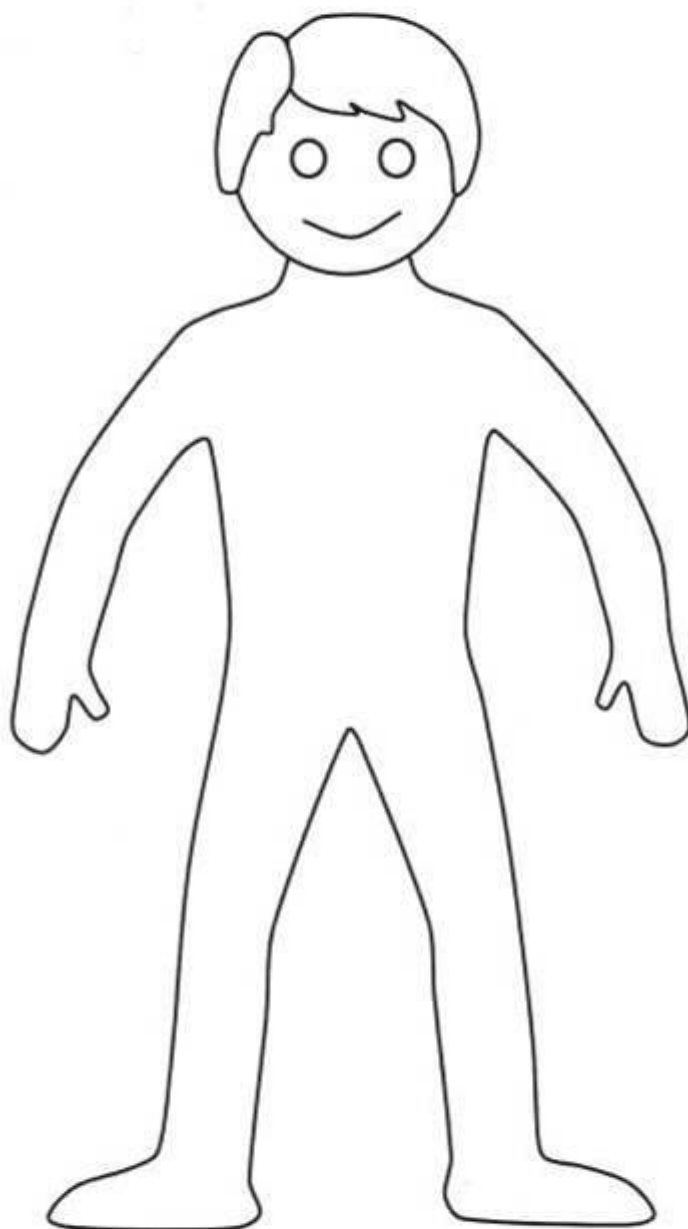
.....

➤ **Now look at the worksheet with the words 'My body belongs to me. Especially my privates'. Make this up into a big poster and decorate it as you wish.**

Name:

Date:

# Boy

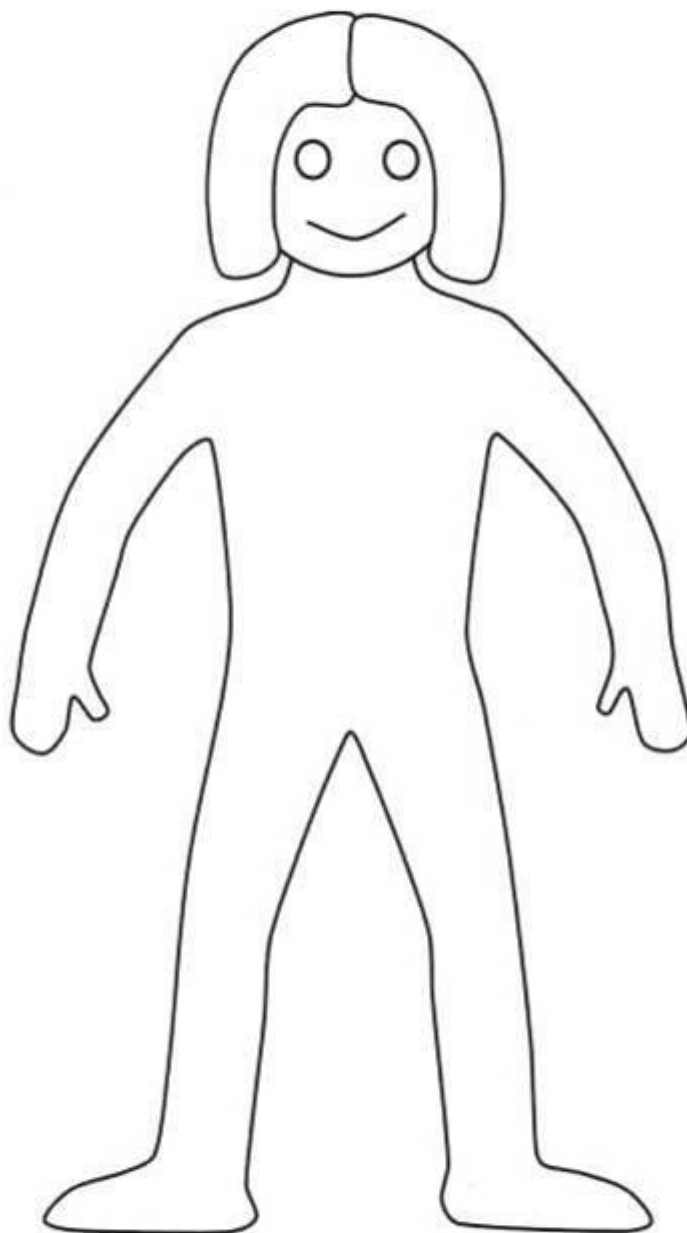


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Name:

Date:

# Girl

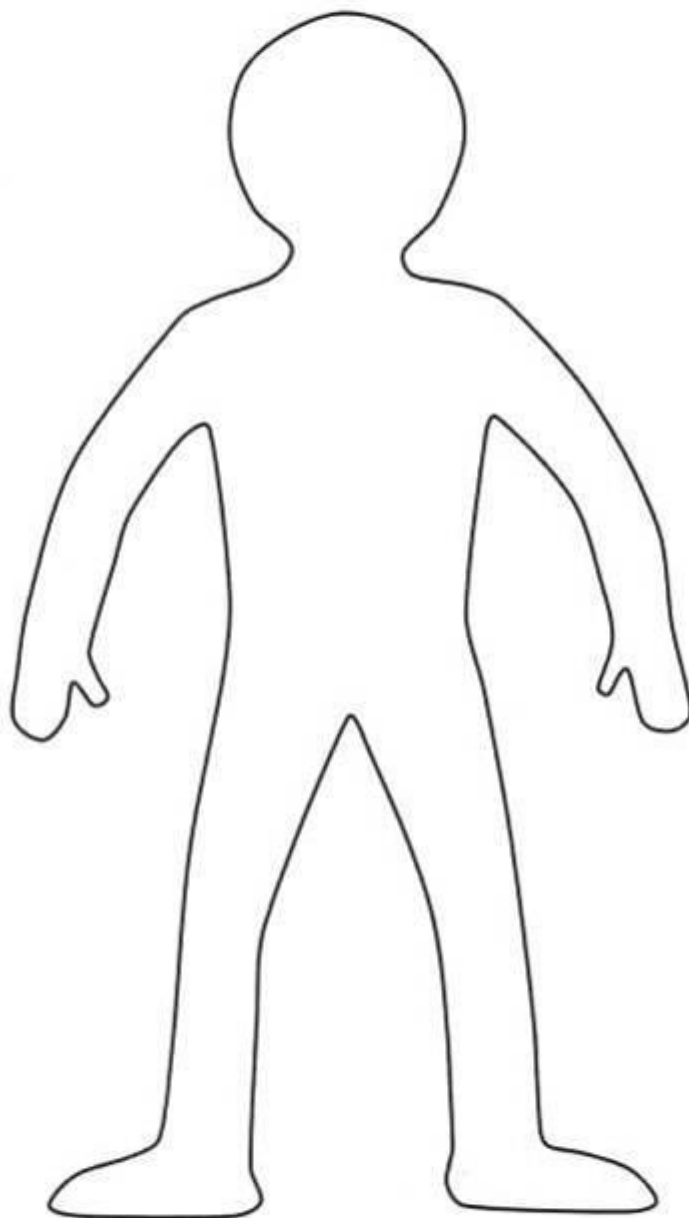


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Name:

Date:

# Body



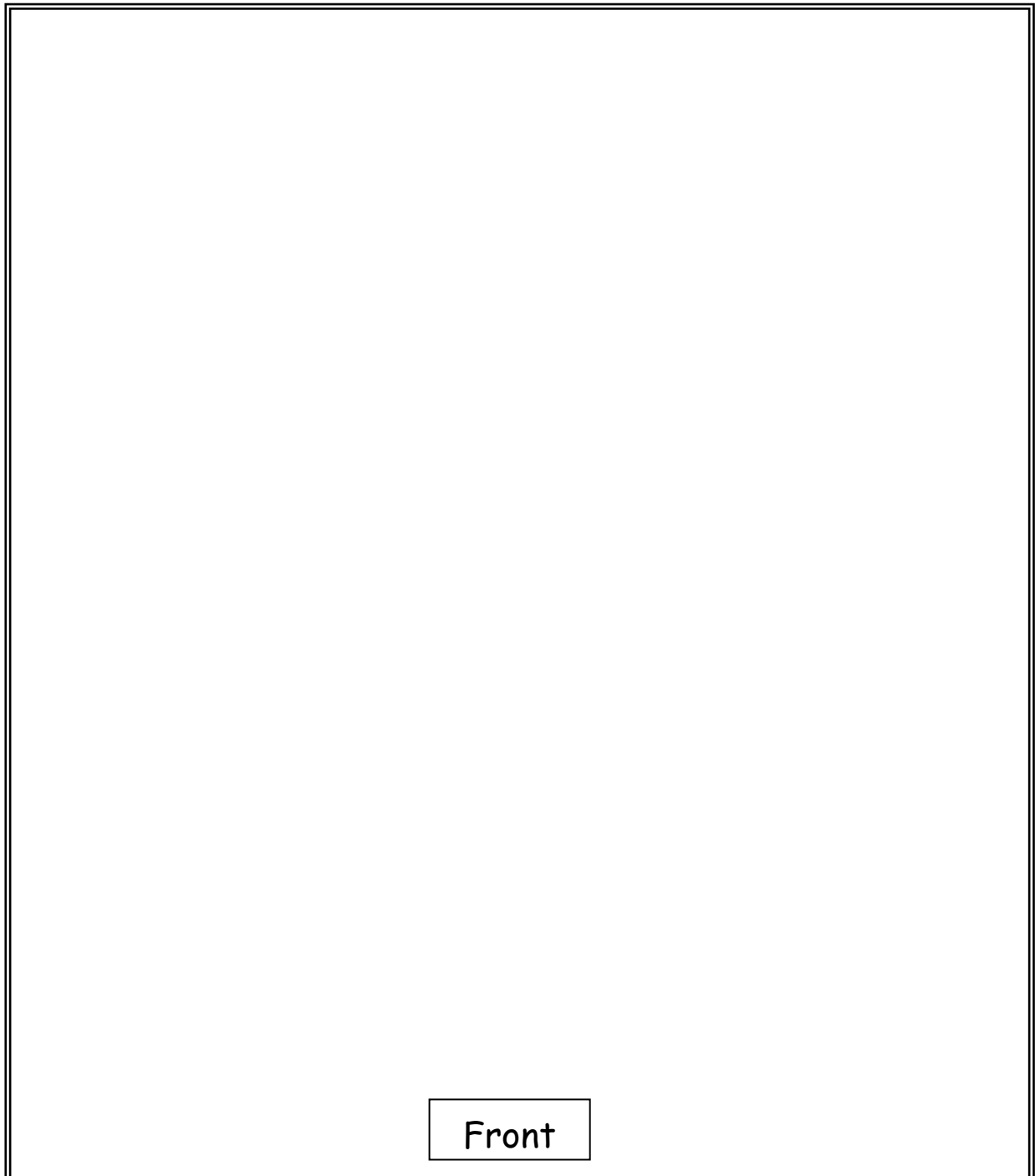
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Name:

Date:

## OK TOUCHES

Draw two pictures of your body. Make one picture of your front and one picture of your back.



Front

Colour all the places on your body that you think it is OK for other people to touch (with your permission)

# OK TOUCHES

Back

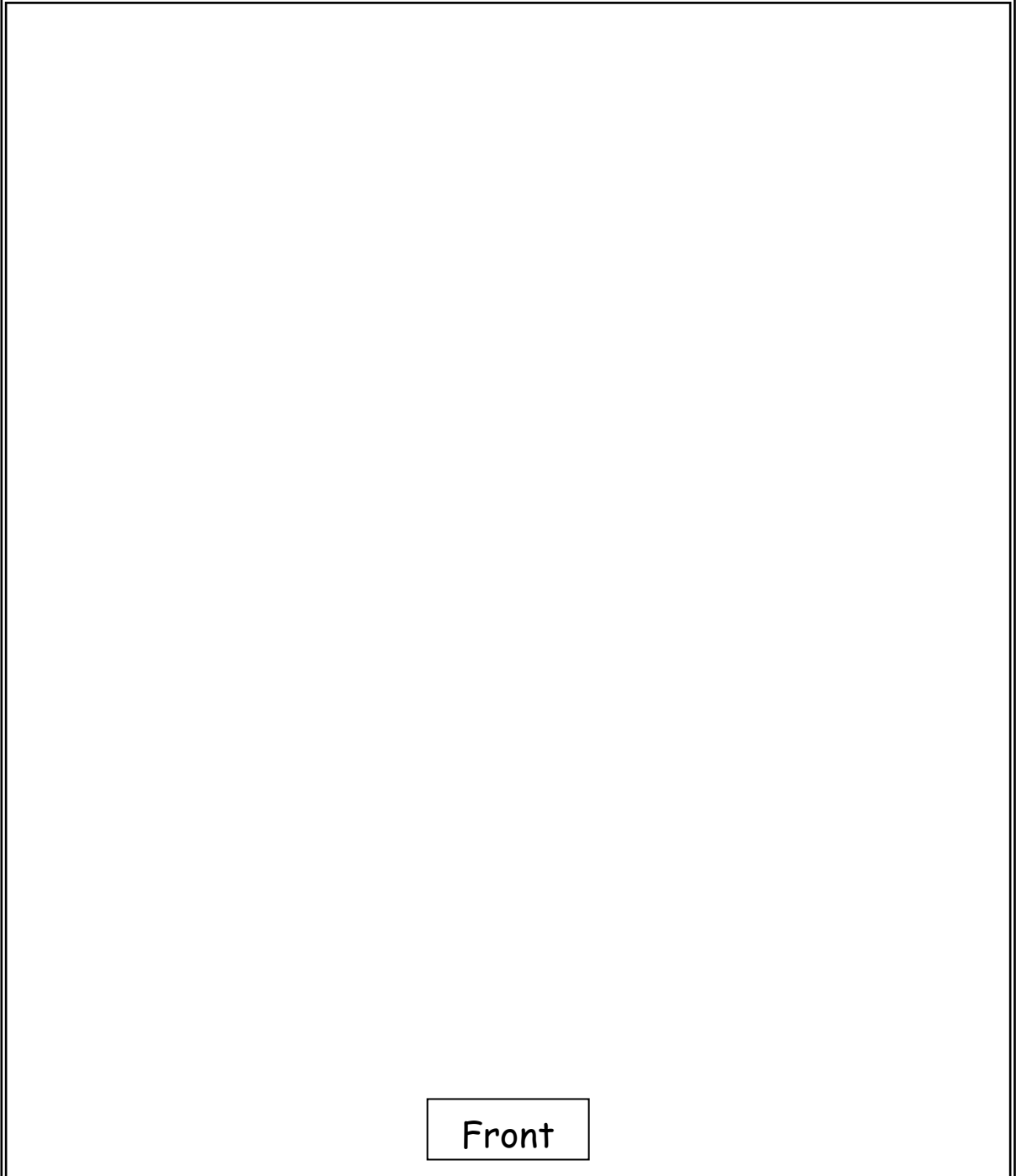
Colour all the places on your body that you think it is OK for other people to touch (with your permission)

Name:

Date:

## NOT OK TOUCHES

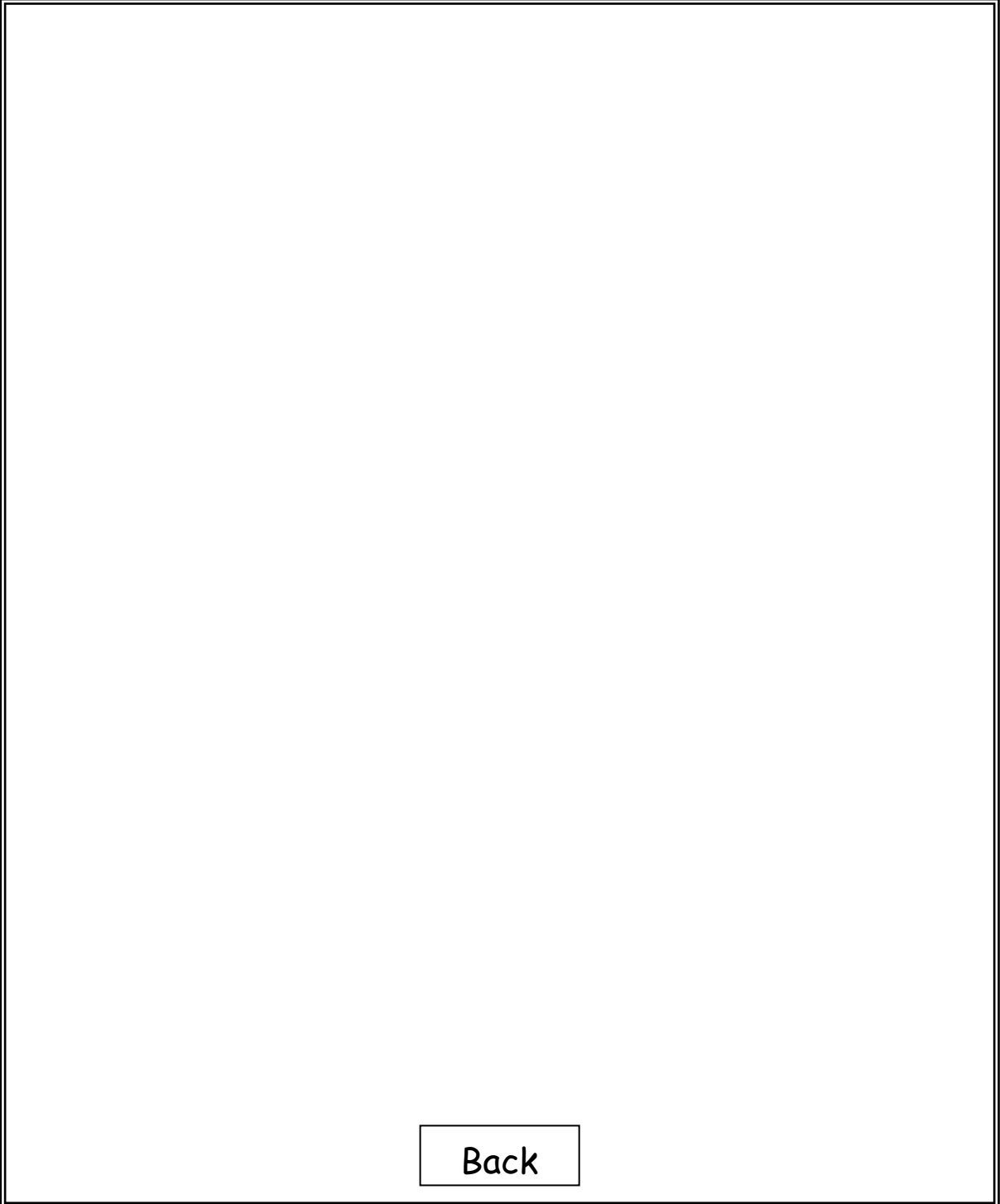
Draw two pictures of your body. Make one picture of your front and one picture of your back.



Front

Colour all the places on your body that you think it is Not OK for other people to touch (with your permission)

## NOT OK TOUCHES



Back

Colour all the places on your body that you think it is Not OK for other people to touch (with your permission)

Name:

Date:

## My Body Messages

Sometimes our bodies give us messages or warning signs that tell us that we may be heading for trouble. Think about the signs your body gives you when you may be in a dangerous situation. Draw an outline of your body and mark these signs on the picture. Then talk about them.



What can you do if your body gives you messages that you are in danger?

Who could you go to for help?

What will you say to them?

How will you show them how you feel?

Name:

Date:

## DANGER SIGNS

Our bodies and our minds have ways of telling us when something is wrong, when a situation does not feel comfortable, OK or safe, or when we are in danger. For example - getting goosebumps when you are cold; a knot in your stomach when you are nervous; a nightmare after a scary event; a dry throat when you are scared. These are messages from your body or mind that tell you how you are feeling. They are called danger signs because they warn you that there will be trouble if you don't pay attention.

Think about the feelings you may have, what your brain may be telling you and the messages you get in your body when someone speaks to you or touches you in a way you don't like. Write down these feelings, thoughts and body messages so you will not forget them.

<u>Feelings</u>	<u>Thoughts</u>	<u>Body Messages</u>
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.

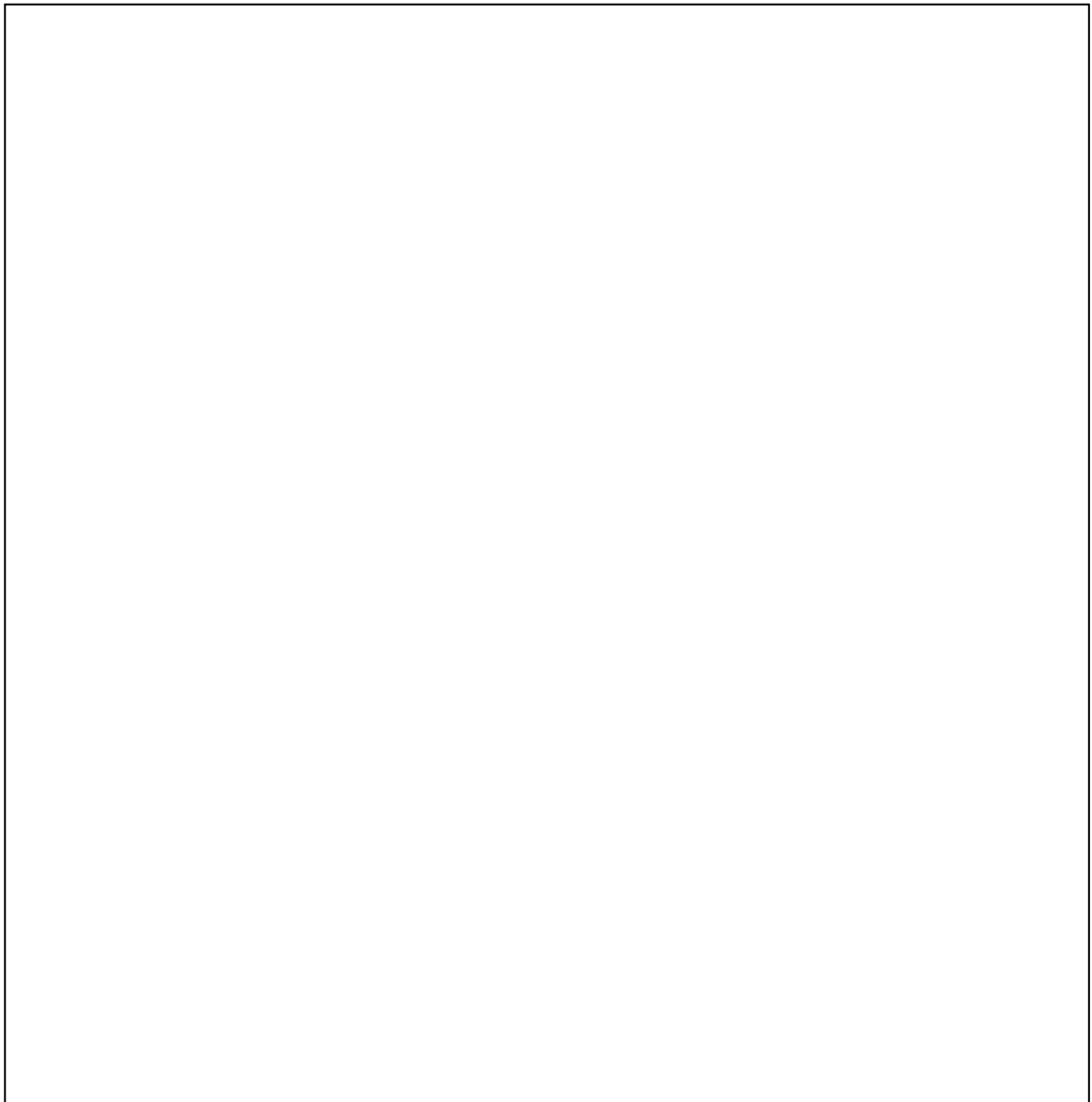
Name:

Date:

## DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Certain situations can be dangerous for kids. Examples of situations that might be dangerous are being left alone with a grown up who touched you or another child; being left alone with someone you don't know; adults who tell you to keep a secret; or being told not to tell your mum something.

Draw or write about some of the situations that may be dangerous.



Name:

Date:

## **PROTECTING MYSELF**

Sometimes it is very hard for children to know when or how to say 'No'. Children have a right to say 'No'.

For example: Susan felt uncomfortable each time her mum said she had to give her uncle a kiss. Her uncle's kisses made her feel strange and weird. Susan told her mum about her feelings. Her mum said she was glad Susan had told her. She told Susan that she would not make her kiss her uncle or anyone else unless she chose to.

**How would you know if someone were talking to you or touching you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable or Not OK?**

**Who would you tell if ....**

1. Someone asked you to keep a Not OK secret?

**Yes**

**No**

2. If someone were talking to you or touching you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable or Not OK?

**Yes**

**No**

3. If someone ever tried to touch your private parts?

**Yes**

**No**

4. If someone asked you to touch their private parts?

**Yes**

**No**

5. If someone said that you would be hurt or be in trouble if you told someone something?

**Yes**

**No**

6. If someone tried to show you rude pictures?

**Yes**

**No**

7. If someone showed you a rude video or pictures on the computer?

**Yes**

**No**

8. If an adult asked you to get into the bath with them?

**Yes**

**No**

9. If someone showed you their private parts?

**Yes**

**No**

**Has anyone done or said any of these things to you? If Yes, write below what happened.**

Name:

Date:

## KEEPING SAFE

1. What would you do if you needed help and did not feel safe? Who would you go to for help?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Write the names of 5 people you would go to if you needed help.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What would you do if you were on your own in the street or park and someone asked you to get in their car?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What would you do if a stranger told you that you could come to his or her house to play your favourite computer game on his / her computer?

5. What would you do if someone you did not know well asked you to come to their house to see their new puppies?
6. What would you do if an uncle or aunt asked to touch your private parts?
7. What would you do if your mummy or daddy asked you to touch your private parts?
8. What would you do if your mummy or daddy told you not to tell about the touching and that if you do they will go to prison?
9. What would you do if someone you know well said that you would go into a foster home or children's home if you tell about the touching?

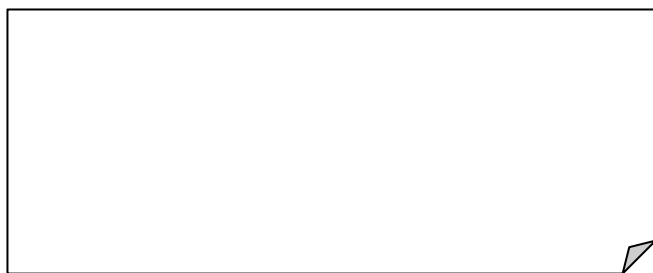
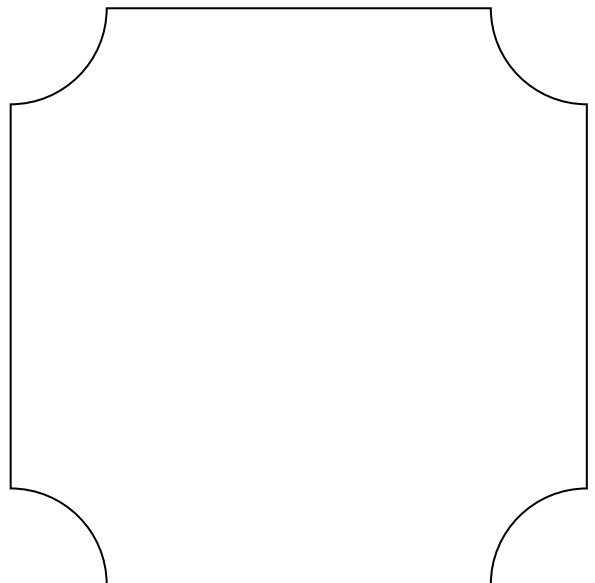
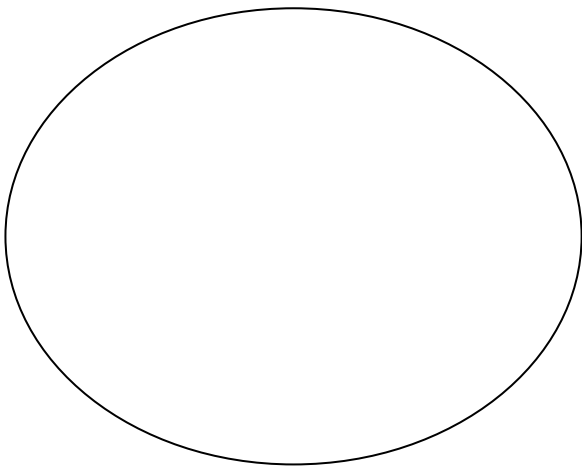
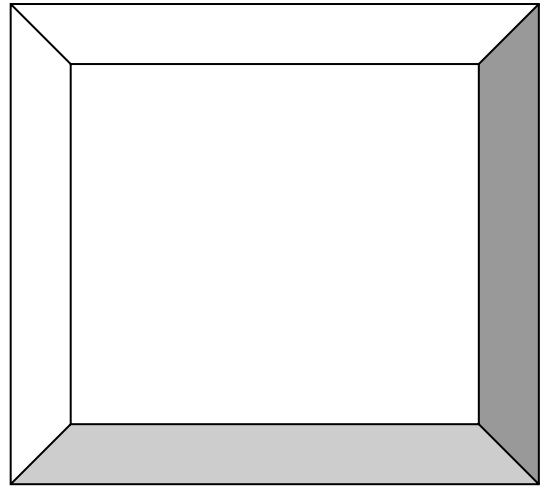
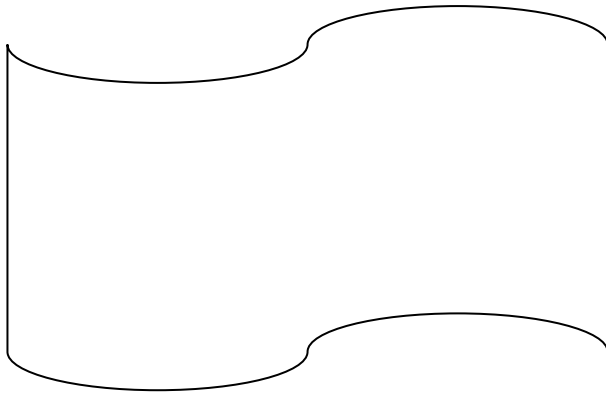
10. What would you do if mummy or daddy promised to buy you what you wanted if you did sex touching with them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What would you do if you saw someone you trust (e.g. relative, friend of the family, parent, brother or sister) doing sex touching with another child / your brother / your sister?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What would you do if you were not supposed to see a member of your family on your own, but was promised a treat if you did?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. What could a grown up say or do to stop you from telling about something bad / uncomfortable / Not OK?

Name:

Date:

## THINGS I CAN DO TO KEEP SAFE

If someone tries to touches your private parts there are many things you can do to keep safe List them below in the shapes



Name:

Date:

## WARNING SIGNS



It is difficult sometimes to know when a situation is safe or unsafe. Here is a list of some warning signs.

- Someone wants to take you somewhere where there are no other people around.
- Being asked to keep a secret that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- If someone would be in trouble if the secret was told it is a bad secret.
- Being given gifts, special treats, money, outings or special attention for no good reason



- Being given gifts, special treats, money, outings or special attention from strangers or people you do not know very well.
- Being threatened with hurting or with a punishment.
- Being told something horrible will happen to you or a family member of friend if you tell a secret
- Someone being weird or scary like a drunk person
- People coming into your private space without you wanting them too
- People breaking your privacy - like coming into the toilet or bathroom when you are there and not leaving.



Write some of your own ideas about behaviours that are worrying or suspicious and which are warning signs

1. ....

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.....

2. ....

.....

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3. ....

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4. ....

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5. ....

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Name:

Date:

## QUESTIONS TO ASK MYSELF WHEN I AM UNCOMFORTABLE



- Do I trust this person?
- Has this person tricked me before?
- Should I go alone with him or her?
- Should I answer his or her questions?
- Is this person really nice or pretending?
- Do I feel comfortable with this person?
- Is he or she trying to hint about sex or touching?
- Do I feel pressured
- Are the questions being asked too personal?
- Is the person showing me too much of his or her body?
- What do I know about this person that will help me decide if they are OK?
- Is this person trying to get me alone?
- Is this person telling me too much personal stuff about him or her
- What do other people I trust think of this person?

❖ **WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE MYSELF FEEL SAFER,  
BETTER AND MORE COMFORTABLE**

Name:

Date:

## QUESTIONS I WANT TO ASK

Do you have any questions about any of the following things? Tick the box if you have.

- ☐ about bodies
- ☐ about OK touching
- ☐ about Not OK touching
- ☐ About private space and boundaries
- ☐ About sex
- ☐ About something else (write what below)

.....

Write your questions below (or get someone to write for you)

1. ....  
.....
2. ....  
.....
3. ....  
.....
4. ....  
.....

If you have more continue on the other side of the page

Name:

Date:

## **What is Abuse – your views (for younger children)**

Many children get mixed up about the word 'abuse'. You may have heard the word used in lots of different places. You might have heard someone on TV use words such as 'animal abuse', 'alcohol abuse', or 'drug abuse'. Your mum or dad might have told you often for being 'abusive' to your brother or sister when you have had an argument and lost your temper. Your teacher might have told someone off in your class for being 'verbally abusive' to another pupil after they were swearing and shouting. You may have heard the word when people have talked about bullying.

You might also have heard the words 'physical abuse', 'emotional abuse', 'neglect' or 'sexual abuse' when people have spoken to you and your family about things that have happened in your family.

This worksheet is to help you think about what abuse means. Your worker will help you think about this.

In the spaces below, write down or get your worker to write down what you think these words mean.

### **Emotional Abuse**

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.....

.....

Name:

Date:

## Physical Abuse

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.....

.....

## Neglect

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.....

## Sexual Abuse

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Now read the worksheet 'What is Child Abuse' (worksheet 3.3) with your worker. This explains the different types of abuse and can be placed in your

## What is Abuse – your views

Many children and young people are confused about the word 'abuse'. You may have heard the word used in a variety of places and situations. For example you might have heard people on television use phrases such as 'animal abuse', 'alcohol abuse', or 'drug abuse'. Your mum or dad might have told you often for being 'abusive' to your brother or sister when you have had an argument and lost your temper or your teacher might have told someone off in class for being 'verbally abusive' to another pupil after they were swearing and shouting at them. You may have heard the word when people have talked about bullying.

You might also have heard the words 'physical abuse', 'emotional abuse', 'neglect' or 'sexual abuse' been used when people have spoken to you and your family about things that have happened in your family. But many children and young people are uncertain about whether or not an experience they have had or have heard about would be defined as abuse. This handout and the conversations you will have with your worker will help you understand a bit more about what abuse is. In the spaces below, write your own definitions of different types of abuse.

### Emotional Abuse

Your definition:

Have you experienced emotional abuse (circle):      y      N

If yes, give examples below

### Physical Abuse

Your definition:

Have you experienced physical abuse (circle):      y      N

If yes, give examples

### **Neglect**

Your definition:

Have you experienced neglect abuse (circle): y      N

If yes, give examples

### **Sexual Abuse**

Your definition:

Have you experienced sexual abuse (circle): y      N

If yes, give examples

Now read the worksheet 'What is Child Abuse' (worksheet 3.3) with your worker. This explains the different types of abuse and can be placed in your

Name:

Date:

## WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse happens when an adult and a child have an unhealthy relationship. This means that the adult doesn't look after the child's rights. Adults who abuse children may kick, beat or punch children. They might say unkind things to them or touch the child in a way that makes them feel sad and frightened. They might not look after them properly and provide them with safe care. Below are some examples of different types of abuse

### **Physical Abuse**

This is where someone's body gets hurt by someone else. Kicking, beating, punching, pinching and biting are different types of physical abuse. Sometimes children are hurt so badly by an adult that they have to go to hospital.

### **Emotional Abuse**

This is where someone's feelings get hurt by someone else. Calling children horrible names, swearing at them and saying mean things to them are different types of emotional abuse.

### **Neglect**

This is where children may not be looked after or cared for properly by their parents or carers. They might not have enough food to eat or enough clothes to keep them warm. Children who are neglected can become very unhealthy, hurt themselves and feel that no one loves or wants them. They might be left at home alone or be left out on the streets without an adult caring where they are. They might even get bullied by other children at school because of how they are dressed.

### **Bullying**

This is where someone is made to feel terrible by another person. Being threatened, called racist names being made fun of or being made to feel that you don't matter by other people are different types of bullying.

## **Sexual Abuse**

This is where someone touches or kisses you in a sexual way or on a part of your body that does not feel OK to you. This can be touching your body's privates or sexual parts - a boy's penis or a girl's vagina - and the areas around them. People who sexually abuse children might try to get the child to touch them in a sexual way too.

Sexual abuse is also when a person tries to get a child to have sex with them or to touch their private parts. This means that they want to join their sexual parts with a child's. It is also sexual abuse if someone tries to make you look at pictures or films of people having sex. Very often, people who sexually abuse children will tell them to keep it a secret or pretend it's a game.

It is against the law for any kind of sexual activity to take place between two people where either one is under 16.

## **Children who are abusive**

Adults are not the only ones who abuse children. Children who are bullies hit, punch and hurt others by saying mean things to them. Some children force other children to touch each other in a sexual way they do not like.

Worksheet 116 (1 of 3 pages)

## **What is Sexual Abuse? (For younger children)**

Many children or young people are not sure what sexual abuse is. Here is a list of behaviours and experiences that may be examples of sexual abuse. Have any of these happened to you? If so write down or talk about what happened.

When you hear an adult or young person talking about details of sexual acts.

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened.

When someone asks you to do sexual acts

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened

When someone makes comments about your sexual parts

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened

When you see sex acts actually happen, or you see them on a DVD, video, on the computer or on TV

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened

When the private parts of your body (the areas covered by a swimming costume) are stroked, touched or played with by another person

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened

Any touching of your sexual parts by another person that is painful, causes bleeding, tearing of skin or makes you upset or scares you.

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened

When an adult or older child or peer shows you his or her private parts.

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened

When you see detailed pictures of sex acts in magazines, on the computer, on DVD / Video or on television

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened

When you are asked or forced to put someone else's body part in your mouth or private parts

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened

When you are asked by an adult, more powerful peer or older child to touch another person's private parts

Has this happened to you?                      Y        N        (circle)  
If yes write what happened

Name:

Date:

## What is Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour?

Inappropriate sexual behaviour is behaviour that is wrong, unacceptable or hurtful. However working out what behaviour is inappropriate can be difficult and confusing. When children are young they need to dress, to bath and use the toilet. In a large family or a small house with one bathroom / toilet it is difficult to be private. Many films or TV programmes show people having sex and many ordinary magazines may have pictures of people who are not fully clothed. Parents often enjoy photographing their children in a variety of poses and situations. None of these things is definitely inappropriate or means that a child is being sexually abused. You often need to talk about a situation to work out if it is inappropriate or part of a pattern of sexual abuse (e.g. there is a difference between wandering into a room where people are watching an adult TV film which has a sex scene or being asked or told to watch an X-rated film. Here are some examples of inappropriate behaviours that may part of sexual abuse. Circle if you have experienced any of them.

People making sexual comments, like talking about a child's private parts in a teasing way.                      Y      N      (circle)

Ignoring a child's privacy when s/he is dressing, having a bath or using the toilet                                      Y      N      (circle)

Showing the child photographs or magazine pictures of naked people.                                      Y      N      (circle)

Showing a child films, DVD's or videos or images on the computer in which people are having sex                      Y      N      (circle)

Taking pictures of a child when s/he is undressed or asking him / her to pose for pictures and "act sexy"                      Y      N      (circle)

## MUDDLES CAUSED BY SEXUAL ABUSE

Some children who have had Not OK touching happen to them (sexual abuse) try not to think about what happened. Some children find this hard to do and start having some problems or muddles, even when the touching has stopped.

This worksheet looks at some of the problems and muddles that some children have talked about having. Tick the boxes if these are problems you have been having too.

- ☐ Thinking about or remembering the abuse when you are trying to do something else
- ☐ Having bad dreams about the abuse
- ☐ Imagining it is happening to you again
- ☐ Feeling upset after seeing, smelling, hearing, or thinking about something that reminds you of the abuse
- ☐ Thinking or feeling like you have seen the person who abused you, even though you know you probably haven't
- ☐ Finding it difficult to get asleep
- ☐ Having difficulty staying asleep
- ☐ Not eating
- ☐ Eating a lot
- ☐ Having trouble concentrating

Continued on next page.....

- ☐ Getting angry a lot
- ☐ Being jumpy or nervous when touched or someone comes near you
- ☐ Not trusting other people
- ☐ Having difficulties forming and keeping friendships
- ☐ Feeling low or very sad a lot
- ☐ Hurting yourself
- ☐ Thinking a lot about sex or touching other people
- ☐ Can you think of any other ways the abuse has caused you problems or muddles? If so write below

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.....

.....

Now spend some time talking about the worksheet with your worker. They might be able to think about some ways they can help you with these problems.

Name:

Date:

## THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

If you have been sexually abused to or are you may wish to forget about the abuse. You want to get on with your life in the present and plan to the future. Remembering and thinking about the sexual abuse is difficult and painful. Of course you may wish you could make it go away. The problem is that the sexual abuse may be affecting you in the present and is getting in the way of your plans the future. Often the effects of sexual abuse continue to be felt long after the actual abuse is ended. It can affect the way you think about yourself, your feelings, your behaviour and your relationships with other people.

How is the sexual abuse affecting you at the moment?

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People who work with people who have been sexually abused and other forms of trauma have found that people often react to trauma in similar ways. They often use the word *post-traumatic stress disorder* as a way of describing the different ways people can be affected. Below are some of the common reactions people have described. **Tick the boxes for any that apply to you**

- ☐ Thinking about or remembering the abuse when you are trying to do something else
- ☐ Having nightmares of the abuse
- ☐ Feeling like you're re-living or experiencing the abuse in the present

- ☐ Feeling upset after seeing, smelling, hearing, or thinking about something that reminds you of the abuse
- ☐ Thinking or feeling like you have seen the person who abused you, even though you know you probably haven't
- ☐ Other (please describe)

Some people who have been sexually abused put a lot of energy in trying to forget that it ever happened. Below is a list of ways that people try to do this. Tick the ones that apply to you.

- ☐ Trying to stay away from places, activities, or situations that remind you of the abuse
- ☐ Trying to push away thoughts or feelings that have to do with the abuse
- ☐ Not being able to remember long periods of time during your childhood
- ☐ Feeling distant and different from other people
- ☐ Not having feelings
- ☐ Thinking that you won't have a long life or a good future

Below is a list of other ways that a young person may be affected by sexual abuse. Tick the boxes that May apply to you.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having difficulty falling asleep | <input type="checkbox"/> Having trouble concentrating                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having difficulty staying asleep | <input type="checkbox"/> Being easily angered                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not eating                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Being very watchful and alert to any danger around you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating a lot                     |   |

Worksheet 119 (3 of 3 pages)

- ☐ Being jumpy or nervous when touched or approached unexpectedly by someone

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not trusting other people                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking a lot                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having difficulties forming and keeping friendships | <input type="checkbox"/> Using drugs                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling low or depressed                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Having sex a lot with people you hardly know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cutting or scratching yourself                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Running away                                 |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify).....                         |

Write below about how you are feeling after completing this worksheet

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Now spend some time talking about the worksheet with your worker

Name: ☐ Thinking about what trying to commit suicide

Date:

## IDEAS TO HELP WHEN I HAVE BAD MEMORIES

Having memories about Not OK touching and sexual abuse can be really hard for kids. Sometimes they are hard because they make you feel upset. Sometimes they are hard because they pop into your head by surprise and are scary. These are some ideas that other children have found helpful when they have these memories

### Things I could say to myself

1. This is only a memory. It is not happening to me again.
2. What happened was not my fault
3. Adults should never touch children in a sexual way
4. There is nothing I did that made the abuse happen
5. I am not alone. Other children have been abused too
6. People care about me
7. I care about myself
8. I am in control of my memories. They do not control me.
9. I can feel better

Other things I could say to myself are...

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### Things I could do to take my mind off the memories

Ideas of things to do when I am having an upsetting or scary memory that is too hard for me:

1. Do some exercises
2. listen to some music - dance or move to the music
3. Go for a walk, a run, a swim or play in the garden
4. Play a game such as football or skipping
5. Find something to keep your mind busy. Watch TV, read a book, draw a picture or go to talk to someone
6. play with a pet
7. Ask a safe adult for some help. Tell them how you feel and ask them for some help to keep your mind busy
8. Get a hug from someone you care about and who is safe

Other things I could do that could take my mind off the memory are

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Continued...

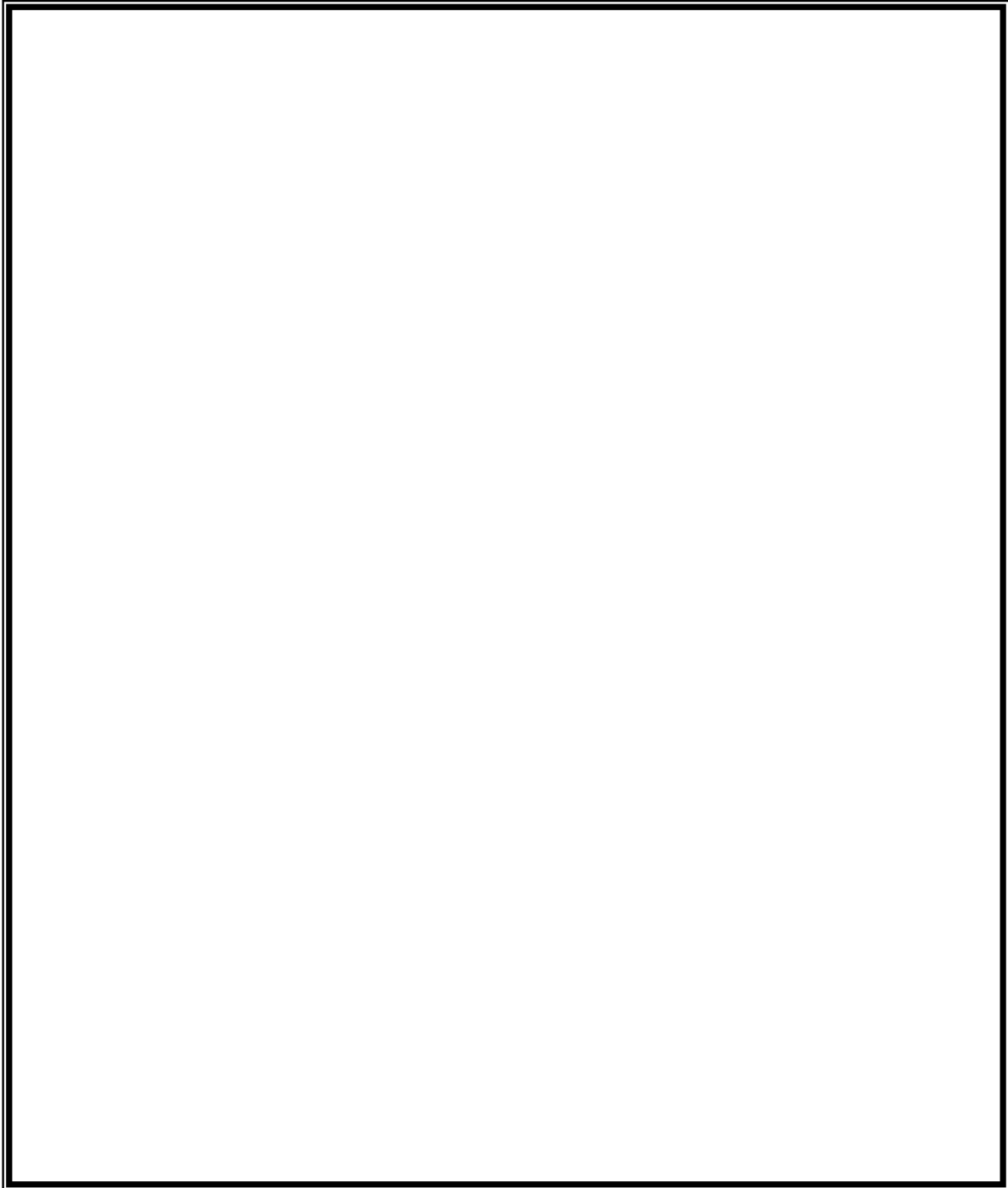
### Things I could do to help me feel relaxed

1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
  2. Take some deep breaths to relax you. Feel your breaths and picture it relaxing your body.
  3. Make your muscles go tense and hard and then relax them. Do this a few times
  4. Picture in your mind a beautiful place. It might be somewhere you have been or it may be a place you have made up. This is a place where you feel relaxed, calm and safe. It is a place where there are no worries.
  5. Think about what you see? Smell? Hear? Think about how nice you feel?
- ❖ This is your safe place and you can go there in your mind whenever you want to.

Talk about this place and practice going to this place with your worker.

Draw a picture of this nice place on the next page...

This is a picture of my relaxing place



You can go to this place when you want to feel relaxed and feel better.

## Being the boss of my memories

A memory is one of the ways the mind uses to try and get feelings out that are blocked inside. These memories can be upsetting and scary sometimes but the feelings inside need to come out so that you can begin to feel better in the future. Sometimes it is hard to ignore these memories and trying to take your mind off it and relax does not work. Sometimes it is better to try and be the boss of your memories and not run away from them. You need to be the boss of your memories and not let them be the boss of you. These are some ways you can let the memories out and be the boss.

- 1 Tell yourself that this is only a memory. It is not happening to me again.
- 2 Tell yourself you are in control of my memories. They do not control me. I am the boss
- 3 Write your memories down or draw a picture of them. You are then in more control of them
- 4 Talk to someone you trust about the memories. Sharing them makes their power go away Bad memories do not being turned into words.
- 5 Get someone to help you with your feelings (e.g. safe parent, teacher, your worker). You are stronger when you work as a team

### **Figure out when these memories happen**

Some children find that these difficult or bad memories keep coming back at the same time, or in the same place or when the same person is in the room. Other children find that they appear when you hear a sound, see something or smell something that might remind you of the touching or the abuse. These things are called 'TRIGGERS'

The worksheet called 'Memories of Sexual Abuse' will help you and your worker figure out whether there are any triggers that cause you to have these difficult memories. Fill in this worksheet with your worker. This will help you work out what things cause these memories to appear. By knowing this you can make a plan for how to be ready for these triggers and deal with them better.

### **Things that I can do to help be ready (prepared) for these 'triggers' and memories**

Some of the ideas that have helped other children deal with memories and be ready for any triggers are:

- 1 Trying to stay away from places where these memories keep happening (this is not always possible, especially if they happen at home or school. Some of the ideas below will help in these places)
- 2 Do not watch television programmes or play games that cause these memories to appear
- 3 If a bad memory seems to happen at the same time (e.g. at bed time or bath time) then do something just before you go to bed or have a bath to relax you.

You could try the ideas about relaxing you have come up with already.

Try ideas such as

- having a relaxing bath before bedtime
- Listening to music
- Reading or having read to you a story
- Do some drawing or writing
- Spending some nice time with a safe person before bed and talking about the good things that have happened in the day
- Take a soft toy to bed (not one that reminds you of the person who did the touching)
- Relaxing your body and thinking of your safe place

Write here some of the ideas you, your worker and anyone in your family have come up with to help you be prepared for these triggers and the difficult memories.

1 .....

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2 .....

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3 .....

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4 .....

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5 .....

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Continued...

**Things other people can do to help me with my difficult or bad memories**

Other children who have difficult or bad memories find it helps when they get lots of support and help from other people in their family or their teacher. They become part of the child's 'Helping Team'. Some of the things that have helped other children are when the helping team ....

- Are told about the helping ideas in this worksheet.
- Talk regularly to the child about the helping ideas and practice them with the child
- Watch out for times when the child seems to have bad memories
- Know what triggers might cause the child to have a bad memory and knowing
- Help the child prepare for these triggers
- Listen to the child when they need to talk about their memories
- Help the child come up with some helping ideas
- Get advice from other people if they do not know how best how to help the child

Talk to your worker and people in your Helping Team about ways they can help you with your difficult memories. Write down below some of the ways you think they can help you.

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Name:

Date:

## **COPING WITH MEMORIES, FLASHBACKS & DIFFICULT FEELINGS - SOME IDEAS**

Having memories about sexual abuse can be difficult and scary. Sometimes they are hard because they make you feel upset or uncomfortable. Sometimes they are hard because they pop up at times or in situations when you were not expecting them or did not want them. These can appear in nightmares, flashbacks or in unwanted memories. They can interfere with what you are doing, can change your mood without warning or can be frightening. They can make it difficult being around people, can be confusing for others and can generally get in the way of you getting on with your life.

There might be times when these memories are confusing. You might get confused about whether they are real memories and whether the abuse really happened. They might be accompanied with very strong feelings such as anger, sadness, fear or anxiety. You might not know when they are coming and you might get anxious that you will get more of them in the future. However there are ways in which you can learn to deal with these memories and control them. This handout looks at some of the problems children and young people can have when they get memories of the abuse and has some suggestions for how to deal with these.

### **FLASHBACKS**

'Flashback' is a word that is used to describe a strong memory that someone might have of the abuse. A flashback is not just a memory of what happened. A flashback is where the memory is so strong that the person feels that the abuse is happening to them again at that moment - like they are reliving the abuse. A flashback is one of the ways that feelings blocked inside a person can come to the surface. They can happen at any time or anywhere but are usually triggered (or set off) by something that reminds the person of the abuse. This could be a place, a time of day, a situation, seeing the abuser or someone who reminds you of them, or even the sight or smell of something that reminds you of the abuse or the person who abused you. However it is important to remember that not all people who have been abused have flashbacks and that they are not the same as having memories (see below)

## **INTRUSIVE MEMORIES**

Bad memories about the abuse that pop up when you are not expecting them are called 'intrusive memories'. Intrusive means something forcing itself into something and in this case it refers to memories that force themselves into your mind before you realise they are there. This is where a memory about the abuse suddenly pops into your mind when you are not expecting them. They are different from flashbacks in that you know it is a memory and is not actually happening to you now. However like flashbacks they can happen in any place and at any time but are often triggered by something that reminds the person of the abuse. Once again the trigger could be a place, a time of day, a situation, seeing the abuser or someone who reminds you of them, or even the sight or smell of something that reminds you of the abuse or the person who abused you.

## **DIFFICULT OR BAD MEMORIES**

Some memories of the abuse are not flashbacks or intrusive memories. These are the times when you might think about some event or person in your past which cause you to think about the bad or sad things that have happened. For example if you were abused by a member of your family you will naturally think of them from time to time (you might think of them a lot) and will remember them when thinking of family occasions or things that have happened in your past. You might remember the good times with this person and might be missing them despite the abuse. This might also lead you to think about the bad things. These types of memories are not unexpected memories but are a result of the normal process of remembering things. However these memories can still cause powerful and difficult emotions - some might be happy but some are likely to be unhappy or upsetting memories.

## **DIFFICULT FEELINGS**

Children and young people who have been abused or who have lived in families where abuse has happened can experience very strong and sometimes extreme feelings. Memories can cause painful feelings to come flooding back and some people describe feeling very scared, getting very angry, bursting into tears or feeling extremely nervous and anxious, having panic attacks.

Not every person who has been sexually abused acts like this. However for those who do have these reactions these feelings can take you by surprise and be quite a shock. These feelings are not always triggered by a memory. You might not know where these feelings have come from and what they are about. They might occur when you are watching a television programme, when you are feeling stressed or when some emotion is triggered.

### **DEALING WITH FLASHBACKS, INTRUSIVE MEMORIES AND DIFFICULT FEELINGS**

Having flashbacks, intrusive memories, difficult memories or even seeing the person in your mind is not necessarily a problem. The problem is the way they make you feel and the effect these feelings can have on your life. They can make you feel very scared, powerless and not in control. They can get in the way of you doing things which can get in the way of you getting on with your life.

The first stage in dealing with these experiences is to lessen your feelings of fear and anxiety and help you feel more in control. The flashbacks or intrusive memories will not stop immediately and there is no magic way of taking these memories and feelings away for ever. However there are some ways that will help you win the battle over your fear and help you be in more control and stop the memories controlling you. The following sections of this worksheet cover some of the ways that other children and young people have found helpful to deal with these memories and feelings.

### **GROUNDING**

'Grounding' means anything that you can do to help you cope when you are feeling scared by flashbacks or memories of the abuse. Grounding means doing things to help you feel safe and comforted and gets your focus back in the here and now. When you realise you are having an unpleasant memory or an unwanted reminder of the abuse you can take a number of steps to help you feel safer whilst you are having these thoughts and feelings. These steps will slowly help you to feel better and feel back in control.

1. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in slowly through your nose and out through your mouth. Take slow deep breaths. Try counting in

- your head up to 4 when you breathe in and 4 when you breathe out. Practice doing this with your worker or a safe member of your family.
2. Be aware of and think about what is under your feet and your hands. For example the carpet under your feet, the wood of the chair under your hands.
  3. Tap your feet on the ground. If you are sitting in a chair hold onto the arms or the seat of the chair (this reminds you where you are)
  4. Hold on to something safe and comforting like a stuffed animal or another special object. Some people keep a special object with them all the time but do not choose something that reminds you of the abuse or the abuser.
  5. Look around. Remind yourself where you are now.
  6. Tell yourself *"I am safe now. I am OK. I am having a memory of something that happened in the past"*.

Hearing someone else's voice can help you get back to the here and now. Let people in your family or your teacher or best friends know that when you appear to be going off into a world of your own and appear scared, nervous or anxious that they could help you by talking to you. It does not matter what the person says, although reminding you where you are and that they are safe can help.

After the memory passes you could write down what you remember in a diary or draw what you remember. This helps you get the memory out and means you are in control of it. It will less scary if you have it again. Another idea is to do something active to take your mind off the memory

- ❖ **If you have these experiences make sure you have written a Grounding Plan with your worker**

### REMINDER CARDS

Reminder cards are a good way of stopping flashbacks or intrusive memories and can help bring you back to the present and reduce your feelings of anxiety or fear. Get a small card (ask for an 'index card from a stationary shop or from your worker) and copy the sentences below on them. If you live at the address where you were abused skip sentence 3 and if you live with the person who abused you skip sentence 4. You could keep this card near to you at all times (in a wallet or a purse perhaps) and when you feel you are about to have a flashback or experience an intrusive memory get it

out and read it. If you can write the answers down do so, if not read your answers out loud. If there are other people around you do not know very well you can read it in your head.

1. My name is .....
2. I am ..... years old
3. I live at .....
4. I live with .....
5. I go to school at .....
6. I am in / at (where you are) .....
7. I can see .....
8. I can hear .....
9. I can touch .....

### **MORE IDEAS FOR DEALING WITH FLASHBACKS AND INTRUSIVE MEMORIES**

You could also copy the following steps onto an index card or keep in a place where you and other members of your family can get to it if you have a flashback or intrusive memory

During the flashback or intrusive memory

1. **tell yourself you are having a flashback** - *"I'm having a flashback"*
2. **tell someone else what is happening** - even if you are not with people who know how to help you can tell someone you need some time to deal with a bad feeling you are having
3. **tell yourself the worst is over** - *"This is not really happening> I am remembering something in my past. It's over"*
4. **Breathe slowly** - ground yourself
5. **Remind yourself of where you are** (use the cards suggested in last section) After the flashback or intrusive memory

Worksheet 121 (6 of 8 pages)

6. **Take time to recover** - flashbacks can be physically and emotionally tiring. Take a rest
7. **write down what happened in your flashback** - whilst this might seem strange as you do not want to think about it writing it down can give you and your worker some useful information about

something you might need help understanding. Also writing it down puts you back in control of the memory

8. **Figure out what might have triggered the flashback** - see sections below on triggers.
9. **What have I learnt** - Although the experience was frightening ask yourself what you have learnt. Have you got more information about what triggered it? Could you have done anything different?
10. **Talk to someone you trust** - talk to someone about the flashback or memory. It helps to share and this keeps you in control.

If you are aware that the memories occur at a certain time of at a certain place you could plan for how to deal with these. For example if bedtime is a difficult time for you plan some relaxing and comforting things to do before to make the bedtime easier. Some children have decided to do some drawing, reading or write in a diary about their day before bed. Others listen to music, have a relaxing bath or have a relaxing drink. Discuss these ideas with your worker and work on the own 'Grounding Plan' with them in the session.

### FIGURING OUT WHAT MIGHT TRIGGER THESE MEMORIES

A trigger is anything that reminds you of the abuse or brings up feelings linked to what happened. Triggers are not always things we see but can come via any of our senses:

- Hearing - e.g. words, voices, music or sounds you link to the abuse, the abuser or where you were abused
- Sight - seeing people, places, types of clothes or objects you link to the abuse, the abuser or where you were abused
- Smell - e.g. cigarette smoke, after-shave linked to the abuser or place
- Taste - alcohol or tastes you had when with the person

Worksheet 121 (7 of 8 pages)

This is one of the reasons it is useful to speak to someone about the memories you still have, where you had them, what time of day it was etc. This can help you learn what might have set the memory off and this can be useful to work out how to plan how to avoid or prepare for these things in the future. When thinking about possible triggers think about:

- What words or phrases might have been used by someone before the memory
  - What sounds or smells might have triggered the memory
  - What people?
  - What places?
  - What situations?
  - What times of day or days of the week?
- ❖ **The activities and worksheets you have been doing or will do with your work will help you think about possible triggers to your difficult memories and flashbacks.**

### DEALING WITH TRIGGERS

Figuring out what the trigger your memories might be enough to reduce the effect they might have next time. Also the work you have been doing in the sessions to understand your feelings and to understand what has happened to you and your family is likely to help reduce these triggers over time.

You can plan ahead to deal with times that are particularly difficult for you. One way is to think of ways you might be able to avoid the triggers. For example if watching a certain television programme or a programme that contains certain situations triggers bad feelings or emotions try keeping away from it. Work out what else you could do at these times. If it is a place think about whether you can avoid it, walk another route or have someone with you when you go there. If it is a certain room or piece of furniture in the house ask your safe parent or carer if you could have it changed or moved. The worksheets you have or will complete with your worker about triggers could help you with this.

If avoiding people or situations is not always possible try and work out some simple tricks or strategies to help you cope better when faced with these triggers. If you know you are going into a situation that triggers bad memories or that it occurs in a certain place or time (e.g. when going to bed or having a bath) then think of some things you could do that might help you relax but that are not connected with memories or thoughts about the abuse or the abuser. Examples include

- Having a relaxing bath
- Listening to music

- Reading
- Drawing or writing
- Talking to a friend or safe family member
- Doing something that makes you feel happy
- Doing something energetic (exercises or a game)
- Telling a friend or family member about the trigger and asking them for support, to be with you and to help with grounding
- 'Self talk' - telling yourself about the grounding ideas you could use and preparing your mind to get ready for a memory (this can stop the memory from coming at the time you usually have it)

Discuss these ideas with your worker and a safe family member and try and think of some ideas to help you for those times you have difficult memories. Put these ideas into your 'Grounding Plan' that you will write with your worker.

## REMEMBERING THE GOOD THINGS

It is hard work remembering all the difficult things. You need to remember that the touching was only one part of your life. You should not forget the good memories you have had. This worksheet helps you remember some of the good things in your life

**My Favourite Place** - draw a picture of a good time you had there

**My Favourite Activity** - describe a picture of a good memory about doing this activity

**A Caring Grown-Up** - write about one adult who has been good to you

**A Special Friend** - draw picture of a good memory doing something with your special friend

Name:

Date:

## REMEMBERING THE GOOD THINGS

After all the hard work you have done you are now at the point when you need to remind yourself at the abuse was only one part of your life. You should not forget the good memories you have had. This worksheet helps you remember some of the good things.

**My Favourite Place** - describe this place and write about at least one good memory of something that happened there

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**My Favourite Activity** - describe a favourite activity. Write one good memory about doing this activity

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**A Caring Adult** - write about one adult who has been good to you

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**A Special Friend** - describe a special friend and write about one good memory about a time you spent together

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Name:

Date

## My world Triangle

