

HANDBOOK ON PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT  
SKILLS AND MANAGING CHILDREN IN  
EMERGENCIES

For Teachers

Universal Basic Education Commission  
(UBEC), ABUJA

# Preface

One of the purposes for initiating the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was to ensure that every child of school age has access to quality basic education notwithstanding their location and background. With the increase in insurgency and banditry in many States in Nigeria, many communities have been displaced thereby leading to the disruption of teaching and learning as schools were closed. This has negatively affected learners in these areas of crises and emergencies as many have been traumatized and disallowed from going to school. Many have also lost interest in education due to the traumatic experiences. This and many adverse effect of their environment will hamper the attainment of their dreams and expectations in life if the situation is not remedied.

Having realised the risk the situation poses on the future of the children as well as the communities, the Universal Basic Education Commission as part of fulfilling its objectives has put in place capacity building strategy to ensure that teachers in areas affected by crises and emergencies are equipped with skills that will enable them provide psychosocial support to learners for their emotional healing from the traumatic experiences. It is believed that this will help the children develop resilience, come over the bad experiences and liven up to resume school as peace returns to the areas.

A training manual and handbook on psychosocial support skill and managing children in emergencies have been developed for teachers. The manual is to be used to train the teachers while the **handbook** will guide the teachers in implementing the psychosocial support skills in the classroom ensuring that all the hands-on psychosocial activities that will facilitate healing of learners and stimulate their interest in education and life in general are effectively used. In implementing these activities, teachers can make use of their initiatives and also ensure that the peculiarities of communities are considered.

It is the belief of the Commission that this strategic step will ensure no child is left out of having quality education and that every child in Nigeria notwithstanding whatever he/she might have gone through has the opportunity to reach his/her potential in life.

## Abbreviations

<b>IDPs</b>	-	International Development Partners
<b>SEL</b>	-	Social and Emotional Learning
<b>UBEC</b>	-	Universal Basic Education Commission
<b>PFA</b>	-	Psychosocial First Aid
<b>PSS</b>	-	Psychosocial Support Skills

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# MODULE ONE

## KEY CONCEPTS ON CRISES, EMERGENCIES AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SKILLS

### Introduction:

This module introduces the basic terms and definitions associated with crises and emergencies as well as skills required for providing Psychosocial Supports to children in crises and emergencies. It also provides the opportunity to appreciate the need to give psychosocial support to children affected by crisis and emergencies. The module has two sessions with activities embedded.

### Objectives of the module:

By the end of the module, you will be able to;

- i. identify the basic concepts associated with crisis and emergencies;
- ii. explain the terms associated with crisis and emergencies;
- iii. define the terms Psychosocial Support Skills (PSS);
- iv. identify the skills related to Psychosocial Support; and
- v. explain skills related to Psychosocial Support.

### Session 1: Understanding the Concepts Associated with Crises and Emergencies

The following terms and concepts relate to crisis and emergencies:

**Banditry:** It is a type of organized crime committed by criminals using threat or violence. The bandits operate as individuals or groups. They engage in criminal activities such as extortion, robbery, murder, kidnapping, cattle rustling and abduction of individuals/school children for ransom.

**Crisis:** Any unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group and society. It can lead to negative changes in human beings and the environment, especially when they occur with little or no warning. Examples include communal crisis, pandemics (Covid-19), natural disasters (flooding, windstorm, fire outbreak, erosion etc.), religious crisis, farmers/herders crisis, land dispute, etc.

**Conflict:** It is a serious disagreement or argument typically a lingered/protracted one between individuals/groups/communities with opposing opinions or principles. Conflict arises whenever individuals have different values, opinions, needs, interests and are unable to reach an



agreement/ compromise. The reasons for conflict vary; may be personal, racial, class, caste, political, religious and socio-cultural. Conflicts may result in armed attacks on schools, unexploded ordnance, civil unrest, abduction/kidnapping, child recruitment, terrorism etc.

**Emergency:** a situation where a community has been disrupted and is yet to return to stability. Most emergencies require urgent intervention to prevent worsening the situation. Sometimes, mitigation may not be possible and agencies may only be able to offer palliative care for the aftermath. For example, flood, covid-19, cholera outbreak, Lassa fever outbreak, etc.

**Gender:** *This denotes the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men and how they are valued in the society.* Gender roles are specific to different cultures and usually changes over time. Gender identity defines how society expects women and men to think and act. These behaviours are learned in the family, schools, through religious teachings and the media.

**Gender-based violence:** *any harmful act (physical or verbal) on persons based on gender differences.* Males and females are usually affected but women and girls are more vulnerable because of cultural barriers. Examples include sexual violence such as sexual exploitation and abuse, forced prostitution, forced and child marriage, early unintended pregnancy, domestic and family violence including physical, emotional and psychological abuse, harmful cultural or traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, honour killings, dowry abuse, widow inheritance etc.

**Hazard:** a potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity, that may cause loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation. Hazards can have natural or human made origins or a combination of both. The risk posed by a hazard depends on how likely it is, where, when, how often and its intensity. For example, an earthquake in a desert region that occurs once in 100 years poses a very low risk for people. An urban flood that occurs to a height of 3 meters within 48 hours once every 5 –10 years has a relatively high risk and requires mitigation measures.

**Insurgency:** is an act of violence by Non-State armed group that rebel against constituted authority with the aim of overthrowing the government. It has subsequently been applied to any such armed uprising, typically guerrilla in character, against the recognized government of a state or country. It is important to note that not all rebellious acts are insurgency.

The key example of groups that commit insurgency in Nigeria is Boko Haram.

**Key things to remember:**

The common concepts associated with crises and emergencies are:

- Banditry
- Insurgency
- Violence
- Poverty
- Crisis
- Hazard
- Sexual abuse

**Poverty:** It is the state of not having enough material possession or income for a person's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, etc. Poverty may be caused by social, economic, and political factors.

**Psychosocial Support:** Denotes all actions that address the physical, social and emotional needs of victims/survivors of crisis and emergencies.

**Violence:** Violence is the use of physical force to injure, damage or destroy. Violence within schools or homes may include physical and humiliating punishment, child abuse, neglect, exploitation, trafficking, separation from family, peer violence, gang violence, bullying, cyber bullying, sexual and gender-based violence.

## Session 2: Psychosocial Support Skills (PSS)

**Psychosocial support skills:** Psychosocial Support skills are techniques deployed to promote healing and build resilience in individuals, families and communities. These skills are utilized by teachers to make learners comfortable and well-adjusted in learning environments. It aims to help individuals recover after a crisis has disrupted their lives, and to enhance their ability to bounce back and return to normalcy after experiencing adverse events. The following are skills associated with Psychosocial Support:

- **Observational Skill:** refers to the ability of an individual to use all five senses to recognize, analyze and recall one's surroundings. This helps the individual to be alert, recognize and report any potential threat.
- **Self-awareness Skill:** This is the ability to recognize and understand one's moods, emotions and how they affect one's thoughts and behavior, as well as how they affect others. This skill helps individuals to conduct self-assessment in their interaction with others.
- **Communication skill:** This is the ability to share ideas and feelings effectively. It is expected that to heal from traumatic experiences, a PSS

### Key things to remember

Psychosocial Supports Skills are:

- Observational skills,
- awareness and diagnosis,
- Communication skills (active listening skills),
- Referral skills,
- Counseling skills,
- Empathy,
- Problem solving skills,
- Social and Emotional Learning skills (SEL),
- emotional intelligence,
- Organizing peer support activities,
- Classroom management skills

For effective communication, it is important to:

- approach the person in a calm and respectful manner;
- use an appropriate tone of voice;
- keep an open and relaxed posture;
- don't cross your arms;
- make the person feel comfortable to trust you enough to open up;
- listen attentively and actively
- don't look away, down at the floor or at your phone
- use appropriate eye contact to support the person to feel relaxed and heard

provider must be an active listener and be careful in the choice of words and expressions.

- **Referral Skill:** The ability to know when to refer an individual for other specialized services.
- **Counselling:** Counselling is a process of providing professional assistance and guidance in resolving personal or psychological problems. In the context of PSS, the teacher guides the learner to understand his/her problems and adjust accordingly.
- **Empathy Skill:** This is the ability to understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people. It enables one to pick up emotional cues and adapt accordingly. In providing PSS, it is expected that the provider will demonstrate that he/she feels the pains of learners by facial and body expression. The caregiver should use supportive phrases to show empathy. For example; “I understand what you are saying”, and acknowledge any losses or difficult feelings that the person shares “I am so sorry to hear that”, “That sounds like a tough situation”. Body language should also reflect ones’ feeling of empathy and may include facial expressions, eye contact, gestures and the way one sits or stands in relation to the other person.
- **Problem-solving skill:** This is the ability to determine why an issue is happening and how to quickly and effectively resolve it. For a teacher to give PSS to learners in crisis, he/she needs to understand the problems and determine the best ways to solve them.
- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate empathy for others, maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** is the ability of individuals to recognize their own emotions and those of others, discern between different feelings.
- **Peer Support:** refers to a process through which people who share common experiences or face similar challenges come together as equals to give and receive help based on the knowledge that comes through shared experience.
- **Classroom Management:** refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive in class.

## Conclusion

Having extensively explored the basic concepts associated with crisis and emergencies as well as Psychosocial Support Skills, it is expected that one will utilize the knowledge, skills and competencies in supporting children affected by crisis, emergencies and in other contexts.

# MODULE TWO

## EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CRISIS AND EMERGENCIES

### Introduction:

This module introduces the participants to experiences of children affected by crisis and emergencies. The module further takes the participants through the specific crisis and emergency situations, features of children affected by crisis and the impacts of crisis on children. It also gives the participants information about how to use Psychosocial Support Skills in discouraging negative perceptions held by children affected by crisis. The module has two sessions with activities emended.

### Objectives of the module:

By the end of the module, you will be able to:

1. Describe the experiences of children affected by crises and emergencies;
2. Discuss how the experiences affect the behaviours of children.

### SESSION 1: Experiences of Children Affected by Crises and Emergencies

#### Displacement

This is moving away/fleeing from original settlement, community or region as a result of crises and emergencies which lead to destruction of properties, livelihood and basic social amenities. Displaced people often end up in camps where environmental health measures are grossly insufficient. Displaced children are exposed to lack of safe water, poor sanitation and improper waste disposal. In addition, they can experience disorientation and diminished wellbeing as a result of displacement from culturally familiar surroundings.

#### Key things to remember

Children affected by crises and emergencies may experience:

- malnutrition,
- displacement
- Absence of adults in the family as caregivers
- Physical violence and other harmful practices
- sexual violence,
- vengeance.

#### Malnutrition

This is a common consequence of crises and emergencies. The lack of micronutrients from a diet may negatively affect the physical and mental development of the child.

## **Absence of Adults in the Family as Caregivers**

School-age children are very dependent on adults. They may experience intense feelings of abandonment when separated from adults in the family who have been injured, missing or killed and are therefore not available in ways they would normally be.

During flight to safety in crises and emergencies, children can accidentally become separated, abandoned, abducted, or orphaned through the death of parents or guardians. Unaccompanied and separated children can be extremely vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking.

## **Physical violence and other harmful practices**

During crises and emergencies, children may suffer extreme violence, such as killing, maiming, torture, and abduction. Families and caregivers are often put under immense strain and the weakened protective social structures may result in family or community members abusing children. This puts children more at risk of domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, and corporal punishment

## **Sexual violence**

This is present in all crises and emergencies but often hidden. Children are especially at risk of sexual violence and exploitation. The consequences of sexual violence on girls and boys are social, physical, emotional, spiritual and psychosocial e.g. early marriage and child prostitution, can become more prevalent in the aftermath of crises and emergencies.

## **Vengeance**

Vengeance is harming someone or a group in retaliation for an injury or offence Some children may want to take revenge on those they blame for killing a loved one.

## **Session 2: Behaviours of Children Affected by Crises And Emergencies**

Children affected by crises and emergencies are prone to exhibit the following behaviours:

<b>S/N</b>	<b>TERM</b>	<b>BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>1</b>	Psychological	Bed-wetting	A stressful event in a child's life or disruption to their normal routine such as crises and emergencies can sometimes cause bedwetting. The wetting is seen as a regressive symptom in response to the stress.
		Drug use	Some adolescents and teenagers are more likely to engage in high risk behaviour such as drug use to

			cope with the distress of crises and emergencies
		Lack of Sleep (Insomnia)	As a result of the traumatic experiences, children may have difficulty sleeping. This may affect their ability to concentrate and participate effectively in class activities.
2	Academic performance	Poor concentration	Crises and emergencies may influence children's ability to concentrate on schoolwork. This may lead to disruptive behaviour in the class such as ignoring instructions, temper tantrums, interrupting others, arguing with the teacher unnecessarily etc
3	Social relationships	Detachment	This is a state of mind caused by prolonged physical and/or emotional separation from loved ones. Signs of detachment include withdrawal from activities, quietness in class, etc
		Depression	This is persistent negative feeling of sadness and loss of interest in all activities. Symptoms of depression include a feeling of hopelessness, mood changes, emotional outburst and persistent sadness which interferes with family life, school work, social activities and personal hygiene
4	Emotional well-being	Low self-esteem	Self-esteem is often an important factor when it comes to emotional balance and sound health. Children affected by crises and emergencies may have low self-esteem such as feeling unsure of themselves, completely un-regarded and not-respected among peers, family or community. This may result to loss of focus, reduced energy, inferiority complex and poor academic performance.

## Conclusion

Having gone through the module, you should have a clear understanding of the experiences and behaviours of children affected by crises and emergencies.

# MODULE THREE

## CREATING LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CRISIS

### Introduction

Many factors affect learning but children learn with ease if the learning activities integrated in their lessons are connected to their lives. Children affected by crisis have experiences that are unique and not universal. Their experiences include exposure to violence, encounter with traumatizing events, loss of touch with normal school experiences like participating in classes and engaging in various forms of learning activities, etc. These experiences determine their needs and often provide a clue on how to engage the learners actively.

### Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Explain the concept “learning experience”;
2. Identify learning experiences that meet the needs of learners affected by crisis;
3. Develop relevant class activities that will arouse and sustain interest in learners affected by crisis.

### Session 1: Understanding Learning Experiences

Learning experiences can simply be described as interactions between the learners and the external conditions within the classroom environment. It involves the activities which may be planned by the learners or teacher but performed by the learners for the purpose of achieving some important learning objectives. So, learning experiences are not what the teacher is expected to do nor the methodology that the teacher wants to adopt for the lesson. They are all the activities that the learners perform during a lesson.

The teacher sets the lesson objectives for a particular topic. The objectives guide in the planning of the learning experiences that the

#### Things to remember:

- Learning experiences are those activities which are planned to attain specific lesson objectives.
- They are activities to be carried out by the learners.
- They can be designed by the teacher or by the teacher.
- To be effective, they are to be designed based on certain conditions.

learners are to be exposed to for the purpose of achieving the lesson objectives.

### **Factors to Consider in Designing the Learning Experience**

As a teacher, to design effective learning experiences, there are certain conditions you need to adhere to. We shall briefly discuss some of those conditions:

- **Relevance:** Choose activities that are relevant to the lesson objectives. The selected activities must be developed taking the objectives of the lesson into cognizance. For instance, if your lesson objective is for the learners to identify different shapes (square, triangle, rectangle, circle, etc.), you could create learning experiences like asking learners to go round the class and identify objects that have the shapes in focus.
- **Learners' needs and interest:** A lot of factors determine the learner's needs and what will arouse their interest. Their socio-cultural background, physical environment, age, Crisis and Emergencies, Physiological and psychological issues and other emerging issues are very vital. Children affected by crisis need love to heal and recover to restart schooling on a good note. This means that the learning experiences you are to develop should be ones that will encourage team work, incorporate some elements of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and psychosocial skills to help learners connect back to the environment etc.
- **Learnability:** This is about learners being able to make sense out of the learning activity. This implies that the activity should be easy, focus on the essence of the lesson and practical.
- **Variety:** There are different types of learners. Some learn easily by observation others by doing and some others by hearing. This means that the learning experiences you design will comprise of a variety of hands-on activities that will enable all learners, irrespective of their learning style fully understand the lesson goal.
- **Ability to bring about multiple learning:** Holistic and quality learning occur only when the three domains of learning- cognitive, affective and psychomotor are involved. The learning activities should therefore help learners acquire general knowledge and develop some social and emotional skills.

### **Relevant Tips to Verify the Suitability of Learning Activities**

- Examine your lesson objectives.
- Identify learning experiences/activities that meet the objectives
- Make an outline of the context of the learners focusing on their background and environment
- Evaluate whether those activities will meet the needs of the learners
- Check the suitability of the activities in terms of the age and class level of the learners
- Find out if the activities have met all the necessary conditions as discussed.
- Ensure the activities are properly sequenced.



- Outline the mode of engaging the learners with the activities taking their peculiar background into consideration.

## **Session 2: Learning Experience that Meets the Need of Children Affected by Crises and Emergencies**

There are various ways that a teacher can engage learners into relevant learning experiences. These include group work, individualized instructional strategy, application of differentiated instructional design, interactive classroom environment etc. Some of these strategies are discussed in the preceding subsections:

### **Group work**

This is one of the strategies used by teachers to encourage active learning, build decision making skills and stimulate critical thinking in learners. It is used to engage learners to interact with each other, the instructor and the learning materials thereby giving them opportunity to work and perform tasks together. To get an impactful result, the teacher needs to be careful in his or her planning and delivery to ensure learners are not frustrated in the process. Teachers should determine on how best to work with the learners based on specific learning needs, strengths or preferences. In crises and emergencies, teachers should consider the traumatic nature of the learners and know what method to use to ensure active participation in the group.

### **Tips for Ensuring the Effectiveness of Group Work**

- Recognize the value of each learner.
- Provide all the necessary working materials.
- Group learners in such a way as to encourage each team to work harmoniously and build trust.
- Ensure that all learners are active in the process.
- Be protective and supportive to all learners.
- Allow the learners to take risks.
- Do not be harsh, aloof or condescending.
- Provide clear instruction for the activity.
- Appreciate the learners using endearing words.
- Ensure that all learners are on equal standing in the group.
- Set clear rules for group work with the learners.

## **Individualized instruction**

Every individual has a unique way of learning. Individualized instruction is a teaching methodology that designs content, deploys instructional technology and pace of learning to take care of the abilities and needs of all learners. The lesson plan must accommodate the different types of learners in each class.

### **Tips for Ensuring Effective Individualized Instruction**

- Understand the different ways the children in your class learn.
- Vary your instructional strategy to accommodate the differences.
- Provide materials that suit the different learning styles.
- Pay attention to their progress in class.
- Give every learner the opportunity to grow in knowledge and skills based on their learning styles and pace.

## **Making Teaching and Learning Interactive**

Interactive teaching is all about instructing the learners in a way they are actively involved with their learning process. Children who have gone through crises and emergencies need to be supported to bounce back to life and learning. The teacher is expected to encourage learners to be active in class. This is achieved by deliberately asking them to do something in class, rewarding achievements and little efforts with praise. This will motivate learners to express themselves freely. One can also use questions that stimulate response, discussion, a hands-on experience teaching aids that capture's learners' attention, elicit feedback from learners and also promote peer education.

### **Tips for Promoting Interactive Teaching and Learning**

- Always focus on helping learners get better in class.
- Ensure that the classroom environment is free from tension.
- Encourage learners to always express themselves.
- Provide opportunity for hands-on activity in every lesson.

## **Session 3: Learning Activities that Can be Used by Teachers**

### **Introduction**

To ensure that learners affected by crisis and emergencies have enjoyable and stimulating teaching-learning experience, there is need to apply uncommon, learner-centred, practical, relatable and yet relevant teaching-learning activities that will stimulate their interest to love and appreciate school, easily integrate into the society and achieve effective learning outcomes.

### **Rationale for Effective Learning Activity**

Learning activities are expected to be modelled along what is obtainable in real life. In addition, it must be practical, fun and integrated with relevant psychosocial support activities that will inspire a sense of well-being. For example, a dance, drama or poetry, recitation depicting the effect of banditry, kidnapping and displacement will elicit empathy for survivors .

### **Types of Learning Activities**

Learning activity is described as active if the learner interacts or participates and passive if the learner is not actively engaged. Examples of learning activities can easily be deployed without financial constraints are encouraging learners to read novels and share with peers, completing an assignment / homework, writing and acting a play, creating artwork, writing short stories, student pair activities, use of audiovisual apps, painting, moulding, ceramics, jewelry-making scrabble, etc. Teachers can deploy any learning activity from the environment for effective teaching and learning.

**Breathing pattern affects the whole body mechanism. Therefore, using deep breathing exercise will help to calm the nerves, reduce tension and relieve stress. Teachers may deploy deep breathing exercises intermittently for effective classroom management.**

#### **Things to note:**

Promote inclusive learning by accommodating learners with special needs who may not be able to perform the activity effectively like others.

**Rationale for intermittent breathing exercise:** Breathing exercise is very good for children who cannot relax and teaches children skills they can apply at home when they are angry, tired, sad, studying for tests or otherwise stressed. It is a simple and effective technique for general relaxation to stabilize the teaching learning environment in an atmosphere of stress, fear and anxiety.

### **Resources**

A quiet and relaxing room or environment where students can sit comfortably on the floor or on the chair.

### **Exercise tips:**

- Introduce the exercise in the middle of a session or before a class to get your learners started.
- Guide learners through the steps involved in the activity effortlessly and help struggling students to act accordingly
- Use the activity to explain to learners how to relax and attain calmness especially when they are sad, anxious and unsettled.
- Encourage the learners to do this on their own as a way of achieving self-control
- Create time for learners to reflect on the learning activity

#### **Things to Note:**

- Be mindful of the key traits that students like about those they have listed as this is critical to forming an opinion about them

### **ROLE MODEL**

This activity is aimed at encouraging learners to participate actively in classroom activities to promote their well-being. It can be used to motivate learners and encourage them to have a role model. (This activity can be adapted to teach values in civic education).

#### **Materials**

Paper and pen, sticky notes, Flip Chart, Cardboard and white board.

**Tips** can be generally accepted as

- Use dialogue to introduce the lesson and refer to one or two people that can be generally accepted as role models.
- Learners should be encouraged to think about one or two names they consider as role models.
- Learners should be encouraged to express the traits they admire about the person as manifestations of personal and national values in-country.
- The teacher should discuss these traits with learners and explain their relevance.
- The teacher should apply the repetition strategy to allow learners understand the meanings and implications of the traits repeat those words.
- The teacher should equally establish a link between the exercise and the particular topic being taught in a given subject (for example, values and national values in civic

- education).
- Learners should be allowed to reflect on what has been done.

### **Conclusion**

In this module, we have seen the meaning of learning experiences and how you can create learning experiences that meets the needs of learners affected by crises and emergencies.

# MODULE FOUR

## EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN TEACHING LEARNERS AFFECTED BY CRISES AND EMERGENCIES

### Introduction

Classroom management is one aspect of the teaching and learning process that has direct impact on how children learn. It is being able to control the complexity of a classroom in order to achieve instructional objectives. It involves managing the resources as well as the learners and their actions during class. While the classroom management practices may be the same in most instances, there are peculiarities that apply to different categories of learners. In this module, we shall discuss the strategies you can adopt in teaching learners who were affected by crises and emergencies.

### Objectives

By the end of the module, you should be able to:

1. explain the concept of managing a classroom while teaching learners affected by crises and emergencies;
2. indicate various strategies you can use to manage the classroom; discuss some class activities you can adopt to enable you to effectively manage the classroom

### Session 1: General concept of classroom management in teaching learners affected by crises and emergencies

You have seen that learners who have experienced crises and emergencies have traumatic experiences. As you prepare to teach them, understand that these experiences have

#### Things to remember:

- Even though children and youth may be adversely affected by conflict in multiple ways, most of them will bounce back and recover.
- Not all children will react to traumatic experiences the same way: some will be more severely traumatized and require significant interventions, but the majority can recover easily if their needs are met.

affected their conduct and behaviours. From time to time, they will exhibit negative behaviours which may disrupt teaching and learning and negatively impact their learning during a lesson. One of the fundamental roles of a teacher is to control learners' behaviours towards ensuring that learning takes place. You must have a safe and conducive social and emotional environment to encourage learners' active engagement and participation in class. Engaging in these activities is what classroom management is all about. It also includes effectively managing the teaching and learning resources for maximum use during ~~in~~ every lesson. Teachers who manage their classes well make learning effective and meaningful for learners.

## **Session 2: Classroom Management Strategies for Teaching Learners Affected by Crises and Emergencies**

Children and youth affected by crises and emergencies go through various life experiences. Some of them would have been traumatized while many others face different levels of difficult experiences. These experiences affect their behaviours. There may be instances where such children become aggressive, hyperactive, inactive, indifferent and stubborn. They may also engage in various forms of antisocial and disruptive behaviours. Some of them may have lost the ability to stay focused for a long-time during lessons.

When these children and youth return to school, some of them return having some of these negative behaviours. These behaviours will keep manifesting in the classroom as you teach. They may, most times, disrupt teaching and learning activities. Learning to effectively manage the classroom will help meet the needs of the learners. Effective classroom management practices by the teacher will help children to develop both academic and social emotional skills. It will also help them gain a sense of control which will promote their well-being and hope for the future.

### **Classroom management strategies.**

There are various classroom management strategies that you can adopt to help the learners affected by crises and emergencies regain their life and be actively engaged during teaching and learning. You may even be familiar with some of these strategies. Let us discuss a few of them.

## Model Ideal Behaviours

You have been told that the teacher is a role model. Learners pick a lot of behaviours from their teachers. When a teacher demonstrates good behaviours, the learner will most likely pick and practice those behaviours. When you as the teacher model how to act in certain situations, the learners will learn to act in the same way when they encounter such situations. Can you imagine what your learners will be learning when you shout and use harsh words in the classroom? Think of what they will be learning when you react harshly when a learner exhibits negative behaviours in the class. The way you react in situations like these will either let learners unlearn some aggressive behaviours or reinforce the aggressive behaviours they entered the class with.

### What you can do

- Always use polite language in responding to your learners.
- Avoid the use of words that hurt learners' ego.
- Avoid shouting at any learner.
- Treat every learner with respect.
- Show them how much you care.
- Avoid blaming the learners when some things go wrong.
- Avoid scolding the learners. You can talk to them in a polite manner and achieve a better result.

### Things to remember:

- As the teacher, remember you are to also obey the rules.
- The class rules are not laws to say that the offender must be punished.

## Jointly establish classroom rules

An effective way to manage your classroom is to have rules that guide the learners' conduct. But it becomes more effective to have learners jointly set those rules. Involving them in setting class code of conduct will make it easy to have them follow those rules. They will see the rules as their rules and not those of the teacher or the school management. Moreover, because of the peculiar circumstances of these learners, when they are involved in the decision-making process, they develop a sense of belonging. They feel good and great as their voice is being heard.

### What to do

- At the beginning of the school term, engage learners to come up with the class rules of conduct.
- Have learners recite the rules until they master them.

### Things to remember:

- *Every teacher is a role model, and every learner looks up to the teacher.*
- *Learners' behaviour in the class can be influenced by the teacher's behaviour.*
- *Learners acquire good behaviours easily when they see their teachers practice such.*



- Before you start every lesson, take 2 minutes for them to recite the rules.
- Constantly remind them of the rules if someone tries to violate any.
- Do not use violation of the rules as a reason for punishing a learner.

### **Avoid harmful punishments.**

Most often teachers think giving a child some harmful punishment will bring about changed behaviour. This does not happen. Children and youth who experience harmful punishment tend to exhibit the negative behavior more. Harmful punishment includes any punishment that causes distress, shame, humiliation or anger in children and makes them feel unsafe in the classroom. This includes physical punishment, shouting, bullying, etc. Some learners who have gone through crises and emergencies may be manifesting some behaviours that might be upsetting. These might be behaviours like making noise, talking during lesson, beating other learners, etc. At such situations, the teacher may be tempted to impose some harmful punishment on such learners. Try using redirecting activities to control such behaviours.

#### **Things to remember:**

- *Teachers that have strong classroom management do not need harmful punishment.*
- *When you do not control your anger, you may mete out harmful punishment on the learners.*
- *Harmful punishments may lead to injury, humiliation, fear, reduction of interest in school, and even dropout.*

### ***What to do (some redirecting activities)***

- Go and stand near misbehaving learner
- Use positive narration – praise learners who are paying attention until the one misbehaving changes behaviour.
- Give a gentle tap on the shoulder of the learner who is misbehaving. Be mindful of the sex of the learner.
- Use sudden silence and a look at the learners who are misbehaving.
- Learn to calm your emotions. This will help you control your anger.

### **Always use Praise.**

Praise makes one feel happy and desire to do more. It can improve academic and behaviour performances. When you praise learners for a job well done, you reinforce that attitude or behaviour. Generally, praise inspires the class, improves a learners' self-esteem and reinforces rules and values you want to see. Children and youth who have gone through crises and emergencies can learn and behave better when we praise them for ~~little~~ positive actions. As a classroom

#### **Things to remember:**

- Everybody loves to be praised.
- Praise can be a good means to keep the learners focused.
- Learners behaviour can be modified when we praise them.

management strategy, when we praise the learners, we secure their confidence and create a positive classroom culture.

### **What to do**

- Acknowledge every effort in behaviour change, no matter how little.
- Offer praise on little achievements in class activity.
- Encourage other learners to appreciate individual learners as they improve in their performance.
- Identify learners who are making effort to be better and give them task to do, such as make them classroom and/or teacher's helpers.
- Use variety of methods to praise and acknowledge the positive efforts that the learners are making.
- Use praise promptly and in a manner commensurate to the positive action.

### **Build relationships**

Learners who have suffered from crises and emergencies need emotional support. Teachers can achieve this by building a class that is more like a family. Every human being needs relationship and when we do not find it, we can become aggressive, restive and violent. When we build relationships in the class, our learners tend to trust us the more and they will make effort to follow rules and instructions. Positive relationship among learners and between teacher and learners makes the class a conducive place to learn.

### **What to do**

- Show every learner respect.
- Get to know your learners by name.
- Do not make them feel bad for asking questions.
- Do not show them hostile attitude.
- Encourage collaboration.
- Teach with positive emotion.
- Encourage every learner to be friendly.
- Discourage every attitude to create tension in the class.
- Use kind words when talking to learners.
- Demonstrate to them that you care about their wellbeing; this you can do by asking about their welfare.

#### ***Things to remember:***

- *Building a relationship is one of the most effective means of managing your classroom.*
- *Every learner desires relationship.*
- *Children learn better in a friendly atmosphere.*
- *Teaching with positive emotion entails presenting your lessons with energy and enthusiasm.*

### **Session 3: Hands-on Activities for Classroom Management**

Learners who are affected by crises and emergencies tend to be distracted and may pay little or no attention in the classroom. This is usually because of the distressing experiences they have gone through. Knowledge of how learners are affected by crises and emergencies enables teachers to use variety of activities to engage them. These activities will also create a conducive teaching and learning environment. The teacher needs to understand the individual needs of learners and tailor activities to meet these needs.

#### **Activities for Classroom Management**

There are strategies for achieving a conducive classroom when teaching in a crises and emergencies context. The teacher should be able to create activities that are child centered and can effectively contribute to the healing of learners who have been affected. Such activities include:

- games
- use of energizers
- questioning
- establishment of shopping centres
- singing etc.

#### **Establishment of shopping centres/ corners in the classroom.**

This is an excellent means of engaging learners in the classroom to help them recover from trauma. The exercise also promotes team work among learners, arouse their interest in the lesson and keep them busy without distraction. It will also build trust.

#### **What to do**

- Place a table in one corner of the classroom with make shift items such as empty cans of milk, tomato, match boxes, pencils, pens, chalk, exercise books, some quantity of food items etc.
- Arrange learners in groups, some will be sellers while others will be buyers.
- Those who buy may need to demand accurate

#### ***Things to remember***

- *Hands-on classroom activities create a conducive learning environment for children affected by conflict*
- *Use of variety of activities enables teacher to meet learners individual learning needs.*

change from those who sell and vice versa.

- This activity could be used to teach Mathematics such as addition and subtraction of numbers by the use of concrete objects and it could also be used to teach Social Studies.

### **Games:**

The use of games when teaching in the classroom is another way the teacher can create an enabling environment for learners who have been traumatized as a result of crises and emergencies. Games increases overall motivation as learners become more motivated to learn, pay attention and participate in set tasks.

#### ***Things to remember***

- *Use of games increases children motivation to learn*

### **What to do**

- Draw and cut figures of different shapes on cardboard papers and display them on the table.
- Call upon the learners to put figures that are smaller together.
- Supervise to ensure learners recognize shapes like circle, rectangle, square etc.

Games enable the teacher to gainfully engage learners in the classroom and help them to become a part of a team as well as take responsibility for their own learning. Other psychosocial games include:

- balloon game,
- elephant ball,
- bounce back,
- willow in the wind,
- time chair
- colours talk
- cooperative squares

[\(Details of these games can be found in modules 5 and 6 \)](#)

### **What you can do**

- Select appropriate games that relate to learners' needs and experiences
- Put them in groups
- Encourage team work and discourage competition

- Isolate lessons learnt from each game and how it relates to their experiences
- Give them time to play the games and allow for equal participation
- Ask learners to relate how they feel when participating in the games

### **Use of Energizers**

Warmups or energizers are activities a teacher uses throughout a lesson to encourage learners' involvement and interaction. These activities may be used by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson to arouse the interest of learners and get them set for the lesson or at the middle of the lesson when learners are bored and start losing concentration.

#### **What you can do**

- Use songs that would relieve learners of the trauma they have been through
- Use songs that relate to subject areas being considered
- Learn songs and energizers peculiar to your community and culture.
- Make appropriate use of the energisers
- Be sure energisers do not take over lesson

### **Use of Effective Questioning Strategy**

Questioning is the key means by which the teachers link the entry behaviour and the learning objectives

#### **What you can do**

- Ask questions to get learners to pay attention.
- Use questions to assess how the learners feel and get them to talk.
- Ask questions to elicit discussions.

### **Conclusion**

You should remember that the role of the teacher is to help every child reach his/her potentials despite traumatic experiences they might have gone through as a result of crises and emergencies. To this end, effective classroom management is very necessary. The procedures involve the use of PSS and SEL activities which includes games, energizers, questioning

strategy, positive reinforcement, time to time interventions etc. The use of PSS activities in the teaching and learning process must be aligned with the lessons being taught in the classroom. When teachers identify what learners' behaviour looks like; they can work to determine which classroom management strategy will be most effective. Becoming familiar with PSS and SEL activities, integrating them in the teaching and learning process, paying attention to the behaviour of learners in the classroom to determine their needs and working to meet those needs lead to effective classroom management.

# **MODULE FIVE**

## **BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CRISES AND EMERGENCIES**

### **Introduction**

This module introduces the teacher to skills on building trust and confidence in children affected by crises and emergencies. The teacher will also learn about wholesome wellness of learners, in order to provide psychosocial support to the learners.

### **Objectives of the module**

By the end of the module, you should be able to:

- i. Explain learners' wellbeing;
- ii. Describe the things teachers can do to develop learners' wellbeing;
- iii. Identify features of a child with low self-esteem and confidence in a school.
- iv. List ways teachers can develop self-esteem and confidence in learners

### **Session 1: Developing Learners' Wellbeing**

Learners' wellbeing is an important aspect of their physical, mental, social, emotional, and cognitive wellness. Child wellbeing is about a child being safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. A child who is in a state of wellbeing will be productive in the classroom. As teachers-in-crisis and emergencies, your role is to help these children cope with the effect of trauma. Many children, especially girls and other vulnerable children, pass through pain, lack, hopelessness, dejection, rejection, anxiety, fear, and a host of others that prevent them to focus and relate with other children in the classroom. A good number of these children drop out of school while some are abused sexually, emotionally, and physically. As a teacher, you should be able to identify your role and that of education in meeting the social, emotional, material, and intellectual needs of these learners. To do this, you need to possess some characteristics that will

help these children recover as well as other activities or services to help them cope in crisis and crises and emergencies.

- **What teachers can do:** in implementing the content area in the classroom.

1. Emphasise that education is a right of every child and be ready to intervene in any perceived obstacles that may hinder the child's access to learning.
2. Be on look out for a child emotional, social, and mental wellness and not only the physical well-being.
3. Cautiously observe and interact with marginalized children and seek their audience to identify their immediate needs for support.
4. Always ensure classroom inclusive and participatory activities involving all learners especially girls, children living with disability and other marginalized children.
5. Be accommodating and be a model of affection to build learner trust and confidence in learning.
6. Develop skills to support children in conflict resolution and peace.

*Something to remember.*

- *Whatever the cause of a learner's low self-esteem and confidence, a teacher should be able to improve it through commendation and positive*

## **Session 2: Developing Self-esteem and Confidence**

Self-esteem is the value one gives to oneself; it represents one's opinion of oneself. It can be high or low. Self-confident is the belief in one's ability to do something. We occasionally have doubts about ourselves and low self-esteem can leave one feeling unmotivated. Some features/characteristics of a child with low esteem may include feeling that they are not as good as other children, doubt their abilities and think more of times they failed to do some things than the times they succeeded. As a teacher, you should be able to identify factors and or issues that could affect a learner's self-esteem and confidence and find ways to address such factors to improve their self-esteem and confidence. Outright condemnation of a child's action or response or ridiculing his/her input can damage a child's self-esteem and confidence. Instead, a teacher can employ commendations such as *excellent, very good of you, nobody is perfect, remember that everybody makes mistakes*, and *keep it up* to build learners' self-esteem and self-confidence.



**What teachers can do:** in implementing learners' self-esteem and confidence in the classroom.

1. Give every child an opportunity to express himself/herself and praise every attempt.
2. Ensure frequent communication with learner and take their feedback.
3. Stop pushing them but encourage them to make effort one at a time.
4. Keep a positive environment by sitting with your learner, talk about how their day went, tell them about your day and try to build a rapport/relationship with them.
5. Set a role model of high opinion about yourself and show confidence on things you have taken time to learn or do.
6. Step back by giving a child pace to make an attempt, take risks, make their own decisions, solve problems, and stick to whatever task they start.
7. Give positive and accurate feedback.
8. Identify and redirect inaccurate beliefs.
9. Avoid over praising learners since it can lower the bar for them and they may not see the need to make more effort or push.
10. Allow learners to make their own choices as this will make them feel confident and start considering the consequences of their decisions.

**Hands-on classroom Activities to Develop learner's self-esteem and confidence:**

1. Employ learner-center approach by grouping learners into smaller groups. Ask each group to assign responsibility for leading the group in turns and making presentation of groups work.
2. Praise every attempt with positive commendation and guide learner to improve on their input. Ensure all learners are given opportunity to make input and make effort where they did not meet up to the expectation. Let learners know that making an unsuccessful attempt is good as it will help them to learn better and correct their mistakes.
3. During classroom teaching or group work, allow learners to make mistakes, ensure no learner is shouted down or ridiculed for his/her response, questions. Carefully correct errors or mistakes made by learners during class activities.

4. Identify learners with low self-esteem during group work, teaching learning activities and create opportunity to give them feedback in particular girls/other marginalized learners that they can do better.
5. Brainstorm in your groups and agree to features of a child with low self-esteem and confidence in a school. Do this by ticking only low esteem features.

# MODULE 6

## SUPPORTING LEARNERS TO HEAL AND RECOVER AFTER CRISES AND EMERGENCIES

### Introduction

Due to the experience of each of the learners in relation to the emergency, they are likely to be dealing with diverse mental health issues including anxiety, stress, depression, and other psychosocial disorder. It is important to note that stress is a feeling of physical or emotional tension which can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Trauma on the other hand is a specific type of stress that reflects an individual's exposure to a devastating event. Trauma can result from exposure to insurgency, militancy, armed banditry,

#### *Key things to remember*

- Learners that have gone through stress and trauma show signs such as fatigue, difficulty in concentration, fear and sometimes perform poorly in the class.
- As teachers, we need to look for these and develop skills to support these children to heal.

kidnapping, farmers-herders' clashes, natural disasters like flood, Covid-19, diseases etc. Trauma can also be one's response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms the individuals' ability to cope, causing feelings of helplessness, diminishing their sense of self-esteem and their ability to feel the full range of emotions and experiences.

### Objectives of the module

By end of the module, you will be able to:

1. Explain the concepts of stress and trauma.
2. Identify signs of stress and trauma among learners and how to manage them.
3. Provide psychosocial support for Teachers and learners in period of emergency.
4. Assist in the use of effective interventions to mitigate stress and trauma.
5. Equip learners and teachers with Psychological First Aid (PFA)
6. Practice some psychosocial activities for teaching and learning.

## Session 1: Understanding Stress and Trauma

Stress is a feeling of physical or emotional tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Trauma is an individuals' response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms his ability to cope, causing feelings of helplessness which diminishes their sense of self-confidence.

Trauma is an individuals' response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms his ability to cope, causing feelings of helplessness which reduces their sense of self-confidence.

Trauma is a specific type of stress that reflects exposure to terrible events that are generally devastating to humans. It can result from human actions in the form of rape, insurgency, militancy, armed banditry, kidnapping, farmers-herders' clashes etc.

As a teacher, we should look out for the signs of stress and trauma among learners. These may include physical, social, emotional, and cognitive/ mental manifestation. For instance, paleness, fatigue, and anxiety are physical, while lost sense of belonging and isolation manifest social signs of stress and trauma. Emotionally a child may exhibit anger, frustration, worry, fear while mentally/cognitively she/he has difficulty in concentration, performs poorly in class and sometimes experiences loss of memory.

**What teachers need to do** in implementing the content area in the classroom?

- Create environment for physical and social interaction among learners.
- Be observant for learners that show signs or possible signs of stress and trauma like fear, loneliness, isolation, withdrawal, anger, and emotional outbursts.

**Hands-on Activities for teachers:**

1. Organize games and sporting activities for boys and girls to participate in.
2. Work with parents and school management to provide expressive materials like chess, scrabble, ludo, and other indoor games culturally acceptable in the communities.
3. Organize debates, quiz, competitions where everybody is a winner and display learners' artwork on the classroom walls.

### ***Key things to remember***

- Learners that have gone through stress and trauma show signs such as fatigue, difficulty in concentration, fear and sometimes perform poorly in the class.
- As teachers, we need to look for these and develop skills to support these children to heal.

## Session 2: Providing Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is a globally recommended training for supporting people during emergencies. It is an evidence-informed approach in stages to help children, adolescents, adults, and families in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event, recover/heal. It offers guidance on delivering psychosocial care. It is worthy to note however that PFA involves being available to listen to people's stories, but it does not require pressuring people to tell you their feelings or reactions to a traumatizing event.

Learners who are absent from school due to their previous experience, repeated truancy and those who have shown fear, aggression or withdrawal are possible targets for teachers to apply for PFA.

### What to do:

- Check out for learners that are obviously withdrawn, sad, aggressive, and frequently absent from school to apply PFA.
- Develop your skill for listening without interrupting the learners when they share their story.
- Help to keep learners calm after sharing their story by responding in a calm voice/tone.
- Provide social support such as basic needs like food, water, clothes, accommodation.
- Provide referrals to significant persons for recovery (especially vulnerable people such as learners with disabilities, girls and adolescents who are directly affected by the crisis)
- Keep families together and learners with caregivers.
- Help learners contact friends and loved ones.
- Give access to religious support.
- Bring affected learners together as they may be able to help each other.
- Make sure people know how to access services.

### Hands on activities for teachers.

The training session will build your skill on the use of Role play for conducting PFA (Tips for role play) for example, how you assess the needs and concerns of the learner, help address their basic needs like food, water etc., listening and not pressurizing learners to talk, comforting learners and helping them to feel calm. Others are helping learners

#### *Something to remember.*

- *Sometimes, survivors need you to just listen. It is therapeutic to talk about your experience.*
- *Personal narrative can be an effective way to process one's situation.*
- *Listening is key to healing.*

connect to information, services, and social supports as well as protect learners from further harm.

<b>How to help people feel calm</b>	<b>Things not to say and do</b>
<p>Give the person your undivided attention; maintain some eye contact (Listen with Eyes, Ears and Heart)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain some eye contact.</li> <li>▪ Carefully hearing their concerns and with caring and showing respect</li> <li>▪ Keep your tone of voice soft and calm.</li> <li>▪ Reassure them they are safe and that you are there to help.</li> <li>▪ If someone feels “unreal,” help them to make contact with: Themselves (feel feet on the floor, tap hands on lap) Their surroundings (notice things around them and focus on breath &amp; breathe slowly)</li> <li>▪ Show that you are there to help and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don’t pressure someone to tell her/his story.</li> <li>▪ Don’t interrupt or rush someone’s story.</li> <li>▪ Don’t give your opinions of the person’s situation.</li> <li>▪ Don’t touch the person if you’re not sure it is appropriate to do so.</li> <li>▪ Don’t judge what they have or haven’t done, or how they are feeling. Don’t say...” <i>You shouldn’t feel that way.” or “You should feel lucky you survived.”</i></li> </ul>

### **Session 3: Activities for Healing and Recovering of Children in Crises And Emergencies**

Storytelling is a form of communication therapy that is often used as the first step in trying to heal. Storytelling is important. It is the first step in healing from trauma and violence and things that are incredibly hard to deal with. It is the first step to deciding to change. With our stories, we can help ourselves, help each other, and help the world. A survivor of trauma may find telling their story as a way of addressing their innermost feelings (emotions). It is a way to figure out why and how the survivor can connect with other survivors. Telling and sharing stories are ways to heal. For example, the use of Psychodrama or Playback theatre - a story-based improvisational theatre which can help survivors enact or see the reenactment of their personal stories and aid reflection.

As teachers, listening with rapt attention to such learners is very important towards their healing. Equally, a teacher should be able to share similar experiences where the victims were able to recover to motivate the learners to heal quickly. Where necessary, the teacher should follow up with such learners if there are confidential matters and make appropriate referrals that may help quick recovery. E.g., Medical doctors, counsellors, social welfare, and parents

**What teachers can do:** this is a highlight of what the teacher can do in implementing the content area in the classroom.

1. Provide a safe space where personal stories can be shared, and no one is at risk.
2. Ensure that there is confidentiality in the classroom.
3. Assure the class that personal narratives can help people overcome their fears.

**Hands-on Activities for teachers:**

1. **First tell your learners to draw a map of a town, imaginary or real. Not much of artistic fine drawing is expected but a mapping. They could include places such as a school, hospital, library, park, and shops. Now with the map created, ask learner to use it can use it as a prompt for storytelling! If your map is of an imaginary town, you can imagine what it would be like to live there. Tell a story about the day-to-day activities in that town or of different scenarios.**
2. Note: Avoid children use of their real life situations unless they are talking to you alone and personally so as to manage the situation. Encourage learners to draw out lessons learnt from their story especially stories that helped in healing process.

**3. Feelings and Showing -**

Group learners into pairs, one partner is A, and the partner is B. Tell partner A to share something they are worried about or a moment from their lives for two (2) minutes. Have partner B listen without any comment/statement. When partner A is done, ask partner B to summarize the story in three (3) sentences using the tips below: -

- What the story is about
- A title for the story
- The feeling behind the story

Then have partner B act out/demonstrate the feeling to partner A.

Let B also tell his/her story and follow same process as above.

### 3. **Story Making**

Have learners form a circle. Someone starts a story in a sentence, then the participant to the left adds another sentence till everyone in the circle has added a sentence and the story gets to a reasonable conclusion of story that ends in making peace, being happy, forgiveness, tolerance, resilience, perseverance etc. e.g.,

Learner A: One upon a time, there was a farmer,

Learner B: who has a very big farm with yams, rice, and millet.

Learner C: He had four wives and 10 children.....

There are several games and activities you can introduce to help your participants/class heal and recover in crises and emergencies. Storytelling and play go hand in hand for this.

## **Session 4: Psychosocial Support Activities**

### **Introduction**

The term ‘psychosocial’ refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological dimension of a person and the social dimension of a person. The psychological dimension includes the internal, emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions, and the social dimension includes relationships, family and community network, social values and cultural practices. ‘Psychosocial support’ refers to the actions that address both psychological and social needs of individuals, families and communities. Psychosocial support is the process of facilitating resilience within individuals, families and communities by respecting the independence, dignity and coping mechanisms of individuals and communities. Psychosocial support promotes the restoration of social cohesion and infrastructure.

In trying to provide support to children that are facing stress or trauma there are possible interventions that teachers can deploy in the classroom. The following are nine of such possible PSS activities that can be deployed in supporting learners to overcome stress and trauma. The creative teacher is also encouraged to come up with some indigenous and inclusive activities that are specific to their cultural environment.



## **PSS Activity 1: Why Writing Your Name Matters**

**Rationale:** Knowing each other's names is a simple but critical step in helping the group members get to know each other through a challenging experience and to opening up reciprocally. This is a powerful activity to help the group get into the frame of mind for a metaphor of change, challenge, diversity and participatory learning. Getting a sense of initial self-confidence through a successful challenge is the first step of PSS. Also, this activity integrates two aspects of PSS – namely a. psychological support (for self-awareness and self-confidence, (liking their names) and b. social support (practicing challenges together).

Lastly, this activity allows the teacher to become familiar with learners' thoughts, feelings, and personal ambitions.

### **Learning objectives (for learners)**

- To identify names of all classmates and build a positive attitude about self, self-respect and sense of belonging
- To overcome passivity and increase interpersonal self-awareness and self-esteem that motivates an experience of self-appreciation
- To experience relational trust as a class where everyone can feel what it means to face the same challenge.
- To give learners an opportunity to communicate and share feelings.

## **PSS Activity 2: Colour Talks (Diversity and Acceptance)**

### **Rationale**

Helping each other use only body language is a simple but important step that can help build group trust through a challenging experience. This is also a powerful activity to help the group get into the frame of mind of accepting diversity, equality and inclusion. The activity incorporates two elements of psychological support, integrated in one: a) promotion of self-awareness and b) provision of social support (practicing, experiencing, receiving, giving trust and solidarity). Lastly, this activity has potential for the teacher to get to know the learners, and understand the way they accept or refuse diversity.

### **Learning objectives (for learners)**

- To develop respect for diversity through learning experience

- To demonstrate compassion for diversity and a sense of belonging
- To overcome passivity and increase interpersonal self-awareness and self-esteem that motivates and values diversity.
- To experience relational trust as a class where everyone can feel what it means to face the same challenge.
- To give learners an opportunity to communicate and share their feelings.

### **PSS Activity 3: Cooperative Square (Cooperation)**

**Rationale:** A simple exercise requires co-operation within a group to assemble pictures or shapes. The activity can be used for any age group. The complexity of the squares can be adjusted to suit various ages.

Lastly, this activity allows the teacher to become familiar with learners' thoughts, feelings, and personal ambitions.

#### **Learning Objectives (for learners)**

- To develop a feeling of trust with classmates and building positive attitudes
- To change from passivity to co-operation and collaboration
- To experience 'co-operation' when solving a group task
- To identify ways in which an individual's behaviour contributes to or hinders the group's progress.
- To experience non-verbal communication
- To experience trust through a challenge together as a group where everybody can feel what it means to be responsible for the group
- To communicate and share feelings about co-operation, including through non-verbal communication

### **PSS Activity 4 : Balloon Game (Responsibility)**

#### **Rationale**

This activity introduces the topic of child protection in a fun, non-threatening manner. Taking the roles of a) targets, b) attackers/bullies, c) supporters/silent bystanders d) defenders in an action game brings the importance of child protection in focus. Through adapting a problem-centered (child protection) and an action-oriented approach participants can easily visualize and

understand the issue of child protection and its actors. Also, this activity integrates two aspects of PSS – namely a. psychological support (for self-awareness), and b. social support (taking a social responsibility).

### **Learning Objectives (for learners)**

- To visualize dangers and threats
- To distinguish between defenders, supporters and attackers/harmers
- To communicate and share thoughts and feelings about protection related matters

## **PSS Activity 5: Bounce Back (Resilience and Recovery)**

### **Rationale**

This activity helps learners internalize the concept of resilience. The teacher needs to be sensitive to the fact that the sharing of stories can be very emotional in its revelation of both strengths and vulnerabilities. For the closing whole group discussion, a critical question to pose concerns the degree to which personal ‘bouncing back’ qualities are the same qualities that schools, communities and other social groupings need during and after experiencing difficult times and crises.

Lastly, this activity allows the teacher to become familiar with learners’ thoughts, feelings, and personal ambitions.

### **Learning Objectives (for learners)**

- To visualize resilience
- To share resilience experiences
- To practice communication skills
- To communicate and share feelings about resilience

### **Quiet Reflection Time**

Invite participants to sit and reflect quietly for 10 minutes on the activity and on the questions and answers in their notebooks. Participants should relate the activity to their personal experiences.

## **PSS Activity 6: Art Space (Creativity and Innovation)**

### **Rationale**

Art Space is a drawing activity that helps express feelings in a different way than with words. Most children love to draw. Give children of any age a piece of paper and some crayons/colour pencils, and they will start drawing. Some will get deeply into their drawing and some will get stuck. Participants/learners can choose if they want their 'art products' to be used for decorating the classroom, which will create positive and empowering learning environment.

Lastly, this activity allows the teacher to become familiar with learners' thoughts, feelings, and personal talents.

### **Learning Objectives (for learners)**

- To express their creativity, their worries, and especially their dreams through art
- To practice class responsibility
- To change passivity and increase interpersonal trust
- To make decisions on classroom decorations
- To bring back some emotional strength from memories of happy times
- To develop their creative skills

## **PSS Activity 7: Time Chair (Hope, Future and Aspiration)**

**2019**

**2020**

**2021**

### **Rationale**

Time chairs is a simple but critical step in helping members of the group get to know each other through an interviewing experience and to open up reciprocally. This is a powerful activity to help the group get into the frame of mind for a metaphor of time, and future. Also, this activity integrates two aspects of PSS namely a. psychological support (for self-awareness, building hope for the future and finding meaning and value of life) and b. social support (practicing communication/interviewing skill).

This activity allows the teacher to become familiar with learners'/Learners' thoughts, feelings, and personal ambitions.

### **Learning Objectives (for Learners)**

- To build hope for the future, find meaning and value of life
- To practice active listening and communication/interviewing skill
- To change passivity and increase interpersonal trust
- To experience trust through a challenge together as a class where everybody can feel what it means to trust and be trusted
- To learn to communicate and share feelings about trust that change class atmosphere.

### **PSS Activity 8: Elephant Ball Game (Identity)**

**Rationale:** This is a playful activity that brings joy and enjoyment to the group playing together.

#### **Learning Objectives (for learners )**

- To develop strength and flexibility
- To overcome passivity and increase interpersonal trust
- To enhance opportunity of playing with friends

### **PSS Activity 9: Willow in the Wind (Trust)**

#### **Rationale**

This activity is based on trust and aims at building trust, friendship, and sense of responsibility. Lastly, this activity allows the teacher to become familiar with learners' thoughts, feelings, and personal ambitions.

#### **Learning Objectives (for learners)**

- To develop feeling of trust with classmates and build positive group attitude
  - To overcome passivity and increase interpersonal trust
  - To experience relational trust in the class
- To communicate and share feelings about trust.

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