

The Rose Programme for Creative Therapies

"Tall Tales and Deep Truths"

By Linda Rose

A Toolbox Manual for Psychosocial Training

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Contents

Aims and Objectives....3

PART ONE

Theory of Creative Therapy....4
- Introduction....5
- Definitions....6
- Creative Art-forms....6
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Creative Responses....7
- Benefits of Creative Experience....9
- Creative Responses to Traumatic Experience....10
- Continuum of Creative Play....11
- Axline's Eight Basic Principles of Non-directive Play Therapy....13

Planning a Children's Programme....14
- Example of Children's Programme with Anger Theme....16
- Example of Children's Programme with Grief/Loss Theme....17

Using Creativity with Individuals....19
Looking After Yourself....20

PART TWO

Individual Creative Therapy Tools....23
Introduction....24
- Mind Map....24
- Life Measure....26
- Gingerbread Person....27
- Life Mountain....28
- Relationships Chart....28
- Personal Shield....30
- Juggling....31

Creating Your Own Exercises....31
Creating Your Own Exercises....32
- Alcohol Case Study example....32

PART THREE

Group Games and Exercises....34
- Activities List....35
- Icebreaker/warm-ups....37
- Light Group Games....39
- Medium/In-depth Games....43
- Educational Games....45
- Circle discussion/action/drawing games....47
- Trust Games....48

Guided Fantasies....57
- Breathing in Light....59
- The Cloud Catcher....61
- The Feathered Messenger....62
- Sea Pearls....64

Bibliography and Resources

Tall Tales and Deep Truths

Creative Therapy Theory and Practice

Aims and Objectives

To give the skills and understanding necessary to use creative therapies in a play setting to benefit traumatised children. (Not focussing on tsunami more than any other trauma.)

- To understand how creative play can answer some of the issues raised by and symptoms of trauma
- To explore the principles of creative play
- To explore the variety of methods and tools available
- To look at necessary skills and attitudes
- To gain skills and experience of games and other tools used in creative therapy

PART ONE

Theory of Creative Therapy

Tall Tales and Deep Truths

Introduction

"The ancient art of storytelling is highly regarded in traditional cultures where it is often the principal vehicle for the **transmission of in-depth understanding** as opposed to the mere accumulation of bits of information. Many anonymous storytellers have spun or woven tender songs and thrilling stories sung in spontaneous verses of ecstasy, while others have enacted mute pantomime performances offered up to the divine Source of their inspiration.

A good story, after all, is **both entertaining and instructive** at the same time. Moreover, it may be told and retold in any number of ways. And stories may serve as **bridges of understanding between people**, for a good story may be enjoyed and appreciated by young and old or rich and poor alike, each according to his or her own level of appreciation."

'Tall Tales and Deep Truths'; **Kataragama Devotees Trust**

Definitions

Trauma:
1) a powerful shock that may have long-lasting effects. 2) any bodily injury or wound. From the Greek = wound

Creative:
1) having the ability to create. 2) characterised by originality of thought; having or showing imagination; *a creative mind.* 3) designed to, or tending to, stimulate the imagination: *creative toys.*

Therapy:
The treatment of physical, mental or social disorders or disease. From the Greek *therapeia* = attendance

Collins Complete Dictionary

Creative Art-forms

Drama, art, craft, dance, music, sculpture etc. all are forms of creative expression.

Many topics/exercises can be adapted from one art-form to another to suit the occasion.

Experiment, and allow the children to express preferences to which art-form they would like to explore. Each has benefits to recommend it.

For example, drama is more sociable, but that might intimidate some children. Availability of resources might also affect which art-form you use. Be creative with things around you. Using natural resources (leaves, stones, feathers, flowers) for crafts, collages, models etc. can be very effective and educational.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Creative Responses

'a shattering of the soul'

Shiraldi (2000)

People who suffer from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can show the following symptoms:

Anxiety:

Physical: *tension, fatigue, trembling, nausea, stomach problems, panic attacks, pounding heart.*
Emotional fatigue: *irritation, moodiness, fear, exaggerated emotions, loss of confidence.*
Mental fatigue: *confusion; inability to concentrate, remember or make decisions.*
Spiritual fatigue: *discouragement, hopelessness, despair.*

Dissociation:

Blocking experiences; freezing out emotions

Traumatised people often need help to reconnect with their senses.

It is also true that some seriously traumatised people may subconsciously seek out more and more extreme situations to try and resolve, redefine or rework the ending of previous trauma. This behaviour can also be due to a feeling of detachment from reality within themselves. Traumatised people can become very reckless in order to try and provoke or rediscover feelings within themselves.

At an extreme, these young people can appear empty, have unfocussed eyes; or cope by becoming 'hard' and resilient to positive experiences; frozen in their responses, as if covered by armour where no person or experience is allowed to reach their vulnerable interior.

All this is caused by deep dark fear; fear of a repeat of the pain that they have already experienced, either as a one-off traumatic experience; or, often more harmfully, as continual betrayal by those who should protect – as in the case of abuse.

Other ongoing situations, extreme poverty, the long illness or suffering of a loved one, war situations, expulsion from being accepted by society – all these can contribute to the traumatisation of the individual.

There is no complete explanation why some people can cope with situations which destroy others. Self-confidence plays a crucial role.

How, therefore, does creative activity help ease these symptoms, and therefore help support the healing of the soul?

Benefits of Creative Experience

Aims of Creative Play:

- to draw out inner world of the child;
- to encourage imagination;
- to develop self-confidence, inner resources;
- to develop the ability to create a variety of solutions;
- to teach children to think laterally, thus gaining options in problem-solving;
- to see the richness and beauty in the world;
- to learn to look beneath the surface and discover depth and diversity;
- to explore ideas in safety.

Aim of Creative Therapy:

- to improve mental health.
- all of the previous aims,
- to understand reasons for imagery, symbols.
- to give a depth to expression.

Creative play stimulates the imagination, lifts the soul, explores new worlds of danger and excitement in a safe environment, and as well as giving joy to the participant, can lead to self confidence and regaining touch with the five senses.

There is little that can be unsafe with creativity, particularly if it is led by the child, working at their pace. *A child should* ***never be forced*** *into exploring 'heavy' issues.*

Some Benefits:

- Invigorating
- Energising
- Challenging
- Sociable
- Non-threatening
- **Safe**
- Validating
- expressive
- Fun – laughter produces healing enzymes in the body
- Experimental, explorative
- FREE THE SPIRIT – unchained
- Holistic
- Space to thaw out and rediscover yourself and inner feelings
- **Exploration; renegotiation; self-confidence**

Creative Responses to Traumatic Experience

Trauma	**Benefit of Creative Activity**
1) Exhaustion of the soul. The victim feels that all personal resources have dried up under the pressure and stress of their experience.	1) Stimulation, invigoration, energising. Relaxation techniques. Creative play is non-threatening, and waits until the child is ready for more in-depth experience.
2) Re-experiencing situations in negative way.	2) Exploration of situations, or parallel situations in safe way, with possible alternative outcomes.
3) Arousal; nervousness; poor sleeping and relaxation skills.	3) Practise of relaxation techniques. At the least, a few moments of relaxation led by worker; at best, learning new techniques to practise at home.
4) Hyper-vigilance.	4) Trust exercises with others; learning to relax into safe play with others; relaxation techniques. Also learning techniques for self-protection through playing out dangerous or frightening situations and practising escapes and happy endings, therefore learning more resilience, skills, and self-confidence.
5) Avoidance; dissociation, freezing; separation of mind and body for self-protection.	5) Going back to basics of using five senses in play; getting back in touch with the body through physical play; relearning connections between body and mind lost during trauma; getting in touch with emotions through role-play etc. Reawakening of self.

Continuum of Creative Play

Lightest Level

Non directive play
Child-led, person-centred

Middle level

Some structure and planning
but the child is given freedom to explore and adapt to their needs

Deepest Level

Fully directed programmes
such as school classes, or directed exploration. The facilitator has control over the direction of the session.

Topics for creative stimulation

- Current children's interest / films / toys / TV
- Traditional stories
- Magazine articles / newspapers
- Folk / spiritual stories
- Meditation ideas
- Poem

- Parallel stories; stories that cover the same themes but don't involve the child themselves – such as looking at the story of a little lost dog to explore issues of loss and grief. The child can choose whether to identify openly with these emotions or not.

- Issue focussed activities; direct to main problem e.g. tsunami fears, loss, bereavement, abuse, anger etc.
- Looking directly at nightmares, traumatic events and re-enacting them or drawing them.

Continuum continued…

The danger of delving straight into Specific focussed issues is that the child may not be ready for this, and the 'frozen' state can be reinforced by the child feeling scared.

This level should only be approached by those with a trusting and deep relationship with the child, who know that the child is ready for this, and that this a better course of action than remaining at the other levels.

It is perfectly possible never to use this level of work, but to explore the issues affecting the child in an oblique manner which provides safety for the child but all the benefits of the deeper issues being addressed, sometimes in the third person only. The child can learn self-confidence and coping strategies without ever needing to relive the traumatic experience directly.

Always be prepared for whatever the child may raise.

Each young person is a different personality and reacts in different ways.

The crucial thing is to move at the child's pace, so as to ensure the trauma is not reinforced and harder to explore another time.

Allow the child to be emotional.

Be prepared for anger, grief, tears, their need for affection, and positive reinforcement. Be prepared for anything!! That is the definition of creative play – that it can take surprising turns. Go with it within the boundaries of safety.

The *eureka moment* is when the healing really takes place. The pieces of the jigsaw fall into place in the child's mind and they can see their situation with new eyes.

Relationship Building

Do not let your own feelings or professional pride into this relationship.

If your relationship is not providing benefits for the child then allow others to try building relationships instead.

Trust and comfort is the most important factor in therapy with children, not your possible feeling of failure if you do not gain their trust. It may simply

be that you remind them of someone they disliked or was hurt by, and is nothing to do with you personally.

Equally I have always told my own workers that it is occasionally possible to dislike a child that you are working with. Perhaps they press triggers within ourselves.

It is important to recognise and acknowledge that feeling and not enter into any deep work with this child. It is better for all concerned to pass this case on to another person, as little quality work can be achieved.

There should be no shame in this honesty. Personalities can clash with any age.

Axline's Eight Basic Principles of Non-directive Play Therapy

1) The therapist must develop a warm, friendly relationship with the child, in which good rapport is established as soon as possible.
2) The therapist accepts the child exactly as he is.
3) The therapist establishes a feeling of permissiveness in the relationship so that the child feels free to express his feelings completely.
4) The therapist is alert to recognise the feelings the child is expressing and reflects those feelings back to him in such a manner that he gains insight into his behaviour.
5) The therapist maintains a deep respect for the child's ability to solve his own problems if given an opportunity to do so. The responsibility to make the choices and to institute change is the child's.
6) The therapist does not attempt to direct the child's actions or conversation in any manner. The child leads the way; the therapist follows.
7) The therapist does not attempt to hurry the therapy along. It is a gradual process and is recognised as such by the therapist.
8) The therapist establishes only those limitations that are necessary to anchor the therapy to the world of reality and to make the child aware of his responsibility in the relationship.

Virginia M Axline, Play Therapy (1969) Random house Inc, New York

Planning a Children's Programme

Ensure the following are included in the basic structure of each session even if the session is only an hour long. Follow this basic structure in every session, but the length of the activities may be adjusted depending on time.

Each session should begin emotionally gently, but often physically energetically. Each session should end with the children firmly grounded in reality, hopefully relaxed and buzzing.

1. Warm up games; introductions so children feel safe with each other and the adults. Include ground-rules so the children know the parameters of the session – (e.g. time, confidentiality, no tolerance of bullying, freedom to leave the group and watch if you feel uncomfortable etc.)
2. Trust games/ teamwork – to promote feelings of safety and trust within the group.
3. Optional imagination warm-ups.
4. Main activity - remembering the group rules; and watching for any concerned or distressed child.
5. Psychological unwinding – which may mean physical expenditure.
6. Physical unwinding – relaxation techniques, story-time, guided fantasy etc.

Before sending the children out, make sure they are all grounded in reality. **All role-play must be debriefed from,** for both the individual and the group. All children must be observed to ensure no concerns are left from any of the exercises. Always end on a positive note, aiming to send the children out buoyed up and enthusiastic.

Discuss with others what themes have come out which may be useful to follow up in the next session. If this is left, it is forgotten and vital opportunities for development lost.

Longer programmes of work:
In early sessions there is no need to try and follow a main activity. It will become clearer as time progresses which themes need to be explored. Gaining the children's trust, and making a safe environment for them to be able to allow their creativity to flow are the most important aspects..

Role-play de-briefing:
This is crucial and is a simple process. In a circle the participants say "my name is _____; I am not _____; I am wearing red shoes today" or "my favourite colour is purple" etc. It is simply designed to root them back into reality. For thorough de-roling, you can choose to get all the other children to repeat what the individual said. There will, of course, be some banter about someone's role, but it will not be so strong or affect the person and group so much.

Good practise dictates that there should be **at least two workers** for each of these sessions where any issues might be stirred up. This is to ensure that one worker can continue with the session while the other focuses on any individuals who need further attention. Also it enables one worker to observe the children while the other worker is busy with the activity. Both workers should be actively involved. Children feel inhibited by those who stand and watch rather than enter into the 'risk' as part of the group.

Endings:
The aim of therapeutic work is not only to work through past hurts in order for these to heal wounds and minimalise scarring. We must also aim to **move the child forward** in their lives. All work should aim to leave the child with a path in front of them which they feel positive and enthusiastic to follow.

This is easier in individual work than in group work, and may be compromised to simply leave the child with a sense of positivity and optimism, rather than a specific life-plan for them to follow.

The worker should be a **facilitator**, not a director; but should not assume that once the issues within have been aired then all is right with the world and their job is done.

There are many activities to enable the child to have a future focus; games in the round that look at ambitions, or dreams; individual activities such as discussing or painting where you would like to be in 20 years; drawing life paths, having a further mountain in the distance which is your aim in 20+ years – but how do you get there… what's the next step.

I believe our job is not done with children until they have a healthy and positive view of their future.

Whatever the case; children need to be able to feel positive, optimistic and joyful. These can happen from happy, positive creative experiences, directed or un-directed.

Example of Children's Programme with Anger Theme

(as part of a longer programme)

1) Introductions, name games.

2) Fun physical group warm ups;

3) Trust exercises e.g. blindfold pairs, falling back

4) Group experience games (non-stressful games e.g. adverb game)

5) Deeper issues: magic wand/life journey/ 'a time that made you angry'.

DRINK BREAK

6) Pick up on a **theme** already expressed, (e.g. anger) for example… brainstorm body feelings in anger, draw an angry person, colours of anger; make an anger model out of clay; dance an angry dance. Tell a group story, a sentence each, about Mr. Angry Monster. Tell a story about feeling angry with two different endings – one safe, one not so safe. Look at issue practically, e.g. how to disperse anger more safely. *Note any children who are uncomfortable or may have issues which need following up either immediately or later. Never force a child to stay if they need to escape an activity.*

7) Run-around noisy game to let off steam: e.g. Pirates

8) Relaxation time; music relaxation/calming/story-time/relaxing guided fantasy, ensuring you return to the room.

* * *

Ensure there is a 'safe corner' preferably with cushions for children to opt out if they feel stressed. Provide some safe anger management tools – again cushions would do for those who feel angry. Ensure children are relaxed at the end of the session and that there are no residual feelings of anger or stress.

Example of Children's Programme with Grief/Loss Theme

Half day activity

1) Introduction/name games

2) Run-around games: fruit-bowl game

3) Hand tangle – get pairs

4) Trust games: mirroring; sculptures

5) Hand-tangle - get fours

6) Story of *the lost dog*; acting out story; discussion of how the dog and other characters felt.

7) Group tug o' war

DRINK BREAK

8) Draw 'something I lost'

9) Lost feelings discussion, acting out/ dance/drawing or talking.

Do you find it or not? How can you find a replacement? What might replace that lost thing? What is really lost? and the emotions it brings.

Either a group activity such as acting out a mountain rescue; or personal drawing of a jelly-baby/gingerbread body with a drawing of the lost item, and inside the body draw how that makes them feel.

Giving 'gifts' to each other - 'what might help that person feel better – cope better e.g. a smile, flower, love, comfort, a hug, money etc. The person collects and keeps their 'gifts'. This can be acted in a circle, written, made out of clay etc…or drawn in the other person's picture of themselves.

10) Group dance or musical exercise – e.g. rain showers

11) Guided imagery lying on the floor with gentle music.

* * *

Ensure with this session that there is more than one worker to keep an eye on children's emotions and coping. Do not pressure children to disclose any

particular loss. Ideally have a corner with cushions etc., here children who want to opt out can go and rest comfortably. Follow up any issues that arise sensitively, maybe drawing a child away from the group if distressed. Make sure no child leaves the room looking uncomfortable.

Using Creativity with Individuals

One to One sessions
Young people are particularly receptive to using creative methods in one to one sessions. Children feel most comfortable when they have something to do, and in-depth talking is often not a comfortable experience at any time. Adolescents also find sessions facing another person very stressful.

I have used these tools with young people on the streets and in prison, as well as in schools, youth clubs and traditional one to one settings.

Literacy problems can also be avoided by the use of large colourful drawings which express issues, with the therapist writing where necessary, but with the picture carrying enough information for the child's comfort and understanding.

There are many ways of using creativity in counselling or life planning sessions. Many of the exercises below can be adapted for individuals; artwork being the most easy to use in a one to one setting.

Suggestions:

- Try and use large sheets of paper and thick, colourful pens if possible, to allow the child to feel this is fun and different to a formal counselling session.
- Always offer for the child to do the writing if they are able to, even if it takes longer.
- Allow a little more time for these sessions as they are slower, more fun and often more productive than talk-sessions.
- Use lots of different exercises, moving between them as necessary. Some may take twenty minutes, others may only last a few minutes each time.
- Keep the drawings with the client's notes, so that you can refer back to them and see if things have moved on at each session. If the child particularly wants to keep a picture, allow them to create a special one or duplicate to take home.
- Treat all drawings as confidential and in the same way as case-notes.

Looking After Yourself

As workers in the caring professions, we often neglect ourselves in order to support others. If we focus on our own needs we might feel guilty that we are being selfish, and not doing as much as we can for others.

This is a short-sighted view of the situation. If we neglect ourselves, there will come a point at which we are not longer functioning well and at the best of our abilities; we may begin to slip with the quality of our work through exhaustion or overwork, and this will affect our clients as much as it affects ourselves. It is in our clients' interest, as well as our own, for us to protect, nurture and look after ourselves.

Supervision
Supervision is vital when we are working with deep emotional issues, especially in individual settings.

The supervisor should be someone with a lot of experience in this area, who you can talk openly and honestly about the issues you are facing in your workplace. It is not often helpful for this to be your line-manager because you may not wish to admit mistakes as freely as if it was someone who did not have managerial responsibility for you.

Through discussing issues thrown up in the sessions you can gain important insight by being gently challenged on some of your decision, or by asking for additional ideas as you discuss the case. This ensures an element of quality control.

Also, because of the confidential nature of the work you do, this discussion can be extremely helpful in off-loading painful or heavy issues (such as unpleasant child abuse cases), and in gaining new insights and ways to work; thus can feel extremely supportive.

Burn-out
Burn-out affects many people in the caring professions and, especially in areas where there seems to be no end to troubles through poverty, war, natural disasters, or all three, workers are hard-pressed to fit as much as they can into their lives to alleviate others' suffering, neglecting their own needs.

Advice for Managers:
Managers often have an oversight of the whole arena in which their project is working, and this can be overwhelming as they need to choose how to

prioritise and meet as many urgent needs as possible, while not forgetting the long-term needs.

Managers can often expect too much of their workers, putting pressure on them as they struggle themselves to meet as many targets or needs as they can.

But managers have a responsibility to their staff to protect them as much as possible from the overwhelming truth of the situation, and allow them to focus on a small part of the picture that makes it more manageable.

Manager need to protect workers from any politics within or outside the agency so that the workers can focus on their work and not get dragged into additional stresses. Obviously they need to be aware of any issues that might affect them directly due to inter-agency rivalry or political situation but managers must not off-load their own personal issues onto those working for them. Manager need to find their own area of support, in order to ensure the well-being of their workers.

Inter-agency meetings for managers can offer some level of support for their own issues, which may include staff problems too. This enables manager to find the appropriate level of support which they might not be able to have in their own organisation, particularly if they are the head person, which can sometimes be an isolated and lonely position.

Be aware that some agencies have very strict confidentiality policies, and you need to discuss your support needs with those over you so that you are not accused of breaking this policy by seeking outside support. Confidentiality must be agreed upon with these discussions to safe-guard the agency and its workers; but the importance of sharing problems with other people cannot be underestimated in alleviating stress, and bringing new ideas, or simply the understanding that you are not alone in your struggles.

Principles for Burn-out:
Burn-out – or simply exhaustion is hard to avoid; but we can try and prevent it through some basic self-nurturing exercises. There may well be other ways that you have learnt to look after yourself – but these are some basic principles, and practical exercises to help with these follow afterwards.

- **Divide your life into manageable pieces**

- **Leave your worries at work**:

- **How to relax**
- **Support Structures**
- **Self-protection – hobbies**
- **Focus on success**

PART TWO

Individual Creative Therapy Tools

Introduction

There is no definitive list of creative tools to use with people; there are many books available that include exercises to use for different issues/purposes. I have included a few of my favourite exercises.

Mind Map

An excellent **assessment tool** is the *mind map*. (see below)

This gains all the information about the child's background and lifestyle without asking a list of questions; it allows you to return to this each session as a starting place, where the child can pick out issues that are concerning them at that time, or add to other notes previously made.

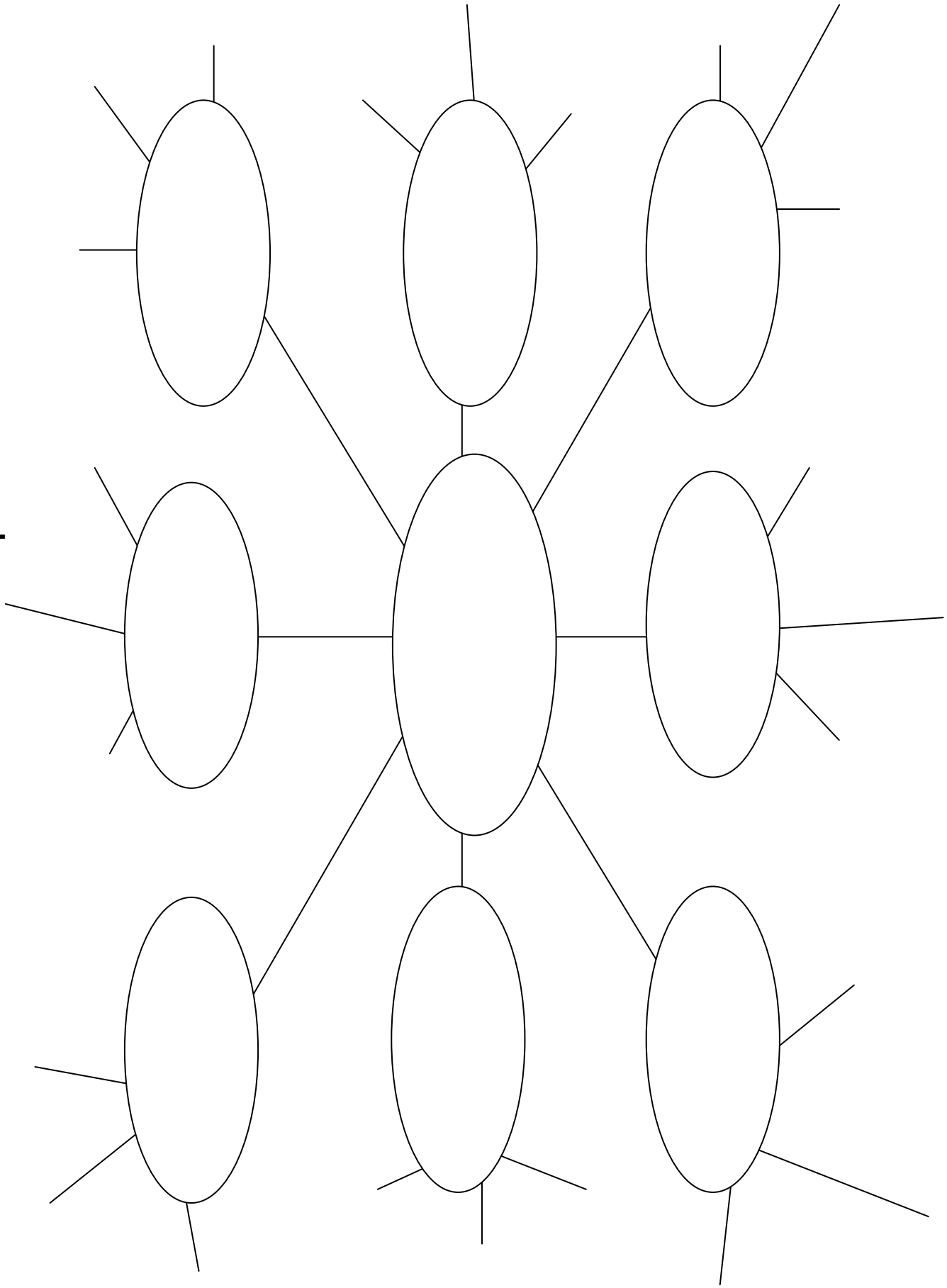
A mind map begins with a circle in the middle of the page with the child inside it – named or drawn. From this circle lines radiate to other circles. These are the primary issues/relationships in a person's life.

The worker, focussing on the paper, asks the child "so what things are there in your life that are important to you…?" Try to keep to main categories in this level, so if the child replies, "my mother's illness", you would draw a circle for the *family*, then a line and circle around *mother*, then a line for *illness*, as you sub-divide the issues. Keep asking gently "what else is important to you, what kinds of things do you like to do, or worry you…" Try to give as little prompting as possible. The benefit of this assessment tool is that you can revisit it at any time, so always keep it handy and add things that come up later.

The primary issues might include: family, school, friends, work, fears, etc. – any of the larger issues for which other things can spring off. The tsunami may or may not appear as a major issue which connects other issues to it, or one among many that springs from other topics. Then from each of these circles spring off concerns/issues/relationships (not mentioning any value judgement – all things of importance to the child, good or bad). From *family* can come the different people of importance – not necessarily only close family. An uncle might be crucial to have on there as a good or bad influence etc.

The child must lead this. There is no rush to do the whole map in one session. The child feels reassured to see this mind map come out at every meeting, to be consulted and asked "where would you like to start today?"

Mind Map



Life Measure

Aim: to give encouragement that they are not as low as they may feel. To look forward and plan some practical improvements to move them forward in their life/situation.

0 **10**

Draw a line across a piece of paper.

Draw number 10 at the far end. Tell the client that this is the best moment they could possibly have in their lives. At the start zero is the worst moment they have ever experienced.

What might number 10 be? Write down their answer under the number 10.

Ask what number they feel they are right now? Write down their answer.

Ask what the zero was – the worst moment in their lives. Discuss any issues that come up.

Ask what might be one step toward the number 10 – just one tiny thing that might move them on towards the best they can hope for. Practical issues are easier to aim for. Encourage the client by showing how far they have come from their worst time of life.

If they can't find any way forward; ask them what is better about now than their worst time, and look at how that can be improved on.

If they are very low, use your own ideas to give genuine support and encouragement, however small the positive might be, e.g. - "you made it here today! That's great! You coped with the journey and found the place, and kept to our appointment etc." then swiftly move on to positive things about themselves and other self-confidence exercises.

Refer back to this exercise next visit and see if things have improved, and if not why.

Variations: This can be done as a graph with highs and lows in their life.

Gingerbread Person

(see below)

A good **self-esteem exercise** is for the child to draw a large gingerbread/balloon person, which is themselves (they could spend some time drawing a proper self-portrait).

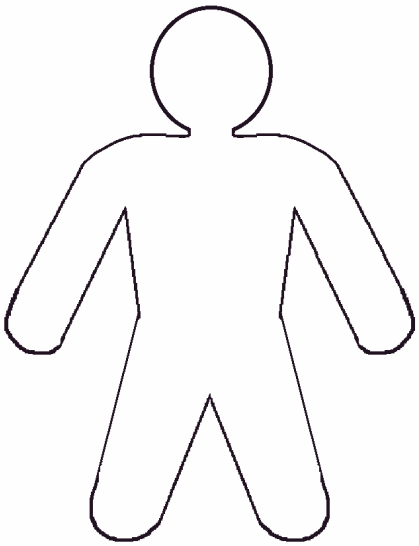
Inside this person you write all their attributes, skills, positive feelings – anything positive that will help buoy them up.

Occasionally, with someone with extremely low self-esteem you have to start them off, and promote them a lot. I always add positive comments myself and work with the child until there is a good healthy list.

Variation: Good versus bad!
For those who feel they have no friends and the world is against them. Using the body of the gingerbread person – which is the self; use the outside area to write down all the people who they feel are against them.

On the inside write down all the people who care about them. Those who are important write/draw larger. Use yourself if you are struggling for numbers.

Do not use this exercise if there is no-one to support this person as it may highlight their problems, but in most cases they had not realised how many people really cared or would stand up for them. It can be friends, acquaintances… anyone to boost their confidence. You can also look at the importance of those outside the body – does it matter what they think? Who are they anyway?!

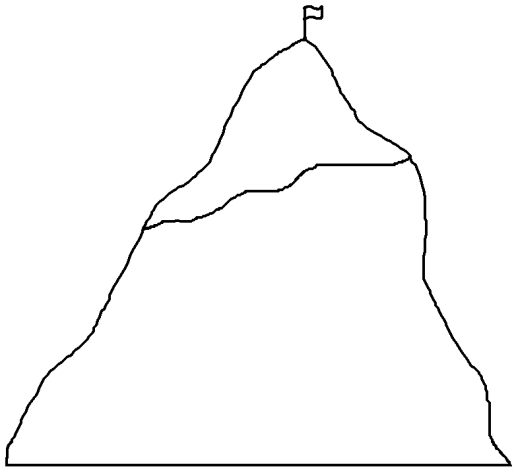


Life Mountain

A variation on the Life Measure Exercise.

Aim: to encourage the client to feel positive about their life, to see some successes and to learn how to move forward.

Draw a mountain.



The top is where you would like to be in 20 or 30 years' time. Draw a little flag right on the top, and the person you hope to be.

What does it mean for you? What do you want to have achieved? Write it in.

Where are you now? How far up the side of the mountain? Draw yourself there.

What is the very next step you must take to get closer to your dream?

How far have you come?

What points have you struggled with? What have your successes been?

Relationships Chart

(see below)

I find the relationships chart of stick people extremely good to ask – "do you recognise anyone on there", and children can see the relationship more clearly than they can express verbally. Or you can take a specific relationship and ask "which of these people is you and your mother….?"

KEEP
OUT

Personal Shield

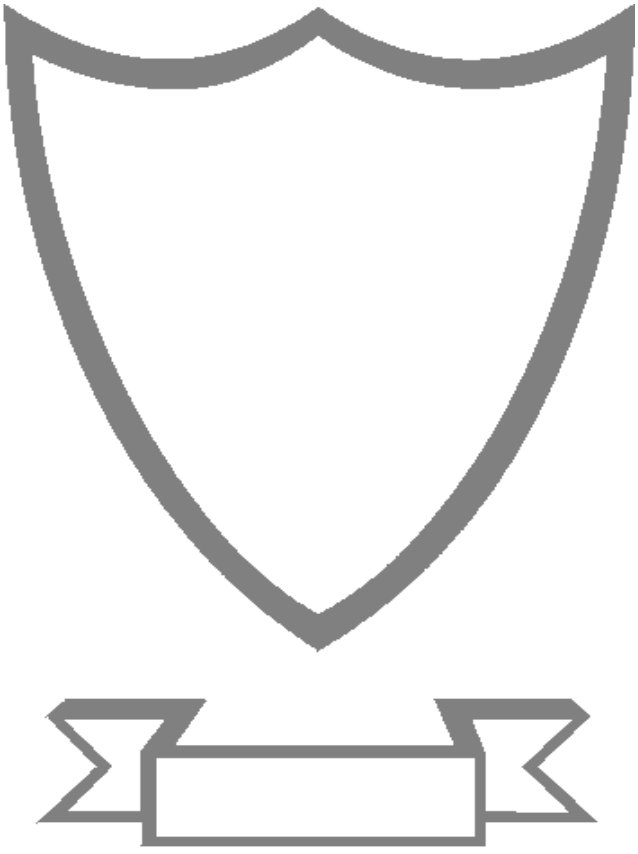
Aims:

For the client to think about and express what is important to them in their life, and to have these things valued by the worker.

For the worker to gain an understanding of what things are central to this person's life.

This can also be used as an introductory activity to feed back to a group.

- Draw a shield, or photocopy and enlarge the template below.
- Divide the shield into four sections.
- Draw or write the four most important things in your life. (E.g. family, friends, hobbies, faith, job, home etc.)
- Underneath, write a motto, belief, or summary of what you stand for. (E.g. "love conquers all", "live and let live" etc.)



Juggling

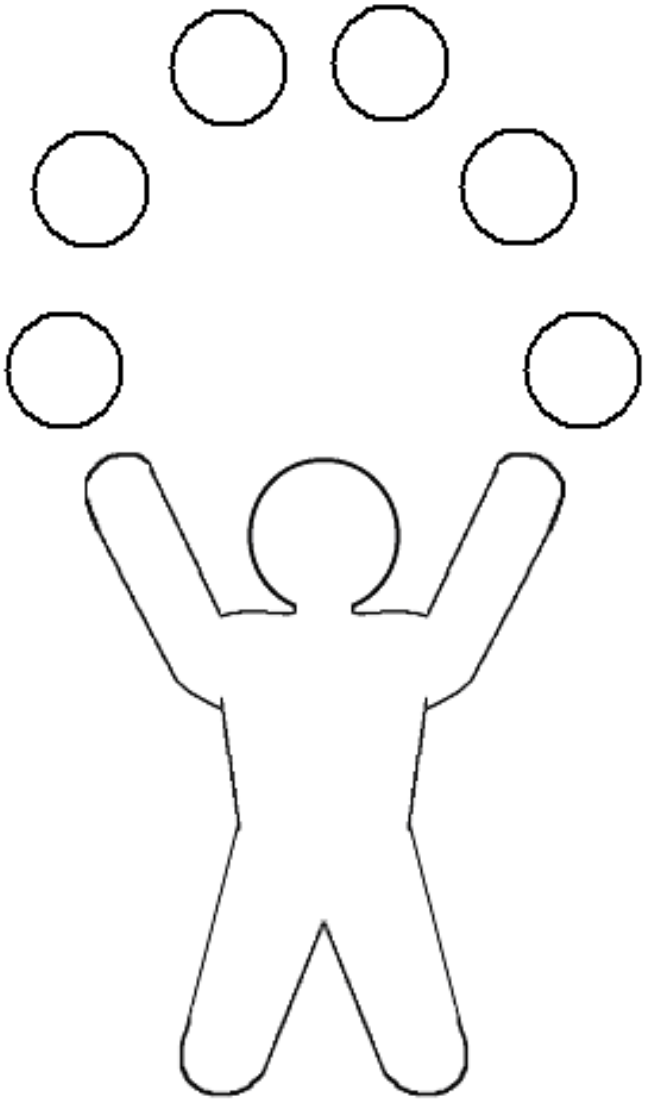
Aims:

To look at areas of your life, to separate them in order to cope better. Especially useful for burn-out or stressful situations.

- Draw or imagine yourself juggling with many balls.

- In each ball write each area of your life you have to keep responsibility for e.g. job, family, parents, money, food, stigma…

How do you balance each part of your life?
What can you pass on to others to help with?
What must you not drop?



Creating Your Own Exercises

To create your own exercises, take the issue and think visually through what it reminds you of.

Can you come up with a picture in your mind of this subject? If so, then use this as a basis for creating a visual exercise.

For example: **despair** feels like a great hole or pit.

So on a large piece of a paper, draw (or get the child to draw) the sides of a deep hole, and at the top grass and a few flowers.

In the bottom of the pit write or draw some of the issues that have caused the despair. If these are too painful, leave this and only work on moving up out of the pit.

Discuss the steps required for taking one step up out of the pit; one little movement in that person's life.

Maybe if the problem is being bullied at school, it might be to move desks, or tell the teacher, or ignore one rude comment etc. – only little steps. You draw this on for the first step, and leave that drawing. Move on to another area… or use this for further discussion.

Have confidence in your own ability to think pictorially, and try it out. Think of a few examples of issues that re-occur – fears, relationships and think what might be an appropriate way to express them; then how could you fit this in with talking to a young person about their worries? Now you have all the ingredients to design your own tailor-made creative therapy session.

For those who feel less creative and prefer to reply on tried and tested exercises, there are resources in this pack, and a bibliography at the back, with an emphasis on those books with practical exercises.

Alcohol Case Study example

With one young man who struggled to control alcohol, and was in prison for alcohol-related offences, I drew a large beer glass.

For him, the full amount was 20 pints, the most he ever drank.

We looked at levels on the glass where he went through different stages of his drinking – after so many pints he felt…. etc., until we looked at what point he lost control, or became aggressive.

We then switched papers and looked at trigger points for his aggression, combinations of different types of alcohol, certain people who wound him up etc.

Later we moved on to look at what might put barriers in to stop him reaching either that place of loss of control, or the trigger points.

These had to be realistic practical things. There was no point saying "well then, alcohol is obviously your problem, so don't drink any more!" He would have blocked any more contact with me, and continued with his behaviour. I also would have waited a very long time for him to discover his own solutions as he preferred to block thoughts or concerns he had, which compounded his problems when he was 'under the influence'. He was in a hole, and needed a hand out. It was my job to try and provoke thoughts that he could respond to, and then for him to work out his own path. But he could not do that alone.

It was not enough for him to recognise his problem and what happened to him physically and psychologically when he was drinking. The crucial part of the work was to enable him to move on beyond his problem into a new lease of life.

We worked out a strategy for him to be aware of **danger points.** In his case this was avoiding mixing certain substances, people and situations, but we also needed to find alternatives for him when he felt himself to be vulnerable.

This often aggressive young man, who had previously smashed a bottle over his brother's head and was convicted for violence to his step-mother, was not comfortable in a therapeutic setting, but was very happy studying a drawing of a beer glass, and could understand the visual impact of seeing the danger points drawn on at certain pint marks.

To my knowledge, that young man has not been back to jail (4 years later), and has since held down a job and more or less kept out of trouble.

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PART THREE

Group Games and Exercises

Activities List

Icebreaker/warm-ups:
Fruit bowl game
Name games:
- Balls
- String
- Labels
- Self-portrait
- Interview/who's who
- Human bingo
- Name meanings
- Name crossword
- Truth and lies

Light Group Games:
Newspaper islands
Superpowers
Magic table/wand/door
Key-keeper
Tug o' war
Group sculpture
Pass the parcel
Parachute games
Musical rain
Conducting orchestra
Cane trick
Swamp/mine-field crossing
Adverb game
Blow football
Trails
Insect city
Web of life
Pirates

Medium/In-depth Games:
Giant snakes and ladders
Life journey
Town plan/gardens
Personal landscape
Role-play games
Super-heroes
Fables/folk tales

Change ending to familiar stories
Hot-seat
Masks
Angel/devil debates
Birthday demands

Educational Games:
Goldfish bowl exercise
What's in the bag
Pass the parcel
Alphabet banner
Run-around
Opinions game
Graffiti wall
ABC seats quiz
Relay post-it quiz
True/false game

Circle discussion/action/drawing games:
Superpowers
If I had a billion rupees...
If I were world leader…
If I had three wishes…
If I could change one thing in the world…
If I were an animal, I would be… because…
Giving gifts to each other
Personal baggage

Trust Games:
Blindfold walk/obstacle course
Falling back
Sitting-circle
People-elevator
Group stroke (*not for those sensitive to touch)

Icebreaker/warm-ups

Fruit bowl game
Seated on chairs in a circle there is a person left standing in the middle. In order to get people to move, they say statements such as 'everyone wearing glasses' or 'anyone who likes sweets' or favourite music/football team etc. or any insignificant thing which links people. All those who can agree have to get up and change places, but are not allowed back on to their own chair. The 'odd one out' has to try and get a chair leaving someone else in the middle. A fast and furious game!
*variations – with or without 'odd person out', name everyone as a fruit, repeating every three or four people, then call the name of different fruits to make them get up. When you want chaos, call 'fruit-bowl' and everyone must move.

Name games
To aid learning of people's names and breaking down barriers between people.

Balls: In a circle throw a ball to someone and call their name as you do so. An easier version is for each person to say their own name as they throw the ball. To become more confusing and fun, add additional balls so there are several balls travelling at the same time.

String: call someone's name and throw the string/toilet roll to them holding on to it yourself. They continue to call someone else and throw the string/paper to them, and so on. Eventually there is a mess of paper/sting but everyone is linked together.

Labels: design your own label with your name in fancy writing and symbols for who you are.
Self-portrait: draw/paint a self-portrait including things that show your hobbies and things about yourself e.g. tennis racquet.

Interview: in pairs, find out everything about the other person and then introduce them to the others later. Can be a prepared list of questions to fill in.

Who's Who variation; to be filled in and stuck on the wall. Everyone has to guess who it is. (See later.)

Human bingo: prepare a sheet with boxes, showing interests, personality likes/dislikes, etc., e.g. someone who has visited India; someone who likes

cats; someone with asthma; someone who skipped breakfast etc. Go around the group and get someone different in each box. (See later)

Name meanings: Can be done as part of crossword game. Stand up and tell the group anything you know about your name, what it means, why you were given it etc.

Name crossword: on flipchart paper each person write their name, but joining it on to another name by using one of the existing letters. All the names will be linked together showing how we are all linked in many ways.

Truth and lies: each member of the group says three things about themselves, two true and one lie. The others have to guess which is the lie.

Light Group Games

Newspaper islands
Like musical chairs; large 'islands' of newspaper scattered over the floor. When the music stops everyone has to jump onto the islands or the crocodiles will eat you/you'll sink into the swamp. After each stop, paper is taken away, so that there are less and smaller islands. Gradually people fall into the swamp or are eaten by crocs. This game can enable children to be helped by others who can hold them off the floor etc. Leaving many islands, make them get smaller until there are only a few miniscule pieces of paper left. No need to go to the last person.

Superpowers
Each child names a superpower they would like to have and how they would use it. This can be acted out in little scenarios; or the scenario acted first and the superpower decided afterwards, and others have to guess what it is.

Magic table/wand/door
The adult explains that there is a table with many things on it that are all invisible. Children can come and choose something from it, and demonstrate it, so the others can guess what it is.

The variations are to use a **magic door** to change into someone else, and acting this out for others to guess. Can be used with emotions, characters, ages, etc.

The **magic wand** can be spoken or acted in a scenario where they can change anything they would like – this can be used therapeutically if required to change a painful situation. The child can use this as part of statues game where they control others and tell them what to do to re-enact a situation, serious or otherwise. The controlling child can then 'magic' a change in the situation.

Key-keeper
A game to quieten children down. Need a large bunch of keys and blindfold. Children sit in a circle and one sits in the middle, blindfolded, with the keys close in front. They are the 'key-keeper'. Another child is pointed to, and they must get up, walk silently all around the circle, 'steal' the keys before the key-keeper hears them and identifies where they are by pointing at them directly. The ground must be taken into account as there has to be a possibility of being heard! (i.e. not carpet/grass sand etc.)

Tug o' war
Good energetic game for two teams. Large rope and two ribbons required, and 2 markings on the floor. The two teams have to pull the rope so that the ribbon passes the marking nearer to their side. All ages and sizes can play this if the larger ones are nearer to the ends of the rope!

Pass the parcel
A popular party game – but can be used educationally if questions are put in each paper; or small tasks etc. People sometimes expect to feel childish playing this, but it is a good game in the round. Music plays and a parcel is passed between players; when the music stops one layer is unwrapped, and often a sweet is in each layer along with a forfeit/task/question etc. All About Me cards are useful as the discussion cards. (see later)

Parachute games
Massive piece of light-weight material – preferably round like a parachute; but can be a large bed-sheet etc. Children gather around the edge and hold it. There are plenty of games to be played with this, many involving large light balls, wafted from side to side; some where every other child runs under the parachute while it is suspended by others; **cat and mouse** is an excellent game where one child runs/crawls on top of the parachute (the cat) and the other (mouse) is underneath. The observers have to waft the parachute so the cat does not know exactly where the mouse is, but has to try and chase the mouse until he/she is caught!

See the web-site addresses for sites with many different parachute games.

Musical rain
Sit in a circle. The children copy the leader, who begins to make light sounds by tapping fingers on wrists. This sounds like gentle raindrops. Then they hit harder, using more fingers, then taping their knees; then clapping gently, then louder, eventually stamping and clapping as hard as they can to make thunderous monsoon weather! Gradually it is reversed and becomes gentler and quieter until just the pitter patter of raindrops can be heard. Excellent for follow-the-leader, power for leading child, and control of body for all.

Conducting orchestra
A good opportunity for a child to exercise little–known power as everyone plays whatever instruments they have, and s/he makes them go louder softer etc as her/his will.

Cane trick
One long cane needed. Children have to balance it on their index fingers, at the same time. They are told to lower the cane together; but it is very hard,

because they must not let go, and so they all push up instead. The more the merrier.

Swamp/mine-field crossing
Ideally need three big tyres and three sturdy long planks. The aim is that the children have to cross a swamp/minefield etc without touching the ground, and the planks cannot touch the ground either. Only balancing on the tyres will save them.

They have to work as a team, puzzling how to move the planks across on the tyres for them all to climb across.

Adverb game
One or two children go out while the others are given an adverb. When the children are called back in the adult gives them a task to do in order to demonstrate the adverb. The outsiders have to guess what it is. E.g. brushing hair and 'sadly' is the word they have to guess. If they can't guess it another action is suggested.

Blow football
Using straws and either a small sweet or tiny light ball is used. It is possible to use screwed up paper. A football pitch is drawn to whatever size wished for, and the players have to blow the football in order to score goals.

Trails
Outside activity. Leaders lay a trail (it can be another team who lays it) with clues such as instructions/arrows/symbols/white markings/scent etc for the other team to follow.

Insect city
The group is asked; if you were an ant – where would you live; what are the dangers to your health; how would you overcome them. Design an environment for the ant which answers these issues, and be as create and imaginative as possible. This can be done through any medium, drama, art or sculpture, as a small group or individual exercise.

Web of life
A ball of string is required. The group looks at the reliance of the world upon each other. Beginning with someone holding the string posing as a tree, the question is asked 'who lives in it/eats from it' etc. The next person who calls out (e.g. bird) is given the string, and the question is repeated (insect etc.) so on until each person is attached showing our interdependence. This can be used as environmental education, or just as a group game. Other issues which are linked can be dealt with similarly.

Pirates
Fun, fast, physical game. Children stand in the middle of a large empty room. Leader calls instructions that they must follow quickly:
Port = run to the left wall
Starboard = right wall
Stern = back wall
Aft = front wall
Crow's nest = pretend to climb up
Scrub the decks = fall on floor and scrub away
Captain's coming = stand up smart and salute

Variations: any theme producing a variety of directions/action e.g. jungle theme.

Medium/In-depth Games

Group sculpture
A theme is decided on and one child is chosen to be the sculptor. The others only move when the sculptor moves their arms and legs etc to form a picture. Good to give a sense of power and control; needs to be watched for those who don't like touch/proximity and for those who might take advantage of controlling others. (I have known people try to make others kiss etc.)

Giant snakes and ladders
This can be played as a board game, but is better as a full-size game where participants stand as counters.
Ideally paint a set of snakes and ladders (64 squares with snakes and ladders crossing between different layers) on to a large piece of material. This is then a permanent resource. You also need a die.
Snakes are bad and when you land on the snake's head you fall down to its tail; when you are at the bottom of a ladder you immediately climb up to the top. Thus you can use this as parallel for anything good and bad in someone's life. "What are your hopes and dreams – what makes you fall down and holds you back from reaching them"…etc. You can play the game asking people to name something before they go up or down the board; you can use this educationally about a subject such as drugs, saying one good thing and one bad thing… and so on.

Life journey
Another active playing game which can be a board game but is better 'super-sized'!
Participants paint a map with many geographical areas and a circular path. The areas include, desert, mountain, sea, island, beach, swamp, forest, and any other you feel like adding. These areas are all representative of parts of life – fear, conquering power/strength, laziness, feeling stuck, or despair. As a group you can use these areas to explain how you feel at different times. You can use the cards in the resources section, or make some up yourself as discussion points.

Town plan/gardens
Art / possibly drama tool. As a group exercise, plan a town with a plot for each person. Each person can design their own little plot – fancy dream house or beautiful landscaped garden etc. After each person has finished their area, each person explains the main features of their plot.
Variation: each child chooses 'house-warming gifts' for each other for their house/garden based on their own needs or what they said. These can be anything that the person needs, a smile, happiness, peace, a new dress, a

guardian angel, etc. They can be drawn like flowers planted in the garden, or given to the child in any art medium.

Personal landscape
Each person draws their own path and the scenery they have passed through at different times and either act this out, or draw it for discussion about where they are; often a good place to explore that they may have been in worse situations than they now are, and have recovered before.

Variation – drama; to walk through your 'life path' using different coloured material to represent different relationships of other themes, picking up the cloths and dropping them at different turns.

Drama games:
Any characters can be used – take a local story or famous tale; hand out roles; or be more in-depth and use people's own stories.
Always de-role afterwards!!
Role-play games
Super-heroes
Fables/folk tales
Change ending to familiar stories

Hot-seat:
One person sits on a chair in front of the group and takes on a role, and everyone asks them questions which they must answer in role. Again, de-brief after this game.

The role can be a personal one, or simply a character in a drama which has previously been enacted. It can be a character from someone's life if carefully managed, and can be to give someone the opportunity to explore aspects of other people's behaviour.

Masks
Many different activities, exploring emotions; exploring the opposite character to one you usually demonstrate. Excellent for safe exploration of feelings, and as an aid to role modelling.

Angel/devil debates
Providing different points of view; can be good to explore issues in depth, pros and cons.

Birthday demands
It's your birthday and you are in charge. Everyone has to do what you say! Good for self-confidence and power for the dis-empowered.

Educational Games

All educational games can be adapted to whatever topic you are exploring. Some examples are in this pack.

Goldfish bowl exercise
Extremely good peer-education for a large even-numbered older group; Divide the group into two. Have half the group sitting in a circle facing outwards, and the other half face them; so that everyone is facing a partner.

The outer circle each have a different 'problem or dilemma' that need solving. They have to ask their partner the problem and the partners try to answer as best they can. The outer circle writes notes of the answers. After a few minutes the outer circle moves one place to the left. They then pose their dilemma again and write down any answers.

After at least six changes, the group reconvenes and discusses the dilemmas and the answers. As this can be hard for the inner group, only read out the answers the child thought were the most useful.

What's in the bag
In a cloth bag put many objects that relate to your topic. Pass the bag around and each participant must take an item out and discuss what it is and its relevance to what you are discussing.

Pass the parcel
As with above; either place objects between each paper, or questions that must be answered/discussed.

Alphabet banner
Put a large sheet of paper along the wall; write the alphabet, with large gaps between, and ask for the children to write words related to your topic under each letter. Useful to assess the children's knowledge level.

Run-around
Quiz game. In teams. At one end of a room stick A, B and C. The team must select a runner for each question. Read a question with multiple choice, and allow the children to run to the answer they think. Then allow the team to shout and tell them whether to move or stay there. Eventually decide who is right etc.
Variations: (**ABC Seats quiz**) can be non-competitive and all can get the right answer, or competitive and there is only one chair by each answer so the first person gets it.

Opinions game *(for example and tools see later)*
This excellent game can be used for any topic, light or serious; fun or educational. Simply write your own set of statements, making sure they only reflect opinions, and not factual issues.

Stick the words 'agree' and 'disagree' on the walls at the opposite ends of a large room. Clear any tables or chairs away to the sides to leave the middle area empty. Remind everyone that **there are no right or wrong answers**. Tell them you will read out the statements and they must choose how much they agree/disagree with each statement, and stand accordingly close or far away from each end of the room. They might feel ambivalent and so stand in the middle.

Read out the statements and allow people to have time to think and move.

Ask if anyone is willing to say why they are standing where they are; don't pressure anyone, but try to get a couple of different views before moving on to the next statement. Don't take too long or people get bored. You may have to adjust how many statements you read out depending on the attitude of the participants.

variations: this game can be written out on to cards and then done in small groups by placing the 'agree/disagree' at either end of a table and placing the cards. This then needs group discussion to agree where to place the cards. No more than 6 people should be in one group to ensure that everyone is more likely to get a say.

Graffiti wall
As with alphabet banner but can give young people the opportunity to raise their own issues or make statements freely. Better when not supervised.

Relay post-it quiz/True False Game
Line up in teams. On opposite wall place paper with choices of answers True/false or A, B or C, etc. or pictures of thumbs up and thumbs down for those less literate. When the question is read out the teams have to run to the far end and stick their answers in the right place – one person at a time. Good for when there is bank of knowledge e.g. parts of the body etc where the children can continue to run and place their notes on the right place. In order to correct a team-member's mistake another turn has to be taken.

Circle discussion/action/drawing games

Short discussion starters for groups; best used sitting in a circle as an icebreaker at the beginning of other work. The aim is to stimulate imagination and bring out information from the children, giving confidence in speaking in front of others.
Some children adore this, and some are terrified.

Giving gifts to each other: what gifts would you like to give – be creative. E.g. A smile, laughter, peace, a guardian angel, a dog, a cuddly bed, money, a beautiful dress, happiness, a best friend. Etc etc. Can be drawn, created, acted or spoken.

Personal baggage: A circle game to get rid of bad habits and bad memories. What will we do with all that negative rubbish we keep hanging on to? Do we file it for later, or bin it forever? Can be drawn, acted, created or spoken.

Seeds: drama for young children. Crouch down low and pretend to be a seed. When you are 'watered' grow up and become a beautiful flower. Tell/show everyone what sort of flower you are and how it feels. (This can be a metaphorical flower) Designed to offer *potential* to a child, the 'What *could* be!'

Superpowers: what superpower would you choose and how would you use it?
If I had a billion rupees...
If I were world leader…
If I had three wishes…
If I could change one thing in the world…
If I were an animal, I would be… because…
For more ideas see ***All About Me*** *activity below.*

Trust Games

(*hard for those sensitive to touch)

Blindfold walk/obstacle course
Pairs work together. One is blindfolded and the other leads them around the room gently at their own pace. They can take them through an obstacle course, or simply allow them to feel the room. Excellent for reconnecting with the senses.

Variation: one partner to call instructions to the blindfolded partner rather than lead them.

Falling back
One partner falls back into the arms of the other waiting behind.

Sitting-circle
Needs a fairly big, comfortable group. Everyone stands in a circle. The circle must get closer and closer until they have to stand sideways. Then they take a step towards the middle of the circle so they are very close indeed. Slowly everyone sits down – on to the knees of the person behind. If no-one withdraws then the group supports each other. This can be uncomfortable for many people.

People-elevator
At least 4 people and one in the middle. Everyone stands around a middle person and links hands. The person sits down on to the hands and they lift the person up. They do this a second time and marvel at how much easier it is the second time.

Group stroke
Extremely soothing for those who feel safe being touched. One person stands in the middle and closes their eyes. If female they can cross their hands over their chest. The others stroke that person extremely lightly from the top of the head down their body, avoiding any inappropriate touch areas.

All About Me

From the board game by Barnardos

***can be made into cards to be read out, or used in pass the parcel etc.**

My funniest joke is

My most special memory is of

My favourite school lesson is

The best present I could get is

The best time of day is

My favourite food is

My favourite clothes are

I love the weather when it is

My most treasured possession is

The sport I love to play most is

My favourite animal is

My favourite hobby is

The best book I ever read was

My lucky number is

The pet I would most like to have is

I am good at

The most exciting thing I ever did was

The hardest thing I ever did was

The bravest thing I ever did was

I'm not very good at

If I could choose to be anyone I would be

It is a real treat for me to

If I could change one thing about myself it would be

My best feature is

I hate looking at

The best thing about school holidays is

The worst thing about being ill is

When I'm ill I like to

The best thing about being ill is

The worst thing about school holidays is

The best thing that happened this year was

The happiest day of my life was

One thing I hate having to do is

I hate having to eat

My ideal room would be

I get really cross when

I feel really sad when

I feel so angry about

It's hard to keep my temper when

It is very irritating when

I laugh when

When I'm angry I like to

I get very embarrassed when

I am a little worried about

I am afraid of

I would like to spend a day with

A good friend is someone who

I feel safe when

If I were invisible for a day I would

If I could change one thing it would be

The best present to give someone is

When I have a secret I can always trust

When I need help I can go to

Opinions Game

(examples)

Remember – the aim is to provoke discussion. Some issues are not clear cut!

On emotions:

- I keep my feelings to myself
- I'm a very emotional person
- How you feel is more important than anything else
- Showing emotions is about being weak
- People in authority make me nervous
- I find it hard to get in touch with my feelings
- If I don't think about my feelings then maybe they'll go away
- I can't talk about my feelings
- I hate it when people don't tell me how they feel
- Feelings make you feel bad
- Not talking about how you feel is being dishonest
- Emotions should be at home and not in public
- I give in to arguments, others always seem to have better ideas
- I'm not too good at following instructions
- I'm fairly confident with other people

On working with children (esp. grief):

- Children are more resilient than adults and soon bounce back
- Death is an adult subject and not suitable for children
- Children need to explore their grief
- Grief is a private matter should not be shown
- The most effective way to teach children is to give them lots of information
- It is important to remember the feelings we had when we were children
- Children should not be protected from painful truths
- Adults know better than children what is good for them
- Children need to explore their grief
- Anger is an unacceptable emotion
- Children's workers should remain separate from the child's emotions
- All children love to be touched and cuddled
- Children who don't explore their feelings can be scarred for life
- Children need to learn their place
- All children are fundamentally good inside

Agree

Disagree

True

False

Who's Who?

Personal Profile



Favourite Colour:.....

Dream Holiday Destination: .....

Most Disgusting Food: .....

I Really Hate (Phobia): .....

Favourite Place:.....

Best Film Of All Time:.....

Worst Pop Song: .....

My Greatest Ambition:.....

Favourite Film Star (male or female):.....

If I was an animal I'd be a...: .....

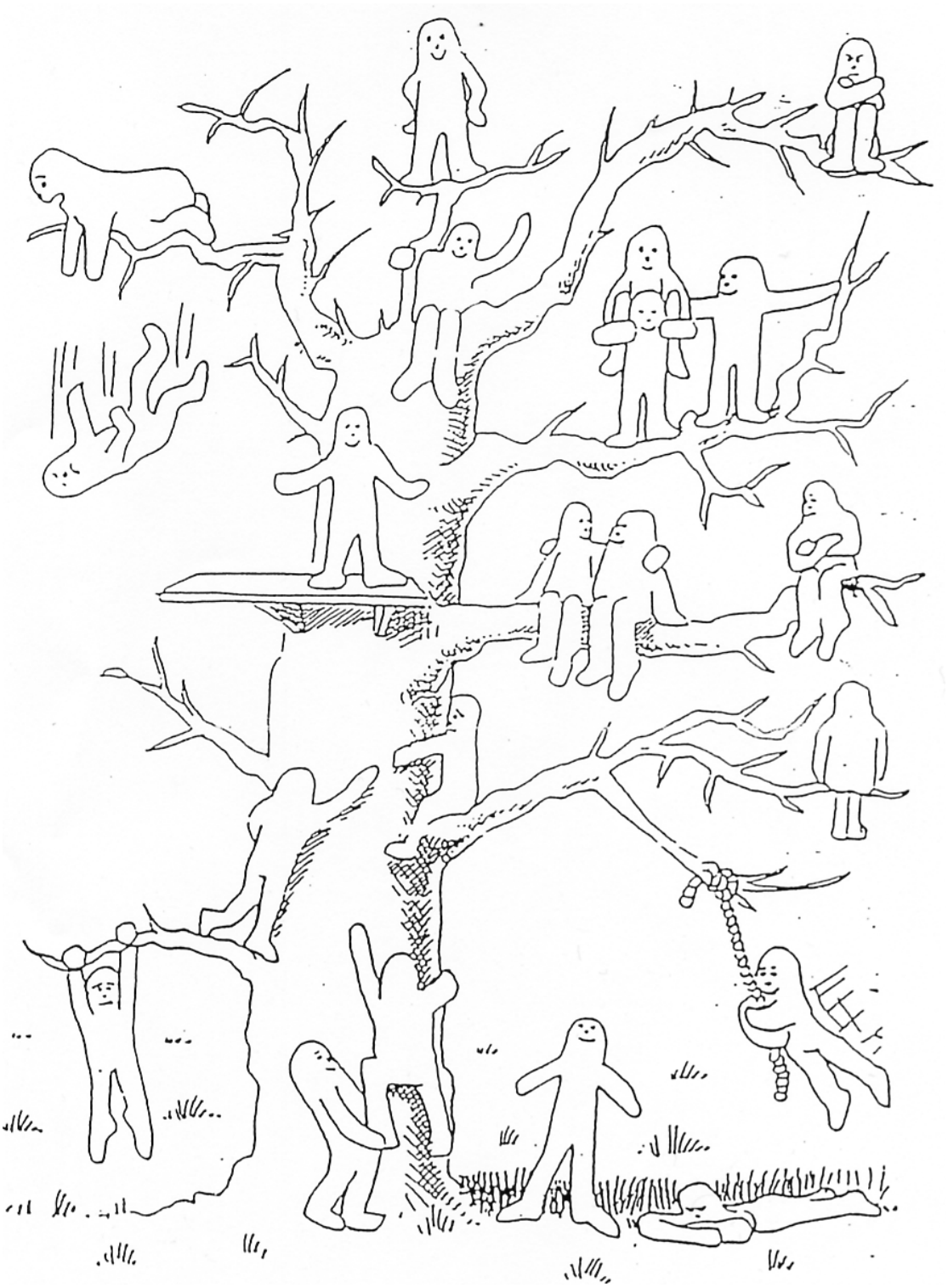
Name:

Human Bingo

Someone who skipped breakfast	Someone who has driven to work	Someone who has children
Someone who visited a place of worship	Someone who has never been to India	Someone who can swim
Someone who can play a musical instrument	Someone who has a pet	Someone with relatives in another country
Someone who rides a bike	Someone who enjoys watching movies	Someone who likes sweet food

"Jelly Babies"

This can be used as assessment of how someone is feeling, or can be used before and after training etc. to make a comparison.



Guided Fantasies

Uses

The main benefit of guided fantasy is for **relaxation**. It can be used also for the **stimulation of creative ideas**. Depending on the subject matter and issues faced by the child, guided fantasy can be **therapeutic**, but needs to be watched carefully if done in a group, so the individual reaction is not lost. Where a child is affected by the imagery or ideas raised, it is likely to be a strong reaction, as the child is led deeply into the fantasy, and therefore the practitioner should recognise that some children may be emotionally affected.

To affect the depth of experience choose whether to lie on the floor, which leaves the subconscious free of concerns of falling off chairs if overly relaxed. If the clients are in chairs, a tiny part of the brain will not relax properly. However, if clients are uncomfortable with lying on the floor and feel exposed, this can also affect the relaxation, so these issues must be considered.

Practical hints

The ingredients for an in-depth experience, each step adds additional depth, from superficial to full immersion:

- Seated with lights on and eyes closed. No music. No relaxation, only the story.
- Add relaxation techniques, breath control
- Add music
- Lights dimmed
- Lying on the floor, with music, relaxation techniques and breath control. If using the fuller experience, the person must be brought back to full consciousness gently.

The story should be read extremely slowly, allowing time for the mind to explore what has been said.

After the session, any 'journey' taken must finish back in the room, in current time. Leaving any story half-finished, or out in a strange place can cause discomfort and even trauma for clients. Bring clients round slowly and gently. Allow the emotions raised to be expressed – usually any relaxation and well-being, but can be tearful if personal issues have been touched on

accidentally (or deliberately). Give the person space if necessary. Some people find they cannot move easily after a full relaxation, as their muscles have overly relaxed and cannot be re-stimulated quickly. Allow them time and don't rush them or draw attention to them. Some people may benefit from water being available.

Do not force anyone to discuss their experiences.

The session can be followed by art/craft work to explore issues or visualisations prompted by the story.

Visualisation versus identification

Visualisation is where the person is encouraged to see the story unfold. I*dentification* is where the person becomes part of the story – such as becoming a seed, or being a river etc.

Either can be appropriate for children.

Breathing in Light

Close your eyes, get into a comfortable position and breathe deeply and slowly. Feel the breath going in and out of your lungs. Focus on your breathing. Keep awareness of the others around you.

There is a warm glow in the room. See the glow of light around each person. There are different colours in the light. What colours are you aware of? The light flows over each person, surrounds the group, fills the space. You are warm and comfortable, you feel safe. Nothing can harm you. Nothing can harm you. All worries are eased from your mind. You let the light touch you and refresh you. Your spirit lifts, you feel relaxed and mellow. Your forehead relaxes, no frowning, your muscles unwind and you feel heavy. Your body feels heavy and you sink back.

The light swirls gently. It is comfortable. Imagine breathing in this light. Breathe it in deeply, feel the light going down into your chest, spreading out in the body.

As you feel it in each part of your body allow the light to heal the aches and pains, to comfort you, to relax your muscles and to take away all tension. Feel it in your arms; let the light breathe life into your arms, it moves into your fingers; feel them heal from all their hard work; the light moves on, caressing and healing into your legs, then your feet. Now the light touches every area of your back. All the knots and muscle-aches and tensions are released. You feel heavier and more relaxed. Your breathing is deeper, your mind is rested. Allow the light into every part of your body, touching, loving, healing.

The light moves around the group, through our bodies, shining from each person, different colours. The light links everyone together, joining our sprits in harmony.

You feel safe, feel relaxed, feel cosy, nothing can harm you, nothing can penetrate the light.

The light gently fades, leaving a glow. You still feel the comfort. You still feel relaxed.

The light fades. You are in your body in the room, separate from one another, yet linked together peacefully. You feel content, you are at peace, relaxed and happy. You feel at one with the others in the group.
Stay still where you are.

Breathe slowly.
Feel your fingers and toes.
Feel the air going through your nose and filling your lungs.
Feel your chest rising and falling.
Become aware of the room, hear the sounds around you.
Staying peaceful and relaxed, slowly open your eyes, and smile at the first person you see.

* * *

The Cloud Catcher

Close your eyes; breathe deeply and slowly.
Breathe in … *two*… *three*…*four*; out *two*… *three*… *four*…
In … *two*… *three*…*four*; out *two*… *three*… *four*…

Let your mind get free of your body. Let it roam around the room.

Keep your eyes closed; your mind is rising out of the top of your head. Can your mind see the heads of all of the other children? Your mind sees all of the room, even as your eyes are closed, and rises – rises. Out – out of the roof you go.

You can see this place now, down below you. You feel the air on your face. You rise up to the clouds. Reach out to the white wispy clouds. What do they feel like? Can you catch one – or do they slip through your fingers? Are they warm or cold?

You look down over the town – what can you see in the distance?

You feel light and happy. Your soul is free. You are free. You feel warm. You are safe. You are free, high above the world, playing in the clouds. The world is beautiful; and you are part of it.

You breathe deeply and start to float back down. Closer and closer come the town, and the buildings. You gently float back down. Now you are in the room again. You see all the children with their eyes closed. You see yourself, and you are happy to be back. It is good to explore and good to be back. You float back into yourself.

Take a deep breath. Feel your lungs grow bigger. Blow the air out. Feel the air on your lips. It is good to be you.

Settle back in your body and breathe slowly. When you are ready, open your eyes and stretch like a panther. Smile at the first person you see.

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The Feathered Messenger

Close your eyes. Breathe deeply. Feel your lungs fill with air and blow gently. Breathe in - and out. In – and out.

You are sitting on the top of a green hill. It is not too hot; the wind gently blows in your hair. Can you feel it, blowing your hair, touching your face?

The day is sunny, but not burning. You feel just right.

You can hear the rustling of the leaves in the trees nearby. The colours are bright all around you. What flowers can you see? Can you hear the birds calling? Can you see the spotted leopard slinking through the shadows in the distance?

The world is peaceful. The world is gentle. You feel relaxed, you feel happy; your spirit is light. You are at one with the world.

In your dream you stand up, and feel tall and strong. Your arms reach up into the air. You are like the branches of a beautiful tree. Your fingers stretch out like the long leaves of the coconut palm.

You can see a beautiful bird flying in the distance. What lovely colours it is. How lovely it looks. The bird flies nearer. You can see each feather in the sunlight. The bird swoops near to you, and gently lands on your outstretched arm.

The bird is your friend. She sings a beautiful song to you. The bird loves you. The bird offers to take a message to someone far away. The bird can fly anywhere at all; anywhere you can think of the bird can fly to. She is a special, magical bird. Who would you like to send a message to? Is there someone you miss? Is there someone far away, or close by, who you want to say something special to? The bird will take a message to them for you.

Whisper the message to the bird. She will understand. It feels good to give the message. Your heart is glad. The bird sings her goodbye to you. You are a little sad to see her go; but her singing makes you happy. She lifts off and the coloured feathers fan a beautiful rainbow of colours in the air by your face. The tips of her wings tickle your face.

Your heart rises into the air with the bird. You see her fly against the bright blue sky. The bird flies around and looks at you. You know she will take your message. You feel happy. It feels good.

The day is joyful; you feel safe and warm inside.

Feel your feet on the ground. Wiggle your toes. Now wiggle your fingers. You are back in the room. The sun is still shining; your heart still feels content and happy. You are safe. Remember the beautiful bird. Your message has arrived. Wiggle your feet; wiggle your fingers. Start the wiggle at the ends of your body and move it up your arms and legs until you are gently shaking your shoulders and head.

Open your eyes and laugh at each other shaking. Share the joy! It is a good day today!

* * *

Sea Pearls

Close your eyes. Breathe slowly.
Feel your chest going up and down.
Hear the sounds of your breathing.
Blow a little harder so you can hear the sound.
Hear the sounds of everyone breathing.
Gentle sounds. Like gentle waves on the beach.
Gently coming in – and going out.
Coming in – and going out.
In – and out.

You feel the sand between your toes. It is hot but not burning. The water is cool, and feels nice.

You have water up to your knees now. It is refreshing. The sun shines on the water. Can you see the sparkling? It dances like a little water spirit. Can you see the spirits dancing on the water? They are so happy. They are giggling. You follow the sparkling, happy spirit. They take your hand and you know you will be safe with them. The spirits give you a magic shell to breathe through. You know you will be safe; and you follow them as they dive down deep. They hold your hand safely as you swim into a colourful world.

You see the beautiful sea horses, the bright corals, the colourful shoals of fish all around you. What colours can you see? Can you see the plants waving to you in the water? They sparkle with the sunlight through the water. It is a happy place. Everything is beautiful, everything is clean and new looking. The water spirits smile at you and dance with you while the fish swim around you, the shells make beautiful patterns on the sandy floor. It is like a beautiful palace with pretty colours, shapes, like fantastic gems shining under the water. A water spirit gives you a large shell. It opens and inside is the most beautiful pearl you have ever seen. The spirit offers you the pearl, but you want it to stay there with the other shells. It belongs there. You are happy to leave it there. It looks right there with the other shells.

It is soon time to go back. You look around at the smiling faces, the beautiful fish and shells. A sparkling water spirit takes your hand and leads you back to the surface. You wave goodbye.

You can hear the gentle sounds of the sea. Swishing in, and out. In, and out. You are on the beach, and can hear the sea, and the birds calling to each

other. You splash your feet in the cool water. You can hear the laughter of the water spirits. You feel happy and good inside. It was a good adventure.

Keep your eyes closed, and stretch out your body. Stretch like a warm cat.

When you are ready, gently open your eyes. Welcome everyone back with a big smile.

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Bibliography and Resources

Only a few of the thousands available
(* recommended)

Books

Mainly theoretical but most include exercises

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Practical only

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Educational Games

Man's World (male sexual health)
All About Me. Barnardos
*The Ungame
Essence (sex, drugs and the UK law)
Time of the month (sexual health for young women.)
Grapevine (sexual health)
Relax Kids Mood cards
Relax Teens Attitude cards

Music

Bliss, *A hundred Thousand Angels*
Putumaya. *Dreamland*; world lullabies and soothing songs
Rose, L. *Inner Calm*
Stockley, M. *Marian*
Viegas, M. *Superheroes*, Meditations for children

Useful Websites

Sri Lankan heritage:
http://kataragama.org/talltale.htm
http://www.discoversrilanka.com/culture/myths.php
http://www.lankalibrary.com/rit/ancient.htm

Games:
http://www.scoutscan.com/beavers/parachut.html practical ideas
http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/pe/parachute/contents.htm games and many useful ideas
http://parachuteshop.com/Play_parachutes.htm (only catalogue, but gives useful dimensions to make your own.)
www.smallwood.co.uk (excellent online shop with catalogues full of social development games, resources to adapt and give you ideas…)
http://www.gamesforgroups.com/interest.htm catalogue site which also has examples of games to use
www.selfhelpwarehouse.com comprehensive US catalogue site with cheaper versions than Smallwood!

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