



ZIMBABWE
MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Tips for schools to support learners and staff in recovering and building resilience after something terrible has happened

A GUIDE



**EDUCATION
CANNOT
WAIT**

a global fund for education in emergencies

unicef 
for every child

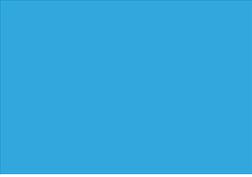
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education acknowledges the participation of members from the Learner Welfare, Psychological Service and Special Needs Education, Primary, Secondary and Non-Formal Education Departments and Curriculum Development Unit and colleagues from the following Ministries in the Development of this guide:

- Ministry of Health and Child Care
- Ministry of Youth, Sport and Recreation
- Ministry of Women's Affairs, Community and Small and Medium Enterprise Development
- Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

Special thanks to the Chief Director, Learner Welfare, Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Department, Ms. Kwadzanai R.L. Nyanungo for enriching and editing this guide as part of the overall disaster preparedness package for the use by all schools at different times of need.

We wish to thank Education Can't Wait (ECW) for the financial support that enabled us to develop and print this guide and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for their technical support.



Contents Page

Introduction 1

About this handbook 1

Assessing and responding to psycho-social needs of staff after a traumatic experience 2

Helping learners recover from a traumatic event 3

Class Programme 8

Teaching Methods 8

Daily routines 9

1. Morning Routine 9

2. Singing songs 12

3. Rebuilding school and Community Activities 12

Opportunities for Self Expression 15

1. Activities for expressing feelings 17

2. Activities for developing hope 20

3. Activities for ridding self of bad feelings 21

4. Topics for writing and/or drawing 22

5. Making and using puppets 24

6. Moving forward 24

Physical Education, Sports and Games 25

1. Recreational Activities 26

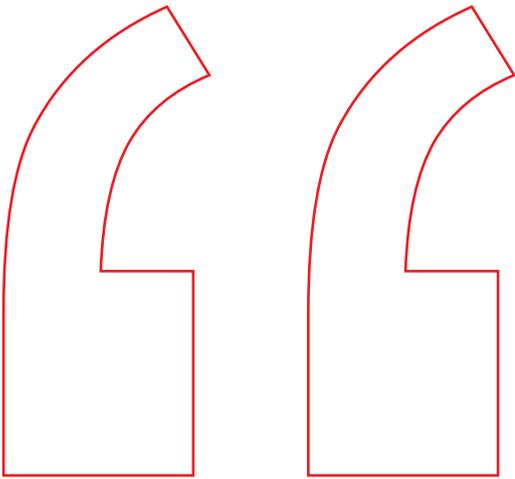
2. Games in lesson activities: Language and Mathematics 28

3. Moving Forward 32

How to use the book: “My Story” 33

Referral and Recourse for additional support beyond the school 35





INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwe School Health Policy provides a broad frame of reference to guide the implementation of a number of health-related issues relevant to the welfare of learners in the school system as well as staff. This Guide has been developed as a resource to strengthen the responsiveness of schools to the psycho-social needs of learners and staff, particularly in the event of traumatic events that may affect individuals, part of or the whole school community.

In the context of climatic change adaptation and the National Disaster Preparedness Plan, it is important for every school to have an established Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Programme which includes age-appropriate precautionary measures, as well as recovery and resilience support for learners and staff, with built-in disability inclusive interventions.

About this handbook

This handbook was developed as part of an information and communication package to strengthen the provision to psycho-social support to learners and school staff in working through any traumatic event that may be experienced by individuals, groups or the entire school community at any time. This handbook provides support to learners at the Infant school level through age appropriate activities such as storytelling and discussion, songs, dances, drawings and drama.

Learners at the junior and secondary school levels could use play activities for their age groups and written storytelling, poetry, expressive arts and discussion platforms. The activities provided are not exhaustive and teachers are encouraged to add fresh ones and their own. This is only a starting point.

Assessing and responding to psycho-social needs of staff after a traumatic experience

It is acknowledged that learners and teachers are affected by the surrounding social conditions that may disrupt or enhance the quality and effectiveness of learning. Therefore, learners and teachers require an environment that is psycho-socially safe, environmentally secure and psychologically enabling in relation to their gender, physical ability and socio-economic status.

Therefore, before directing attention to learners, session should be held to discuss and plan for the psychological well-being of teachers and support staff.

The sessions should be guided by the content below:

- The Zimbabwe School Health Policy includes health promotion for staff as one of the eight components of the comprehensive school health package;
- The policy defines the concept of psychological environment as: the psychological social factors that have consequences for satisfaction, health and ability to perform at learning places; and
- The term psycho-social refers to the close connection between psychological aspects of one's experiences (thoughts, emotions and behaviour) and the wide social experience.

When teachers have experienced a tragedy, their situation might be very difficult. It is important to encourage teachers take good care of themselves, as well as their learners and colleagues. Helping people recover from trauma (distress/shock) is rewarding work, but also very stressful. Some teachers could be suffering trauma themselves. It can be difficult for teachers to be always calm, positive and reassuring with the learners.

1. Identify traumatic events that have recently affected the school community;
2. Give individual members of staff time to share their thoughts, feelings and practical experiences of the traumatic events;
3. Identify members who are showing/ sharing evidence that they need particular attention and support;
4. Document the support that the school can provide; and
5. The Head of the school should urgently consult the District Schools Inspector for guidance on what the school is unable to cope with.

Always Remember!

- It is important to always remember that the Head of school is also human and requires psycho-social support like everyone else.
- When feeling stressed (anxious), staff members need to talk to colleagues. Each must practice being a good listener if colleagues need to talk. It is important to work as a team and give each other as much support as possible.
- Routine medical checks should be facilitated and not be deferred for any member of staff.
- Regular social events are encouraged to foster a feeling of belonging among staff and to strengthen support for each member in times of need.
- Pro-activity in managing signs of psycho-social distress among members of staff is strongly encouraged.
- Gender and other differences should always be carefully considered when managing the trauma-related needs of adult members.
- Members with disabilities need space to articulate their unique experiences and needs and to be supported accordingly.



Helping learners recover from a traumatic event

These tips apply to any situation in which a group or all the learners and/or teachers have experienced a traumatic event or process. Anyone – a group or all might still be suffering great hardship in their lives. Their behaviour can sometimes be different to their usual behaviour before the trauma. It can be difficult for them to concentrate and learn. They will need love, care and patience.

This information is provided to help the school and individual teachers to deal with traumatic events and help learner and staff to recover and resume near normal school activity.

Recovering from a traumatic event.

- When people experience a crisis, they suffer great fear and loss, and their normal life is disrupted. They become deeply shocked. This is called trauma.
- Each person is affected by trauma in their own way. Some people will recover quickly. Other people will need special support from others to recover.
- Learners' trauma is often very severe. This is because learners use 'normal life' to help them feel safe, and to guide their natural development.
- To help traumatized learners it is very important to rebuild their 'normal life' as soon as possible.
- Providing access to school is an important step. Teachers can also assist trauma recovery by using special activities with their learners.

Signs that a learner or member of staff is/are experiencing trauma.

Here is a list of human behaviours that often indicate trauma in a learner or school adult:

- Often afraid or anxious
- Lacking trust in others
- Not able to concentrate
- Depressed, lacking hope
- Body pains
- Feel guilty (for surviving)
- Behaving like a young child
- Withdrawn (not communicating with others)
- Passive (not interested in play)
- Aggressive or uncontrolled behaviour.
- Constantly reliving the traumatic event by talking about it, role playing it or drawing it.

What support do learners or staff members experiencing trauma need?

- To feel safe
- An environment that enables them to trust and rely on each other and the team of teachers, prefects and child protection committees around them
- To feel that they belong
- Reassurance that it is normal to feel sad and afraid, but these feelings will pass with time
- To believe that bad times eventually do fade away
- To feel hopeful



What can a school community do to support learners, teachers and support staff recover from any trauma?

Behaviour: There are 5 main teacher behaviours that support recovery:

- 1 Listen:** be willing to listen and talk about the traumatic events
- 2 Protect:** care about the safety and well-being of each learner, teacher and other member of staff
- 3 Connect:** be open to working with others in your school and community
- 4 Model:** be a positive role model for each other
- 5 Teach:** be willing to use the curriculum learning areas to strengthen coping skills among learners

Actions

There are 3 main actions that support recovery from trauma:

1. Establish a safe environment for learners and staff

- make the school a safe, 'fear-free' and welcoming place for all learners, and make the learning area as comfortable as possible
- be tolerant, patient, understanding, calm and trustworthy, and show that you care about each learner's welfare and that of other members of the school community

2. Establish a regular class schedule

- make school feel 'normal' to the learners: have a regular timetable, class rules and so on, and help learners become familiar with them
- before a full, normal learning programme. Include special activities designed to assist recovery
- use a 'child centered' approach; use learning activities, small group work, materials, games, a variety of experiences

3. Instill a feeling of hope for the future.

- By opening the school and establishing a 'normal' class programme, you have already given the whole community hope for the future. Well done. Here are some other things to do:
- Create time for staff to share their thoughts and feelings and support each other so that they can assist learners to recover
- Demonstrate a positive attitude about the future yourself. (If you are feeling stressed, try to calm yourself before going to your class. Talking about your feelings with other colleagues will help.)
- Encourage and praise learners
- Make sure there are activities learners enjoy in each day, including recreational and creative activities
- Use activities and methods that help learners to to share what they are going through: encourage self-expression through discussion, drama, drawing, and writing.



Introduction

Here are some examples of activities that will help learners to work through any traumatic experience. Only a few examples are given:

- adapt the example activities to make them suitable for your class
- make up your own similar activities as well.
- Plan your daily programme thoroughly. It is a good idea to plan with other teachers - to support each other and share the school resources. Here is some advice to help you start:

Do:

- Routine and enjoyable activities such as singing and games
- Let each activity take as long as is needed
- When learners trust you, begin the 'self expression' activities
- Revise activities, but keep them short, active and fun
- Give time for learners to get to know you and trust you
- Give time (and do activities) to build team spirit within the class
- Introduce new learning activities when learners seem able to concentrate

Do not:

- Forget to assess learner's readiness to learn after a traumatic experience.
- Rush into a regular class learning programme without making sure that learners are ready.
- Force all learners to participate in all activities (especially don't force them to talk about the trauma)

When talking about the any traumatic event or experience:

Tell learners that:

- it is normal that some learners will feel numb (unfeeling) and not interested in playing with others
- some learners might still be thinking about and remembering bad things they have seen, even when trying to concentrate on school activities.
- this is very upsetting for them, different people react in different ways to a bad event that many people experience

Reassure learners that:

- soon these bad feelings, thoughts and memories will be replaced or fade away
- you are encouraging learners to talk about the experiences, because this will help them 'get past' these bad memories and replace them with good thoughts.
- Even teachers and adults may be experiencing the same feelings and thoughts.

Mention that:

- some learners may not be experiencing these bad thoughts
- these learners can help others by being good friends to them, and by encouraging others to participate in play and school activities.
- some adults may also need the same support while others are ready to help others.



Class programme

Every day, begin with the 'morning routine' to help learners settle down. After the morning routine, select lessons and activities that meet the learners' needs.

In the first few days after traumatic experience, involve learners in informal activities such as drawing, singing and chatting. Involve them in setting up and decorating their classroom. Give them a lot of fun activities and games. This will give you a chance to observe each learner's level of participation, interaction and concentration.

In the first couple of weeks, after any traumatic event or experience develop and begin a regular programme with activities that are more structured (planned and organised). The regular programme should include:

- classroom routines – e.g sayings, bible/holy verses, morning talk, daily devotion, meditation, prayer, weekly theme
- recreation activities – controlled games like "Pada, sarura wako etc.
- self expression activities – such as writing a storybook/ diary entry/ poetry etc.
- creative and cultural activities – folk songs, art work, use of items such as moulding clay, sticks, sand, pebbles, blocks etc
- learning of needed information and revision of previous learning

After this time, gradually include new curriculum learning- make sure your lessons are child centred.

Teaching methods

Class learning activities should be active because all learners learn well in this way. Use lots of games, physical activities and materials. Learning activities that require communication between learners in small groups build cooperative relationships, a sense of belonging, and a sense of being competent and in control.

Plan thoroughly. Make learning objectives clear to learners. Provide feedback and praise to learners.

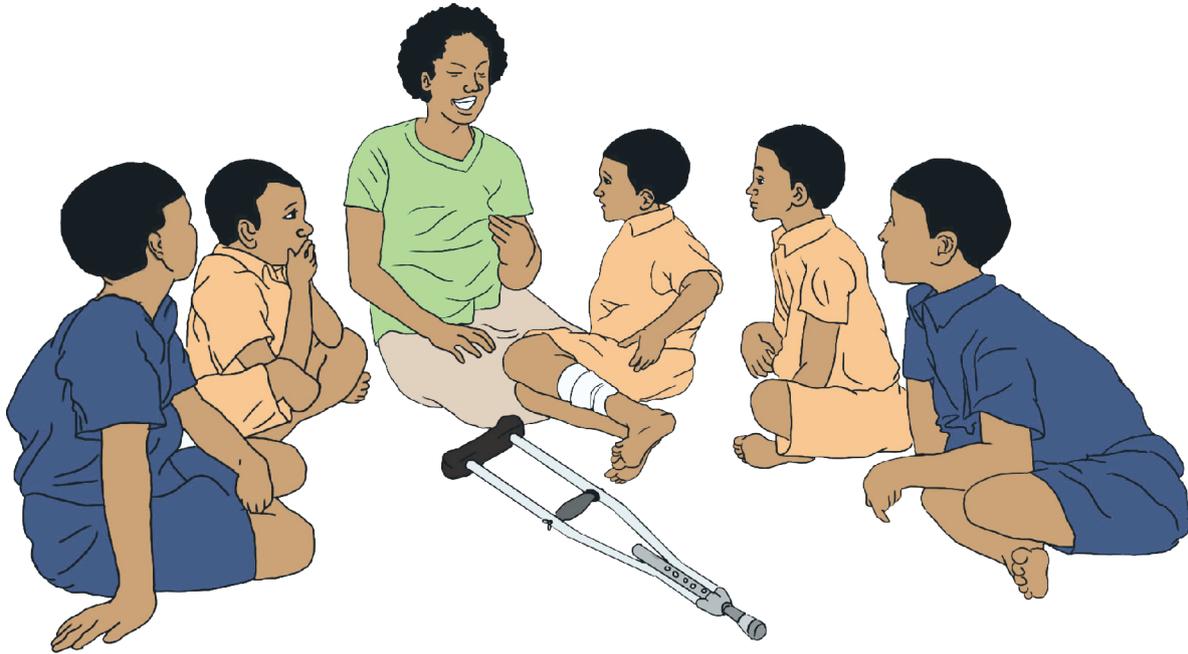
Learners who don't join in activities

If some learners don't want to participate, don't try to force them. Some learners need more time to recover. Try to find ways to involve these learners and gradually get them to talk by providing a child friendly space e.g create a space and organized activities to calm learners who are reluctant to be part of the class activities. For example encourage their attention to lesson activities, (Oh look, this group has made a very interesting sentence for their picture. Let's listen while they read it to us. Tendai, can Farai read you his story?). Encourage learners to watch and enjoy games and sports. (Did you see who crossed the winning line first?/ Was that ball in or out of the court?/ That was funny wasn't it.)

After several weeks, if some learners continue to be very distressed or very withdrawn, they may need support that is more individual, and specialised. Discuss what should be done with other teachers and parents within the school community.

Daily Routines

Objectives: build sense of security, sense of belonging, self-expression, team work, concentration, playfulness



1. Morning routine

Do at the start of each day. Include timetable discussion, checking the attendance role, sharing news, singing songs.

NB: For schools with hot-seating, the timing of such routine would obviously vary.

a) Timetable

With the class, create a classroom timetable display. Each morning discuss the agenda for the day, so students know what to expect. Highlight enjoyable activities. On Monday discuss the coming week.

- **Adding health messages:** Discuss students' daily routines before and after school, and the importance to health of having regular meals, regular washing, enough sleep and enough leisure time. Ask students to tell what they do in leisure time and what they would like to do. Emphasise actions students can take to maintain good health for selves and younger siblings.

b) Recording attendance

As you complete the attendance role, greet individual students as you call each name, demonstrate interest and pleasure that each student is present. If some students are absent, enquire about the reason. If some students are returning from absences, welcome their return to the class and ask reasons for absence (identify reasons for their absenteeism). Attendance for different subjects and those who go out during class time.

Add interesting activities for students to do, while you are recording. Here are some examples:

- In a clear area (outside) stand in a circle. Teacher calls first name on the role, then throws a ball to that student. Teacher calls the next name, and the ball is thrown on to them, and so on to the end of the class list.

- When teacher calls the first name s/he passes something to this learner (a toy, flower, puppet), when teacher calls the second name, the first learner goes to the second learner and gives the thing to them, and then takes their place in the circle, while the second learner takes the thing to the next person whose name is called, and takes their place in the circle, and so on to the end of the list. Last learner takes the thing back to the teacher.
- Learners in circle take turns to tell own name. Then go around the circle again and take turns to name something e.g. name by colours (green leaves, blue sky, red skirt), or name one thing they like ("I like ... kittens, baby birds, ice cream")
- After saying own name first learner says an animal name, (e.g. Kudzai - hen) Everyone immediately acts like that animal (moving, calling out) until next learner in circle calls out "Stop". Everyone stands to attention. Then second learner calls out name, and then animal (Jake - snake). Again, everyone acts like snake until third learner calls "Stop". And so on until every learner has called their name.
- Pass a ball or a stick around the circle to indicate whose tum to talk. Say the name of the learner who passes the ball instead of own name.

Note: if the whole class is too big, break into smaller groups

c) News Sharing Time

There are many ways news sharing can be organised.

- One way is to raise a topic and ask if any learner has something to tell about that topic, e.g. "Let's talk about family. Would anyone like to say something about family?"
- Another way is to ask if any learner has any news they want to share with the class. When you first begin this activity, you may have to model sharing news. Tell learners something interesting you did or saw the evening before or on the weekend. Encourage learners to tell good news or bad. Show interest. Help learners to express their feeling about their news. Encourage class members to listen actively.



Learner's news

- Last night my relatives from Mutasa came to visit. My cousin-sister came and she gave me a new school bag.
- This morning my little brother is sick with Malaria. Mother has taken him to the clinic.
- I saw some quilia birds going to and coming from a bush near my house. I looked in and saw a nest with two baby birds. They were very cute. I didn't touch them – I just looked.

Teacher's response

- How nice!
- You must be feeling very worried about him.
- I'm glad you didn't touch them. You must have been excited when you saw them. We all like babies and baby animals. Has anyone else had new baby animals around their home? Has anyone had a new baby in their family?

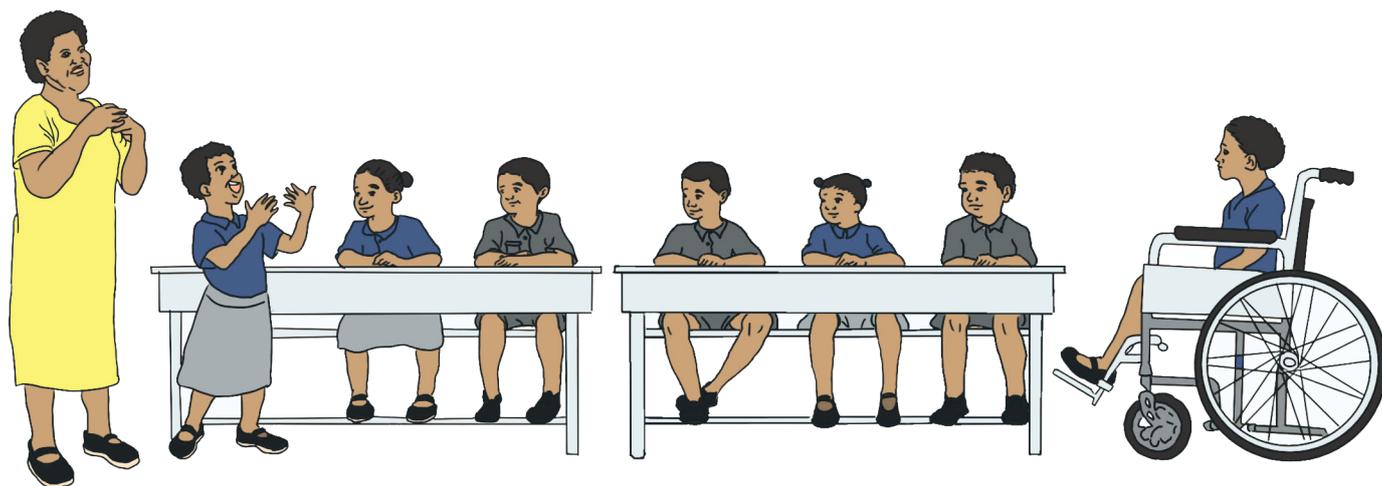
Note : Encourage other learners to respond



2. Singing songs

Singing is a good way to release stress, create a happy atmosphere and lift the spirits. Sing learners' favourite songs/advertisement jingles whenever possible. Teach a new song each week. At the start of the school day, make time for singing 3-4 songs (including the new song being learnt). For younger learners choose 'action' songs. For older learners sing a range of song types, including some that challenge their singing skills.

As learners do activities together that don't require thinking and discussion, encourage them to sing as they do it, e.g. when doing classroom jobs at the start of the day, when tidying at the end of the day, when doing stretching exercises for physical education. Also end the school day with a happy and energetic song.



3. Rebuilding school and community activities

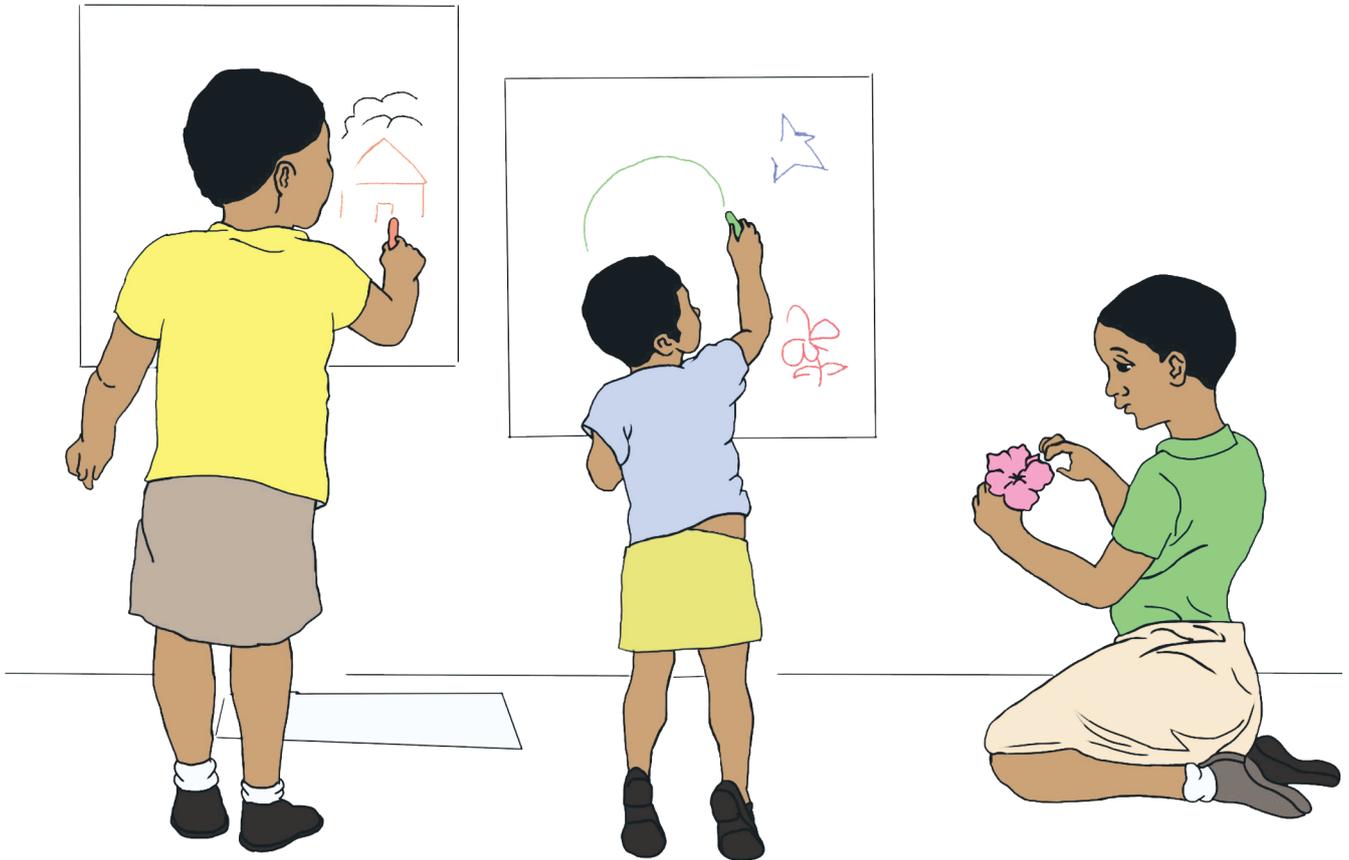
Materials: whatever is available from class materials and environment

Learners benefit from being involved in 'rebuilding' activities. Let them make plans and decisions about improving their classroom or their school. Where it is safe and useful for learners to participate in community activities, organise some regular participation. All learners benefit from focusing on nature or on helping others. Older learners benefit from helping younger learners. Here are some examples:

a) Beautifying the classroom

Ask learners to make bright and happy pictures and decorations to put up around the classroom. Learners can work in groups, to plan and do. Each group could be assigned their own area. Older learners can work with younger learners to beautify the younger learners' classroom. Learners can add to or change their display each day.

Link with Art activities. For pictures learners can draw, paint, make prints, etc. For decorations they can make with glue and paper, environmental materials or junk materials. Teach how to use art materials. Teach some techniques that learners can use if they wish. Teach how to make hand prints, leaf prints and prints using other environmental materials. Teach how to make paper streamers, chains, flowers, lanterns, etc.



b) Plant a garden

Prepare, plant and care for a garden. Plant vegetables to harvest for class meals, or to cook and give to others in need. Plant flowers to harvest as gifts for the sick or elderly. Plant medicinal herbs to give to those in need.

Or

Plant a 'garden of hope': make a special garden of remembrance (or name after a person). Hold a school ceremony and plant a beautiful tree in honour of those lost in the disaster (learners and teachers lost or include community members as well). Involve each class in planting and caring for the garden.



c) Make safe playing areas

Clean up areas of the school yard or the community. Make interesting play areas for themselves or younger learners. Before this activity train learners to do it safely, (avoiding dangerous materials or taking precautions in handling them).

d) Checking health of younger learners

Materials: soap, clean water, basic first aid materials

Teach learners basic hygiene and first aid skills and make time for them to take responsibility for checking hygiene and health of younger learners in school and family. Learners should learn to take basic actions on simple problems, and to report serious problems.

e) Helping others in need

Make happy and hopeful pictures, slogans and decorations as gifts for display in houses or in community centres. Make, cook or collect things to give to others in need.



Opportunities for self expression

including Speaking, Writing, Storytelling, Arts and Drama

Objectives: release stress and build trust in others, concentration, sense of belonging, ability to express and process feelings (for recovery), and hope for the future.

Learners need to talk about their crisis experiences, share their feelings about it and ask questions about it. Create activities that allow for calm discussion about the cyclone. Have follow up activities where learners draw or write about their feelings.

The teacher's role

Listen sympathetically and show interest. Help learners find the right words to express their feelings. Eg: Oh, you must feel sad about that/that must have been frustrating/how did you feel then, were you afraid?



- Don't tell learners what they must think or feel. However, if they are constantly expressing fearful or sad thoughts, introduce some activities that help them think about and plan a happier future.
- If learners have misunderstandings, help them to learn the true information.

- If learners ask questions, answer as truthfully as you can. Some learners will want to know more about the crisis, why it occurred. Give factual information.
- If learners express fear that more bad things will occur, reassure them that it is a very rare event.
- Some learners will benefit most from individual, private conversations with you. Try to make yourself available for the learners who are not talking in whole class activities.
- If learners are constantly repeating the same picture or the same story, (reliving the crisis), plan activities to help them think more positively about now and the future.

1. Types of activities

Plan activities in which learners 'do, talk and record'. Where appropriate, learners can work in pairs or small groups.



Activities that combine the use of Language activities (speaking or writing), storytelling, art and drama are very useful in supporting trauma recovery. These activities encourage creativity, imagination, self expression, and responding to others. They help learners to release their negative (bad) feelings and develop more positive feelings (hope).

Drawing (or painting, collage, printmaking, construction, moulding, etc) activities, allow learners to express feelings that are difficult to talk about. After drawing, ask learners to tell about their picture. (The quality of their artwork is not important in these activities, however they will benefit from learning and applying a range of art techniques. As you introduce art materials teach how to use them.)

Story telling activities, (telling through pictures, puppets, role playing, narrating and/or writing), allow learners to express their feelings and ideas through creating story characters.



2. Types of self expression

At first, help learners express (tell or draw about) their feelings and experiences related to the crisis. Use many different activities. Learners may need to do these kinds of activities many times in different ways to process their experiences of the crisis. End these activities positively. Reassure learners that now the rebuilding of the community and people's lives is underway, so the future will be better. Gradually introduce activities that focus more on talking about the present and hopes for the future.

Make time for learners to display and view or read and discuss each others' work each day. Encourage learners to be sympathetic towards others.

Here are some example activities:

a) Activities for expressing feelings

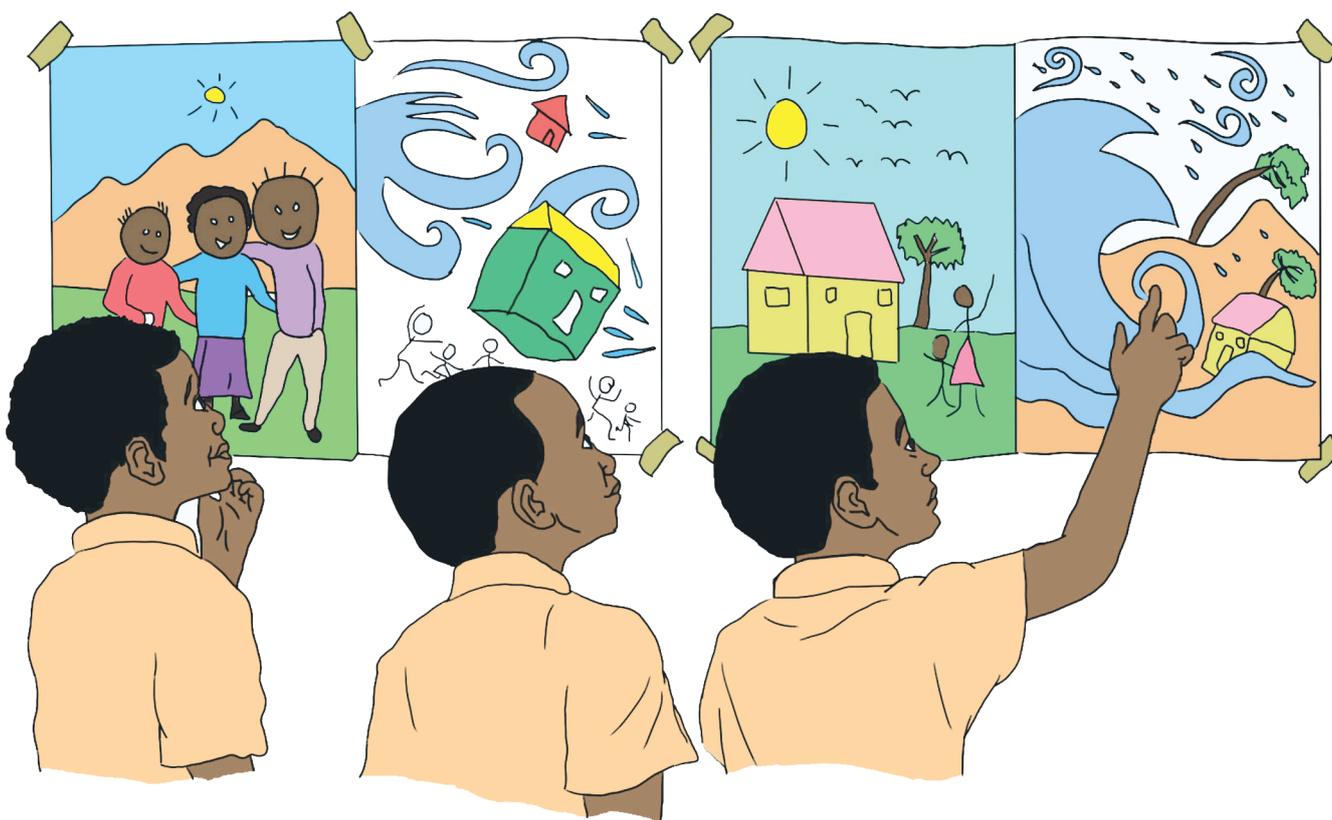
Materials: paper, drawing materials

Doing and Talking: Ask learners to tell all the feeling words they know (Brainstorm activity). List these, (eg. happy, sad, angry, caring, frightened, brave, energetic, tired, old, young, uncomfortable, relaxed, anxious, confident, confused, etc). Ask learners to give examples of when they have each feeling. Discuss daily routine activities and how learners feel at each step of their day, (add new feeling words to the list if necessary) Comment that all people are different, and so in any situation different people can feel differently about it.

Introduce talking about the crisis and its aftermath. Mention that it caused very bad feelings for everyone. Ask learners to tell what happened from their own point of view. Answer any questions they have as truthfully as possible. Be calm and reassuring. Ask learners about how they felt during the crisis, and how they feel now when they think about it. Add new words to the list if necessary. Note that although they all experienced the same event, they all feel about it in their own way. Ask learners to tell how they feel now, and how their feelings have changed over the time since the cyclone. Ask learners to select feeling words for how they want to feel in the future [think positive words].

Recording: Write a list of all the colours. Ask learners to give their ideas for matching colours to feelings. For example, red might be the colour of anger for some learners, while for others it might be the colour of happiness. Ask the learners to do two drawings on one paper. They should fold their paper and do one drawing on each half. The first drawing should show the learner's feelings during or just after the crisis, and the second should show how they want to feel in the future. They should choose colours that match the feelings. Learners should tell about their finished drawings to others and display in the classroom.

Extension: learners can also write about each picture.



Follow up activities: Keep the list of feeling words to use in follow up activities. Each day, select and do one of the follow up activities:

● Revise by reading the list of feeling words. Then ask learners to think about how people look when they have each of these feelings. For example: when you arrived at school and saw your friend there, how did you show your gladness? What was your face like? How would you walk when you felt glad. (Learners give demonstrations.) If you found out you passed your Mathematics test how would you feel? How could we see that in your body? What about if your friend failed the test - How would s/he look/walk? How would you react to her/him? Would s/he want you to react like this? For each feeling on the list, ask learners to show facial expressions and body language of people with that feeling. Ask them to also think how they might talk and what they might say to others when they feel like that. What kind of response from others they would need/expect? Ask some learners to express a feeling through body language and have others guess what the feeling is.

Extension: In groups learners role play to show how they identify their friend has a bad feeling, and how they help them overcome it.

- Revise the list of feelings: identify the bad feelings (the feelings we do not want to have). Ask learners to give ideas or tell what they usually do to get over the bad feelings, (e.g. “When I feel sad I play with my kitten”). In small groups, each group is assigned a bad feeling. The group creates a page for a class book showing what to do to overcome the bad feeling (drawing pictures and writing captions or instructions). When finished, all the pages are gathered and made into a class book, with a title like: "What we do about bad feelings". The book is then read to the whole class.

Variation: Each group can make a whole story about overcoming a bad feeling. They can make up a role play to tell it, use puppets or draw a picture sequence that tells their story.

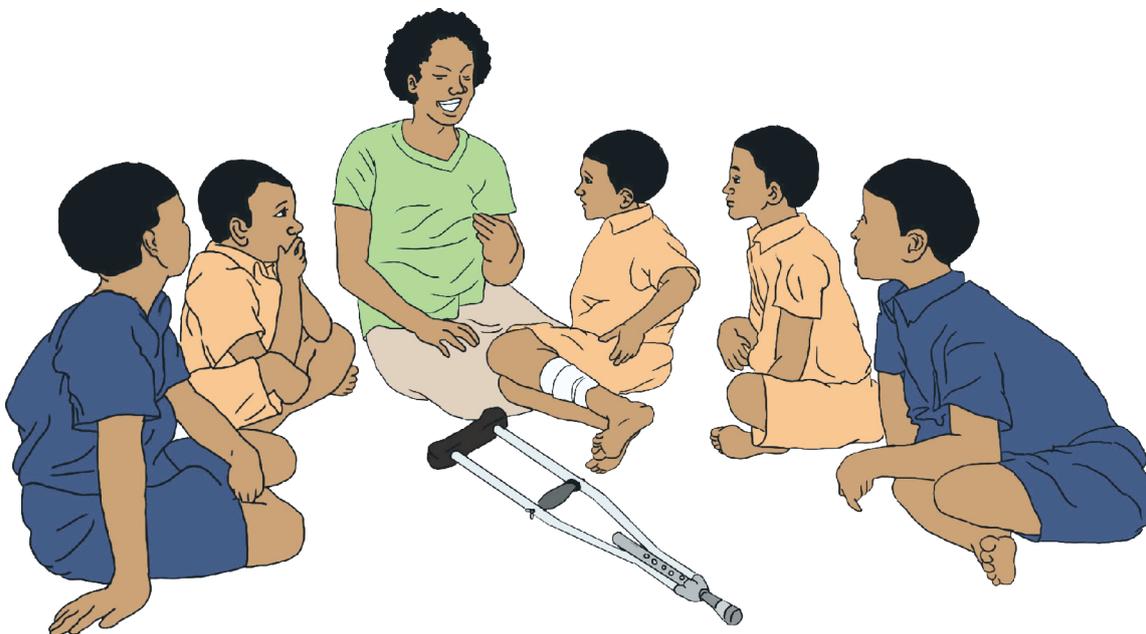
Extension: Write the stories. Each group's work can be displayed or made into little books that groups then swap and read. Learners can also read their work to learners in other classes.



2. Activities for developing hope

i) Reading and telling stories

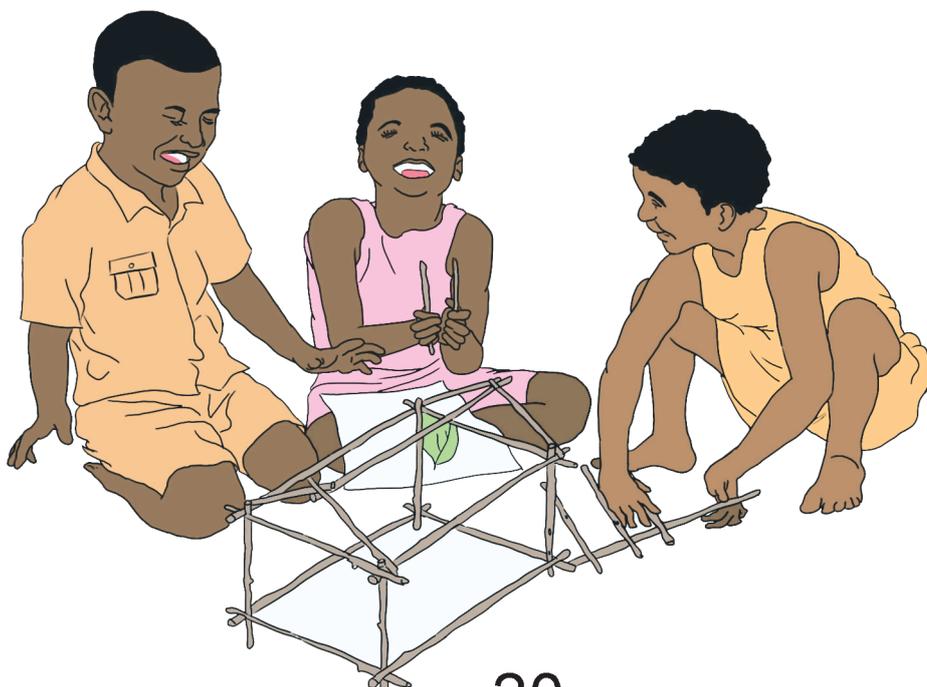
If you have story books read them regularly to the learners. After reading the story, do follow up activities: discussion, role plays, drawings, creating different endings, and so on.



ii) Construction activity 1

Materials: whatever is available from the environment

Ask learners to use construction materials (environmental materials, leaves, building blocks, toys, sticks, clay, etc.) to make a model of their home environment before the crisis (or draw). Talk about or show what happened during the crisis. As learners build, talk about the different people who helped them, their family and their community through the event and the aftermath. Talk about local heroes, who managed to help others. People who contributed because they cared for others. Emphasize that this has just been a start and that help will continue from inside and outside the community.



iii) Construction Activity 2

Ask learners to rebuild (or draw) their homes and community in a new better way for the future. (Talk about how things will change) Encourage them to include things they desire like normal family activities, pets, toys, etc. Thank them for rebuilding the comm

3. Activities for ridding self of bad feelings (Blowing Bubbles)

Materials: small lengths of soft wire, (flexible reed or similar) to make into bubble blowing wand, small bowls of liquid detergent, My Story booklet.

Doing and Talking: Do outside in a clear area. Demonstrate how to make a bubble wand and how to blow bubbles. Then let learners try themselves.

Tell learners they will participate in a little bubble ceremony. Discuss that the bubbles will be used to take away bad feelings, (bad memories, anger about the actions of others or ourselves, hatred, sad things, etc.). Demonstrate blowing away bad feelings in a bubble and tell learners you feel much better after blowing the bad away. (Stand with the breeze behind you.) Advise learners to think about their own bad feelings (or bad thought or memories) as they blow into their bubbles, so that these feelings are carried away. (Let these bubbles float far away.)

After finishing blowing the bad away, suggest that now it is time to have some fun. Learners can make bubbles for others to chase and break. Do this until you finish all the detergent. Then pack up and go back to the classroom.



Variation: Make paper boats to carry bad feelings away. Take to river and launch.

Recording: Discuss that although the bad feelings were blown away, some will keep coming back for a while. Ask learners to give suggestions for what they can do when the feelings come back, (talk about it to others, participate in a game with friends, etc).

Discuss what learners hope for in the future. Ask them to make up sentences that include "I hope.....". Write some of their sentences on the board or get learners to write four of their own sentences. Younger learners can draw what they hope for and present their picture to others



4. Topics for writing and/or drawing

Choose writing or drawing topics for the learners that allow them to include their crisis experiences if they want to, but also allow them to plan a happier future. They can draw, paint, or use any art form. They can write words, sentences or whole essays, depending on their skill level.

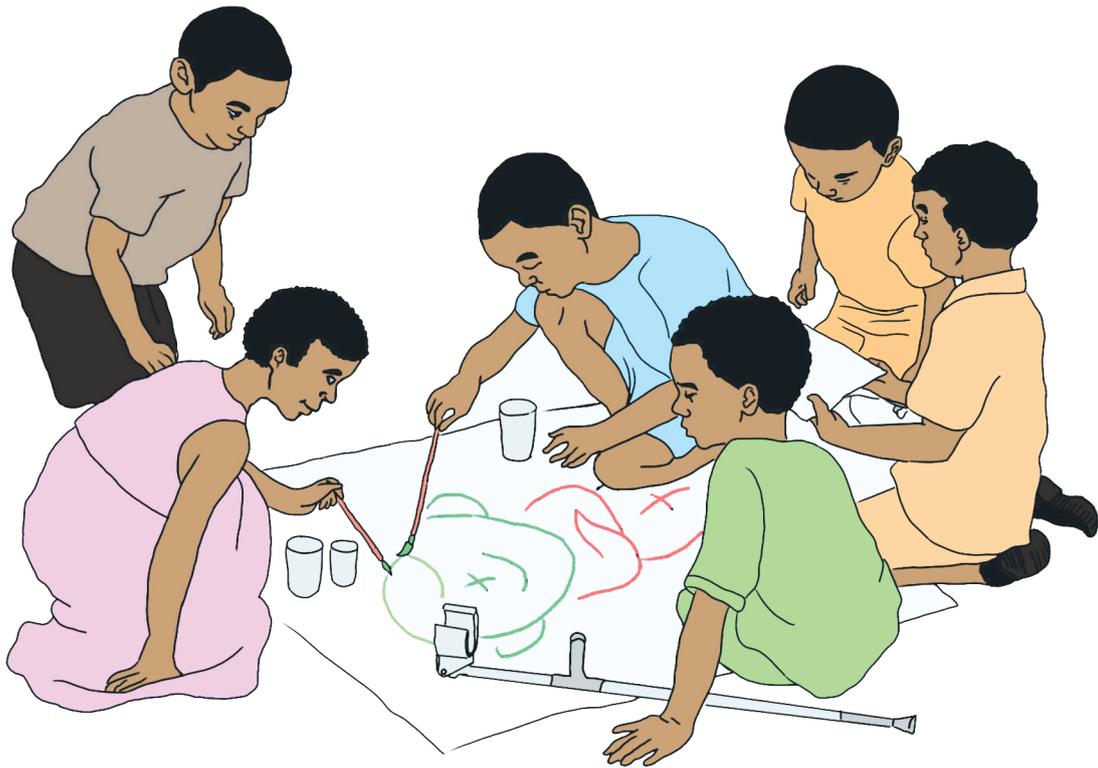
I am most happy when...../ I am most sad when.....

My best friend

My dream

The most important thing in my life

A local hero



When you introduce the topic, ask learners to talk about it. Ask questions that help them think and give their own ideas. Make sure lots of examples are given in the discussion, to help learners who are having difficulty concentrating and expressing their ideas. As learners' work, discuss with individual learners: Tell me about your drawing/ Who are you writing about? / What happened? / Who is this in the drawing? / How did you feel then?

Sometimes use topics learners introduce. For example, topic raised during the Morning Routine activity.



5. Making and using puppets

Use whatever materials are available. Demonstrate some ways to make simple puppets. Get each learner to make a simple puppet friend. Learner can use the puppet in any activity to talk for them, (learner speaks but pretends the puppet is talking). Often learners are more willing to talk about sensitive topics through a puppet. The puppets can also be used in lessons to talk about the main points with the teacher or demonstrate concepts. Learners can make the story characters and use to role play stories.

Variations: Learners can make masks and use when they are story telling or telling about sensitive topics.

6. Moving forward

- Identify local examples of age appropriate activities for the learners at:
 - Infant level
 - Junior level
 - Lower secondary
 - Upper secondary
- How can the visual and performance arts learning be utilised for psycho-social recovery and resilience following traumatic experiences?



Physical Education, Sports and Games

Objectives: release stress and build sense of belonging, boost enjoyment and a sense of hope & love, participation, cooperation, team work, trust in others, concentration, playfulness.

Sports, music and games are a good way to release stress, restore playfulness, build a sense of belonging, enjoyment, sense of hope & love and develop cooperative, trusting relationships among learners. Team games in particular are very useful for rebuilding relationships between learners.

Physical activities should be used often, as deep breathing and physical exertion release stress. Games should be used in learning activities, and as recreational activities. Use games learners already know well (such as Simon Says, "Tsuru darika mutanda" etc. that are in the local language) and teach many new games. Older learners would benefit from involvement in sports competitions.

Team activities are very useful for building social and emotional skills, and they also usually need less space and equipment. This is especially true of activities where team members take turns. Individual activities that promote fun more than competition is also very good for encouraging full participation.

Make up simple contests that are fun, (e.g. paper aeroplane contests: who can make one that flies the farthest, talent quest like singing and fashion show).

Include activities based on local culture: songs, dance, music, stories, handicrafts.



1. Recreational Activities

Here are some examples of enjoyable games:

a) Who is the leader?

Learners form groups of 3 or 4, standing in a triangle or diamond formation, (so one person is at the front). The front person is the first leader. They make slow, flowing movements and the others in the group copy them. If the leader turns right or left, the person on their right or left becomes the new leader. Then everyone copies the new leader. The new leader continues making similar movements until they turn left or right and pass the leadership on. They continue until players get used to it.

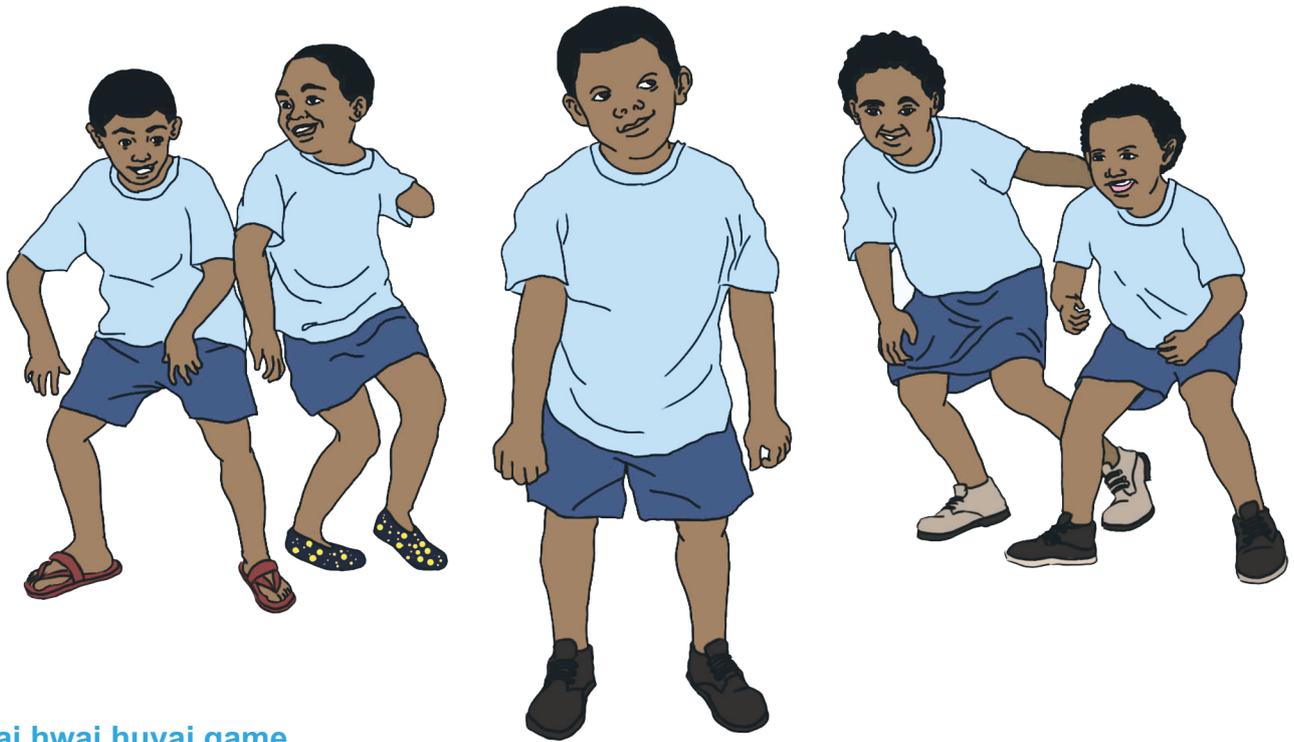
b) Cat and mouse

Teacher organizes and teaches the game cat and mouse. Learners stand in circle holding hands. They open and shut the door by lifting and lowering their arms and calling quietly "open" or "shut". One cat and one mouse are chosen. They go in and out of the circle through open doors - cat chasing mouse. Learners in the circle open and shut the doors, trying to help or hinder the mouse or the cat. When the mouse is caught new cat and mouse are chosen.



c) Giant's treasure

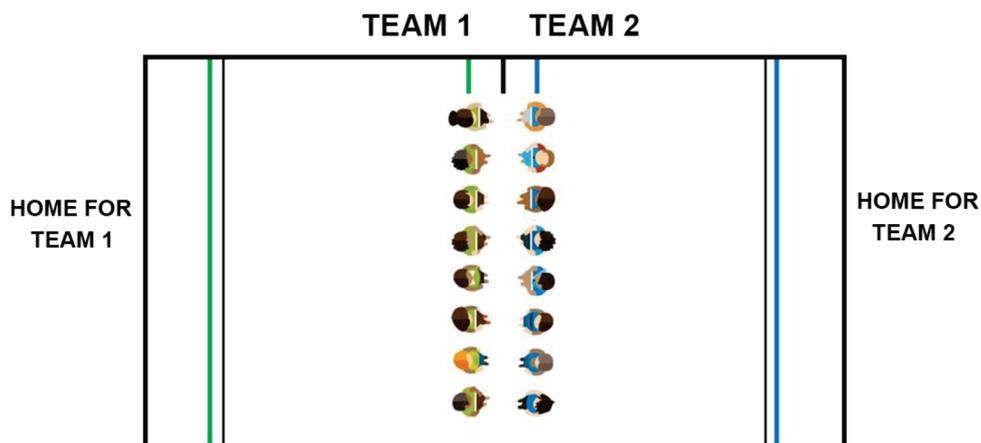
One child is the giant and s/he stands with his/her back turned to the others and a treasure on the ground just behind her/his feet. (The treasure can be anything: an eraser, a flower or a duster). All other players in the game are behind a starting line about 5-10 metres away from the giant. The giant guards her/his treasure by turning often to watch out for robbers. The players silently sneak up on the giant, but every time the giant turns to look for them they freeze. The giant can only see them if they are moving. If the giant sees any movement at all they point to the player, who must then go back to the starting line and start sneaking up again from there. If a player can get close enough, they grab the treasure and run to get across the starting line. The giant chases them. If they are caught they become the new giant.



d) Hwai hwai huyai game

This is a physical game played following the concept of the hand game called '1, 2, 3' or 'stone, scissors and paper'

The game is played outside in an open area, with 2 teams; 10-20 learners on each team. A rectangular area about 20 meters long, is marked out. In the middle of the area is a line, and at each end of the rectangular area is a home area for each team.



The teams play by first having a secret team meeting in their own home area, where the whole team chooses which of the 3 things they will be for the game; a giant, a wizard or an elf. All team members must be the same one thing. They whisper quietly to decide.

Then the teams come to the centre of the playing area and line up facing each other. They stand about 2 meters apart. The teacher stands at the end of this line calling 1, 2, 3. When s/he calls 3, the learners in each team do an action to represent being a giant, a wizard or an elf.



As the learners make their action, they also see the action of the other team, and from this decide if they should run away from them or chase them.

Giants chase wizards, wizards chase elves, and elves chase giants.

Eg: If team 1 are elves and team 2 are giants, then team 1 chases team 2 members.

If team 1 are elves and the team 2 are wizards, then team 2 chases team 1 members.

The team that chases immediately starts to chase the other team, who all turn and run for home. If they are touched by a chaser before they get home, they must join the chaser's team.

If both teams have chosen to be the same things, for example if both teams are giants, they don't chase. They say 'tafanana', or shake hands, and go back to their home area to start the next game.

The game ends when all members of one team have been caught by the other team.

2. Games in lesson activities: Language and Mathematics

Here are a few examples:

a) Add to the story game

Class stands in a circle. Teacher gives start of a simple story, then throws a ball to one learner. This learner must add a new part to the story. Then they throw the ball to another learner who also adds the next part ...and so on until one learner ends the story.

Eg: Teacher: An old man walked through the forest one day.

Learner 1: He was feeling hungry.

Learner 2: He looked around for something to eat.

b) I see with my eyes

The game leader secretly selects something s/he can see in the classroom, and then says: "I see with my eyes, something beginning with (e.g. r)" (the leader might have selected 'ruler')

The learners must guess which thing the leader is thinking of.

Learners raise their hands and take turns to tell a thing it might be. If learners are incorrect, (guessing window, bottle, spider, calendar) the leader says "No, I'm thinking of something else". If they guess correctly, "ruler" the leader says "that's it, ok it's your turn to be leader now. Then the game starts again with a new leader.

If no one can guess the correct answer, the game leader asks: "do you give up?" if everyone agrees, the leader tells the word, and then stays as the game leader for another turn.

c) What am I? - to practice describing animals

Teacher starts as game leader. Game leader asks, "What am I?" and gives 3 clues: "I have fur, I have long ears and a small fluffy tail" Learners guess from clues. Whoever guesses correctly becomes the next game leader.

d) What am I? - to revise topic (e.g. animals) and practice questioning

Teacher starts as game leader and says: "What animal am I?" Learners can ask as many questions as they need to find out, such as: Do you have fur? Are you dangerous? Are you a farm animal/ forest animal? Do you eat meat? Do you have a tail? Is it a short tail? Do you have long ears? Are you a rabbit?

To each question the game leader answers in a sentence: Yes, I have fur. No I am not dangerous. Whoever guesses correctly becomes game leader.



Cat! Mouse! Monkey!

e) Teacher says (or Simon says) - listening game, practicing classroom instructions

Game leader gives instructions, beginning each instruction with "Teacher says..." Learners all

follow each instruction, until an instruction is given without the "Teacher says..." beginning. When this is given nobody moves...if they do move they are out of the game. Game ends when there is only one learner/a few left- the winner/s.



f) What has changed?

Materials: familiar objects

A number of things are displayed in a particular arrangement that includes things that are on, under, in and out. Learners study the arrangement and then turn their backs or hide their eyes while the game leader rearranges 1-3 things from the arrangement. Learners study the arrangement again and describe how it has changed: e.g. The stone was in the bowl. Now it is on the pen.



g) Charades (word guessing game)

Materials: flashcards of words being learnt (word cards)

One learner comes to the front of the class. Teacher shows her/him a flashcard. This learner has to do an action for other learners to guess what the flashcard says. For example, if the flashcard says 'monkey' they do monkey actions, if the flashcard says 'wash' they act as if they are washing. When learners guess, the teacher shows the flashcard, and everyone reads it.

h) Race to the word

Materials: flashcards of words being learnt

The teacher places several flashcards on view around the classroom. Learners are divided into 2 or more teams. Team members take turns to play. Teacher calls out word, and one player from each team races other players to run to and take the card containing that word. If they win they score a point for their team.

Alternatively, this can be played outside. Make 4 teams. All learners stand in their team group, one side of a mat. All cards are placed on the mat. The game is played with all 4 teams playing at once in the way described above, or for the first word, team 1 can play against team 3, and then for the next word team 2 can play against team 4. And so on.

Alternatively, the teacher can hold all flashcards. The learners playing for each team stand in a line with their backs to the teacher. Teacher shows one flashcard towards them and says, 1, 2, 3. On 3 the learners turn around and read the card. The first to call out the word wins a point for their team.

i) Ostrich game

Materials: flashcards of words being learnt, 2 pegs

Best to play outside. Learners play in pairs (2 at a time, or 4 or 6 at a time) while other class members are watching. Clothes pegs are needed. Pairs stand facing each other, a couple of feet apart. One flashcard is pegged to each learner's back. When teacher says "go" each learner tries to read the card on his/her pair's back, without the other learner reading the card attached to their own back. (They must not touch each other.) When one learner reads the card on the other's back s/he calls it out and so is the winner.

j) Making Groups

Teacher organizes learners to move around in a circle while s/he claps. When she stops s/ he calls out 1, 2, 3 or 4. Learners have to put many parts of themselves on the ground, e.g. 1 = standing on one foot only, 3 = two feet and one hand on the ground. When teacher resumes clapping they have to move around with these parts touching the ground, e.g. 1 = hopping, 2 = walking/jumping, 3 = strange bent walk that includes hand taking steps in turn with feet.

k) Buzz

Players stand in a circle. One player starts by calling out 1. Next player on the left calls out 2, next player 3, and so on. Every player who should say 7 or a multiple of 7 must say 'buzz' instead. If they accidentally say 7, then they are out of the game, and must drop out of the circle. The players must call out quickly when it's their turn. Game ends when only 1 person is left- s/he is the winner. (Sometimes the last 2 players are both winners.)

3. Moving forward

- In addition to the above listed examples, what local games and activities would achieve the same goals?
- Any recreation activities for staff to also work through difficult thoughts and feelings?
- How active is the learner or teacher with disability in this activity?
- If not, how best can the activity be more inclusive?

My Story: A workbook for facilitating communication with learners on sensitive topics

My Story is a book for learners. However, it is not a book for learners to use alone; this is a book for learners to read and use, and then share their thoughts with adults who can help them understand their worries, their confusion, and other feelings after a traumatic event such as a crisis.

Feelings and emotions can be very confusing for learners. When something terrible happens

- a natural disaster, an attack, a family loss, a death (teacher, community member, child's parent, or family member) learners feel many emotions, sometimes all at once, and don't know how to handle them.



A child's social-emotional needs are very fragile during this time. As a teacher, you can help learners learn how to understand and manage their feelings and emotions - that it is ok and normal to feel many feelings at once, it is ok to be confused, that adults feel this way as well. The most important thing is for loving adults to guide learners how to deal with difficult emotions in healthy ways.

How to Introduce This Book

What You Can Say?

"We (our community/school/village/etc.) have gone through something terrible. We are all feeling many emotions right now, and that is ok and totally normal. It is good to learn about our emotions, so we can know how to handle them positively. This book is for you. It is yours. It is for you to draw in, share, and talk about. There are no right or wrong ways to draw your pictures or share your feelings."

Materials needed:

- My Story Book
- Writing materials- this can be crayons, markers, pens, pencil with dengue. Mother has taken him to the clinic.
- Learners can even use collages to make their pictures; glue, sand, scraps of paper or material, leaves...

How You Can Use This Book

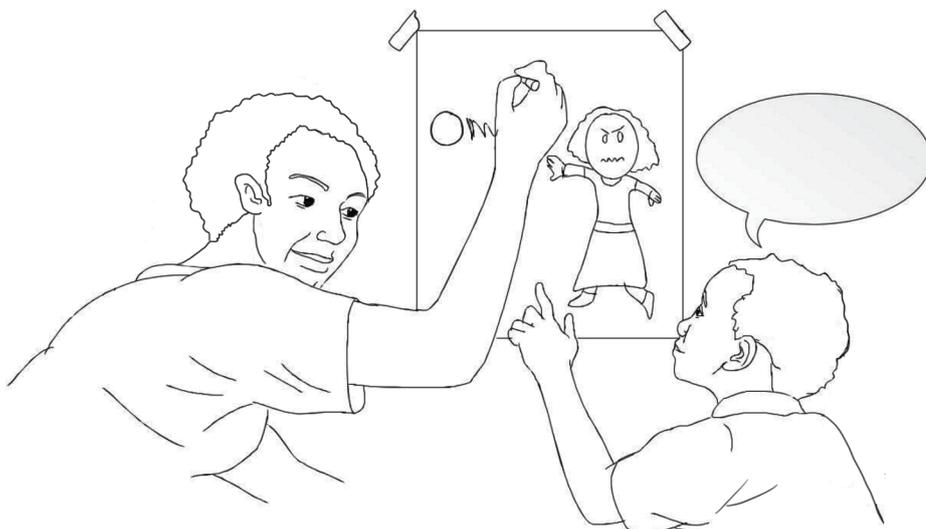
There are many options on how to use this book with your learners. The purpose of this book, though, is to get the learners thinking, talking and sharing about their feelings so that they learn that what they are feeling is OK. Learners need to know that they will get through this difficult time. It is important for you, as the teacher, to acknowledge that there is no right or wrong way to feel, and that different learners may feel and react differently to what has happened.

- For younger learners unable or just learning to read:
- Gather the entire class together, read the story together. You can discuss one page at a time with the class, asking a few learners to share their thoughts or examples.
- For the pages that talk about feelings, ask the learners to show you their (angry/sad/afraid/etc.) face.

Then all learners can go draw their pictures.

Once learners are finished drawing, ask learners if they would like to share any pictures and tell the class about them. This can be done group, or learners can sit in small groups and share their pictures with each other.

For younger learners, it would be good to ask the learners what they drew, then write down their answers next to the picture they drew. This can then help the child share their book with their family.



Referral and Recourse for additional support beyond the school

Teachers are encouraged to work closely with the focal teams and their schools, particularly the:

- School Health Coordinator
- Guidance and Counselling Core Team
- Child Protection Committee
- Special Needs Education Teacher
- Senior Lady/Senior Master/Senior Teacher

The focal teams are constantly capacitated to strengthen learner support services at the school level and assist the Head with the relevant referral procedure. It is important to identify and facilitate early access to mental health services and other support resources to reduce the physical and emotional impact of trauma on individual learners, teachers and ancillary staff.

The goal is always to ensure a conducive psycho-social environment for quality teaching and learning .

Schools are encouraged to contact their local District Education office for directions to the nearest Learner Support Services Resource Centre for further assistance and possible referral to Educational Psychologists or other free psycho-social services within easy reach. In the context of the School Health Policy, schools are advised that local clinics provide mental health service and should be regularly invited to raise awareness of related signs of mental health conditions and locally available service .

Contact details can be obtained on the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education website:
www.mopse.gov.zw

