



JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANTS

## Parent Support Sheets

# Lesson 7: When Friendships Go Wrong

### Lesson Summary:

In today's lesson, the children watched videos of children in different scenarios and they identified "okay" and "not okay" actions in friendships. The children practised ways of being assertive and learned a Power Pose and an Assertiveness Mantra.

### Try It At Home Activity: "What I Can Do Mantra and Power Pose"

The Power Pose and assertiveness mantra were taught as part of this lesson. An assertiveness mantra like "I can say what I feel in a kind and confident way" is a helpful tool to encourage children to express themselves clearly and respectfully. Practise our mantra together while standing up in a Power Pose [See Lesson 7 TIAH Sheet]. See next page of this Parent sheet for an "Assertiveness Role Play" exercise to try with your child/the child in your care.

### Dr. Malie and Linsey's Top Tips:

Although it doesn't come naturally to many of us, **assertiveness is a crucial skill for children** to learn, which enables them to stand up for themselves, build confidence, and maintain stronger relationships. The power of saying "no" is important in building self-esteem. Children need to be empowered to learn skills for dealing with "not okay" actions.

In speaking to your child/the child in your care about friendships, remind them that **there is no perfect friendship**. There are times when friends do things which are kind, and other times friends do things which are "not okay". Talk to your child/the child in your care about times when their friends might have done something "not okay". How did they feel? What did they do? What made it better?

When things happen that are "not okay", rather than dismiss the friendship altogether, it may help to **focus on the whole person**, and think about why they may have acted the way they did. This does not excuse their actions, but gives context for how we can all be imperfect sometimes and do "not okay" things. We all have ruptures sometimes; it's **how we repair these that builds healthy relationships** going forward.

On the other hand, there are times when another child behaves in a mean way repeatedly, which is when **it is important for children to seek help from adults** (i.e., teachers and parents) to listen to their hurt feelings, validate them, and problem-solve a way forward.

In helping children to build assertiveness skills, it is essential for parents to **model assertive behaviour**.

In class today, children learned about the **3 basic styles of communication**, including passive, assertive and aggressive. Children who use passive or aggressive responses may continue these patterns into adulthood if they don't learn assertiveness skills at a young age. Neither of these communication styles, be it passive or aggressive, gets their needs met. **Finding a balanced and assertive way to deal with situations is healthy communication**.

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### Communication styles





#### PASSIVE MOUSE

Try to please others

Don't speak up for myself

Low voice

Don't look people in the eye

Find it hard to say 'no'

Feel angry but no power to do anything

#### ASSERTIVE DOG

Stay calm and confident

Share my feelings

Listen to others' feelings

Look people in the eye

Firm voice

Stand up straight

Respect myself and others



#### AGGRESSIVE ALLIGATOR

Try to control things

Mean to others

Loud voice

Invade people's spaces

Don't listen

Step on others to get my way



### Assertiveness Role Play

Act out a playground scenario, where you play the "mean" role and your child/the child in your care practises different responses using the 3 communication styles [See Visual].

Ask your child/the child in your care to come up with something "not okay" you might do. If your child/the child in your care prefers, use your child/the child in your care animal or toy figures to play out the various roles.

For example, you or the toy figure might say "You're not playing with us".

Encourage your child/the child in your care to practise a "Passive Mouse" response (e.g., head down, with a low voice, "Oh okay I'll go over there then"). Then try an "Aggressive Alligator" response (e.g., squaring up to you, shouting "What did you say to me?!").

Finally, using the Power Pose, encourage your child to respond to you like the "Assertive Dog". Practise different assertive responses (e.g., "I'm going to play with my other friends" and your child walks away; or "I feel sad when you tell me I can't play, I want to join in").

After you finish the role play, shake off your roles and do something fun together.

### Resources:

- Here are four playful activities to help children develop assertiveness: <https://www.momentsaday.com/help-children-develop-assertiveness/>
- Here is a useful resource for parents to build assertiveness skills: <https://www.kennys.ie/health-personal-development/the-assertiveness-workbook-a-teach-yourself-guide-teach-yourself-relationships-self-help>