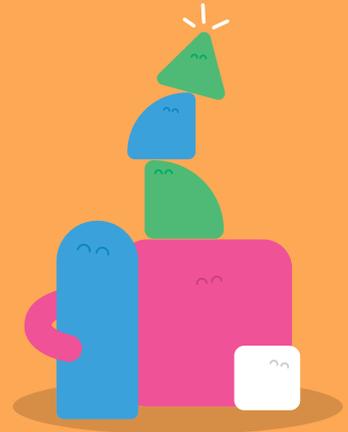


1ST & 2ND CLASS

Parent Support Sheets – Lesson 8: Boundaries



Lesson Summary:

The aim of this lesson is to help children to manage feelings in tricky relationships. Children discuss what a tricky friendship is, including being excluded. They role-play a scenario where a child is excluded, and use flashback and flash forward activities to figure out how a solution might be found to the tricky situation. Children use what they learnt about assertiveness in Lesson 7 to come to these solutions.

Try It At Home Activity: 'Left Out'

This 'Try It At Home' activity leads on from a discussion on tricky friendships in class. It is a reminder for children and adults that all of us can feel left out at times. Your child is asked to draw a time where they felt left out or somebody else felt left out. They are encouraged to empathise with the person excluded by thinking about how they felt when they were left out in the past. They are asked to problem solve and figure out how that person might be included, and to think about how it feels to include others. You could ask your child:

- What did it feel like for you or the other child to feel left out?
- What could you do next time if you or another child is being excluded?



Scan here for
'Try it at Home'
activities!

Dr. Malie's Top Tips:

- It is important to understand what 'bullying' is, so we can respond appropriately:

"Bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. This definition includes deliberate exclusion, cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying (such as homophobic or racist bullying or bullying of those with special needs.)"

(p.8, 'Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, DES, 2013)

<https://assets.gov.ie/24429/3b6f3db2de154ebaa1f69a0856c97c8e.pdf>

- It is of the utmost importance that children feel they can come and talk to their trusted adult (i.e. a parent, teacher, club leader, family member, etc.) if something like this is happening to them at school, at an after-school club, or in any of their social spheres. See the 'Resources' section for links on how to support your child.
- One of the best ways to prevent bullying is to build compassionate communities, and nurture kindness in children towards themselves, and kindness towards others. Here is an excerpt from my book 'Love In, Love Out' (Harper Collins Ireland, 2020):

“Self-compassion is about nurturing our relationship with ourselves and learning to be our own good friend. When kids who are struggling practise self-compassion, powerful things can happen: they experience a boost in their brain’s feel-good chemicals, which lowers stress, anxiety and low mood; and their sense of self-worth, resilience and ability to cope with challenges improve.

We all speak to ourselves unkindly sometimes, which has huge power over how we feel and how we make sense of our experiences. Children can be their own worst critics and judge themselves very harshly. They may be comparing themselves to others and feel like they don’t quite measure up. Repetitive critical self-talk can lead to low self-worth and increased anxiety. Explain to your children that an ‘inner bully’ is something we all experience”.

- We can help children to turn down the ‘inner bully’ voice by encouraging them to say kinder things to themselves. Brilliant books which teach self-kindness tools are Fiona Forman’s ‘Self-Kindness for Kids: Whizzo-Voice to the Rescue!’, and Louise Shanagher’s ‘Kindfully Me’ series. Both talk about the benefits of mantras or affirmations for children to develop a kinder inner voice, like ‘I’m good enough’, ‘I am safe’, ‘I am loved’, ‘I’m not alone’, or ‘I don’t need to compare myself to anyone.’
- Another powerful way to build children’s compassion muscles is by giving to others. A growing body of research has shown that volunteering improves children’s mental health. Being kind to others boosts serotonin, which increases satisfaction and wellbeing, also known as a “helper’s high”. It reduces stress, strengthens the immune system, and increases happiness. These benefits are especially significant for children today, who are at risk of developing anxiety and depression at younger ages, as it empowers them to make a positive difference in someone’s life.
- Giving is a ‘WIN-WIN’ for the giver and the receiver, in that the giver feels a sense of purpose and wellbeing, connection to community, a sense of perspective on life and an appreciation for life’s blessings; whilst the receiver benefits from knowing they are ‘held in mind’ by another child who values them in their common humanity.

Resources:

To learn more about supporting your child with bullying, check out the following resources:

- Read your child’s school’s ‘Anti-Bullying Policy’ and share any concerns with School.
- Here are a few links for helping children to manage bullying:
<https://www.parents.com/kids/problems/bullying/bully-proof-your-child-how-to-deal-with-bullies/>
<https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2018/0112/932881-how-to-help-your-child-deal-with-bullying/>
- Here is a parent’s guide if your child is displaying ‘bullying’ behaviour:
<https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-if-your-child-is-bullying/>
- Finally, here is a Loving Kindness Meditation for Children by Louise Shanagher:
<https://youtu.be/pOE6V6o2y-4>