

Young Carers Project

Friendship

Training Pack Number 1



TRAINING PROGRAMME

Learning how to make and keep friends

Developed by The Skye and Lochalsh Young Carers Project 2004/2005

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INTRODUCTION

This training programme has been developed by young carers and their workers to meet needs which were identified through one to one support sessions, group sessions and young carer assessment questionnaires.

Children who are socially isolated due to geography, family choice, financial restrictions, disability or caring responsibilities may lack confidence and have underdeveloped social and communication skills.

The activities described in this document have been positively evaluated by the young carers, their workers and some family members and school representatives. Some of the activities may require adaptation to suit different age groups, skill levels and interests.

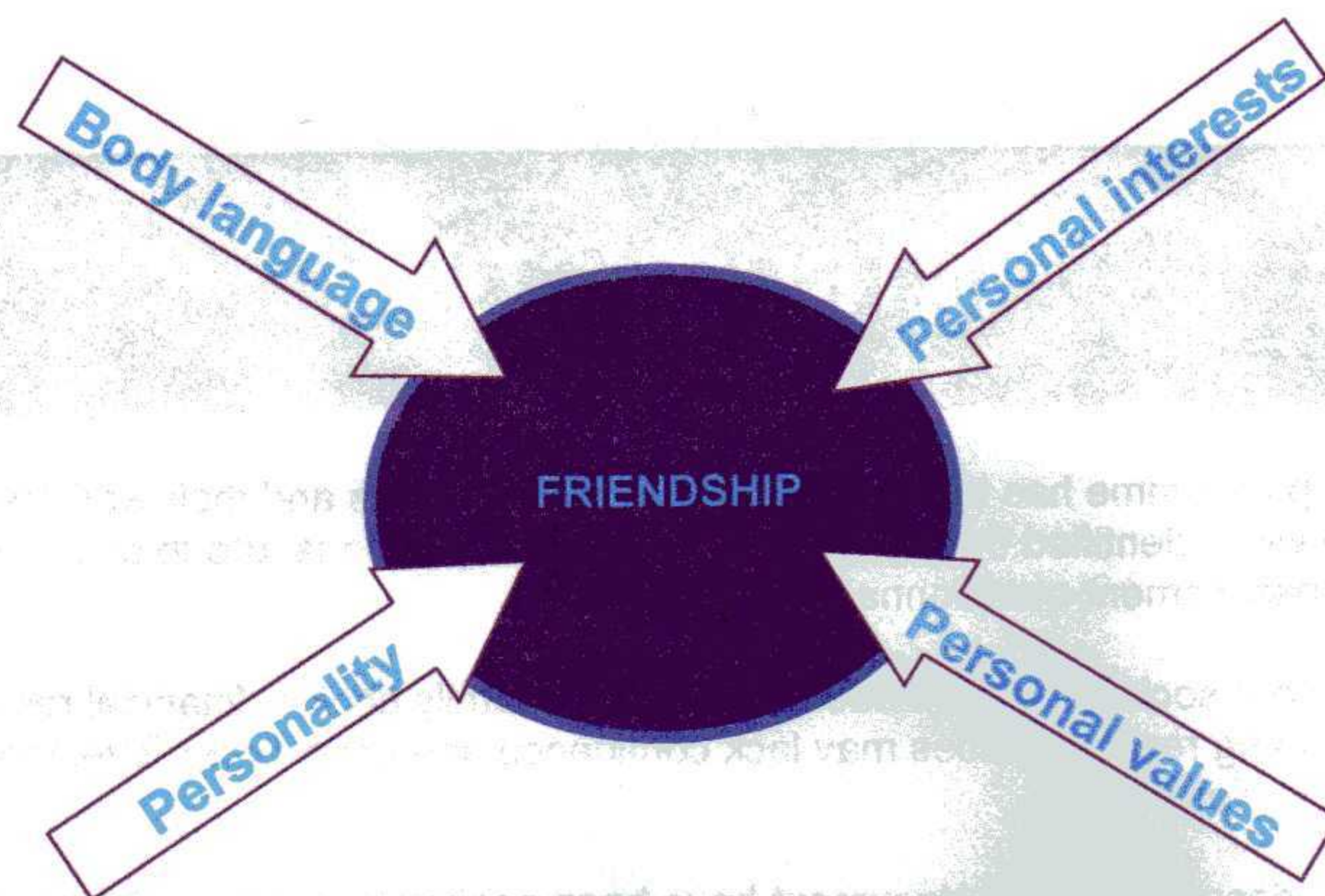
The observational skills and experience of people delivering the programme will affect the outcome, knowing the children you are working with and being prepared to be flexible in your approach is the key to success. Be open to the use of pictorial working to encourage and support the children, particularly those with literacy or attention deficit difficulties. Workers should feel free to adapt the modules and take risks in experimenting with their own ideas. We will be very happy to receive any feedback on your experiences.

This training programme has been written to assist others working to support children and young adults and is based on worker and young carer experience and developed knowledge. Although we did not resource materials for the development of this programme we acknowledge that other individuals and organisations may have developed similar working activities and strategies.

Training Programme Aims:

- ◆ To promote Personal and Social Education (PSE) through communication, social and emotional development.
- ◆ To increase the confidence and self esteem levels of children and young adults.
- ◆ To provide workers with clearer insight into the values, choices, reasoning and presenting behaviour of the young people they are working with.

Modules are best worked on a weekly basis with a minimum time of 20 minutes allocated - always allow additional time for discussions to overrun.



Endorsements:

Dr Celina Kelley, Consultant Clinical Psychologist (Children's Services)

Bob Leadbetter, Area Principal Educational Psychologist - Skye and Lochalsh

I am very impressed by the package the Project has put together. A lot of thought has gone into it and I have no doubt it will meet the needs of young carers and any children or young people who struggle with this issue.

The Friendship programme is quite comprehensive and utilises a creative, multi-media approach to new skills. All areas of building and maintaining friendships are covered including how to make friends and how to cope if those friendships break down. Using concrete methods such as modelling and role play in conjunction with discussion, problem solving and self-evaluation will help engage children of all ages and promote internalisation and generalisation of the new skills.

The Friendship training programme has been planned and implemented in such a way as to motivate and actively engage the young people. You have done some evaluations of outcomes, and seem to have brought about substantial and beneficial changes in understanding and attitudes. I would be happy to endorse this programme and recommend its use. It looks like fun, which is probably very important!

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Module One: Body Language

- * Eye contact
- * Facial expression
- * Body gestures

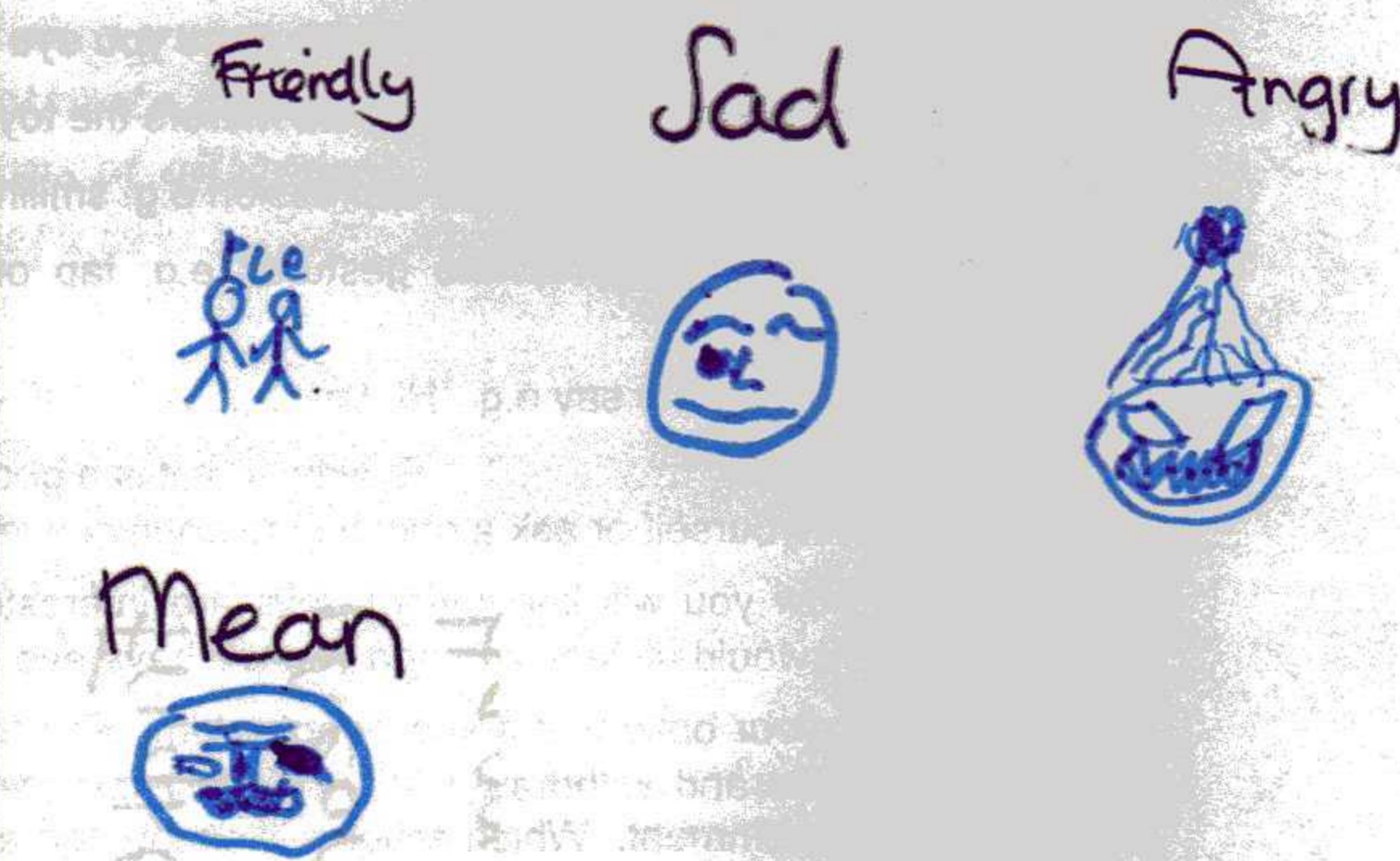
Activity: EYE CONTACT

Aimed at:	This is for young children observed as lacking eye contact when communicating; it is useful to introduce games which promote this.
Age Group:	Primary school age. This can be done one to one or in small supportive groups.
Resources needed:	Use toys (with eyes) and place them in a group setting, they should all be placed in different positions.
Challenge:	Explain that the challenge is to work out how you could get each toys' attention and get them to look as if they are ready to play a game with you.
Trainers Notes:	<p>Trainer should prompt and provide assistance when required by encouraging the child to discuss possibilities and ideas. Trainer should then try out the ideas with the child to reduce embarrassment and promote good humour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Decide whether it is better to speak individually to toys or to try to get the groups attention ◆ Place your body in a position which gives you eye level contact. ◆ Place your body in a position which mirrors the toys' position ◆ Decide on appropriate facial expression e.g. smiling ◆ Decide on any appropriate gestures e.g. tap on the arm, offer/show something ◆ Decide on what to say e.g. "Hi, I'm" "Hi, would you like" ◆ "Hi, I like your" Explain that it is a good idea to either introduce yourself or ask a question to open conversation with someone ◆ Agree how you will know when toys are interested in playing with you e.g. they would all face you and you will have eye contact with them ◆ Discuss your options if some people don't wish to get to know you e.g. give space and withdraw with a friendly comment or withdraw with a negative comment. Which action will encourage a future potential friend - why?
Comments:	<i>We found this very useful in building a fun trusting relationship with individual children while also giving us insight into the child's confidence levels.</i>

Module One: Body Language

- * Eye contact
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Activity: FACIAL EXPRESSION

Aimed at:	Same children as in stage one. To practice what they have learnt.
Setting:	The worker and child can do this one to one or in a small supportive group setting
Resources needed:	The worker and other children sit around as the toys did in the previous game.
Challenge:	It should be explained beforehand that this is a game and others will only be acting. Explain that the challenge is to work out how you could get each others attention to play a game without speaking. Allow time to discuss people's individual reactions, ideas and feelings.
Trainers Notes:	<p>Next, set up turn taking games such as card and construction games. Any verbal communication is penalised with loss of a group point while successful and innovative use of body language and eye contact (e.g. thumbs up and winking) is awarded a point. Set an achievable <u>group</u> success score with identified group reward. Make sure that scoring rules are explained and understood by everyone.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Friendly Sad Angry</p> <p>Mean</p> </div>
Comments:	<i>We found this work prompted a lot of good humour, especially when exaggerated facial expressions were used – this helped reduce any feelings of embarrassment.</i>

Module One: Body Language

- * Eye contact
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Activity: BODY GESTURES

Challenge:

Organise a 'challenge' game to explore the use of body language. This should be done in a supportive group setting with the worker(s) prepared to act out examples as well.

Resources needed:

Have prepared cards with appropriate individual words and/or pictures on them, no verbal communication is permitted. Each child is asked to pull out a card and act out the word written on it, for some it may be easier to do this in pairs until their confidence grows. Using dressing up clothes can help make it easier to get into the role play.

Example words

Angry	Happy	Restless	Sad	Worried
Kind	Upset	Tired	Interested	Nervous
Bored	Frightened	Bossy	Confused	Unwell
Sore	Uninterested	Surprised	Friendly	

Trainers Notes:

Allow time to discuss how easy or difficult it can be to read and use body language effectively. Promote the use of body language along with speech to communicate more effectively with people.

To encourage mutual support and participation a prize should be awarded to share amongst the whole group for their involvement in the challenge.



Comments:

Dressing up helped the younger children and those with lower confidence levels in particular. Relating how difficult it can also be for workers and teachers etc. to read body language without verbal communication to back it up helped encourage the children to see the benefits of talking about their feelings.

Module One: Body Language REVIEW

REVIEW:

Review the effectiveness of the programme by encouraging the children to practice it and then seek their feedback and that of appropriate family members and school/service workers. It is very helpful if others are aware of the work being done so that they can provide the child with appropriate encouragement and affirmation in various settings e.g. at home and at school.

To reduce the reliance on positive feedback which may not always be forthcoming from others it is helpful for the child to be able to self evaluate and know they can acknowledge their own progress. This will help to improve their confidence and feeling of self worth.

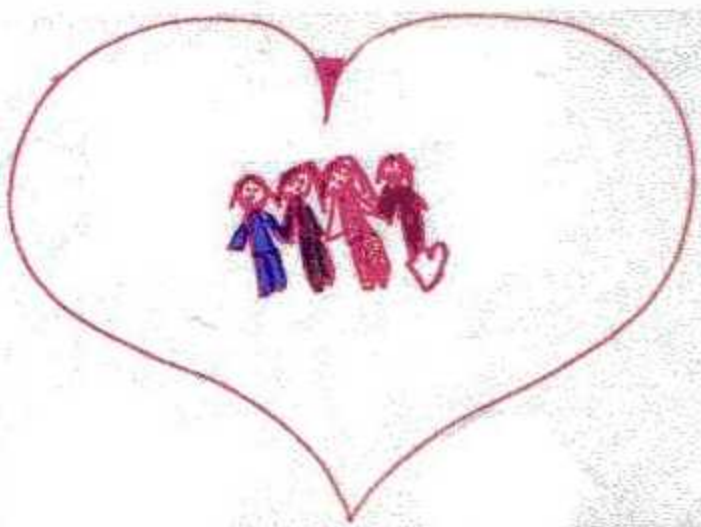


Comments:

“No-one else noticed what I did, but that’s ok because I know I did well”
 “It gives you a feeling of power - you can help control how other people react to you”
 “Smiling is great - it can get other people to help you feel happier”

Module Two: Personal Values

Task One

Challenge 1:	<p>It is important that children are able to consider their personal values as these will affect the friendships they are likely to develop and want to maintain.</p> <p>Organise a one to one or small supportive group challenge with the task being to identify what they would need from a best friend. A worker or better still a nominated member of the group should write up the answers given on a chart/board. Make it clear that no answer is a wrong one as we are all different and need different things from other people.</p>		
	Examples:		
	Loyalty e.g. no bitching	Trust	Honesty
	Generosity e.g. sharing	Kindness	Fairness
	Reliability e.g. keep promises	Confidentiality	Respect
Trainers Notes:	<p>Discuss what each example means to people – why is it important? Point out the fact that the majority of people actually look for and need very similar things from friends.</p> <p>Discuss whether people feel there are any risks associated with having friends, what might they be?</p>		
Comments:	<p><i>During this session the young people identified values through phrases like “no bitching” and “laughing with me, not at me”. The worker then helped to put these phrases under the appropriate headings – we found this helped develop better understanding of the more adult words commonly used in association with personal values.</i></p>		
			

Module Two: Personal Values

Task Two

Challenge 2:	<p>Explain that we all have strengths and weaknesses and that it is useful for us to be aware of them as these can have positive and negative affects on ourselves and those around us.</p> <p>Organise another challenge as in 2.1, but this time ask the children to put a tick against where they feel their strengths are in relation to the examples they gave previously. This can either be done on the open chart/board, or if more appropriate on pre printed individual sheets. Be sure to acknowledge the value of their strengths.</p>
Trainers Notes:	<p>Ask them then to underline the ones they feel they are ok with but could improve on and circle round the ones they feel they have a weakness. Allow time to explore the possible causes of the weaknesses and any potential strengthening measures. For some children who feel they have nothing of material value to share ('generosity') point out that sharing time, ideas and feelings often have more value to other people.</p>
Comments:	<p><i>We found this very useful in identifying follow on support work needed to promote positive behaviour change for some individuals. One group went on to develop very effective peer support both at the Project and in the school environment. We also found that some siblings supported each other by providing affirmation and choice reminders to each other.</i></p>
REVIEW:	<p>Review individual progress through observation, informal feedback and discussion time, this will provide opportunities to raise any issues of concern and acknowledge progress. This ongoing work will help support positive behaviour changes which will in turn lead to increased confidence and self esteem.</p>



Module Three: Personality Traits

Task One

	Individual personality traits are inherited characteristics and habits we have developed over the years.			
Challenge 1 :	Work one to one or in a supportive group setting. Explain that the challenge this time is to look at what it is about someone's personality that might attract you to become their friend. A worker or a nominated member of the group should write up the answers given on a chart/board. Explain that no answer is wrong and it would probably be very boring if we were all the same and liked all the same things about other people.			
Examples :	Funny	Helpful	Cheerful	Sporty
	Good listener	Gives you time	Gives you attention	Shares things
	Strong/ assertive	Confident	Good at things	Caring
	Dress sense	Relaxed	Way they speak	Good manners
	Fairness	Optimistic	A 'go getter'	Out spoken
	Supportive	Good humoured	Quiet	Gentle
	Encouraging	Risk Taker	Plays 'safe'	Takes control
Trainers Notes:	Allow time to discuss the examples given; what do they mean to different people? Now ask them to tick against how they would describe themselves – are they usually drawn to similar people or their opposites?			
Comments:	<i>This worked especially well when established friends were in the same group, they benefited from hearing about each others positive personality traits. For any child finding it difficult to describe themselves it was helpful to allow them to ask others for their opinion.</i>			



Module Three: Personality Traits

Task Two

Challenge 2:

Set up as in 3.1 and explain that this challenge is to look at what might put you off potentially making friends with someone. Allow time again to discuss the answers given and highlight that what some people may see as negative others might see as positive.

Examples :

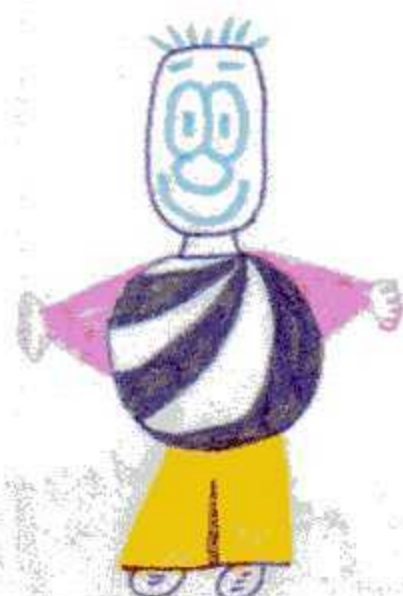
Angry	Boring	Uninterested	Talks too much
Too quiet	Bullying	Dress sense	Weak
Annoying	Unhelpful	Lets you down	Tense
Not good at things	Rude	Way they speak	Greedy
Bossy	Knows it all	Unpredictable	Tells lies
Shows off	No time for you	Uses you	Judgemental
Pessimistic	Out spoken	Takes risks	Argumentative

Trainers Notes:

Point out how our choice of friends can be influenced by lots of different things and that most of us are more likely to be drawn to people with similar personalities. There are times when opposites can attract and these friendships can be exciting and help balance us within a team or a relationship e.g. someone who takes risks can benefit from another person who is cautious – it could lessen the risk of injury or of losing something! Also point out that there will be times when we and our friends will say or do things which will upset each other, it helps to be honest about these times and to learn how to deal with them.

Comments:

This challenge prompted lots of interesting discussion and opened up previous experiences and anxieties. It also created a useful platform to explore feelings again. Allow a significant amount of additional time to allow discussions to overrun.



Module Four: Personal Interests

	<p>We tend to be drawn to people who have similar interests to us, that is why activity and support groups are usually so successful. Having similar ideas, skills and targets can provide valuable support which promotes people's confidence and self esteem.</p>			
Challenge:	<p>Ask the children to list individually on paper their own personal interests and encourage them to be as diverse as possible (can also include their goals in life). Try to ensure they do not share their information with others as this might affect the outcome at the end of the challenge.</p>			
	Examples:			
	Sports	Arts	Helping people	Cars
	Computers	Playing	Learning new things	Having fun
	Taking risks	School	Being with friends	Playing jokes
	Reading/ writing	Crafts	Puzzles	Fashion
	Make-up	Chatting	Hill walking	Bitching
	Story telling	Fighting	Pets	Debating
Trainers Notes:	<p>The worker should now compile all the individual examples given and put them up on a chart/board (up to 8 profiles at a time). Ask children who haven't got their own profiles on display to pick out from the information given who they think they would be likely to get on with. The worker should then identify the individuals by name and challenge them to play together for the next half hour or so and feed back how they got on. How many picked out existing friends?</p> <p>The worker should try to ensure that no child is placed in a grouping without potential friends, if this appears unavoidable then the worker should take part in the exercise themselves, targeting the interests of the particular child or, make themselves also appear very different and therefore 'unique'.</p>			

Module Five: Friendship Breakdown

	The breakdown of friendships can be very traumatic and particularly for vulnerable children who may already be lacking in confidence and self esteem.			
Challenge Part 1:	In one to one sessions or supportive discussion groups challenge the children to identify feelings they have experienced when a friendship has broken down.			
Examples:	Sad	Frustrated	Lonely	Let down
	Frightened	Angry	Distrustful	Hurt
	Unwanted	Disliked	Worthless	Vengeful
	Free	Relieved	Sick	Happy
	Allow time to acknowledge and discuss the feelings identified but focus finally on the more positive potential feelings of freedom and relief.			

Challenge Part 2 :	Next, ask the children to identify why a friendship might end.			
Examples:	Moving away	Getting different interests	Getting new friends	Tiredness
	Drifting apart	Lack of time	Lack of interest/ bored	Being used
	Breakdown of communication	Being let down or lied to	Pressure from other people	
	Again allow time to acknowledge and discuss the reasons for ending friendship.			



Module Five: Friendship Breakdown

Challenge Part 3:	Then move on to how they might influence how a friendship ends.
Examples:	Being really angry and threatening.
	Picking up on signs beforehand and suggesting you give each other more space.
	Become very upset and keep begging them to stay with you as a friend.
	Threaten to hurt yourself if they don't keep being your friend.
	Feel hurt but don't show it and find other people and things to try to fill your time.
	See it as an opportunity for you to move on too and pick up on ideas you've had in the past .
	Sulk and speak to no-one about how you feel – send everyone to 'Coventry'.
	Let them know how you are feeling and say you hope you can still be friendly if not friends.
	Tell them what you liked about your friendship together and move on with other people
	Become vengeful and encourage others to fall out with them by telling lies, half truths or the secrets your friend once shared with you.
Trainers Notes:	Discuss the pluses and minuses of each option, which ones are likely to result in friendships being restored or new ones being developed?
Comments:	<i>This challenge highlighted a lot of past difficulties and issues, the children really appreciated exploring alternative options available to them. For some it provided a useful insight as to why some ex-friends had reacted so negatively to breaking up with them.</i>

Module Five: Friendship Breakdown

Challenge Part 4:	In a similar set up ask the children to identify what they have to gain from friendships.
Examples:	Fun
	Learning from each other
	Someone you can trust
	Loyalty – someone who will stick up for you
	Things to share
	Feeling good about yourself
	Places to go to and things to do
	Support
	Strength and confidence
	Someone who's there when you need them
	A stronger voice to influence things or people around you
	Extended friendships – friends of friends
Trainers Notes:	<p>Finish by discussing whether people now think making friends is worth the risk – have we more to gain than lose? If we have more to gain then it is well worth working at how we start and maintain our friendships.</p> <p>Give a final challenge to play with someone within the group they don't normally play with for a least 20mins, the worker should supervise interaction to provide encouragement and play activities if appropriate.</p>

Friendship Training Programme

Evaluation:

We used the Likert scale method up to four weeks after the activities so the children had time to experiment with what they had learned. They were asked to scale each module for how good or helpful they found it; 1 being unhelpful / not good at all, up to 10 which is very helpful / excellent. Younger children found it easier doing this with support from a volunteer while older children liked working through a short questionnaire. Having a column for feedback and ideas for future work provided very useful and interesting feedback. We then worked out the average scores for the group to assess overall effectiveness and success of the work.

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