

POSITIVE & HEALTHY FUTURE



Introduction to the theme 5 – Positive & Healthy Future

Families who have experienced domestic violence often find it difficult to visualise or imagine a positive future for themselves. They have experienced traumatic and difficult events and might still be experiencing abuse or attempted abuse from the perpetrator. It is important to give time and space for recovery but to also focus on the positive aspects of the family and where they see their futures.

Many families have been so focussed on managing and minimising the abuse, making sure their behaviours did not inflame situations with the perpetrator that when they leave, and the perpetrator is no longer the centre of attention, their focus changes, which can be overwhelming and difficult.

It is difficult to imagine and plan for a positive future whilst living with abuse and control or within the chaos and fear that can still be apparent, once a family have left the abusive environment. A mother and her children might have experienced humiliation and negative comments about their abilities and talents. Their confidence and self-esteem is usually affected by living with abuse, making it difficult for them to recognise their strengths and potential. It is important to enable and advocate a more positive and supportive dialogue between the families and demonstrating the benefits of praise and encouragement.

Trips, Cultural Activities, Celebrations, Parties, Workshops

Below are some suggestions for ideas to support families experiencing isolation. You might want to incorporate some or all of these into your broader package of support. You could also choose to add your own which may be culturally specific to your town, region or the families who are attending the program.

End of Programme Party

Ask families to bring a dish each and celebrate finishing the “Our Time” programme. Organise games and activities for all the families to take part in, or ask each family to plan their own game.

Litter Picking

Thinking specifically about your environment, and the part it plays in keeping us healthy and safe, arrange to pick up litter around your local area. Make sure that families are provided with gloves, litter pickers and refuse bags. You could always do this around the or place of safety if it is not suitable to arrange a walk.

Community Projects

Encourage the families to get involved in local community projects that are already happening or start your own. Ideas for this could include weeding an area in the local park, helping to paint community buildings or even designing their own space within the place of safety.

Refuge’s Got Talent

Invite families to audition for a place of safety talent show. They may wish to showcase a talent of their own, as a family or with friends within the place of safety. It is important to encourage and support all those who wish to enter; staff may want to make suggestions or offer a group performance for those who may be less able. Arrange for staff and families to watch the final show.

Guest Speakers

Invite inspiring people from your community to come to the place of safety to give a talk on their job or talent and how they got involved with it. Fire fighters, police, sports people would all make great guest speakers. After they have visited, you could arrange a follow-up session, where you invite families to decorate a gingerbread person to represent a job or talent that they want to become involved with in the future.

Movie Night

Choose a film with a positive and inspiring message and invite families to come and watch it together. You could provide popcorn and bean bags too.

SESSION 8: OUR POSITIVE & HEALTHY FUTURE

Session 8 Objective

To think positively about your future as a family

Introduction

5-15 minutes

Re-cap on the activities covered in the last session

- Invite the group to discuss any positives that have happened since the last session (remember to record these in your chosen way)
- Discuss the “What Happens to My Body When I’m Feeling Angry” activity- Invite volunteers to give examples of what they have written?

If you completed the relaxation exercise you could ask if anyone tried it again at home.

Briefly introduce today’s activities.



Standard Activities

Activity 8.1. Positive Statements

20-30 minutes

Lay out the positive statement cards¹ on a table; you may want to read them out to the group before you start. Focussing on one family at a time, ask them to assign positive statement cards to each other; there should be a consensus or at least two people agreeing. Each person should tell the group how they feel about the positive statement.



Materials needed:

- Positive statement cards

¹ Positive Statements worksheet is found on page 115

Activity 8.2. My Family is...**30-40 minutes**

Give each family a large piece of paper², ask them to write down on the sheet positive statements about their family. Encourage families to decorate their sheets.

**Materials needed:**

- Piece of paper for each one
- Pens or pencils

Activity 8.3. Letter from a Time Traveller**25-35 minutes**

ask families to work together to write a letter from their future selves, imagining they have travelled back in time and given their present day selves the letter from the future. Families should decide how far in the future the letter is from, 1 year, 5 years or maybe even 10 years. Ask them to think about how old they will be, where they will be living, what hobbies and interests will they have, are they at school, college, university or working? What has changed for them? Are they happy and what messages would they give to their younger selves? Encourage them to draw pictures to go with the letter.

**Materials needed:**

- Pens
- Felt tip / pencil crayons
- Sheets of paper

**Low Level of Literacy Activities****Activity 8.4. Time Capsule****25-35 minutes**

Ask families to create their own time capsule for them to look back on at an agreed future date. They should write letters to their future selves, draw pictures and put memorable items in to a box or chest. They could add their wishes and hopes for the future as well as how they feel now. They may want to predict what jobs or subjects they do or if they will still be playing an instrument or sport

Activity 8.5. The Future Me**25-45 minutes**

² My Family is... worksheet is found on page 116

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Give each person a piece of paper and ask them to create a drawing or collage of their hopes and goals for the future. Encourage the families to think about how they see their lives in the future. This could include what job they might have, the sports they might play, the books they will read, the college or university they might go to and anything else they want their future life to contain. Once they have finished their pieces, invite the group to talk about their futures and what their hopes and dream are. Advise the group that they could display them somewhere to help them remember their ambitions for the future.



Materials needed:

- Paper
- Pens / Pencils
- Felt tip / colouring pencils
- Magazines
- Glue
- Scissors

Activity 8.6. Mime My Future

15-35 minutes

Invite the group to come to the front one at a time and mime one thing they hope to do or achieve in the future. The remainder of the group has to guess what the ambition is. Once it is guessed, or the group give up, invite the person to say why this is their goal or ambition. It would be a good idea for the facilitator to be the first to complete this activity and to show the group what ambition or goal they have. If the group are struggling, give them some ideas and suggestions. Prompts could include: Where would you like to travel? What Job would you like to do? What hobby would you like to try?

Some people may have more than one so if there is time you can allow them to do more than one.

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Advanced Activities

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Activity 8.7. Positive Thinking

25-45 minutes

Split the group up into pairs or groups of three if pairs is not possible. In their groups, ask each person to describe a positive experience they have had. This could be their proudest moment, a visit to a new and interesting place, meeting a new friend, starting school or something they have achieved. It would be a good idea for the facilitator and any other staff or volunteers in the group to talk about their positive experiences.

In their pairs or groups, advise participants that they should identify the feelings they have about their positive experience. Get the pairs or groups to feedback about how it felt to talk about their positive experiences to each other and give individuals the opportunity to share their positive experiences with the whole group.

On a board or flip chart write down the emotions which the group had during and after their positive experience. Ask the group to try to identify and think about these emotions when they have them and encourage them to find a positive experience in every day.



Materials needed:

- Flip chart/board
- Marker or drywipe pens

Activity 8.8. My Positive day

20-40 minutes

Begin a discussion with the group about positive thinking. What is it? Why do we sometimes find it difficult? What can we do to help us think more positively?

Advise the group that they are going to make a positive day jar. In the jar will be lollipop sticks that have questions about their positive experiences written on them. Each day, take it in turns to pick out one lollipop stick. The whole family, including mum, should give their answer, beginning with the person who picked the stick.

Examples could be: One thing which made you smile, Something I did well, Something I am proud of, Something I improved at, One nice thing that happened or My best moment.

You could write the examples on the board and ask the group for their ideas. To simplify this activity, you could write on the jar, "One thing which made me ..." and the lollipop sticks could have words such as Proud, Smile, Happy or Laugh written on them..



Materials needed:

- Flip chart/board
- Marker pen
- One Jar per family
- Lollipop sticks (coloured or plain) at least 10 per family
- Thin tipped marker pen
- A sticker or jar paint/pens to write on the jar



Relaxation Activities

Activity 8.9. Blow it Away

Give the families a piece of paper and ask them to rip it up into pieces (approximately 18 if you are using an A4 sheet). Then ask them to place the pieces in a pile in front of them. Instruct them to imagine the pieces of paper represent their worries and fears. Now, tell them to bend down towards the table and blow the pieces away. Ask them to imagine their worries and fears are blowing away with the pieces of paper. Stack the paper again and repeat the process.

Discuss with the group how that made them feel. Do they think this is a technique they could use in the future?

Plenary

10-20 minutes

Remind the families of what has been covered in the session and today's objectives. Ask them to reflect on what they have learnt in this session.

Suggested Questions

- What things can you do to help you deal with negative emotions?
- How does how we feel affect how we act or react?
- How do you think you can use the tools for dealing with feelings and emotions which we've talked about today?

Introduce the Supporting exercise: "My Goals and Achievements" this exercise asks participants to identify and write down their goals, the date which they achieved them and how it felt for them to achieve them.

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INDEPENDENT FAMILY ACTIVITIES



Supporting Exercise 8: My Goals and Achievements

Hand out the My Goals worksheet.³ Ask families to set their own goals and to record them on the sheet when they are achieved.



Materials needed:

- Pens/ pencils, enough for one each
- My goals and achievements worksheet



Extension Activity 8: Imagine My Future

**Key workers can decide beforehand which extension activity they are offering. Only experienced practitioners should use the advanced extension activity.*

Advise families that there is an option to complete the Extension Activity⁴ with their key worker. This session will look at imagining their participant's positive, happy and safe future as a family.

** Tip: You may want to approach families who you feel would benefit most from this Extension Activity.*



Advanced Extension Activity 8: Our Family Journey

Advise families that there is the opportunity to complete an Extension Activity as a family with the key worker. This Advanced Extension Activity⁵ is only to be completed by experienced practitioners who are skilled in supporting families who have experienced domestic abuse.

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³ Supporting Exercise 8 worksheet is found on page 117

⁴ Extension Activity 8 is found on page 118

⁵ Advanced Extension Activity 8 worksheet is found on page 119

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Worksheet: Positive Statements

I am kind and caring

I am a great listener

I am reliable

I am working hard to be less angry

I am confident

I am a positive person

I have lots of talent

I am knowledgeable

I am brave

I am stronger than I realise

I am smart

I am a good cook

I am a wise

I am loving

I am fast

I am honest

I am special

I am working hard to make a difference

I am unique

I am a good mum

I am good at art

I am resilient

I am undefeatable

I am a good dancer

I am a good singer

I am helpful

I have made a difference

I am good listening

Worksheet: My Family is...

Give each family a large piece of paper, ask them to write down on the sheet positive statements about their family.



Our family is kind



Our family is caring



Our family like sports



Our family are artistic



Our family listens to each other

3 things we are looking forward to doing together are...

1.

2.

3.

Worksheet: Supporting Exercise 8

My Goals and Achievements



My goal:

Date I achieved it:

How it felt:

My goal:

Date I achieved it:

How it felt:

My goal:

Date I achieved it:

How it felt:

My goal:

Date I achieved it:

How it felt:

My goal:

Date I achieved it:

How it felt:

Worksheet: Extension Activity 8

Imagine My Future



Materials needed:

- A key worker
- A safe and private space big enough for the whole family to comfortably sit around a table or on the floor.
- A large sheet of paper or card
- Felt tips
- Colouring pencils
- Magazines
- Glue

Invite the families to sit around the table or on the floor with the resources in the middle. Begin a discussion about what they feel they have achieved as a family as well as individually and make notes of their responses. Ask the family to imagine what their future looks like and make notes of their responses. Now ask the family to use the materials on the table to create a poster showing their achievements as well as their goals for the future. Encourage the family to use as many different resources as they want to.

If the family is struggling to think of things you can make suggestions.

Worksheet: Advanced Extension Activity 8

Our Family Journey



Materials needed:

- A key worker who has experience working with domestic abuse
- A safe quiet and private space big enough for the whole family to sit comfortably around a table or on the floor.
- A large sheet of paper
- Felt tips or colouring pencils
- Scrap paper
- Collage materials

Ask the family to begin plotting major life events. Examples could include: when mum was born and the names of her parents, the birth dates of all children, and significant positives that the family has experienced. They may want to include starting a new school, going into a place of safety etc.... Then talk to the family about their goals and aspirations and make notes of what they want these to include.

Ask the family to begin to create a time line or collage of these events on the large piece of paper. They can use drawings and embellishments