



Primary *National Strategy*

Excellence and Enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning

New beginnings Years 1 and 2 small group activities

Headteachers, teachers
and practitioners in
primary schools,
middle schools, special
schools and Foundation
Stage settings

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Silver set

Introduction

This Silver set provides an early intervention for children who need additional support in developing their social, emotional and behavioural skills. It is aimed at children in Years 1 and 2 and links to the Blue set. The ideas in the materials could also be adapted, however, to provide group work for children in Year 3 and in the Foundation Stage.

The Silver set contains:

- a proforma for planning a group-work intervention;
- a proforma for planning a group-work session;
- suggestions for warm-up activities to begin the sessions;
- suggestions for core activities linked to the relevant theme within the curriculum materials;
- suggestions for relaxation exercises to end the session.

The *Guidance notes* which follow address key issues for school staff in planning group work.

Why might we want to develop group work?

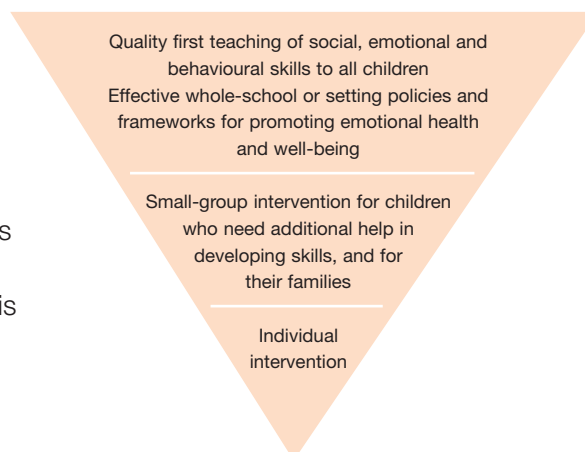
This group work supports an early-intervention approach for young children who need additional help to develop their social, emotional and behavioural skills. It is similar to other small-group interventions that schools may be using with children who need additional help in other areas of the curriculum – for example, Early Literacy Support (ELS).

The intervention is based on the principle that some children will benefit from exploring and extending their social, emotional and behavioural skills by being members of a supportive, small group that is facilitated by an empathic adult. This group should build on and enhance the curriculum being offered to each child within the whole-class setting.

The purposes of group work for the children will include:

- facilitating personal development;
- exploring key issues in more depth;
- practising new skills within a safe environment;
- learning more about self;
- developing ways of relating to others;
- feeling safe and taking risks;
- being better equipped to make wise choices;
- being reflective.

The group work is **not** about ‘therapy’. It is about teaching children new skills, and creating the conditions that will support this learning. It is positioned at Wave 2 of the Primary National Strategy ‘Waves of intervention’ model.



Is our school ready for group work?

The decision to embark on group work should stem from the needs of the whole school community and through reflection about those needs within whole staff enquiry. As a staff, you may wish to consider the following questions in coming to a decision.

- Are you confident in your current provision at whole-class and whole-school levels to promote and develop social, emotional and behavioural skills?
- Do you feel that more is needed to reach all the children?
- Would small-group work be a natural extension of your curriculum in developing social, emotional and behavioural skills across the school?

If the answer to these questions is yes, you may wish to consider these further questions.

- Are there children who would benefit from small-group work?
- How might small-group work enhance the inclusion of all children, including your most vulnerable and troubled children?
- Is this the right time for you – does the school currently have the capacity to manage and implement the intervention?

When you have reflected on these questions and if you decide to embark on the group intervention, it might be time to consider in more detail the practical implications and requirements necessary to start the work.

Who needs to be involved and how?

Headteacher and the leadership team for inclusion

The key responsibility for decisions to implement, support and sustain small-group work rests with the headteacher and the inclusion leadership team. It will be their responsibility to ensure that there is an ongoing, coherent, whole-school approach and that there is the capacity for effective delivery. This will include:

Coordinating the involvement of other agencies as appropriate.

Ensuring adequate supervision and support for the group-work facilitator.

Ensuring that adequate time is allocated to the class teacher and group-work facilitator(s) for weekly reflection and planning.

Securing the practical arrangements required, such as appropriate staff, facilities, cover and resources for each weekly session to be able to run effectively.

Organising the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention.

Class teacher

The intervention will not be successful unless the class teacher retains an active role. The class teacher takes overall responsibility for the group, including planning the curriculum being offered to each child and ensuring that it is consistent with whole-class activities. The teacher should work in partnership with the group-work facilitator in the following ways.

Planning the group-work intervention in line with the whole-class theme and to match the specific needs of the individual children in the group.

Holding weekly meetings to review and reflect on each session and agree the following session.

Building on the learning that has taken place in the small-group session throughout the week's work in class.

Following up targets and specific issues with individual children as needed.

Liaising with parents/carers and with other agencies as appropriate.

Lead behaviour professional/behaviour and attendance coordinator

Most schools will now have a member of staff who coordinates policy and provision to promote positive behaviour and regular attendance. Part of their role will be to ensure that the small-group work fits within whole-school provision and planning. They may also ensure that the facilitator has the necessary skills to implement the intervention and/or receives any necessary training.

Group-work facilitator

When considering who might be the most appropriate person to facilitate a group, the following questions need to be addressed.

- Do they understand and model effective social, emotional and behavioural skills?
- Do they show the core conditions of warmth, empathy and positive regard for children (even when the children's behaviour can be challenging) that we know to be essential in all effective helpers?
- Are they reflective learners?
- Do they have an understanding of how groups work?
- Are they effective in working with groups?
- Do they understand issues such as child protection, etc.?

The role of the facilitator will be:

Joint planning with the class teacher;

Facilitating each weekly session, making sure there is pace and purpose while responding and adapting to the needs of the group as they arise;

Making sure the intervention provides a coherent and meaningful experience for the children;

Having clear, intended learning outcomes that are matched to the needs of individuals and shared with the group for each session and the intervention as a whole;

Ensuring that each child has a positive and valuable experience each week and that there is follow-up as needed;

Maintaining the group as a safe and respectful environment for children and adults;

Liaising with other adults in school to make sure that the learning from the group sessions is followed up by everyone who has contact with the child.

You may decide that the class teacher is the most appropriate person to be the group facilitator. This would enable the teacher to build positive relationships with the members of the group and to build on skills and approaches used with the whole class. Or you may decide that a learning mentor or a teaching assistant has the right skills, working in close partnership with the class teacher.

Co-facilitator

Groups are likely to be more effective when there are two adults involved. Respective roles can vary, from two adults who take an equal role in facilitating to a more likely situation where one adult takes the lead and the other takes a supporting role. This combination may be of an experienced and/or trained practitioner and someone who is developing their skills as a group-work facilitator.

Roles within the session might involve role playing and modelling for the children, providing observation and feedback, or being available to deal with difficult issues for children who might need individual support.

An important benefit of having two facilitators is that it provides the opportunity for more detailed reflection and analysis of each session and planning to meet the needs of the children in future sessions. Time must be allocated for this essential part of group work.

The facilitators should model appropriate social, emotional and behavioural skills at all times. However, it is recognised that we all have 'bad' days. For example, an adult might become exasperated with a child and engage in a 'power struggle' or shout at a child. If this happens there will be a need to reflect on why and how this happened, and consider how it can be used as a helpful learning experience for all those involved. This also provides an opportunity to model the skill of 'putting something right' by apologising and making up when needed.

Children

The group work described here is an early-intervention approach and is planned primarily for children in Years 1 and 2. This is because there is research evidence that work can be particularly effective with this age group.

The selection of children for a small group should be transparent and fair and form part of a review of each child's skills and needs. Individual children and their parents/carers should be involved at an appropriate level in identifying their needs and deciding on appropriate provision. The rationale for including children in the group should be explained to the class, in a context where all children know they may at some time be part of a group having extra help with aspects of their learning – whether this be in literacy, mathematics, speaking and listening or group work linked to another SEAL theme.

It should be made clear to children that joining the group is voluntary, although attending individual sessions is expected once the child becomes a member of the group.

Careful consideration should be given to the make-up of the groups to make sure the individuals can work effectively together. A recommended model is that the children in the group are from the same class.

Schools can decide on the nature of small groups. They might be:

- for specific groups of children (for example: anxious or quiet children, children who have irregular attendance);
- to promote a specific skill or explore a specific issue (for example: assertiveness, resolving conflict effectively, coping with change or loss).

Either of these approaches is likely to be effective; the choice will depend on individual circumstances.

Groups should:

- include children who provide good role models for at least some of the skills to be explored;
- be balanced, drawing from children with a range of needs. This will be particularly important in supporting children who find it hard to resolve conflict.

Children in Key Stage 2 might be invited to mentor and support the children involved in the group work, as part of the whole-school approach to creating a sense of community and promoting pupil participation.

Parents/carers

When you first introduce your whole-school work on the social and emotional aspects of learning to parents/carers, it will be important to say that this includes opportunities for children to do extra work in small groups from time to time, where this will help their learning. You could emphasise that the extra group work is being carried out routinely with all children who can benefit, and that most children are likely to be offered the opportunity at some time.

Parents/carers have an important role to play in small-group work but they will not all have the same capacity to be involved or support their children.

Parents/carers should be part of decisions about their children being involved in small-group work and be provided with information about the purpose of the group.

Some schools might be able to involve parents more actively. This could be by:

- providing follow-up activities for children to do with their parents/carers;
- inviting parents into the group for one or more sessions to be involved in activities and to see what their children have been doing;
- involving parents in assessment of their child's learning;
- running a parallel group for parents/carers.

What are the factors that make group work successful?

Key features of effective group work include:

- early intervention;
- the use of assessment for learning, to identify children who may benefit from the intervention;
- effective liaison between the facilitator, the class teacher and others who work with the child in school;
- the involvement of parents and carers;
- careful monitoring and evaluation.

Where shall we do the group work?

It is essential to consider carefully where the small group meets. The setting should:

- be quiet and comfortable (for example, with a carpet and sufficient resources);
- be free from interruptions;
- be set up to allow for children to work in a circle and to complete pair and individual activities;
- be attractive, with places for displays and personalisation;
- provide easy access to resources.

How do I plan an intervention?

The class teacher will coordinate the planning of the group-work intervention. The basic framework for this is across six weekly sessions, to mirror the duration of whole-class work on a SEAL theme. It is recommended that a group-work intervention be for a minimum of six sessions. A proforma is provided at the end of this section, to help plan the intervention.

The first planning task will be to adapt the activities in this booklet to meet the needs of the group, given their age and stage in their social and emotional learning.

Once the overall plan of the intervention has been decided, there will be a need to plan the weekly sessions, to meet the learning outcomes identified and to meet the specific needs of the individual children involved.

Planning for small-group work is an active process where the class teacher and facilitators use reflection, review and creativity. The proformas (for the overall group-work intervention and for each weekly session) provide a framework for recording decisions from planning meetings.

Each session will be based on intended learning outcomes for individuals, and on aims for the development of the group.

Intended learning outcomes: These take the form of 'I can ...' statements. Select intended learning outcomes from the 'I can' statements within the SEAL curriculum materials. These are objectives for individual children.

Group aims: These provide a focus for development of the group as a whole. They will be determined through observation of the group and might be identified by group members. An example would be 'We will take turns in our group.'

When planning the small-group work, the following questions might be helpful.

- What is the social, emotional and behavioural skills focus within the class?
- What is the focus for the small-group work?
- What are the skills of the children who have been selected?
- What are the key aims for the group as a whole?
- What are the key intended learning outcomes for individual children in the group?
- How will the small-group work be monitored and evaluated?

The planning group should also consider how to establish a well-run and effective group, bearing in mind the following factors.

The structure and process of the group-work sessions as a whole. These need to be planned as a coherent and meaningful whole, with a beginning and end to the intervention.

Group identity and formation. The very first session is key for setting aims for the group as a whole. It will include a reminder about the class charter and the relevance of this to the ways the children and adults will behave towards each other in the group. Children may be asked to decide the name of their group. Group aims will be agreed, and in each session children will be encouraged to reflect on their progress in working together.

Structures and processes for the group facilitators and class teacher to meet, reflect and plan each week. The overarching plan for the intervention will have been agreed before the group work begins. Adaptations to each session may be made as the intervention proceeds, in the light of the group's and individuals' development. There needs to be built-in flexibility, whereby a balance is struck between keeping to the overall plan and the process of weekly planning which is sensitive to feedback from ongoing observation and assessment for learning.

The way in which group work will be introduced to the children.

Communication within the group, including the language to be used, which should build on key vocabulary within the SEAL resource theme.

Group and child management, including positive feedback and planned responses to disruptive incidents. Back-up support for the group facilitators should be planned, in case this is needed.

It is important to be aware that the **content** of the group-work session is only part of the learning and teaching that goes on. The **process** of the group is equally important. This process will include the facilitators modelling desired skills, providing frequent responsive and informative feedback to the children as well as addressing the specific needs of individuals.

What will a group-work session be like?

Each session will take a minimum of 40 minutes.

It is suggested that group-work sessions follow a standard format that will become familiar to the children. It is important that the balance between novelty and routine is matched to the needs and preferences of the children involved.

Specific approaches within the curriculum materials, such as the peaceful problem-solving process and the emotional barometer, can also be incorporated and practised within group-work sessions.

The proforma for planning a session provides the following structure.

- Welcome and check-in
- Warm-up activities
- Reminder of group aims for how we behave towards each other
- Review of previous week
- Plan for today's session
- Core activity

- Review and reflection
- Plans for coming week
- Relaxation

These key aspects of the session are expanded below.

Welcome and check-in

The group facilitators welcome each child to the group session.

The check-in provides an opportunity for the children to say or show (for example, using a feelings fan from the whole-school resource file) how they are feeling today and to express any concerns or issues they bring with them to the group. The check-in also provides the group facilitators with information about each child on that day. It is important to acknowledge and listen carefully to any concerns or issues the children bring, while still enabling the planned session to move on. It may be helpful to offer the child an opportunity to talk one-to-one at a later time, if they need to.

Warm-up activities

Suggested warm-up activities for group work are provided in this booklet. You can also use the circle games and rounds from the relevant year-group theme materials.

These activities are designed to:

increase group cohesion;

practise skills such as listening and taking turns;

mix up children to encourage them to work with everyone in the group;

provide opportunities for beginning to explore the intended learning outcomes for the session;

create a climate where children will feel free to share feelings and experiences.

Reminder of group aims for how we behave towards each other

These will have been discussed in the first group-work session and will build from the class charter. Supporting the children in developing the skills they need to meet these group aims will be an integral part of the group work in each session.

Review of previous week

The group reviews the week and developments throughout the week. This includes discussing any specific actions agreed at the previous meeting. It will also provide an opportunity for the children to review how they have applied learning from previous sessions. A standard format might be used, but planning should include any particular focus or adaptations.

Encourage children to talk about things that have gone well for themselves and for others in the group. A range of approaches may be used to support this, including rating scales. This is a time to enjoy the achievements of the previous week, and celebrate any progress made.

Plan for today's session

The group facilitators will give an introduction to the session. This will include the specific 'I can' statement(s) that are the focus of the session.

When the group is ready they might be involved in determining the group aims for the session as well as deciding how to work towards the intended learning outcomes. The facilitator might, for example, ask the following questions:

- Last week I really enjoyed the session. What do you think we all need to do to make sure it is another good session today?
- Today we are going to learn about how to listen to each other. How will you know if you have learned this?

Core activity

The core activity will relate to the SEAL resource theme being addressed by the class and to the 'I can' statement(s) for the individuals in the group. This activity can be selected from the ideas in this booklet, or designed by the class teacher and group facilitator. Activities should be chosen to provide a balance of types within each session and across the intervention – for example rounds, structured group work and opportunities for enquiry.

The facilitator will play an essential and active part in the activities, scaffolding the child's learning:

- by making sure the ideas and activities are accessible to the child;
- through the use of facilitative questioning;
- by breaking down the task into small chunks;
- by making thinking, problem solving and reasoning explicit;
- by modelling the skills being taught.

It is suggested that the core activity of the final session of the group intervention includes the children planning how they are going to feed back their learning to their class.

Review and reflection

Children need to be given time to:

- review what they have done and what they have achieved in the session against the 'I can' statements and group aims;
- consider and plan how they might apply what they have learned over the week. Specific actions for individual children and the group as a whole can be agreed here, and children might think about who can help them apply their learning, and how. This might be other group members or the class teacher, for example.

As part of the review of progress with the group, you might establish a routine by which the children can show how well they think they have achieved their group aims.

One way is to do this graphically by the use of scaling. Below are some practical suggestions as to how this might be done.

On a line: Place a picture to illustrate success on one end of a 'line' and the opposite on the other end of the line. These might be a smiley face and a sad face. The children position themselves on the line to show how well they think they have achieved their group aims. Help the children to reflect on where they have positioned themselves, using the following questions.

- Why did you stand there?
- Why didn't you stand at the sad face?
- What shall we do next week to help us get nearer to the smiley face?
- What would each of us need to do to help get nearer the smiley face?

On a ladder: Draw a picture of a ladder or a staircase and stick it on the wall. Attach Velcro™ to it. Provide a picture to represent the group. This might be a puppet you use regularly in the sessions. Ask children to think about whether they have met their group aims. Choose a child (ideally a different child each week) to place the picture on the ladder to show how well they think the group have met their aim.

Ask the other children whether they agree or disagree with where the child has placed the picture and to give a reason. The group should try to agree a consensus but the facilitator should recognise that this might not be possible.

Use the questions above to encourage reflection.

In a circle: Ask the children to sit in a circle. Go through the aims and ask the children to give a thumbs up, thumbs down or thumbs neutral to each of the aims.

Use the questions above to encourage reflection.

Plans for the coming week

The group facilitator will suggest a task that children can undertake in the next week.

Relaxation

Each session might end with opportunities for children to relax, through a quiet time or guided exercises and visualisations. Suggestions for these are provided in this booklet.

How will we know the sessions are being effective?

You can evaluate the impact of the group work through formative and summative approaches.

Formative approaches involve the use of assessment for learning, to inform future learning and adapt approaches to ensure they are of maximum benefit for the children. Approaches may include discussions, interviews, questionnaires and observations in a range of sessions.

A range of people need to be involved in this evaluation, including the children, group-work facilitators, class teacher and other school staff and parents/carers.

Summative data should be collected both before and after the small-group work has been carried out. This might include using tools such as those suggested in Appendix 8 of the *Guidance book* in the whole-school SEAL resource. You might want to reconvene the group, perhaps a term later, to discuss and evaluate their progress with the 'I can' statements focused on during the group intervention.

What do we need to do first?

The following checklist will help you get started.

Actions to be taken:	✓
Have all members of staff been involved in the decision to run the small group?	
Are your plans to teach social, emotional and behavioural skills to the whole-class group effective and being implemented?	
Have staffing and resources been secured and the choice of group facilitators made?	
Has any necessary additional training for group facilitators been arranged – example, in active listening skills or in how groups work?	
Has time to run the group been timetabled with time for planning, review and weekly supervision?	
Do you have a robust system for selecting children for the group that involves key staff, including external agencies if appropriate?	
Has alternative provision been made or sought for children for whom there is concern but who are not included in the group, for example because they are felt to require more specialist support?	
Is a suitable room available and has this been arranged to facilitate effective group work?	
Have evaluation procedures been agreed and any necessary assessments been carried out before the sessions begin?	
Have parents/carers been involved in the selection of their children to take part?	
Have children been actively consulted about the group? Are they aware of why they are being offered this opportunity and have they agreed to join the group?	
Do children understand the purpose of the group and the intended learning outcomes?	
Are children aware of the timescale of the group and the format of the group?	
Have you agreed a plan to involve parents/carers in the group?	
Have you agreed the overall structure for the intervention?	
Have you planned the weekly sessions, including the specific 'I can' statements being focused on and the core activity for each week, with the aid of the session proforma?	
Do facilitators know what to do should they need to seek help and support and talk to others – if, for example, a session did not go well or if it becomes clear that a child needs help from someone with specialist skills?	
Have risks that would prevent the group work being effective been identified? Have plans been made to manage these risks?	

PROFORMA FOR GROUP-WORK INTERVENTION

SEAL theme:

Planning team: *Class teacher, group-work facilitators*

No. of sessions:

Minimum of 6 sessions

Dates:

Group:

Focus of group:

The planning team will have decided the focus of the group work.

This will have informed and been informed by the choice of the children to be part of the group.

Group aims:

These are the aims for the group as a whole, with planned outcomes by the end of the intervention.

These link to the aims within the curriculum materials for this theme.

Intended learning outcomes: 'I can' statements

These are the 'I can ...' statements that will be focused on in the intervention.

These will link with the 'I can ...' statements within the whole class curriculum materials for the theme.

Key vocabulary for the intervention

This will link to the key vocabulary within the SEAL curriculum materials for this theme.

Core activities chosen from the ideas in this booklet, or your own ideas

Session 1

The beginning process – naming the group, overall purpose and structure of the intervention, getting to know each other, referring to class charter

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 2

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 3

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 4

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 5

Preparation for ending the intervention

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 6

The ending session of the intervention – summing up learning and achievements, planning to share learning with the rest of the class, agreeing ongoing support

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Post-intervention review and planning

The class teacher, group facilitators and inclusion leadership team review outcomes of group intervention and agree the next steps for the group and individuals. The leadership team consider any whole-school issues or planning implications that have been raised through the group-work intervention.

PROFORMA FOR GROUP-WORK SESSION

SEAL theme:

Session no.:

Date:

Group:

Class teacher:

Facilitators:

Resources:

Group aims:

These may be phrased as 'We can ...' statements for the group.

The 'ground rules' for the session will also be group aims.

Intended learning outcomes: 'I can ...' statement(s)

One or more 'I can ...' statement(s) will be focused on in each session, linking with the whole-class curriculum materials.

Key vocabulary:

The key vocabulary focused on in each session, relating to the theme.

Welcome and check-in:

Each child is welcomed by the facilitators.

Each member of the group has the opportunity to talk about what's uppermost in their mind that day.

Warm-up activities:

Chosen from the ideas in this booklet, or your own ideas.

The children may develop a favoured routine for these.

Reminder of group aims:

A reminder about how we behave towards each other.

Review of previous week:

This includes the follow-up actions agreed and progress with last week's 'I can ...' statements.

This is a time to enjoy the successes of the last week and to apply a solution-focused approach to exploring any difficulties that may have arisen.

Plan for today's session:

This is the introduction you will give, including introducing the intended learning outcomes ('I can ...' statements) and deciding together some group aims for the session.

Core activity:

*This activity will focus on meeting the intended learning outcomes for the session, including the specific 'I can ...' statement(s).
Chosen from the ideas in this booklet, or your own ideas.*

Review and reflection on intended learning outcomes and group aims:

The group reviews and reflects on the process and outcomes of the session.

Plans for coming week:

Follow-up actions are agreed for the coming week, for individuals and the group as a whole.

Relaxation:

This may be a guided relaxation or a quiet time.

Approaches to incorporate into session:

Examples: Peaceful problem-solving approach, emotional barometer.

Warm-up activities¹

The start of a group session is an important time when members are deciding whether the group will be a comfortable place for them and will meet their needs. Starting and ending with the same short, simple game will give the group-work session a routine and help children feel secure. Games with a clear structure, where individuals feel safe and stimulated, can set the tone for the group. They provide children and adults with a way to get to know each other, express themselves and experience what it is like in the new group.

Working in a circle during warm-up activities supports a sense of belonging and occasion. A regular circle ensures that every member can see each other. Using chairs, cushions, small mats, a rope or a chalk line will help children maintain their place in the circle. If there is a range of cushions, each child has a safe, predictable space and place for games and sitting, then relaxing at the end.

'Changing places' games are often useful in encouraging children to sit with different neighbours. Asking children to change places if they agree with your statement offers even the shyest children a chance to express themselves, while children who don't wish to answer may just sit still. Prepare statements from fairly neutral areas, to more personal if appropriate; for example, 'Change places if you are wearing red socks', 'like sausages', 'have a sister', 'enjoy being on your own', 'like playtimes'.

Rounds offer a language structure to work within and can give group leaders an idea of how the children are feeling. They can be used at the start of the group (for example, 'If I were an animal I would be a ...') or as a closing ritual (for example, 'If I were an animal now I would be a ...'). You can invite the children to give reasons if they wish to.

Sometimes it may be more appropriate for children to work initially in pairs on the warm-up activities suggested below, before working in the larger group. This allows less confident children to share ideas and build relationships. Change partners regularly so that everyone gets a chance to feel comfortable with each other.

When you have finished a warm-up game, try to explore with the children what they have learned.

Suggested warm-up activities

Find your match

Collect any pairs of objects (knife and fork, pencil and sharpener, connecting construction pieces) or half-pictures (old Christmas cards, simple coloured card). Issue one item to each child, who has to find the child with the matching object or picture.

Mirror games

Pairs take turns to mirror each other in movements, starting off slowly. Later they could be given feelings to express and mirror. The child doing the mirroring could then guess the feeling.

¹ **Note:** Many of these activities are well known and have been used in different settings under many names. We especially thank Jenny Mosley for her inspiration and support for us in using them.

Secret writing

Just using a finger, each partner draws or writes a simple word on the other's back or hand. The other has to guess what it is.

Serious sausages

Partners question each other about any topic, for example 'What are clouds made of?' The respondent always replies 'Sausages'. The aim is not to laugh.

Blindfold games

These particular trust-building games rely on a sense of trust already being established. Never force a blindfold onto a child; always ask for volunteers and use a loose scarf or aircraft-type sleeping mask that can be easily removed by the wearer. In the early stages play party games such as 'Squeak'. In this game the blindfolded child can sit and classmates come up and make animal noises. The child guesses their identity. When more trust is established, blindfolded children can be led around by hand or by verbal directions from partners.

Beanbag games

Using beanbags reduces the disruption caused by chasing after rolling balls. Group members call another's name and throws a beanbag to that child. If everyone begins in a standing-up position and sits down when they have thrown the bag, you can make sure they have all had a turn. Once a pattern has been established, new bags can be thrown in and passed around the same order of children. This gets increasingly fun and challenging the more bags are thrown in. Group facilitators can hold the bags at their turn to stop the game slowly.

Blast off!

The children count down from the total number present. Each child can say only one number. This means that everyone has to say a number to reach 'one'. When this happens, all call 'Blast Off!' They can call out at random, but must not call at the same time. If they do, they have to start again.

Traditional games

Playing familiar playground games in the group offers predictability and practice in games that can be used in the playground with other peers. Examples might be *Duck duck goose*, *Oranges and lemons*, *Wink murder*, *Ring a ring of roses*, *What's the time Mr Wolf?*, *Simon says* or *Hunt the thimble* (using louder or softer clapping to indicate how 'warm' or close the finder is).

Copying actions

The group leader starts an action, which the children copy. The leader then changes the action and the children copy. Once a range of movements has been established, a child can initiate the actions.

Passing games

Passing an object around encourages turn-taking skills. Once established, the game can be adapted – for example, passing an object and telling the neighbour what it is not (perhaps passing a pencil and saying ‘Here is an orange’). As more objects are introduced it becomes more challenging to remember their fictitious identities.

Zoom eek

Imagining a car zooming round the circle, children pass the word ‘zoom’ with both hands pointing as it passes. Encourage eye contact with neighbours. Later, introduce the word ‘eek’, which bounces the zoom in the reverse direction. Explore the sense of cooperation and the feelings of frustration that this causes. To ensure that everyone gets a turn, say that a new game can be played once the zoom has gone all the way round.

Walking around the room

Get the children to walk around the room. Notice and praise those who give each other space. Get them to practise freezing so they have a routine for stopping in a fun way. Then give them descriptions of how to walk, first concrete then according to feelings, which can be linked to the topic of the group. Examples might be:

- walking silently, sliding, stamping;
- walking as if you are feeling a little/quite/very: happy, sad, scared or angry (you could use the emotional barometer for this);
- walking as if you are with good friends;
- walking as if you have no friends;
- walking as if you have just done something great;
- walking away from doing something bad.

Fight, flight, flow

The group stands inside a small circle made from rope or cushions. Someone (a group facilitator at first) stands outside the circle. Shuffle cards with characters on them and quickly call out who the character is. Choose a range of friendly or frightening ones that the children would know, generic or particular (for example a ghost, police officer, Mum, Dad, a child who bullies others, a barking dog, a dragon). The person outside the circle acts the role of the character; the other children decide whether to run to the safety of the centre of the circle (flight), confront the character (fight) or be friendly with it (flow). (This exercise can give an opportunity to explore a range of appropriate responses to threat and to discuss the feeling of being scared.)

Core activities for *New beginnings*

You will need two large dolls or puppets and one smaller beanie. These will be used throughout the Silver set. Ideally they will be representative of the ethnic mix of the school. We suggest that you name them yourself, but for the purpose of these materials we have called them Zotty and Zeb. It will help to have a small beanie for the rounds and for some of the other activities.

Nine core activities are suggested here, of which you will want to choose about six for your group-work intervention.

Core activity 1

Intended learning outcomes

- I know I belong to my class/group.
- I feel good about the ways we are similar in the group and the ways I am different.

Key vocabulary

Session

welcome same different

General

feelings happy excited sad/upset

scared/worried comfortable uncomfortable belong

solve a problem nervous/worried calm down welcome

set a goal

Resources

- A large picture of a tree without leaves, or a small branch with twigs stuck into a sand pot. This should be available at each session, and known as the group tree.
- Card leaf shapes, with a circle or face shape drawn on one side (these need to be attached to the group tree). You will need four for each member of the group plus some spares.
- Old picture cards cut in half, with enough halves for each child. If there is an odd number of children in the group then the facilitator will join in.
- Drawing materials and card

What to do

Go round the circle and ask each child to say:

'Hello, my name is ...'

Give a half-card at random to each child. Without speaking, each child has to find the person with the other half of the card and sit next to them.

The children should tell each other three things that they like (for example, that they like playing, doing, seeing or eating).

Children should be given three of the card leaf shapes, draw a happy face in the circle or face shape and on the other side write their likes. They might need help with this.

The children should return to the circle and take it in turns to say their likes, handing their leaves to the facilitator, who should mix them up to use in the next activity.

Play the following circle game:

Change places if you like ... (insert one of the 'likes' from the leaves made in the last activity).

Additional activity

Give out the leaves randomly. The children should take it in turns to say:

'My name is ... and I like ...' They should add what is on the leaf they are holding.

The others have to guess if the speaker really does like that thing.

Hang the leaves on the tree ready for next week.

Explain that you would like the group to have its own name, and ask the children to begin to think about what they would like to call their group, ready for the next session when they will decide on a name.

Follow-up

Give the children a blank leaf each and ask the class teacher to help each child to identify one thing they do during the week that they like. They should be helped to write it on the leaf to bring back to the group.

Note: Try not to suggest your own favourite thing first, as the children may feel they have to copy you in some way.

Core activity 2

Intended learning outcome

- I know what I have to do myself to make the classroom and school a safe and fair place for everyone, and that it is not OK for other people to make it unsafe or unfair.

Key vocabulary

Session

problem solving belonging feelings goal

General

feelings happy excited sad/upset

scared/worried comfortable uncomfortable belong

solve a problem nervous/worried calm down welcome

set a goal

Resources

- Card leaf shapes as for the last session, but a different colour
- Pens
- Old picture cards cut in half, with enough halves for each child. If there is an odd number of children in the group then the facilitator will join in.
- A magic wand
- A digital camera

What to do

Begin the session with a review of the last session, using the children's leaves as a reminder. You should also choose a group name.

Remind children of the first Theme 1 *New beginnings* assembly when children were asked to write on leaves how they would like the school to be, and to stick these to a tree.

Wave the magic wand and say, 'Hocus, pocus didjeree dee, here is a group as kind (and hard working) as can be.'

Ask the children what kind things they would see in the best and kindest group they could be part of. Give them some thinking time.

Pair up the children, using the half-picture cards as in the last session. Each pair should talk together about what a kind group might be like. They should then share their ideas with the rest of the group. You might like to encourage them to think about what it would look like, feel like and sound like. The children or facilitator should write down or draw their ideas on the leaf shapes.

Attach these to your group tree and keep it for each group meeting as a reminder of what they want the group to be like, and what they have to do to achieve it.

The children might show the facilitators what the group would be like, and the facilitator might take a photograph. Talk about the characteristics of a 'magic', kind group and how you might recognise one.

The leaves and the photograph (if you have taken one) should be referred to when establishing the group aims for each session.

Follow-up

Ask the children to try to remember their class charter or class rules and tell you in the next session. The class teacher might help the children compare the ideas they came up with about what a kind group would be like with the ideas in the class charter or class rules, to see how they might be similar.

Core activity 3

Intended learning outcomes

- I know I belong to my class/group.
- I know that people in my group/class like me
- I know that I belong to a community

- I feel good about the ways we are similar in the group and the ways I am different.

Key vocabulary

Session

belonging welcome

General

feelings	happy	excited	sad/upset
scared/worried	comfortable	uncomfortable	set a goal
solve a problem	nervous/worried	calm down	

Resources

- Fruit shapes (laminated) or fuzzy balls that are labelled with supportive statements/beliefs. (The children will take them away to help them remember the positive things about themselves.)

Examples:

- I belong
- I am special
- I am kind
- I am loved
- I can work hard
- I make people happy
- I can make good things happen
- I can think about others
- I can stop and think before doing
- I can manage my anger
- I am calm and happy
- I am thoughtful

There should be enough fruit shapes or balls for the children to have a choice.

What to do

Explain that the group tree has given us some fruit to help us.

Read the statements on the tree and ask the children to choose one of the fruits. Help them to read it out. Explain that the child can be like this if they really want to. The facilitator should help the child to think about what it would/will be like if/when the statement is true. The child might draw a picture, write a sentence or tell the rest of the group, using the format:

‘When I ... then ...’

Alternatively, the group could work as a whole to describe what each person's statement might be like and produce a photograph of the person demonstrating how they would look and feel if/when the statement were true.

Follow-up

The children should take their fruit with them to show the class teacher. The teacher should help the child to live up to the positive statement on their fruit, and refer to this during the course of the week – for example:

'Well done, you are special/kind/thoughtful etc.'

Core activity 4

Intended learning outcome

- I can let you know if I feel happy, excited, scared or angry.

Key vocabulary

Session

feelings comfortable happy excited

General

sad/upset scared/worried uncomfortable belong
solve a problem nervous/worried calm down welcome
set a goal

Resources

- Pictures of people showing happy, sad, scared feelings, stuck on to card
- Three hoops
- Card leaves of a colour that is different from that used in earlier sessions

What to do

You will have already considered how the children got on with the fruit over the week. You might like to help them choose a new fruit or keep the one they have already chosen. During the session you should encourage them to demonstrate how they would feel and what they would do now that they have chosen the statement.

Put the pictures you have collected into the centre of the circle. Ask the children to sort them by placing them into the three hoops. Ask children to collect more feelings pictures for future sessions.

Place the pictures upside down in the centre of the circle. The children should take it in turns to pick a card and show what the feeling looks like.

The other children should guess what feeling is on the card. You should encourage them by saying things like:

'Oh, I think you look happy because your mouth is turned up, your eyes look sparkly, and your head is held high.'

Recap with the children about the feelings that they have learned about and write them on the leaves to hang on the tree.

Follow-up

The children should show their class teacher what one of the feelings they have talked about looks like. Ask them to notice a time during the week when they have had one of the feelings – happy, sad or scared – and tell the group about it at the next session.

Core activity 5

Intended learning outcomes

- I can let you know if I feel happy, excited, scared or angry.
- I know how to make someone feel welcome.

Key vocabulary

Session

feelings	comfortable	happy	excited
scared	worried		

General

sad/upset	uncomfortable	belong	solve a problem
nervous/worried	calm down	welcome	set a goal

Resources

- Pictures as for last session
- Zeb
- Card leaves of a colour that is different from that used in earlier sessions

What to do

Lay out the picture cards from the last session. Explain that Zeb has come to see them because he wants their help. His parents have told him that he is going to go to a new school.

Say something like, 'I wonder how Zeb might feel. What picture might show this feeling?'

Zeb explains that he is feeling bad because he doesn't know any of the children.

Ask, 'How do you think Zeb would like to feel?' The children should choose a picture to show this feeling.

Ask the children:

'What might Zeb do to help himself feel better?'

Record the children's answers. Try out the suggestions – for example, relax, think of what he might say to the other children and so on.

Have Zeb explain that this makes him feel a bit better but that he is still feeling a bit scared because he doesn't know what to do. Sometimes in his last school his teacher was cross with him. He doesn't want this to happen.

Explain that Zeb has to go, and put him away.

Ask the children how they might help Zeb. What should Zeb do? What could the children at Zeb's new school do to make sure he is OK? Suggest that they might write a letter to the children at the new school. Scribe the ideas, for example:

Dear Children

This is our friend Zeb. He is coming to your school. He is scared because he doesn't know anyone at the new school. Can you ...

(add the children's ideas)

He is scared because he thinks he might get into trouble because he doesn't know what to do and he might make a mistake. Can you ...

(add the children's ideas)

Love

(write the name of the group).

Have Zeb come back. Give the letter to Zeb to give to the children at his new school.

Write some things that the group has learned on the leaves and hang them on the tree – for example, 'We helped other children to welcome Zeb to his new school.'

Follow-up

The children should try to make someone feel welcome in their class. This might be a child who has not been in the class very long, or a 'visitor' arranged by the class teacher. You might like to give the class teacher stickers or certificates to give to the children to show they have been successful.

Core activity 6

Intended learning outcomes

- I know some ways to calm myself down when I feel scared or upset or excited.
- I know what I have to do myself to make the classroom and school a safe and fair place for everyone, and that it is not OK for other people to make it unsafe or unfair.
- I can help to make the class a safe and fair place.

Key vocabulary

Session

solve a problem calm down stop and think

General

feelings happy excited sad/upset
scared/worried comfortable uncomfortable belong
nervous/worried welcome set a goal

Resources

- Card leaves of a colour that is different from that used in earlier sessions
- Three small red, green and blue cardboard 'doors', labelled with notices you have in your school – for example:

School office	Headteacher Meeting in progress. Please wait.	Hall Please do not walk through when a PE lesson is in progress.
----------------------	--	--

- A letter from the children at Zeb's new school (in an envelope) as follows:

Dear children in group ... (give the name of the group if you have chosen one)

Thank you for your letter. We think that Zeb is a really nice friend. We made him welcome by:

(add the ideas from the previous session)

Poor Zeb did try very hard but he made one big mistake. You know Zeb likes to be quick.

He is

- a rapid runner;
- a swift swimmer;
- an eager eater;
- a hurried handwriter and
- a hasty helper.

He is so quick he doesn't have time to think.

I was asked to look after him on his first day. It is my job to take the register to the office. Zeb came with me.

I wanted to go carefully down the stairs, but Zeb jumped down three at a time.

I wanted to hold hands, but Zeb couldn't wait.

I wanted to walk carefully down the corridor, because the floor is very slippery, but Zeb raced away.

At the end of the long corridor there are three doors – a red one in front, a green one on the left and a blue one on the right. The doors have notices on them. They looked like this. *** STOP READING

Zeb rushed up and opened the green door. There was a very important meeting going on. The headteacher was cross, very cross, but she tried not to be. I dragged Zeb out.

I like Zeb and I wondered if you could help him.

Love

Zeb's new friend Zotty

What to do

Explain that the group has received a letter. Take it out of the envelope and read it to the children. When you get to the stars (*** STOP READING), show the children the three doors with the notices on them. Ask the children what Zeb might see if he opens each door. Ask them which door Zeb and Zotty should open.

Read to the end of the letter.

Bring Zeb out of his bag and give him advice on how to behave in this school.

Discuss the school rule for walking around the building and going into other rooms. Do you knock and wait, just knock or go in without knocking and wait?

The children should show Zeb how to walk round the school. Hold up one of the 'doors' so they can show Zeb how he should respond in the right way to the notice on the door. The facilitator could role-play the voice of the person in the room. Repeat for other doors.

Emphasise how the children are helping Zeb to 'stop and think' before he does things. Ask them for examples of other situations in his new school where he might need to stop and think/calm himself down before he does things.

Write on a cardboard leaf or leaves a summary of the learning in the group and hang it on the tree – for example, 'We helped Zeb to stop and think' or 'We helped Zeb to calm down and slow down' or 'We helped Zotty and Zeb to solve a problem'.

Follow-up

The children should all try to 'stop and think' rather than act impulsively during the week. The class teacher should try to spot when they have done this and give them feedback.

Core activity 7

Intended learning outcomes

- I can learn the rules that help me/I know what to do in my classroom/setting.
- I know what I have to do myself to make the classroom and school a safe and fair place for everyone, and that it is not OK for other people to make it unsafe or unfair.
- I know some ways to solve a problem.

Key vocabulary

Session

rules stop and think

General

feelings	happy	excited	sad/upset
scared/worried	comfortable	uncomfortable	belong
solve a problem	nervous/worried	calm down	welcome set a goal

Resources

- Zeb
- A copy of the class charter or rules
- A digital camera
- Card leaves of a colour that is different from that used in earlier sessions

What to do

Place Zotty and Zeb in the circle.

Explain that Zeb has come to ask the group for help.

Remind the children of the day Zeb crashed into the headteacher's office. Ask the children what Zeb did and what mistakes he made.

Zeb says he hasn't gone through any more doors without stopping to think. But he still got into trouble. This is what he did last week. Read the story below. You may want to change the story to fit the group – for example, altering some of the mistakes so that they are relevant to particular difficulties that children in the group may have.

Ask the children to put up their hands if they think Zeb got into trouble. They should then tell Zeb what they think he did wrong and what he could have done differently. Encourage them to speak to Zeb and not to you.

On Monday morning I was feeling hungry so I went to the fruit basket in the classroom and took an apple. I bit into the apple. My teacher was very cross.

On Monday afternoon I was working in a group. I did the drawing and listened to what the other children were saying.

On Tuesday morning I was doing my writing but it kept on going wrong so I broke my pencil in half.

At play time I helped put the chairs away.

On Wednesday I chatted to my friend in the playground and chatted to my friends when I was doing my maths work.

On Thursday morning the teacher asked me to take a message to the next class. I walked down the corridor. I knocked on the door. I waited until the teacher said, 'Come in!' One of my friends was in the class doing his work so I shouted hello to him.

I was playing with my friends in the playground. My friends told me to call another boy a silly name, so I did.

On Thursday afternoon it was football. I ran really fast and scored a goal.

On Friday I didn't want to do my writing so I sat and did nothing all afternoon.

I laughed at the story in assembly.

Ask the children how they know what to do when they are in class. Encourage them to look at the class charter. Take each 'rule' and show a way of keeping the rule and an example of breaking the rule. Take photographs and label them with:

... kept the rule by ...

... broke the rule by ...

Write a summary of what you have been doing on the leaf/leaves and hang it on the group tree – for example 'We helped Zeb to keep to the rules'.

Follow-up

Each child should choose one class rule or statement from their class charter, tell their class teacher which one they have chosen and try to keep to it. The class teacher should give them feedback. They should report back to the group in the form:

'I kept the rule by'

Core activity 8

Intended learning outcomes

- I can learn the rules that help me/I know what to do in my classroom/setting.
- I know what I have to do myself to make the classroom and school a safe and fair place for everyone, and that it is not OK for other people to make it unsafe or unfair.
- I know some ways to solve a problem.

Key vocabulary

Session

rules 'ready, steady, go'

General

feelings	happy	excited	sad/upset	
scared/worried	comfortable	uncomfortable	belong	
solve a problem	nervous/worried	calm down	welcome	set a goal

Resources

- Red, green, amber circles with Ready, Steady, Go written on them (Ready on red, Steady on amber, Go on green)
- A copy of the class charter
- Card leaves of a colour that is different from that used in earlier sessions
- Zotty and Zeb

What to do

Ask the children to think of situations where Zeb might make mistakes at their school. This might be done as a round. Pass Zeb round the circle, asking each child to say:

'Zeb might get in trouble when ...'

Take one of the children's ideas and go through one of the situations in detail. Ideally, act this out using Zotty and Zeb. For example:

Zeb was sitting at his desk. He was trying to do his work.

He was stuck.

He looked around.

Zotty was at the teacher's desk.

He got up.

He went up to Zotty and he took her work and hid it in her desk.

Replay the same situation, this time giving the children a red, amber and green circle each and using a set yourself.

Model for the children holding up the red (Ready) circle when they think that Zeb should stop and think.

Hold up an amber (Steady) circle and ask the children to think through what Zeb should do instead. Remind them of the rule that Zeb is going to break.

Hold up a green (Go) circle and finish the story with the new idea.

Try the same process with some of the children's ideas from the round. Ideally, the children will take it in turns to act out their own ideas. The others should hold up their circles.

Write on the leaf a summary of the session – for example, 'We learned about our charter/rules'. Hang the leaf/leaves on the tree.

Follow-up

The children should practise using 'Ready, steady, go' when they might make a mistake about a rule, with the help of their class teacher. They should report back on how it went.

Core activity 9

Intended learning outcome

- Review of intended learning outcomes from previous sessions.

Key vocabulary

General

feelings	comfortable	happy	sad/upset	
scared/worried	excited	uncomfortable	belong	
solve a problem	nervous/worried	calm down	welcome	set a goal

Resources

- Zeb and Zotty

What to do

Explain that Zeb and Zotty have come to say thank you to the group. Say that Zeb hasn't been in trouble all week. Ask the group to show how they think Zeb is feeling. Encourage them to show the feeling with their faces and bodies.

Look at each child in turn and go through the elements that make you able to tell the feeling the child is trying to show. (For example, 'I can see that you think Zeb is feeling happy because your eyes are sparkly, your mouth is turned up to show you are smiling, your body is straight and confident.')

Remind the children of the group tree and the leaves and fruit that you have hung on the tree through the weeks of the group.

The children should each take a leaf off the tree. (Try to make sure leaves from all the weeks are chosen.) Use the leaf to help the child reflect upon what they did in one of the sessions.

The children might use the leaves to produce a short presentation to let their class know what they have been doing.

Follow-up

The children should do the presentation to their class as above.

Relaxation exercises

A routine of relaxation or visualisation exercises establishes a sense of closure and safety at the end of the group session, offers a chance to reflect on the learning that has taken place and can calm down a group ready for the next lesson. Children may have their own cushion or towel to lie on. Ideally, the children should lie down comfortably, with their eyes either closed or covered, with the lights dimmed. Alternatively, they could stay in their seats.

Suggested relaxation exercises

Breathing by numbers

Get the children to try breathing by using their abdomens rather than by chest expansion. They can rest a hand on their chest to see the difference. You will need to model this before counting. Say 'I want you to breathe in for four counts and out for six. In – one, two, three, four; out – one, two, three, four, five, six.' Do this just five times at first.

You can extend the exercise by encouraging the children to breathe in through the nose, and out slower and longer, through pursed lips. You can extend this to relax on the exhale using the techniques below in *Tense and loose*.

Tense and loose

Get the children to tense and relax (in turn) their feet, legs, buttocks, back, shoulders, arms, hands, neck and finally face. Use timings appropriate to the children's concentration, from five seconds tensing and ten seconds relaxing, to longer stretches. Use a range of vocabulary to emphasise the skills – harder, stronger, tighter, fiercer, then calmer, softer, letting go, ease, looser.

For a quicker version, concentrate on legs, hands or face. You could say, for example:

'Lying flat on your back, feel the floor touching your body. I will name a part of your body (*check the children know these*) and then tell you to squeeze and tense it as hard as you can. You should feel that part become hot and tired. When I say relax, stop tensing and feel it become limp, floppy and calm. Try to just work on that one part at a time. We will work on different parts as we go.'

Melting in the sun

Paint an accessible verbal picture of the group lying in the sun. This could be lying in the playground or on the sand on holiday. Point out that imaginary sun bathing is healthier than risking sunburn!

'... The sun is heating up your body. You can feel it warming you up through your clothes, through your skin... it's warming you right through to your muscles. Even your bones are getting hot. Your body starts to feel soft and loose. Feel your face become softer. Your jaw relaxes, slightly open. You can feel your muscles start to slip off your bones. Feel your legs melting. Your arms are slowly melting into the floor ...'

After a few minutes, start bringing the children back to reality, for example saying:

'A cloud covers the sun and you start to cool, but you still keep the warmth inside you. Feel the hard floor underneath you and your own body being strong but still relaxed. In

your own time open your eyes, see where you are and slowly sit up and smile at the others in the room.'

The mysterious shop

Paint a different kind of word picture for the group, saying:

'You are going down to your local shops and notice a strange old shop that you have never seen before. You go in and look around. It is full of shelves of old and interesting things. You find a shelf in a dark corner. At the back of it is something of yours that you have not seen for a long time. You pick it up and remember how it felt, how it smelt, and how heavy it was. The shopkeeper smiles at you and says that you can take it for free. It is wrapped up in lots of brown paper and you carry it out of the shop. You carefully take it home and put it in a special place. When you look at it you remember the happy times that it gave you. Now hold that feeling in your head, slowly open your eyes and smile at the other people in the group.'

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