




9. CARVING OUT YOUR PLACE! Maintaining healthy friendships through prosocial behaviour.

<p>Targeted competency(ies) (ÉKIP, WHO)</p>	<p>ADOPTING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR MAINTAINING GOOD INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS SELF-ACCEPTANCE</p>
<p>Cross-curricular competencies (QEP)</p>	<p>COOPERATING USING CREATIVE THINKING ACHIEVING THEIR POTENTIAL</p>
<p>General workshop objectives</p>	<p>AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP, THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize the importance of healthy friendships in tackling life’s challenges • recognize the importance of choosing themselves first and foremost • apply strategies for getting out of uncomfortable interpersonal situations • adopt new prosocial behaviour to develop and maintain quality relationships

Total duration

60-MINUTE version, follow all steps

40-MINUTE version, DO NOT do the activities marked with the  icon

Materials and preparation

Materials required

- One large sheet of paper per six students for the “Twelve skilled hands” exercise, and the “Your secret mission” worksheet
- Markers (for drawing)
- Chalkboard and two chalk colours or interactive digital board (IDB)

A. Twelve skilled hands (20-25 minutes)

TIP FOR FACILITATORS

In order to encourage the students' social skills, it's important that you don't interact with the groups. All interactions will be useful for discussion purposes. This way, a student who doesn't participate much or one who monopolizes the conversation can be topics for discussion later on. During the class discussion, the idea is to highlight the different ways the groups worked and not to pass judgment on their methods.

1. Form groups of six students. Ask each one to get into a good position for group work (desks pushed together, sitting on the floor, etc.).
2. Then describe the exercise to the class: Each group has 10 minutes (seven minutes for schools with 40 minutes) to do a group drawing on the theme of their choice. Give some examples of themes (friendship, justice, music, sports, environment, travel, etc.), as needed. There are no restrictions. Specify that you won't answer any questions during the exercise. The only time you'll speak is halfway through the exercise, to tell them how much time is left. If the students insist on asking questions, simply remind them how much time they have left to finish their drawing.
3. Now ask each group to appoint someone in charge of the material and ask these people to join you at the front of the class. Give them the material (a large blank sheet of paper and markers), then discreetly give them a small piece of paper with a SECRET mission written on it that they must perform during the activity (see the *Your secret mission* worksheet). Ask them to read it before returning to their group. Here's what's written on the piece of paper:

Your secret mission

When I say that we're at the halfway point, you should suddenly, but subtly, adopt a negative attitude (look discouraged, sigh, stop drawing, sit away from the group, make a negative comment about the drawing, refuse to continue participating, say "Ugh, this is so ugly!" or "This activity is so boring," etc.). Keep this negative attitude up for as long as your group members fail to notice it or do anything about it. If they react (e.g., by questioning you, worrying about you, encouraging you to keep going, trying to get you interested in the activity again... or getting impatient!), you can decide whether you want to keep up your negative attitude or continue drawing with your group.

4. Ask the students in charge of the material to return to their groups without revealing their SECRET mission.
5. Give the signal to start the group exercise. Keep an eye on the time. (The exercise should last 10 minutes, or seven minutes for schools with 40 minutes).
6. Halfway through, let the groups know that they have five minutes (or three and a half minutes) left to finish their group drawing. At this point, the students with a secret mission will start acting out their role. Don't get involved!

7. Once the time is up, ask the groups to briefly describe their drawings to the class. Ask them the following questions (schools with 40 minutes can ask fewer questions):
 - How did your group decide on your theme?
 - Did your group decide on the specific roles for each member, or did everyone naturally take their place in the group?
 - Did you rely on the talents of certain group members to do the drawing?
 - Did all group members contribute equally to the drawing?
 - How did you personally react to the student who developed a negative attitude halfway through?
 - How did you resolve the situation as a group? (Reveal the secret mission at this point, if you haven't already!)
 - How did you feel about the others during the activity?
 - Does your personal contribution to the drawing reflect your usual role in group activities?
 - What parallels can you draw between your contribution to the group drawing and your role in your group of friends or with your classmates?
8. Finish the activity by mentioning the importance of students finding a comfortable place among their peers. Having friends to talk to about what you're going through creates a sense of security and support during the transition to adolescence. Each individual has a unique and important role to play in a group (Claes *et al.*, 2005).

B. Video: Nadège and friendships – Part 1

C. The umbrella effect (10 minutes)

1. Briefly recap the video by pointing out that friendships seem to be very important to Nadège despite the issues she's having.
2. Explain that carving out a place for yourself in a group is a very important part of adolescence. Expand with this thought:

DIGGING DEEPER

Friendships

According to several researchers, successfully fitting in with a peer group and forming friendships act as protective factors when it comes to the many changes that accompany the start of adolescence, whether physical, family related, social, or academic. In fact, heart-to-heart conversations with friends can help to lessen the anxiety related to transitioning to adolescence; they can also help to increase self-esteem and coping skills. Friendships also create feelings of security and well-being. Finally, friendships are an important source of support during stressful events. Researchers have found that the quality of friendships is more important than the number of friends a person has.

(Claes *et al.*, 2005)

DIGGING DEEPER

Friendships (cont.)

Conversely, feeling alienated (angry, distant) from your friends is linked to mental health issues, such as symptoms of depression and anxiety. A lack of friendships, or poor-quality or rocky friendships are also risk factors for the eventual appearance of mental health disorders such as anxiety.

(Claes *et al.*, 2005)



Making friends is one of the main things young people worry about. These friendships also play a very important role in how well you adapt to all the changes you're facing (puberty, first romantic relationships, family dynamics and your quest for independence, fitting in and doing well at school, etc.). Having friends makes you feel braver, more optimistic, and good about yourself. Also, knowing that you can share your innermost thoughts with a close friend can help you to better navigate difficult situations (e.g., an argument with your parents, a breakup, a bad grade). On the other hand, when you feel left out or uncomfortable and "out of place" in your group, you may feel more stress and sadness. You may also feel like you're lacking the strength to get through life's challenges.

3. Use the umbrella metaphor to illustrate your point:



Imagine that you're hiking in the forest when you're suddenly caught in a torrential downpour. You have an umbrella in your backpack. You quickly take it out and open it up to protect yourself from the rain. Phew! Even though it's pouring, now you won't get wet (or at least not too wet). Even though the rain caught you off guard, forcing you to change your plans, you can still appreciate this force of nature and maybe even have a good laugh! But without an umbrella, you would have been soaked, possibly angry, and very uncomfortable...

4. Explain to the students that fitting in with a group is like having an umbrella.



As mentioned earlier, it helps us to feel good, safe, and even stronger in some difficult situations. But, just as an umbrella won't stop the rain from falling, having friends doesn't prevent us from encountering difficult situations. However, our friendships let us face these situations with more confidence and courage.

5. Continue the metaphor:



A single umbrella in good condition has a better chance of keeping you dry and standing up to the wind. On the other hand, opening multiple umbrellas at the same time, some of which may be broken or full of holes, won't protect you any better from the rain.

6. Conclude with the following: "It's better to have a few good friends you can count on (*a good umbrella!*) than a bunch of people you don't feel comfortable with or who don't care about you!"

D. Navigating troubled waters... (10 minutes)

1. Referring to Nadège's situation in the video with her group of friends, ask the students the following questions (you can write their answers on the board):
 - Why do you think Nadège stays in her group of friends, even though she's increasingly uncomfortable with their behaviour? (Focus on her fear of being rejected, being judged, and feeling alone.)
 - Do you ever lose sight of yourself, like Nadège, or disrespect yourself to fit in with others?
 - What advice would you give Nadège?
2. End by saying that while there are a lot of attitudes conducive to making and maintaining friendships, the challenge is to apply them while still staying true to yourself, your values, and your needs.

E. A few strategies... (5 minutes)

1. End the workshop by suggesting a list of strategies (prosocial attitudes and behaviours), shown in the PowerPoint presentation, which they can apply in their daily lives to make, improve, or maintain friendships (taken from Kids Help Phone, n.d.; Mayo Clinic, 2016; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.), or even to get out of uncomfortable relationships (D'ansembourg, 2001; Motoi and Villeneuve, 2006).


To make friends

- Smile, be calm
- Use humour
- Appreciate the person, show interest in them
- Compliment their accomplishments and skills
- Make eye contact with the person you're talking to or who is talking to you
- Practise active listening, show signs that you're listening (agree, nod)
- Take the first steps to talk to someone
- Ask questions about the other person's situation and experiences
- Take the time to listen before resuming the discussion
- Identify shared interests
- Wait your turn to talk and give others a chance to speak up
- Participate in the discussion
- Use a calm, steady tone of voice

To maintain good relationships

- Listen attentively
- Get involved, show interest in others
- Open up, learn to talk about yourself



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- Express yourself clearly and honestly
 - Take initiative, talk about your ideas and projects
 - See and respect other people's points of view
 - Criticize opinions and behaviours, not people
 - Accept criticism from others and tolerate differences
 - Encourage, help, and compliment others
 - Have a sense of humour

To get out of uncomfortable relationships

- Talk to friends about what's making you uncomfortable
- Identify and express your needs
- Find an ally
- Actively look for solutions
- Develop other relationships at the same time
- Gradually distance yourself from people who are bad for you
- Leave the group when you disapprove of their behaviour
- Choose activities where the situation is less obvious

F. Video: Nadège and friendship – Part 2 and REMINDER HORS-PISTE challenge (5 minutes)

This week, ask students to think about their friendships. Suggest the following questions: Where do you fit in with your group of friends? How do you feel about your friends (good, comfortable, uncomfortable, unhappy)? Ask the students to look at the list of strategies and to choose two that they'd like to apply during the week to improve the quality of their friendships.

Worksheet
Your secret mission

<p style="text-align: center;">SECRET MISSION</p> <p>You have a secret role to play during the activity. When I say that we're at the halfway point (5 minutes), you should suddenly, but subtly, adopt a negative attitude (look discouraged, sigh, stop drawing, sit away from the group, make a negative comment about the drawing, refuse to continue participating, say "Ugh, this is so ugly!" or "This activity is so boring," etc.). Keep this negative attitude up for as long as your group members fail to notice it or do anything about it. If they react (e.g., by questioning you, worrying about you, encouraging you to keep going, trying to get you interested in the activity again... or getting impatient!), you can decide whether you want to keep up your negative attitude or continue drawing with your group.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SECRET MISSION</p> <p>You have a secret role to play during the activity. When I say that we're at the halfway point (5 minutes), you should suddenly, but subtly, adopt a negative attitude (look discouraged, sigh, stop drawing, sit away from the group, make a negative comment about the drawing, refuse to continue participating, say "Ugh, this is so ugly!" or "This activity is so boring," etc.). Keep this negative attitude up for as long as your group members fail to notice it or do anything about it. If they react (e.g., by questioning you, worrying about you, encouraging you to keep going, trying to get you interested in the activity again... or getting impatient!), you can decide whether you want to keep up your negative attitude or continue drawing with your group.</p>
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