

GROUP ACTIVITIES RESOURCE  
for the  
CHILD AND YOUTH MILITARY AND FAMILY LIFE COUNSELOR  
(CYB-MFLC)



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Group Activities Resource for Child and Youth Behavioral Military and Family Life Counselors (CYB-MFLC). This resource is intended to provide CYB-MFLCs with group activities for children of different ages on a variety of in scope topics. These activities can stand alone or utilized in a series.

Please note that this is an INTERNAL USE RESOURCE ONLY and none of the material included is intended for distribution on military installations or in schools.



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# ICE BREAKERS



ACTIVITY	SLIDE NUMBER
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# Instructions to “I’ve got mail”

## Instructions:

### Introduce the topic:

Today we are going to do a fun activity that will help us get to know one another and also learn some things we may have in common with others.

### Activity

- The facilitator stands outside the circle and calls out “I’ve got mail for everyone who....”, fills in the blank with a statement that will affect some of the group (see ideas below). Anyone who is affected must stand up and find another chair. The game should begin with “safe” statements and move to statements that are more self-disclosing as the game continues.
- If a large group of children stand up, the adult should quickly remove one of the chairs from the circle as soon as the kids stand up and begin moving. Any child who cannot find a chair moves outside the circle and helps the adult come up with ideas for the next “I’ve got mail”.
- Here are some ideas:
  - I've got mail for everyone who has a little brother
  - I've got mail for everyone who has a big sister
  - I've got mail for everyone who has been to France
  - I’ve got mail for everyone who has a deployed parent
  - I’ve got mail for everyone who is new to this school
  - I've got mail for everyone who has a dog
  - I've got mail for everyone who ate cornflakes for breakfast this morning
  - I've got mail for everyone who likes (celebrity)
- **Discussion:**
  - Did anyone notice someone they have something in common with?
  - Did anyone learn something about a person that was surprising?
  - Etc.
- **Closing ritual:** Today in group I learned.....

# I'VE GOT MAIL



Goal: To provide an opportunity for children to share information about themselves as well as learn things that they may have in common with others.

Ages: Can be adapted for all ages beginning with preschool.

Materials required:

Chairs, however, this game can be played by children standing in a circle and changing places within the circle if they fit the category.

# Instructions to “Two Truths and a Lie”

- **Instructions:**
- **Introduce the topic:** Today we are going to help you get to know one another better and build friendships with others in the group.
- **Activity**
- Have everyone sit in a circle. Each person prepares three statements, two of which are true and one of which is a lie. In any order, the person shares the three statements to the entire group. The object of the game is to figure out which statement a lie. The rest of the group votes on each statement, and the person reveals which one is the lie.
- **Variation: *Two Truths and a Dream Wish*.** As an interesting variation to the classic Two Truths and a Lie icebreaker, people may also play a version called Two Truths and a Dream Wish. Instead of stating a lie, a person says something that is not true — yet something that they wish to be true. For example, someone that has never been to Hawaii might say: “I have visited Hawaii when I was young.” This interesting spin often leads to unexpected, fascinating results, as people often share touching wishes about their lives.
- **Closing ritual:** Today in group I learned.....

# TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE



- Goal: To help group members become acquainted and foster positive peer relationships.
- Ages: Works best with tweens and teens, but can be adapted for younger age groups.
- Materials required: None





# Instructions to “The Name Game”

- **Instructions:**
- **Introduce the topic:**
- Today we are going to do a fun activity to help the group members learn each other’s names to help develop friendships.
- **Activity**
- Have everyone sit in a circle. One person starts and states their name. The next person in the circle then repeats that child’s name and then their own name. The children continue to go around the circle in the same manner, stating the names before them and then their own name. The last person must repeat all the children’s names.
- **Variation:** With the group standing in a circle, have the participants each choose an action for every syllable of their name. Example: Elvis has 2 syllables, so he does a hip shake with “El” and snaps his fingers for “vis”. Once Elvis has done his action while saying his name, the whole group repeats. After the 2nd person does his/her name, the whole group repeats, then does Elvis’s again. And so on ‘til everyone’s done.
- **Closing ritual:** Today in group I learned.....

# THE NAME GAME

- Goal: To help group members become acquainted and foster positive peer relationships.
- Ages: Works best with elementary age children through high school.
- Materials required: None



Hello  
my name is



# Instructions to “Getting to Know You”

## **Instructions:**

**Introduce the topic:** Today we are going to do a fun activity to help everyone get to know one another better and help develop new friendships.

## **Activity**

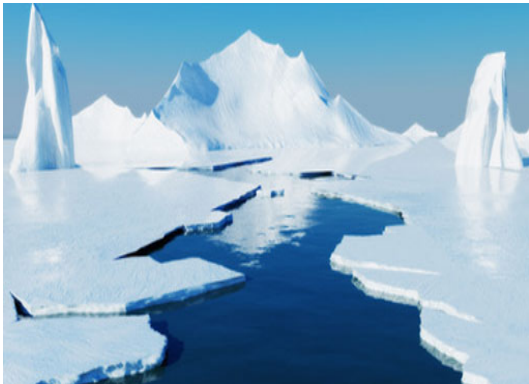
Children (and facilitator) stand in a circle. The facilitator starts off the game by throwing a beanbag or ball at someone in the circle and asking a question at the same time - such as "What's your name?", "Do you have a brother or sister?", "What's your favorite color?" , How many places have you lived?, How many schools have you been to?, Do you have a deployed parent? and so on. The person who catches the beanbag/ball must answer the question and then throw it on and ask their own question. The game works best if you keep it moving quite quickly, so the facilitator may have to step in to prod very young children.

At the end you can engage the children in a discussion about what they learned about others, who they have things in common with, did anything about anyone surprise them, etc.

**Closing ritual:** Today in group I learned.....

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- Goal: To help children get to know one another and foster positive peer relationships
- Ages: Four and up
- Materials required: None

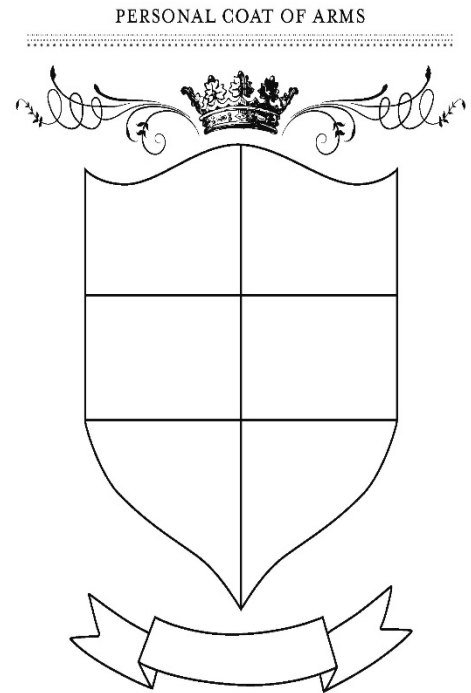


# “My Personal Coat of Arms” Instructions

- **Instructions**
- **Introduce the topic:**
- Today we are going to do a quiet activity that will help everyone get to know each other better in order to help build friendships in this group.
- **Activity**
- A fun but “quiet” ice-breaking activity for a group of older children. Finished coat of arms make a fabulous display for a classroom or meeting place, or to allow them to take home.
- Give each child a piece of white paper and crayons, markers, or colored pencils. Tell them to copy the coat of arms template, creating between 4 and 6 sections. Explain that a coat is a shield with symbols and figures that represent a family, person, a group or other organization. An example of a **coat of arms** is a **family crest**. Instruct them to illustrate the coat of arms to tell things about themselves in each section. It is a good idea to suggest the following possibilities if children are slow to start:
  - What their interests are
  - Where they come from
  - Favorite colors, animals, or sports
  - Their families or pets
  - Places they have visited or want to visit
  - Places you have lived
- After the children take 15-20 minutes to create their personal coat of arms, ask them to stand up, one by one, hold up their coat of arms, and explain the design to the other children.
- At the end the facilitator can discuss with the children what they learned about one another, who they have things in common with, if anything was surprising, etc.
- **Closing ritual:** Today in group I learned.....

# MY PERSONAL COAT OF ARMS

- Goal: To help children get to know one another and foster positive peer relationships
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: White paper, crayons, colored pencils



# MAKING FRIENDS

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BEING A FRIEND	22
BEING IN A CLIQUE	24



# Instructions to “Introducing Yourself”

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce the topic:** “Today we are going to talk about the proper way to introduce yourselves to others.”
- **Mini Lecture:** Tell the group: “There are specific steps that people usually follow when they introduce themselves to others, what are some of those steps?” Have the children brainstorm and write their responses on a white board. Make sure to include the following points if they have not been stated.
  - 1. When people are meeting for the first time, it’s polite to tell each other their names.
  - 2. They try to appear friendly and interested in the person they are meeting.
  - 3. Grownups usually shake hands too.
  - 4. First impressions make a difference, so when you meet someone new:

## Stand up

- ❖ Look the other person in the eye

- ❖ Smile

- ❖ Say, “Hi. I’m \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Sharing/self disclosure:** Choose two children to role-play introducing each other. Then ask each child to choose another person and introduce one to the other, until the entire group has been introduced.

**Closing ritual** – “Today in group I learned.....”



# INTRODUCING YOURSELF

- Goal: To teach children the proper way to introduce themselves
- Ages: Works best with elementary age children
- Materials required: None



# “Meeting New People” Instructions

- **Instructions:**
- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to talk about meeting new people. This is especially important for military kids who attend a lot of different schools and are meeting new people all the time.”
- **Mini lecture:** “Most people want to be friends with others, but meeting new people isn’t always easy. It takes time to get to know another person.” Spend a few minutes having them respond to the question: “Why is it sometimes hard to meet new people?” “What do you think the first step is when trying to meet someone new?”
- Make sure they include that the first step is starting a conversation. Try to think of something the other person might be interested in—something the two of you might both have experienced, such as, “How long have you been at this school?” or “What other places have you lived?” Once you begin a conversation, the other person will usually join in, and you’ll be on your way to forming a friendship. When you feel comfortable with the other person, you can usually plan to do something together.
- **Sharing/Self disclosure:**
- Call on volunteers to talk about their friendships—old or new—and how they developed. Ask them to try to remember everything they did to build these friendships. Then, pair children who don’t know each other well. Tell them to talk with each other to find out what they have in common—what they each like to do and why, their families, their pets, their favorite subjects in school, and so on. Each pair can then share what they have learned about each other with the group.
- **Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”

# MEETING NEW PEOPLE

- Goal: To teach children to build and enhance relationships with peers
- Ages: Elementary age and up
- Materials required: None



# “True Friends” Instruction

- **Instructions:**
- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to talk about what it means to have “true” friends versus being in the “popular” group.
- **Mini lecture:** “Sometimes, children really want to be part of a popular group. When they get to know the children in that group, they often find that they don’t like them very much. Just being in a specific group of children doesn’t make you happy; having friends who care about you and treat you well does.” Ask the children, “What does it mean to be popular in your school? With this idea in mind, think about your true friends. Do they like you? Do they accept you? Do they admire you? The answer to these questions is probably yes. As long as you have true friends, it doesn’t matter whether your group is considered to be popular or not.”
- **Sharing/Self disclosure:**
- Thinking about a good friend, have the children write down and answer the following questions:
- My friend likes me because \_\_\_\_\_  
I like my friend because \_\_\_\_\_
- My friend’s favorite thing to do is \_\_\_\_\_
- My friend and I like to \_\_\_\_\_ together.
- My friend admires me because \_\_\_\_\_.
- My friend is really great because \_\_\_\_\_.
- Two things my friend and I have in common are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- Here’s a picture of my friend:
- If they want to, they can give the completed sheet to your friend.
- Call on volunteers to talk about their friendships—old or new—and how they developed. Ask them to try to remember everything they did to build these friendships. Then, pair children who don’t know each other well. Tell them to talk with each other to find out what they have in common—what they each like to do and why, their families, their pets, their favorite subjects in school, and so on. Each pair can then share what they have learned about each other with the group.
- **Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”

# TRUE FRIENDS

- Goal: To teach children that having true friends is more important than being in a “popular” group.
- Ages: Elementary age and up
- Materials required: Blank sheet of paper, pen or pencil, crayons, markers



# “Being a Friend” Instruction

- **Instructions:**
- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to talk about what it really means to be a friend to someone.” Ask the students, “What does it mean to be a friend to someone?” Have them brainstorm ideas as you write them on the blackboard or a large sheet of paper.
- **Mini lecture:** “You can make a friend by being a friend to another person. Friendships come in all forms, but it is always important to make friends who will bring out the best in you and who will be there for you when you need them. People you choose as your friends will usually have some of the same interests you do. Here are some things kids have said are important to them when they make a friend:
  - • Treat your friends the way you want to be treated.
  - • When your friend is talking to you, always pay attention.
  - • If your friend tells you a secret, keep it. Don’t tell anyone.
  - • Always share things with your friend.
  - • Always tell your friend the truth.
  - • Always stick up for your friend.
  - • Take turns with your friend
- **Sharing/Self disclosure:**
  - On a blank sheet of paper have them first draw a picture of a friend.
  - Below that, have them answer the following:
    - Three things I really like about my friend are:
      - 1.
      - 2.
      - 3.
  - If the friend is in the group, ask them if they want to share what they wrote with that friend.
- **Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”

# BEING A FRIEND

- Goal: To teach children about positive friendships
- Ages: Elementary age and up
- Materials required: Blank sheet of paper, pen or pencil, crayons, markers



# “Understanding Cliques” Instruction

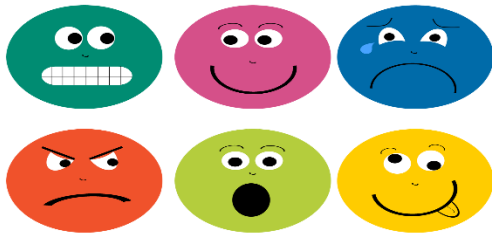
- **Instructions:**
- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to talk about what it means to be in a clique.” Ask the students to share their ideas about what a clique is and if they think there are cliques in their school.
- **Mini lecture:** “A clique is a group made up of friends who may look and act the same way. Usually, clique members don’t like to let other people into their group which makes other kids consider them snobby or stuck-up. One important thing to remember is that those in the clique are probably trying really hard to fit in and keep up with being part of the group. They have to be cool and always do whatever the clique considers the right thing. Often, they have to dress and look alike, which can put a lot of pressure on them. If they can’t keep up, they may get kicked out of the clique. If you’re not in a clique and you want to be, keep in mind that there’s no reason to limit your friendships. In the long run, it’s better to have a diverse group of friends from whom you can learn different things and with whom you can have different experiences
- **Sharing/Self disclosure:** Ask three or four children to sit in the middle of the group and act like a clique talking about their favorite movie or TV show. As volunteers try to join the conversation, clique members should continue to exclude them. After about ten minutes, have the clique rejoin the main group. Then, have a discussion about how it felt to be in the clique and how it felt to be excluded.
- **Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”



# UNDERSTANDING CLIQUES

- Goal: To teach children the negative aspects of being in a clique
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: None





# FEELINGS ACTIVITIES

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# Identifying Feelings

## Instructions:

**Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to talk about recognizing feelings we may have throughout the day.”

**Mini lecture:** Tell them: “Everyone experiences many different feelings and emotions. Some are sad feelings, some are angry, some are happy, and others are scared feelings. They are all a little different.

Write the four groups of feelings in this activity on the blackboard or a large sheet of paper. Ask the group, “What are some feelings you might have during a normal day?”

For example:

- When you're **SAD**, you might feel:
- Discouraged
- Depressed
- Unhappy
- Hurt
- Uncomfortable
- Embarrassed

**Happy** feelings might be:

Excited  
Cheerful  
Confident  
Comfortable  
Proud  
Satisfied

Some **SCARED** feelings might be:

Terrified  
Nervous  
Anxious  
Confused  
Unsure

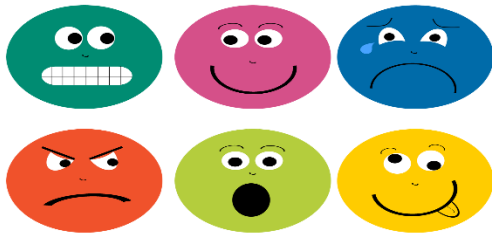
Some **ANGRY** feelings might be:

Threatened  
Disgusted  
Frustrated  
Jealous  
Resentful

- **Sharing/Self disclosure:**

- Choose one feeling from each of the four categories and draw four faces showing each of those feelings. Have the children share their feeling faces. Have them demonstrate one of the feelings they chose to draw.

- **Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”



## IDENTIFYING FEELINGS

- Goal: To define and recognize different feelings
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: Paper, markers, crayons

# Talking Abuse Feelings

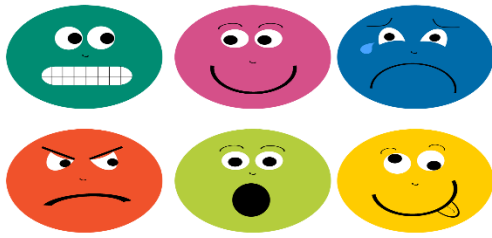
- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to understand that talking about our feelings can help us deal with them better.”

**Mini lecture:** Tell them: “It’s important to recognize how you are feeling at different times and to express your feelings appropriately. If you’re angry, it’s better to tell someone than to keep it inside. If you’re happy, it’s hard to keep your excitement to yourself. Expressing your feelings will help you deal with them. Telling someone you trust and sharing your feelings in a conversation almost always makes you feel better. When you’re aware of what you feel, it is usually easier for you to get along with others.”

- **Sharing/Self disclosure:**

- Write the following on a white board or large sheet of paper:
- Ask different children to tell how they would feel in the situations below, and why.
  - • If you just found out your parent is getting deployed
  - • If your parents just told you that the family was moving to Japan after the school year
  - • If you got a bad grade on a test you hadn’t studied for
  - • If you got 100% on a test
  - • If your best friend couldn’t come to your birthday party
  - • If you lost your homework
  - • If someone teased you
  - • If your teacher called on you to answer a question, and you didn’t know the answer
- Then, have the children think of their own examples, and again tell how they would feel.
- **Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”



## TALKING ABOUT FEELINGS

- Goal: Teaching children that talking about their feelings can help in dealing with them
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: None

# I-Messages

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn what an I-Message is and how an I-Message works.

**Mini lecture:** Tell them: “When you’re angry with people, it’s easy to blame them for whatever happened. But when you blame other people, they often get angry with you. Then, everyone ends up with hurt feelings. You can use I-messages to tell other people what you really want, without judging, confronting, or blaming them. You can also use I-messages to express other feelings, like happiness or fear. I-messages always focus on what the speaker feels, rather than blaming the listener. Here’s how an I-message works:

Write on a large piece of paper or white board

1. Say what you feel (I FEEL...)
2. Tell what the other person did that upset you (WHEN YOU...)
3. Describe how you were affected (BECAUSE...)
4. State what would make the situation better for you (AND I WANT

For example, let’s imagine that Megan told Sara a secret, which Sara then told Kevin. Megan is very angry, so she tells Sara: “I FEEL angry WHEN YOU tell my secret BECAUSE I asked you not to AND I WANT you to apologize and never do that again.”

# I-Messages

## Sharing/Self disclosure:

- Write the following on a white board or large sheet of paper. Have the children pair up and take turns stating their I-messages to each other. These I-messages can be based on real or imagined situations. Individual children can also complete the sheet on their. Have children share their responses.

• I FEEL happy WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ AND I WANT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

• I FEEL frustrated WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ AND I WANT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

• I FEEL afraid WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ AND I WANT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

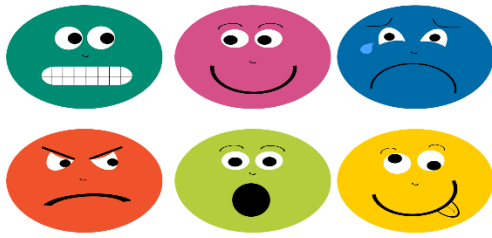
• I FEEL sad WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ AND I WANT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

• I FEEL \_\_\_\_\_ WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ AND I WANT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

• I FEEL \_\_\_\_\_ WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ AND I WANT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

- **Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”





## I-MESSAGES

- Goal: To teach children how to use I-Messages to express themselves without placing blame
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: None

# Empathy Activity

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn what empathy means.”

**Mini lecture:** Ask the children: “What does it mean to put yourself in another person’s shoes?” Encourage them to share examples from their own experience when someone was able to do that for them and how it felt. “When you put yourself in another person’s shoes, you empathize with her. Empathy is the ability to understand another person’s feelings as if they were your own. When we see and feel things the way other people do, we can get along better with them. People who have empathy for others can feel sad with them, or happy for them, and so on. They know what it is like to feel that way. When children can understand another person’s point of view and respect her feelings, they are less likely to start fights and more likely to make friends easily. They are better liked by other children and more successful in school.” Can you think of someone in your school who is very empathic?

**Sharing/Self disclosure:**

Engage the children in discussion by using the following prompts:

How do you think Allie felt when Brianne didn’t invite her to her party? Can you empathize with Allie? Did anything like this ever happen to you?

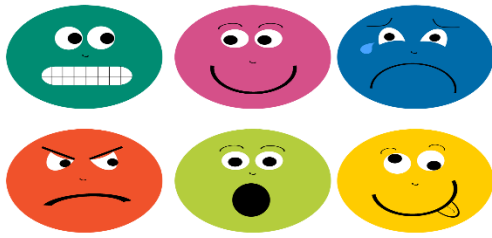
How do you think Joe felt when he wasn’t picked for the team? Can you empathize with Joe? Did anything like this ever happen to you?

How do you think Annie felt on the first day of school when she was new kid? Can you empathize with Annie? Did anything like that ever happen to you?

How do you think Bobby felt when he found out that his dad was going to Iraq for six months? Can you empathize with Bobby? Did anything like that ever happen to you?

How do you think Jessica felt when her parents told her they are moving to England at the end of the school year? Can you empathize with Jessica? Has anything like that ever happened to you?

- **Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”



## EMPATHY ACTIVITY

- Goal: To teach children how to identify with and understand another person's feelings
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: Paper and pencil

# Mixed Emotions Activity

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn that people can often have more than one feeling at the same time.”

**Mini lecture:** “People can have more than one emotion at the same time. For example, you might feel excited about moving to a new country, but sad because you are leaving your friends. You could feel excited about finding the last piece of cake in the refrigerator, but unsure about whether you should eat it. The important thing is to try to be aware of all the emotions you’re feeling, and if they trouble you, talk about them with someone who will listen to you and can help.

**Sharing/Self disclosure:**

Write the following on a large piece of paper or whiteboard and have the children write down their responses:

1. Your mom just had a new baby.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I also feel \_\_\_\_\_

2. You dad is being deployed to the Middle East.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I also feel \_\_\_\_\_

3. I got a great birthday gift, but it was not exactly what I was hoping for.

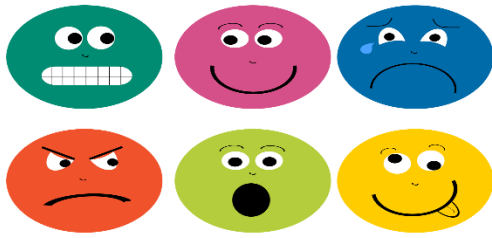
I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I also feel \_\_\_\_\_

4. I just found out that I made it on the team.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I also feel \_\_\_\_\_

Have the children make rounds sharing their responses.

**Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”



## MIXED EMOTIONS ACTIVITY

- Goal: To teach children that people can have more than one feeling at the same time
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: Paper and pencil

# Reflective Listening

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to talk about a special kind of listening; that is listening with full attention and then repeating back what you heard the person say.”

**Mini lecture:** Ask the group, “What do you think ‘reflective listening’ means?” Suggest that they think of the two words separately, which may help them determine the meaning. Brainstorm ideas and write them on the blackboard or a large sheet of paper. Tell the group: Reflective listening is listening to someone with your complete attention and then repeating what she has said in your own words. If your reflection is correct, she might say, “Yes, that’s what I said.” If it’s not quite right, she may say, “No, that’s not what I said.” Reflective listening is often used when the speaker is talking about something that upsets her. If your friend said, “I feel so sad because my mom is going away for six months,” you might say, “You’re upset because your mom is going away for a long time. I bet you will really miss her,” instead of, “You’ll be OK, my dad went away for one year and I survived!” Reflective listening shows that you have empathy for the other person—you understand how she is feeling, and she feels that you are supporting her.

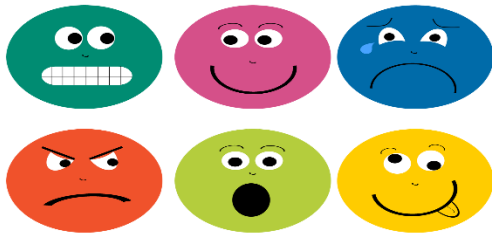
## **Sharing/Self disclosure:**

Pair the children and have them talk about any of the subjects below. After two minutes, one speaker restates what the other one has said, using reflective, empathetic language. Then the speakers switch, choosing another topic.

- Something that really bothers me is...
- At school, something that is really hard for me is...
- One thing I really worry about is that we will have to move again....
- One thing I really worry about is that my parent will be deployed again or will be harmed while deployed
- Once, I was teased

Have them come back to the larger group and talk about how it felt when someone really listened

**Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”



## REFLECTIVE LISTENING

- Goal: To teach children to listen with complete attention and reflect back what the other person said.
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: Paper and pencil



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	SLIDE NUMBER
WHAT IS A CONFLICT?	24
IT TAKES TWO	25
RESOLVING CONFLICTS CALMLY	26
COMPROMISING	27
FAIR FIGHTING	28



# “What is Conflict?”

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn about the meaning of conflict.” Ask the group, “What is conflict?” Brainstorm ideas and write them on the blackboard or a large sheet of paper.

**Mini lecture:** Conflict begins when two people want the same thing, or when people disagree about the same thing. Conflicts are a part of everyday life—everyone has them. Sometimes they can be resolved easily, and sometimes resolving them takes a lot of thinking and talking. When you’re having a conflict with someone, it’s a good idea to ask yourself, “Is it more important for me to get what I want or to keep a good relationship with the other person?” This question is important because arguing with someone may affect your relationship. No one likes to argue, and when people argue, they often end up with hurt feelings. If you are always arguing with people, it will be hard to have good friends.

**Sharing/Self disclosure:**

Facilitate a discussion on conflicts children have had at home, school, or elsewhere. Ask whether and how the conflicts were resolved. If they haven’t been resolved yet, talk about ideas for conflict resolution.

**Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”



# WHAT IS A CONFLICT?

- Goal: To teach children the meaning of conflict.
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: None

# “It Takes Two”

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn that whenever there is a conflict, both people involved need to accept responsibility for their part.

**Mini lecture:** There are many different types of conflicts. You can have a conflict within yourself or with someone else. Groups can have conflicts too. Sometimes one group of children doesn't like another group of children. Conflicts between two people are probably the most common kind, and they can happen even when you are having fun. They are a part of normal life, because there will always be times when both people want different things or see a situation differently. Sometimes, people blame others for conflicts. But you can't have an argument alone, and arguments aren't anyone's fault—they happen because two people disagree. Learning to resolve conflicts peacefully is an important part of getting along with others. Have the children think of activities in which they participate in with another person. Conflict begins when two people want the same thing, or when people disagree about the same thing. Conflicts are a part of everyday life—everyone has them. Sometimes they can be resolved easily, and sometimes resolving them takes a lot of thinking and talking. When you're having a conflict with someone, it's a good idea to ask yourself, “Is it more important for me to get what I want or to keep a good relationship with the other person?” This question is important because arguing with someone may affect your relationship. No one likes to argue, and when people argue, they often end up with hurt feelings. If you are often arguing with people, it will be hard to have good friends.

**Sharing/Self disclosure:**

Have the children think of activities in which they participate with another person—playing catch, hugging, playing checkers, walking to school together, watching television together, playing a video game, and so on. Then, for each example, have them think of a conflict that could happen. For example, Jon and Matt are playing catch. Jon throws the ball way over Matt's head, and Matt thinks Jon did it on purpose. Ask the children to talk about recent conflicts they have had that were resolved quickly and positively and what they did to make that happen.

**Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”

# IT TAKES TWO

- Goal: To teach children that whenever there is a conflict, both people are responsible.
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: None



# “Resolving Conflict Peacefully”

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn the importance of being calm when trying to resolve a conflict..

**Mini lecture:** Conflicts come from issues that people differ over and the feelings that grow from their disagreement. Expressing your feelings can be difficult when you’re trying to resolve a conflict, but it is important to let the other person know how you feel. If you and the other person are calm, you have a much better chance of being able to talk about the conflict and your feelings about it. Here are some steps you can take to deal with conflicts calmly: List these on a large piece of paper or whiteboard

- Before starting to talk, take five deep breaths and let them out slowly.
- Relax the muscles of your face and body.
- Describe what you want.
- Tell the other person what’s bothering you and how you feel.
- Listen carefully to the other person’s wants and feelings.
- Talk about the conflict as a mutual problem—it belongs to both of you.
- If you find yourself getting angry or upset, take deep breaths again and try to relax
- If feelings are starting to take over the discussion, take a break.,

**Sharing/Self disclosure:**

Ask for the group to pretend they are angry—tensing their muscles, making annoyed faces, assuming an angry posture, etc. Then, ask a volunteer to describe a recent problem he had with someone, using an angry voice. Next, ask the group to relax, taking five deep breaths and loosening up their bodies. Now, ask a volunteer to use a calm voice to describe a problem he recently had with another person. Discuss the differences in the way people felt, thought, and talked. happen.

An alternative activity is to have the children role-play a conflict when they are angry and then have them act out resolving the conflict when they are calm.

**Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”

# RESOLVING CONFLICT PEACEFULLY

- Goal: To teach children the importance of being calm when trying to resolve a conflict.
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: Large piece of paper or white board



# “Compromising Activity”

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn about what compromise is and the benefits of compromising. Ask the group to define compromise and give a recent example.

**Mini lecture:** People compromise when they agree to make concessions (give something up), or “meet in the middle.” Neither person gets exactly what she wants, but each gets some of what she wants. It’s often necessary to compromise when two people have a difference of opinion on how something should be done, or what they each want to do. If you can learn this skill, it will help you get along better with others.

**Sharing/Self disclosure:**

For each of the situations written on a white board, have the children write down how they can work out a compromise.

1. Both children want to use the same color crayon.
2. There is only enough cereal for one child and both of them want that cereal for breakfast.
3. Two friends are going to the movies each have their own idea about what to see.
4. Both children want to go first in the game.
5. Make up your own example

Have the children go around and share their responses.

**Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”

# COMPROMISING ACTIVITY

- Goal: To teach children the benefits of compromising
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: Large piece of paper or white board; paper and pencils





# “Fair Fighting”

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn that when resolving conflict it is most important to attack the problem not the person you are in conflict with.”

**Mini lecture:** Ask the group, “What do you think ‘fair fighting’ means?” Brainstorm ideas and write them on the blackboard or a large sheet of paper. Tell them: There are rules that boxers and wrestlers should follow when they fight. These rules are intended to keep them from getting hurt and to keep the match fair. There are rules for fighting with words too. If two children are arguing over something they both want, they can fight fairly so that neither gets hurt. Here are rules that are important to keep in mind when you are arguing with other people:

- Don’t call them names or make fun of them in any way.
- Stand or sit at least an arm’s length away.
- Don’t touch them.
- Don’t threaten them.
- Don’t interrupt them when they are talking.
- When it is your turn to talk, speak as calmly as you can.
- When you have both had a chance to express your opinions, try to work out a compromise.

**Sharing/Self disclosure:**

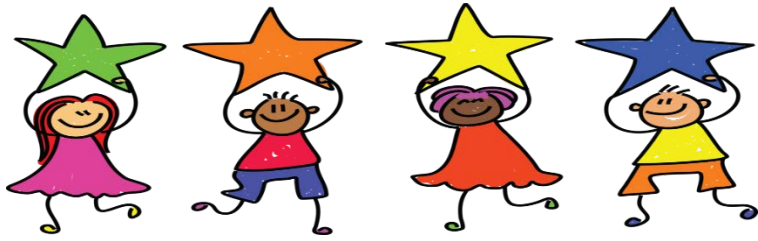
Facilitate a discussion by asking the children to think about recent conflicts they have had with friends. Have them talk about whether the fight was fair, or if not, what fair-fighting rules were broken. Ask them to talk about which of the fair fighting rules are most challenging for them and to generate a plan for improving on that fair fighting rule. Have the children go around and share their responses.

**Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”

# FAIR FIGHTING

- Goal: To teach children to attack problems, not people
- Ages: Older elementary age and up
- Materials required: Large piece of paper or white board; paper and pencils





# SOCIAL SKILLS EARLY ELEMENTARY

ACTIVITY	SLIDE NUMBER
WHAT ARE SOCIAL SKILLS?	30
BUBBLES	31
MY FRIEND IN THE MIDDLE	32
ONE QUESTION INTERVIEW	33
I THINK YOU ARE FEELING	34
SUPERHERO STATIONS	35

# “What are Social Skills?” Instructions

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to play a game to help us learn what social skills are and why they are important.”

**Activity:**

Write down different social skills on individual slips of paper and put them in a bowl, hat, etc. Have your students sit in a circle and pass around the slips of paper, taking turns pulling them out one at a time. Here are some examples:

Sharing  
Following directions  
Listening  
Staying on task  
Taking turns  
Using quiet voices  
Waiting patiently  
Using good manners

- When the student pulls the slip of paper from the bowl, ask him/her to say what the social skill means, have them give an example, and/or ask them to tell the rest of the group why that skill is important. Give as much guidance and support as your students need to answer the questions. You may want to go first, to show the students how to do this activity.
- Here is an example:
- If a student picked “sharing materials” she could say “That means to let someone use something that you are using. For example, if I am coloring with crayons, I can let my friend borrow my crayons and color with me. Sharing is important because it shows others that you care about how they feel. Part of being a good friend is sharing.” You could even have students act out the skills. So in this example, you can have one of your students pick materials to share with the other members in the group. You can also let students the skill you are talking about.

**Closing ritual:** “Today in group I learned.....”



# WHAT ARE SOCIAL SKILLS?

- Goal: To teach children what social skills are and why they are important
- Ages: Early elementary and up
- Materials required: None

# Bubbles Activity

- **Instructions:**
- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to practice sharing, taking turns, listening, following directions, encouraging others and being polite.

## **Activity:**

We are going to take turns blowing bubbles. But there are some rules we have to follow to be able to blow bubbles. The first rule is that to get your turn, you have to **(1) wait patiently**. Then, when it is your turn, the second rule is that you have to say, **(2) “Please can I have the bubbles.”** Rule number three is that when you get the bubbles you have to say, **(3) “Thank you for giving me the bubbles.”** Then, when you get the bubbles, the next rule is that you can **(4) following directions by blowing the bubbles three times and not in anyone’s face**. Then, the next rule is **(5) sharing the bubbles** by passing them to the next person when the person asks you for them. Go around the circle practicing these skills with the children and let them know that you will help them remember all the rules. Review with them the different skills:

1. Waiting your turn
2. Asking for the bubbles politely
3. Saying thank you
4. Following directions
5. sharing.

**Closing ritual:** Ask the children, “What did we learn today?”



# BUBBLES ACTIVITY

- Goal: To give children the opportunity to practice sharing, taking turns, listening, following directions, encouraging others, and being polite.
- Ages: Early elementary and up
- Materials required: A bottle of bubbles

# “My Friend is in the Middle”

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to have fun and learn how to follow directions and take turns.

## **Activity:**

- Have the children sit in a circle, and choose one child to be in the middle.
- Encourage the child to dance out the moves as you sing, using their name:
  - Izzy’s in the middle, Izzy’s in the middle, Dance Izzy, Dance!  
Get up, down, turn around (here have the child pick a new friend to be in the middle of the circle). Now Jacob’s in the middle!
- Repeat until all of the children have had a turn.
- This game will ultimately teach kids to listen and follow instructions (get up, down, etc.), and teach them to involve other children in play by sharing the spotlight. It’s also a great way to instill self-esteem in children by allowing them to be the center of attention for a moment.

**Closing ritual:** Ask the children, “What did we learn today?”





## MY FRIEND IS IN THE MIDDLE

- Goal: To build self esteem, teach sharing and following directions
- Ages: Preschool and early elementary
- Materials required: None or a shaker instrument like a tambourine.

# Instructions to “One Question Interview”

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn about listening and making new friends.

**Activity:**

- Create a set of index cards with simple questions written on them such as:
- Do you have a pet?
- What is your favorite food?
- How long have you been in this school?
- What other places have you lived?
- How many schools have you been to?
- Has your parent been deployed?
- Pass out the cards, and help the children read what their questions are.
- Have kids disperse, taking five minutes to get into pairs.
- Have the children ask each other the questions, and listen to one another’s answer.
- Go around to each child and ask what they’ve learned about their partner.

**Closing ritual:** Ask the children, “What did we learn today?”



## ONE QUESTION INTERVIEW

- Goal: To teach children about active listening and meeting new friends.
- Ages: Preschool and early elementary
- Materials required: Cards with simple questions on them

# “I think you are feeling...” Instructions

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn about noticing how others are feeling and how to show they care and understand how that person is feeling.”

**Activity:**

- Have the children split into groups, and give each group a jar with slips in it.
- One by one, let each child take a turn reaching into the jar to withdraw an emotion word.
- Have the child pantomime (no talking!) what that feeling looks like.
- Have the other children try to guess what emotion the first child is modeling.
- Ask the children what they would do if they saw their friend having that emotion in real life.
- The point of social skills games like this one isn't to discern a “right” or “wrong” answer. Instead, it's to help children understand what certain non-verbal cues look like when a person is feeling a certain way, and to get them to think about how they can empathize with people who feel that way.

**Closing ritual:** Ask the children, “What did we learn today?”



## I THINK YOU ARE FEELING.....

- Goal: To teach children to begin to read social cues and the concept of empathy
- Ages: Preschool and early elementary
- Materials required: A jar or jars and small pieces of paper with the words written on them: Happy, sad, mad, scared, etc.

# “Superhero Stations” Instructions

- **Instructions:**

- **Introduce topic:** “Today we are going to learn about caring about how others feel and doing the right thing.”

**Activity:**

- Prepare in advance a set of index cards with different, everyday situations that children may encounter. Examples could include:
  - You see Rachel making fun of Jessica’s shoes and even though Rachel say’s she is “just joking,” Jessica is very upset.
  - Your best friend finds a wallet with \$20 inside and asks you if you want to split the money.
  - You see one child being “mean” to another child who you do not know.
- Split the children into groups of about four.
- Place a different situation card in different locations or stations around the room.
- Have each child take a turn being the “superhero”.
- The “superhero” will read the card to determine which situation the children should role play.
- The other children role play the situation on the card (Susan making fun of Thomas’ shoes, for instance.)
- At this point, the “superhero” says “freeze!” and the children should have a group discussion involving which steps the “superhero” should take next. Have them ask each other questions like “How would I feel if someone was making fun of me or one of my friends?” or “would I step in? Would I want someone else to step in?”
- After the group has come to a decision about how the “superhero” should act to “save the day”, and the “superhero” role plays the group solution.
- When the time is up, have each group rotate to the next station with a new child acting as the “super hero”.
- When every station has been completed, engage the entire group in a child-led discussion about what they experienced. Ask them to identify similar situations that they have encountered and determine what they did in those situations. When have they had opportunities to be “super heroes” in real life? Tell them to be on the lookout for opportunities to be “super heroes” everyday.

**Closing ritual:** Today in group I learned.....



# SUPERHERO STATIONS

- Goal: To teach children about empathy and integrity
- Ages: Early elementary and up
- Materials required: Situational cards

# DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- [Supporting Students and Adolescents with Deployed Caregivers: A Structured Group Approach for School Counselors](#) - *Christina Mitchell Rush and Patrick Akos - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*
- This resource is an excellent description of a ten session deployment support activities group. Each group focuses on a specific cycle of deployment. The group activities are intended as one hour sessions and geared for older children. However, these activities can stand alone and can be adapted for children of varying ages.





## DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Available resources for deployment support group activities. Go to:

MagellanMFLC.org

Sign in

Click on “Tools” tab

Scroll down to “Optional Counselor Resources”

Then scroll down to the article entitled:

1. [Supporting Students and Adolescents with Deployed Caregivers: A Structured Group ApprSach for School Counselors](#) - *Christina Mitchell Rush and Patrick Akos - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*
2. [Deployment: It's Not a Game \(Iowa OMK\)](#)

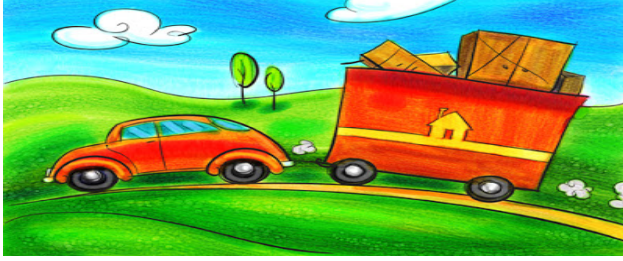
Go to <http://www.magellanmflc.org/public/home.aspx>

*Click on Tools, click on Optional Counselor Resources and scroll down the page to find the above resources*

*If you click on “slide show” above, and then click “from current slide” you can open the links from there.*

# TRANSITIONING ACTIVITIES

- The **Facilitating Groups** power point is a comprehensive, internal use training guide that includes group activities to support transitioning military students. They are as follows:
  1. **HAIL: NEW STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP ACTIVITIES** – This four session group includes activities that are intended to assist military children make a smooth transition to their new school and to enhance school connectedness.
  2. **FAREWELL: RELOCATION GROUP ACTIVITIES** – This three session group includes activities to support military children anticipating leaving their school and help them prepare for transitioning to their new environment.



## HAIL AND FAREWELL TRANSITIONING ACTIVITIES

Available resources for group activities for supporting students preparing to transition:

[MagellanMFLC.org](http://MagellanMFLC.org)

Sign in

Click on “Tools” tab

Scroll down to “Optional Counselor

Scroll down to:

*FACILITATING GROUPS POWER POINT*