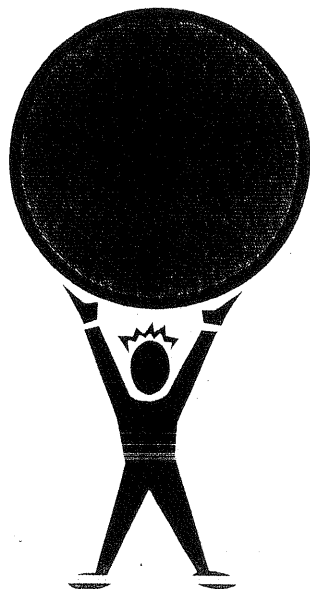Circle of Friends

Circle of Friends

Circle of Friends

Circle of Friends

A Resource

Booklet

Contents Page

Ice-Breaker Activities (for beginning/end of sessions)

There's a space on my right (feelings- being left out)
Pupils sit in a circle with one extra space. The person who has the empty chair on their right says, 'There's a space on my right and I would like ....to sit in it'. The chosen person moves into that space and the game continues.

All change
Someone stands in the middle of the circle and is the caller. The caller calls out something several of the group have in common e.g. 'everyone with fair hair', and those children most get up and swap seats. The caller sits in a vacant seat, leaving a new caller in the middle.

Farmyard
Choose four animals and give each person in the circle the name of one animal. The name of one animal is called out and those people change places. If 'Farmyard' is called everyone changes places. **N.B.** Care is needed with pigs.

A similar game is called 'Fruit Salad'.

Pile up
One person tells everyone in the circle to move one place to the left (two to the right etc.) if they answer the description e.g. if you have an M in your name, are wearing long socks, have got green eyes etc. Each time someone moves and finds the seat already occupied they have to sit on that person's lap. After a set amount of time stop and see which is the biggest pile of people.

Spot the difference
One person leaves the room. Whilst this person is outside, two other pupils swap places. The person outside has to come back in and guess who has moved.

The initial game
One person introduces him/herself and then says something beginning with the same letter of the alphabet as their name, 'I'm Becky and I like Biscuits.' The next person then continues, 'That's Becky and she likes biscuits, and I'm Louise and I like L...'. The game continues until everyone has had a turn with the whole group co-operating to help those at the end with the most to remember.

Name clap
Everyone claps a rhythm together and then says the name of each person around the circle. For example clap knees twice, clap hands twice, say persons name.

A variation of this game is to bounce the name around the circle.

This is my friend

Each pupil talks to the person next to them for a few minutes and finds out three things about them, e.g. hobbies. Then take it in turns to go round the circle all introducing your friend. Or find another pair and exchange information.

Zoom

Start by passing a zoom around the circle in one direction. Next introduce 'Eeek' (symbolic of putting the brakes on). When someone says Eeek the Zoom goes the opposite way round the circle.

People to people

Everyone finds a friend except one person who is the caller in the middle of the circle. The caller shouts out instructions to the pairs such as 'Hand to knee' or' back to back' and the pairs follow the instructions. After a while the caller shouts 'People to people' and everyone has to find a different partner. The caller also finds a partner, which will leave a new caller in the middle.

Partner balances (co-operation)

Pupils find a partner of equal height and size. Partners sit back to back with elbows inter-linked and try to stand up helping one another. Try also facing one another with feet touching, holding hands and pull each other up to a standing position.

Knots (co-operation)

Everyone stands in the circle with their arms stretched out in front of them. With their eyes closed, they slowly walk towards the centre of the circle. They then hold hands with two people. When everyone is linked, the whole group open their eyes and attempt to untangle themselves, working together to solve the problem.

Loop the Hoop (co-operation)

Everyone stands in a circle holding hands. A playground hoop is looped over one person's arm. The aim is to pass the hoop all the way around the circle without letting go of hands.

Pass the smile

One pupil is chosen to start the smile. This person chooses whether to pass it to their left or right by making eye contact and smiling at their neighbour. Their neighbour then turns to the next person and smiles. This is continued until the whole circle is smiling.

Pass the squeeze/Pass the hug

These are both similar to 'pass the smile', except a squeeze or hug is passed instead. The teacher needs to consider the age appropriateness of these activities and also be aware that some children may prefer to opt out of physical contact and smile instead.

Wink murder

The detective hides his/her eyes whilst one child is chosen to be the murderer. The detective is asked to stand in the middle of the circle and guess the identity of the murderer. The murderer winks at others around the circle, one at a time, causing them to fall on the floor. Will the detective name the murderer before everyone else dies???

Chinese mimes

The children stand sideways in a circle, their right shoulders pointing to the centre, with their eyes closed. The teacher taps Child A (the child in front of her) on the back. Child A opens her eyes and turns to face the teacher, who mimes an action. Child A turns to B (in front of her) and taps him on the shoulder. Child B opens his eyes and turns to face Child A, he repeats the teacher's mime. This continues around the circle. Once the children have completed the mime they keep their eyes open. Once the mime reaches the teacher she repeats the original mime to the class to show how much it has changed. ('Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom', 1997, by Jenny Moseley).

Developing Friendships

This may form appropriate content for the initial circle meeting if the class has identified friendship as an issue within the whole class session.

Discussion and Brainstorm:

- Why are friends important?

- When do we need friends?

- Are all friends best friends?

- Are some friends imaginary?

Round:

- The children take turns to say two positive things about an unnamed friend, e.g. 'my friend is a good listener, and makes me laugh'

Brainstorm:

- How do we feel when we have no friends? Think of times at school when people may feel lonely and suggest ways of helping them

- What makes a good friend? Create a list of ideas to show our friendship to others

Round:

- Each child selects one idea from the list, e.g. I can be a friend to N (target child) by ...

Teasing / Name-calling

Teasing overlaps with bullying to some extent since it includes name-calling. Teasing can be defined as follows:

- Annoying behaviour that can be trifling or petty in nature. It is an attempt to arouse a response from the recipient. The reaction of the recipient and the bystander reflects the seriousness of the teasing.

Strategies to counteract teasing / name-calling:

- make it clear that it upsets you and that you want them to stop
- if you are a victim, try to avoid potential confrontation with bullies
- tell an adult or a close friend
- tell your parent/s

Activity 1

- Children work in small groups of 2 or 3 and are asked to come up with their own definition of 'name-calling'.
- Each group then shares their definition with the whole group.
- Group then collate ideas and agree on a group definition of name-calling.

Activity 2

Hot seating to explore feelings about name-calling:('victim')
- When I get called names I feel ...
- I think that I get called names because ...
- I wish that people would stop calling me names because ...
- If people continue to call me names I ...
- The names I like being called are ...
- The names I do not like being called are ...

('name caller')
- When I call other people names I feel ...
- I call people names because ...
- If I stopped name-calling I would feel ...
- I like calling people names such as ...

Activity 3

Sorting out name-calling:
- How would you try to avoid being called names?
- What skills does the teacher use to prevent name-calling?
- What else can the school do to stop name-calling?
- If I saw someone else being called names I would ...

- Why do you think people get called names?
- What would you do if you got called names?
- What can we do to help to prevent name-calling in school?

Activity 4 (Brick wall exercise)

What Hinders? What helps?
- Children to work in small groups.
- Draw out a 'brick wall' on large sheets of paper – one for each group.
- Write one reason why your school cannot implement strategies for combating name-calling on each brick on the wall.
- Then write solutions on 'post-its' to cover each brick. This means that each 'hinder' is covered with a 'help'.
- The groups share their solutions
- If less time is available this activity could be done as a whole group sharing ideas of: What hinders? What helps?

More school based strategies:

- tell a teacher
- teacher to run a whole-class session i.e. during P.H.S.E exploring exactly what teasing involves and how this behaviour makes others feel
- brainstorm a session with children of ways in which they could help to prevent teasing from happening in the first place
- linked literacy work on *'anti-teasing'* and why it upsets those who get teased
- run a school *'no teasing day'*

How to say 'NO' (assertiveness skills):

- when saying 'NO', be firm as if you really mean it, but do not be aggressive
- make sure that your body language means 'NO', i.e. do not confuse the other person/s by laughing or joking about the situation
- don't let others persuade you to change your mind, but maintain your firm stance
- if they remain persistent in challenging you, tell an adult, i.e. a teacher/parent

Dealing with Anger

Brainstorm:

- What happens when someone is angry?

- Discuss the effects of these – are they positive or negative – leading onto the idea that sometimes anger is appropriate

Round:

- When I am angry I ...

Brainstorm:

- How can you help yourself/others to calm down?

- What activities can you do to prevent yourself/others becoming angry?

- How might others feel when someone is expressing anger?

Round:

- When I am angry I can ...

- When others become angry I can ...

Keeps calling out…

Round

When people call out I feel…

Sometimes I call out when…

I don't like it when people call out because…

Activities

Discussion: to generate alternatives to calling out. Instead of calling out I could…(put my hand up, wait for a more appropriate time to participate…)

Is there a time when it is appropriate to call out? What cues can focus child use to realise when it is appropriate? (E.g. wait to see whether others call out first, ask teacher to state when it is appropriate).

Possible strategies to suggest to group if they are having difficulties generating ideas

- A photo of people with their hand up on desk as a prompt.
- A friend sitting near by to remind focus child.
- Reward system for each time child remembers to put hand up or for lessons where the child hasn't called out.
- A note pad for focus child to write things down that they want to say, to help them remember their point, if it is not an appropriate time to speak out.

Keeps flicking things and fiddling
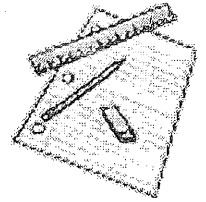
Round
When people flick things at me I feel...
I flick/ fiddle with things when I feel...

Activities
Discussion: What are the consequences of flicking things?
              What does the teacher do?
              How do other children react?

Possible strategies to suggest to group if they are having difficulties generating ideas

- A fiddle box to keep all objects safely under the table out of reach when not needed
- Prompt/ reminder card to be kept on desk
- Something safe to fiddle with/ hold (e.g. Stress ball)
- Reward for lessons where focus child has not, or has reduced the amount of flicking/ fiddling.

Use of inappropriate language

Round:

- People use inappropriate language (swear words) when ...
- I think swear words are inappropriate because ...
- I don't like to use swear words because ...
- I don't like other people to use swear words because ...
- I feel ... when people use inappropriate language

Brainstorm and list on flipchart:

- Does everyone have the same ideas as to what is meant by 'inappropriate language'?
- What do you think is appropriate/inappropriate language in school?
- Is there a difference between what is appropriate/inappropriate at school and at home?
- What makes people use inappropriate language?
- What could they do instead? E.g. counting to 10, use other more appropriate words, say the words in your head/silently, etc.
- What is the effect on other people when inappropriate language is used? E.g. people's feelings - insulted, upset, annoyed; people's behaviour - potential for arguments, fights, loss of friends, etc.

Role play alternatives to using inappropriate language:

- Investigate responses in situations where inappropriate language may be used, e.g. in the playground, in the classroom, in the dinner hall
- Investigate alternative responses to such scenarios
- Scenarios may include:
- Someone misses a clear goal in a football game
- Someone is called a racist name
- Someone answers an easy sum incorrectly in numeracy hour
- Someone takes property which doesn't belong to them

Brainstorm:

- What could you say to someone who is using inappropriate language?
- What could you do that would have an effect, e.g. alerting staff

Won't listen...
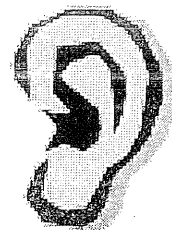
Round
Sometimes I don't listen because...
A good listener is someone who...
My teacher knows when I'm listening because...
It is important to listen because...

Activities
Discussion: Discuss possible consequences of not listening, so as to emphasise the importance of this skill.

Role-play: One-person talks about what they did yesterday after school, the other pretends not to listen.

How do we know when someone is not listening?

How does it feel when people don't listen to you?

Swap roles, this time the second person tries hard to listen to their partner.

What makes a good listener? How did you feel?

Listen and remember: Share with your partner two things you like at school. Feedback to the circle each other's favourite things.

Game: Stand up and turn around if... (You are wearing grey socks, have blue eyes...).

Possible strategies to suggest to group if they are having difficulties generating ideas

- Prompt card/photo for during lessons- sit still, look at (teacher), and sit quietly.
- Reward system for when focus child is successful
- Someone from circle of friends to sit near focus child to remind them not to talk/sit still.
- Change seats in classroom so focus child is facing front of class
- Members of group to model good listening skills

Lying, cheating, stealing

Round:

- People lie/cheat/steal when …
- I think lying/cheating/stealing is … because …
- When other people lie/cheat/steal I feel …

Brainstorm and list on flipchart:

- What is meant by lying/cheating/stealing?
- Is it ever acceptable to lie/cheat/steal? E.g. white lies
- Is there a difference between borrowing and stealing?
- What makes people lie/cheat/steal?
- What could they do instead? E.g. tell the truth, count to 5 and think before they speak, play games fairly, respect other people's property, ask to borrow other people's property
- What is the effect on other people when people lie/cheat/steal? E.g. people's feelings – hurt, upset, angry, lack of trust; people's behaviour – potential for arguments, fights, loss of friends, etc.

Role play alternatives to lying/cheating/stealing:

- Investigate responses in situations where lying/cheating/stealing may occur, e.g. in the playground, in the classroom, in the dinner hall
- Investigate alternative responses to such scenarios
- Scenarios may include:
- Handing homework saying that it's been completed when it hasn't
- Taking another child's dinner money and denying it
- Playing a game, either outdoors or indoors, not by the rules
- Copying from another child in a test situation

Brainstorm:

- What could you say to someone who lies/cheats/steals?
- What could you do that would have an effect, e.g. alerting staff to the problem, asking staff to monitor the situation, asking parents to inform school about your concerns