

Theme 1: Recognising abuse

Activities to
develop skills
in recognising unsafe
or potentially abusive
situations

STAGE 3

Overview

Protective skills cannot be used unless children recognise situations of potential abuse or when abuse is occurring. It is important that students develop knowledge and skills, appropriate to their age and stage, about what constitutes abuse.

Focus Areas

Protection
Body Parts
Physical abuse and sexual abuse
Emotional abuse and neglect
Indicators of risk
Identifying risk situations, people and places
Effects of Abuse

Things to look for

Things to look for suggest ways that students may demonstrate achievement of the outcomes at the relevant stage when learning about child protection. Teachers can use this section as a guide to making judgements about what their students know and can do.

Stage 3

Protection

Can students:

- identify community organisations where adults have a responsibility to protect and care for children?
- describe the roles and responsibilities of adults who work in schools and who contribute to a safe environment?
- identify factors that may cause accidents?

Body parts

Can students:

- identify private and sexual parts of the body using precise anatomical terms?
- identify some cultural differences regarding parts of the body which are considered private?
- explain why personal information needs to be kept private?

Stage 3

Physical abuse and sexual abuse

Can students:

- identify injuries or actions that constitute physical abuse of children?
- differentiate between situations which are sexual abuse and those which are not sexual abuse?
- give some reasons why the physical or sexual abuse of children is not their fault?

Emotional abuse and neglect

Can students:

- discuss some needs of children which adult carers have a responsibility to meet?
- identify situations which can cause harm to a child's feelings and thinking?

Indicators of risk

Can students:

- identify some warning signs and external signals which indicate that a child's safety might be at risk?

Identifying risk situations, people and places

Can students:

- discuss some factors which may promote or threaten safety?
- recognise familiar situations which have the potential to cause harm?
- describe some indicators of risk?

Effects of abuse

Can students:

- discuss how abuse can affect self-concept negatively?
- discuss why it might be difficult to talk about abuse?
- give positive feedback to others?

main idea

All adults are responsible for protecting children from harm and abuse. Adults who are parents or carers, and adults who work in organisations and services that look after children have a special responsibility to care for, as well as protect, children.

Protection

field building

- ❖ A number of protective items are presented to students eg a bicycle helmet, an eye shield, kitchen mitt or pot holder, sunscreen cream, sports knee pads, an umbrella, ear muffs, a life jacket, a smoke alarm. The teacher poses the questions:
 - What do these things have in common? (They protect people from harm.)
 - What might happen if you didn't use a pot holder (an umbrella)? Discuss how each of the items may protect people from harm.
 - Can you think of any other protective items and their uses?
- ❖ The teacher has prepared a number of strips of paper. The activity is introduced by writing the sentence stem on the board: *Protection is...* Students form small groups, each receiving paper strips. Group members discuss and agree on some definitions of *protection* and record them on their paper strips. Groups present their definitions to the class group and attach them below the sentence stem. Common words and phrases are highlighted. Create a shared definition for the term *protection* and record on a chart.
- ❖ Pose the following questions for discussion:
 - What are some things that people can do to protect each other that objects such as helmets, signs and rules can't do? (People can care for others. They can comfort other people by touching, talking and listening to them. People can love and care about others and show this in ways that bring happiness to them. People can learn skills and carry out special caring and protective jobs such as being doctors, nurses, police and firefighters.)
 - What are some things that people have done to protect and care for you this week? (Looking after you if you were sick, taking notice of how you were feeling, helping you if you were hurt, making sure that safety rules were kept, providing food, listening to you if you had a problem, making sure you had enough clothes.)
 - What are some things you have done to show care for others this week?
- ❖ Discuss and agree on a definition for the word *care*. (Care is having a liking or fondness for someone or something, showing attention to or looking after someone or something. Care is being concerned about or providing for the well-being and safety of someone or something.) Create a wall of caring images using 'wall tiles' provided at appendix 1. These may be photocopied onto card or coloured paper. Students individually draw images or cut and paste magazine pictures onto the wall tiles. A sentence is written to describe each image eg *This boy is helping his little brother learn a new game*. Arrange and display in brick formation.

core learning

- ❖ Revise the *right* that children have to be safe and the *responsibility* of all adults to protect children. Some adults have a responsibility to care for as well as protect the children they look after.

Inform students that:

- people who are caregivers to children (such as parents, foster parents, grandparents, step parents or guardians) have the *responsibility* to protect and to care for their children
- adults who work at community organisations which have children in their care (such as child-care centres, activity or sports clubs, vacation care centres and foster centres) also have a *responsibility* to protect and care for the children who spend time there
- adults who work in organisations which have children in their care (such as schools, pre-schools, group homes, hospitals and family or community services and youth centres) also have a *responsibility* to protect and care for the children who spend time there.

List some of the examples given above on the board or a chart under the heading: *People and places with a responsibility to always care for and protect the children they look after.*

Add additional relevant local organisations, centres and services as appropriate.

- ❖ Revise the ways that children might be harmed if care is not provided, and the name of each form of harm:
 - their bodies may be harmed - physical harm
 - their feelings may be harmed - emotional harm
 - their thinking may be harmed - mental harm.

Remind students that if harm is not accidental it is abuse.

Consolidate understandings using the worksheet *Physical, emotional and mental harm* (appendix 2). As a whole class in small groups or individually, students classify each statement as true or false.

Share responses and discuss to clarify any uncertainties.

- *The correct responses to statements in appendix 2 (down each column) are true, false, false, true, true, false, true, true, true, true, false; false, false, true, false, true, true, false, false, true, false, false.*

- ❖ Revise the definition of accidental harm. (Accidental harm is not planned, not done on purpose and is often difficult to avoid. An accident happens by chance and is not usually repeated in the same way to the same person.)

Read the following scenario about accidental harm and ask students to imagine themselves in the role of the teacher in the scenario.

The names and sex of the students may need to be changed to suit the classroom context.





Telia strolled into the playground chatting to her classmate Brad. They started talking about their new class project. The next minute Brad fell to the ground. He was in pain. A cricket ball had hit him on the leg.

A cricketer ran from the nets where she was training.

"I'm really sorry. Are you all right? I'll go and get a teacher to help you."

The cricketer ran to tell a teacher what had happened and to get some ice for the bruise coming up on Brad's leg.

She later explained to the teacher who had helped Brad, that she was getting in some early practice before their cricket coach arrived.

Discussion based on the following questions:

- What harm did Brad experience? (Physical harm.)
 - What factors could help you (as the teacher) decide this was accidental harm? (It was not planned and was not done on purpose. Brad had no warning signals before the accident. The person who caused the harm told someone exactly what had happened. Brad probably won't be hurt again in the same way by the same person.)
 - Is this same event likely to happen again and again? (No. Not involving the same people. Not if the coach and cricketers take steps to stop similar accidents.)
 - What are some steps that could reduce the chance of a similar accident happening again? (Students don't start training until the coach arrives. Students use tennis balls for practice. They decide to change practice time until after school. All students agree to set up a boundary using markers, while cricketers are training, so other students can be safer.)
 - What might you (as the teacher) decide if you found out that:
 - The cricketer had aimed for Brad.
 - The cricketer threatened Brad and Telia not to tell anyone about the accident.
 - The cricketer was very upset that she had hurt Brad.
 - The cricketer hit Brad again the next day and said it was an accident.
- ❖ The teacher poses the question: What do we call harm that is not accidental? (Abuse.)

Teachers and students decide upon and display a definition for the term *abuse*. (Abuse is actions or behaviours that cause harm or injury. Abuse is not accidental. Any kind of abuse is not OK.)

- ❖ The teacher informs students that all adults who work in a place where children spend time have a responsibility to care for those children and to protect them from abuse. All the adults who work in schools have this responsibility.

As a whole class, brainstorm the things that happen in a school which help make sure that students are safe and cared for.

Record these on cards. eg

- *School rules about safe and unsafe behaviour and places in the school; consequences when safety rules are not kept; school staff being 'on duty' in the playground; school staff not using physical punishment with students; students not being left alone at school; first aid equipment; a place where sick students can rest and be looked after; 'no-hat-play-in-the-shade' rule.*
- *Staff and students with particular roles such as the principal, the deputy or assistant principal, the school counsellor, community language teachers, the Aboriginal education assistant, the school captain, student leaders or the SRC, peer support group leader, the road crossing supervisor, excursion supervisors, school camp supervisors.)*

Each student receives a blank card and paints or draws to illustrate a provision, role or action. Cards and illustrations can be displayed as a mural.

- ❖ Display appendix 3, as an overhead or enlarged as a chart, and inform students that adults who work in schools also have particular responsibilities in protecting students from abuse. Clarify with students the role of school staff in child protection. Discuss how the government has asked teachers and other school staff to do these things and that they must do them.

Inform students that if a teacher believes that a student is experiencing abuse, or if a student tells a teacher that he or she is being abused, teachers are not allowed to keep it a secret. They *must* tell people at the Department of Community Services about it so the student and his or her family can receive help and the abuse can be addressed.

conclusion

- ❖ Using the example of a job advertisement, appendix 4, as a model, students in small groups write their own advertisement for the job of a parent or a carer (a person who looks after children). Share advertisements with the class group and discuss. Incorporating feedback from the class group and the teacher, students publish and display their work. A brief explanation about the responsibilities of adults who work with children might be displayed as a caption.



main idea

Everyone has body parts which are private. Most people believe that the sexual parts of the body are private. It is not OK for anyone to look at or touch these parts unless help is needed and permission has been given.

Body parts

field building

- ❖ Explore resources that give information about the human body such as encyclopaedias, CD roms, internet sites. Display muscular and skeletal charts if relevant.
 - *It is important that the teacher previews resources to check their suitability for students. Resources that realistically depict the sexual anatomy of adults or give information about human sexuality may be considered inappropriate by school communities. Parental consent is required before information about human reproduction or sexuality is presented in the classroom.*
 - *Students may use inappropriate terms to refer to sexual parts of the body. It is important to remind students that these words are often derogatory and offensive to others. Other parts of the body are rarely given derogatory names. Respect should be given to all parts of the human body, and correct or inoffensive words used to refer to all body parts.*
- ❖ Involve students in body awareness activities. eg
 - Students find a full length body picture of a person of the same gender as themselves. Students cut their picture in half, lengthwise. They paste it on to a sheet of paper and sketch to complete the missing half of the body.
 - Create silhouette portraits in small groups. A strong light source such as an overhead projector or lamp is needed for each group. A sheet of art paper is attached to a wall (at head level of a seated student) and the light source directed towards it. Individual students position themselves so the shadow of their profile falls on the paper. In pairs one student traces in pencil the outline of the partner’s silhouette on the paper. Roles are reversed.

Students have the right to make slight modifications to their own profiles if necessary. Using coloured pencils, crayons or paints, students colour their profiles to represent the thought waves inside their heads when they are feeling safe and happy. As a stimulus for their artwork, students in groups might list words which describe happy and safe feelings.
 - Students with limited motor skills may build up body images using computer graphics. Flip books where body parts are mixed and matched may also be used.

core learning

- ❖ Define or revise the term *private*. Brainstorm a list of private objects or things (eg diaries, wallets, bedrooms, prescription medications). If the names of private body parts are suggested it may be more appropriate to record general terms for these, such as private parts or genitals.

Inform students that personal information about themselves (such as names, photographs, addresses and telephone numbers) is also private and should not be made public or shared with strangers, unless there is a special reason to do so.

Discussion based on the following questions:

- What are some times when you need to be careful about giving personal information about yourself? (When talking to a stranger. On the telephone when your parents or carers are not at home with you. When you communicate by e-mail, internet or another public communication system.)
- Why is it safer to keep personal information about yourself private? (Strangers may find out your name and address and send you junk mail or try to sell you things. They might bother you by visiting or telephoning your home. They might pressure you to be their friend or to join their group or club when you don't want to.)

Include the term *personal information* on the brainstorm list.

- ❖ The teacher informs students that:
 - Everyone's body is individual and unique.
 - Your body is special and it belongs to you.
 - Some parts of your body are private and you usually keep them covered up when other people are around.
 - You don't have to show them to anyone else unless you want to, or if you need help to look after these parts.

Brainstorm some private parts of the body (parts which are covered in public and not freely shared with others). Suggestions should include other body parts as well as sexual body parts.

- ❖ Remind students that:
 - There are no right or wrong answers because different people consider different body parts private. For some people the hair of women and young girls is considered private. The mouth and lips are also considered as private or special, although they are not covered*. If appropriate, discuss how some cultural groups do cover the mouth and lips in public.
 - In special situations it might be considered OK to uncover some private parts of the body. eg At the swimming pool or beach, with your family or friends, it is usually considered OK to wear a swimming costume. It would usually not be OK to wear a





swimming costume to, say, the cinema. (The terms *appropriate* and *inappropriate* may be used instead of OK and not OK.)

As a part of some cultural activities it is OK to uncover some private parts of the body, such as the breasts as part of Aboriginal dancing or the stomach as part of belly dancing in some Eastern cultures.

- At a party with your friends it might be considered OK to wear ripped jeans. It would usually not be OK to do this at church or in your religious centre. Some people believe that it is never OK to do this. All these views represent different values in our community.

Discuss other examples of situations where it might be considered OK to uncover parts of the body and situations where this might not be OK.

Acknowledge and affirm the range of attitudes about privacy of the human body. After the discussion, state that most people agree that the sexual parts of the body are considered private and should be covered in public.

- * *The mouth and lips should be included as private body parts and included in discussion about the privacy of sexual body parts – not be shared with another person unless the owner chooses to do so. Research shows that oral contact with sexual body parts is frequently a component of sexual abuse of children and young people.*
- *Explain that kissing can be a special part of a close relationship but is only enjoyable and OK if both people give permission to be kissed and to share their mouth and lips. If people are not happy to share, they should say NO, if possible, and take action so the kissing will stop. Children have the right to have their bodies respected and to feel safe.*

- ❖ The teacher displays the body outlines of a girl and a boy (appendices 5 and 6). Remind students that the *sexual parts* of the body are those private parts which are different for girls and boys and indicate their gender or whether they are female or male.

Call upon students to identify and name the sexual parts of the body outlines. Label the sexual parts of each body outline (breasts, chest, vulva, vagina, penis, testicles, scrotum, bottom, anus).

The teacher poses the following questions to assess students' understandings:

- When might it be OK for another person to touch a child's sexual parts? (If they need help to clean them or if they are sore or injured.)

The teacher informs students that the sexual parts of the body are special parts which should be kept safe and private until they are older and choose to share those special parts with another person

in a private and loving relationship. Both people will want this touching to take place and will have given permission.)

- What should you do if someone touches or tries to touch the sexual parts of your body for the wrong reasons? (Say “NO”, “Stop that” or GO away, if you can. Take action or TELL a trusted adult about the touch so it will stop.)

- *Where Stage 3 activities are used with students who are post-pubescent, alternative body outlines, provided at appendices 49 and 50, should be used.*

conclusion

- ❖ Choose an appropriate short story from the four short stories in the book *No More Secrets for Me* by Oralee Wachter, such as *Talking Helps, What If.* or *Promise Not to Tell.*

Discussion based on the questions:

- Which kinds of touching in the story were inappropriate or not OK? Why?
- What were some feelings or body signals that the character experienced in response to this touching?
- What did the child in the story do?
- How did this help the child feel safer?

extension

- ❖ Remind students that in many families it is common to see the private or sexual body parts of babies and young children when bathing, cleaning or dressing them. These children are too young to be able to look after these parts themselves and they need this care.

In some homes, children and adults sometimes bathe and dress in places where it is not private and other family members may see the private or sexual parts of their bodies. Some groups of adults and children like to swim and sun-bathe without wearing swimming costumes or without tops. Where this happens, the members of the family or the group have usually given permission (verbally or non-verbally) for people to see their private or sexual body parts and everyone feels OK about it. If a member of the family or group feels uncomfortable about seeing the private parts of another person's body or about another person seeing his or her private body parts, then doing this is not OK and they need to say so, or to talk to someone about it.

- ❖ Discussion based on the following questions:
 - What should you do if another person shows you the private or sexual parts of his or her body when you feel uncomfortable about it? (Say NO, I don't want to watch that or leave, if you can. TELL a trusted adult about it so the behaviour will stop.)





main idea

*I can recognise abuse.
Physical abuse is any non-accidental harm or injury to a child by a parent, carer or other person. Sexual abuse is any unwanted sexual behaviour made towards a child.*

- What should you do if someone shows you photographs, magazines or videos of the sexual parts of a person's body and you feel uncomfortable about it? (Say NO, I don't want to watch that or leave, if you can. TELL a trusted adult about it so the behaviour will stop.)
- Why is it OK to see diagrams or pictures of the sexual parts of the body in child protection (and human sexuality) lessons at school? (It is important to learn about the sexual body parts so children will be safer. Parents and carers know that this will happen in these lessons and have given permission for their children to take part. (If appropriate, it may be useful to discuss some parents' reactions to child protection lessons.)
- Why do teachers, parents and carers have to give permission before photographs of students are taken at school and given to people outside the school? (Teachers, parents and carers need to know who is taking the photos, exactly how they will be used and who will see them. Photographs can give personal information about students, eg what they look like, how old they are and what school they go to. It is not safe to give personal information to strangers.)
- What are some other times when it is not OK to let someone take a photograph of you? (If the person is a stranger. If your parents don't know that the photo is being taken. If you do not know who will see the photo. If the photo will show private parts of your body.)
- What should you do in this situation? (Say NO, if you can. GO away if you can. TELL a trusted adult about it so your photo can be taken back or destroyed.)

Physical abuse and sexual abuse

- *Before participating in activities from this focus area students need to have participated in activities which have established understandings about OK and not OK touching, feelings, warning signals and signs, accidental harm, intentional harm, sexual abuse and physical abuse. Examples of these activities are provided in Child Protection Education: Stage 2.*
- *It may be appropriate for teachers to consider team teaching activities from this and the following focus area with a support teacher (eg ESL teachers, Aboriginal education assistants or community language teachers).*

field building

- ❖ Revise what is meant when we talk about OK and not OK touching. Divide the board or chart paper into two columns with the headings *OK touch* and *Not OK touch*. Ask students to think about some ways they have been touched in the playground during

the week. Brainstorm these ways of touching, classifying each form of touch as it is suggested and recording it in the appropriate column.

Inform students that the words OK and *not OK* are also referred to as *appropriate* and *inappropriate*. Record these words alongside the headings.

- *The terms 'OK' and 'not OK' can continue to be used if students prefer these terms. However, include references to the terms 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' from time to time to ensure students have an understanding of these words.*

Discuss how inappropriate (or not OK) behaviour of others can be a warning sign that harm to a person might follow.

- ❖ Revise the five factors which can help decide whether touch is appropriate or inappropriate: WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? HOW?

Using some examples of touch, examine how the factors can help decide if it is appropriate or inappropriate (OK or not OK).

Ask students for examples of situations of touching that would be OK and not OK according to one or more factors. eg

A hug: WHO? from your mum (OK); from a taxi driver you don't know (not OK)

A tickle: WHAT? your sides (OK); your private parts (not OK)

A massage: WHERE? with your family or a physiotherapist (OK); with a stranger (not OK)

A kick: WHEN? practising karate (OK); playing in the playground (not OK)

A squeeze: HOW? gently (OK); painfully (not OK).

- ❖ View the performance of the song on the video *Tell a Friend - It's Never Too Late*. If appropriate, students revise or learn the rap song *Body Parts are Cool* using appendix 7 as a chart or a handout which is collected after the activity. The words of this song should be dealt with in context with the rap music and dance.

core learning

- *The following activities may be confronting to some students, particularly those who have experienced abuse. Appropriate teaching strategies should be incorporated. Examples of these can be found in the Introduction, page 6. They include*
- *respecting students' right not to participate, encouraging*
- *supportive acceptance of individual student's contributions (where they are appropriate), protective interrupting (when necessary) and monitoring of students who appear to have a*
- ▼ *high level of information about abusive behaviours. If there is*

main idea cont.

Physical abuse and sexual abuse are not OK and are never the child's fault.



- concern about the safety of a student this should be reported to the principal.
- If a student displays negative reactions to these activities (such as withdrawal or disruptive behaviour) an alternative activity which will provide space and distancing for the student should be provided. Later, sensitive discussion with the student may clarify some difficulties and assist the teacher to modify future activities involving the student.

- ❖ Teacher displays the definition for physical abuse (appendix 8) as an overhead projection.

Physical abuse is non-accidental harm or injury to a child by a carer or other person. Physical abuse harms a child physically. It can also harm a child's emotions and thinking.

Students, in small groups, create a list of physical injuries, harm or actions that could be classified as abuse. Remind students that the actions must be non-accidental and cause harm to a child. Also remind students to keep their lists to general examples and not to use the names of any people in discussion.

- *It may be necessary to remind students that actions such as smacking or slapping by parents or carers may not necessarily be physical abuse. If smacking or slapping do not cause injuries or do not harm a child's emotions or thoughts, this is probably not abuse. However if a child is smacked or slapped every day, even if there are no injuries, a child might begin to feel frightened and unsafe. A child might also start thinking that he or she is no good and is not loved or cared for. This could then be considered abuse.*
- *The teacher may need to be aware of individual reactions to this task and be prepared to positively interrupt any personal disclosures of physical abuse. See the Introduction, page 9.*

A reporter from each group shares the group's responses with the class. Discuss to clarify whether suggestions constitute abuse.

- *Information for teachers (not appropriate for presentation to students):*
- *Examples of physical abuse of children include: shaking; pushing; throwing; drowning; holding a child underwater; beatings; cuts and lacerations; stab wounds; welts; cord, belt or buckle marks; burns; strangulation; choking; poisoning; being tied up; suffocation; broken, fractured or dislocated bones; bruising; internal injuries; administering of unnecessary drugs or alcohol to a child.*

After discussion reinforce that none of these behaviours are ever OK. Every child has the right to be safe and to be protected from harm and abuse.

Discussion based on the following questions:

- If young children are difficult and their parents or caregivers physically harm or injure them as punishment, is this abuse? (Yes it is abuse. It is never OK for children to be harmed on purpose no matter how difficult they are.)
Remind students that smacking or slapping by parents or carers may not necessarily be abuse. If smacking or slapping do not cause injuries or harm they are probably not abuse.
- If children do something wrong which causes their parents or caregivers to become so angry that they harm the child, is it the child's fault? (No. It is never the child's fault. No child deserves to be hurt on purpose. Even if a person is out of control his or her actions are not 'accidents'. Parents and carers have a responsibility to care for and to protect children – not to harm them.)
- What if a relative or neighbour who is looking after a child harms or injures that child on purpose? (This is abuse. The relative or neighbour has a responsibility to care for and protect the child.)
- What if an older child or teenager is looking after a child and he or she harms or injures the child on purpose? (This is abuse. If an older child or teenager takes the responsibility to look after a child he or she also has the responsibility to keep the child safe.)
- What should you do if you are physically harmed or injured on purpose by an adult or older child? (GO from the situation, if you can. Decide what you want to happen next. Talk to a friend if you feel unsure or confused. TELL a trusted adult so that the abuse can be dealt with. It 's never too late to TELL.)

❖ Read the story *Don't Hurt Me Mama* by Muriel Stanek.

• *NB. This story should be read first by the teacher to ascertain its suitability for students. It presents an accurate but detailed account of a loving relationship between a girl and her mother which involves physical abuse. Although the story has a very positive ending, debriefing may be required. Careful monitoring of students' reactions is necessary and support should be provided if individual students have strong responses to the story. Protective interrupting may be required in discussion following the story. Refer to page 9 of the Introduction.*

• *When working with students who have experienced abuse it is very powerful and reassuring when others discuss similar abusive situations in a general way, naming the abuse and*





- *declaring it as not OK and not the child's fault. It is always*
- *important that the teacher keeps discussion general so that*
- *individual students do not disclose sensitive information in*
- *the classroom as it is not a safe or appropriate place for*
- *such disclosure.*
- *Appropriate ways to discuss personal or sensitive issues*
- *should have been conveyed to students prior to teaching about*
- *sensitive issues eg with the teacher after the lesson, with the*
- *school counsellor, a trusted friend or adult network member.*

Discussion and debriefing based on the following questions:

- How did the physical abuse affect the girl in the story? (She felt sad and lonely. She felt confused and didn't know what to do. She would hide in her room because she was scared that her mother would hurt her again. She had injuries on her legs and arms.)
- Why was it difficult for the girl to tell someone about her situation? (Her mother had told her not to tell. She didn't want to cause problems for her mother because she loved her. The girl might have known that the school nurse would have to tell other people about the abuse.)

- *Remind students about the responsibility of adults who work*
- *in a school to always tell people at the Department of*
- *Community Services if a student tells them they are being*
- *abused. School staff are not allowed to keep abuse a secret.*
- *They must help the student.*

Discuss how, when adults physically abuse their children, it is often because the adults have problems. Even though they abuse their children, they may love them very much. They might need help to manage difficult things in their lives in appropriate or OK ways, or to understand more about the effects on children of parents' behaviour.

- What happened after the girl told her secret? (Her mother received help from special people in the community who work with families where there are problems, so children can be safe. She was helped with some of her problems. The girl and her mother started to have a better relationship with each other.)

- *If discussion leads to questions about the people in the*
- *community who work with families where there are problems,*
- *these should be addressed. It may be helpful to use a local*
- *telephone book to locate the numbers of services which are*
- *available to help families where parents and caregivers are*
- *having difficulties in caring for their children.*

- ❖ The teacher reminds students that it is very hard for children to talk about abuse. It can be even more difficult for children to talk

about *sexual abuse* because it involves talking about private body parts and activities which are often not talked about.

Review with students, the definition of sexual abuse by reading the following:

Sexual abuse involves the touching of the sexual parts of a person's body when that person does not want to be touched, or need to be touched. Touching might be by the hand, the mouth, another part of a person's body or by an object. The touching might not be uncomfortable - like tickling, but it usually gets less comfortable over time.

Adults, teenagers and other children can sexually abuse others.

Sexual abuse can also involve looking at someone's sexual body parts or making a child look at another person's sexual body parts when they don't want to. Sexual abuse also includes pressuring someone to look at pictures or videos which show sexual body parts.

The teacher may wish to invite questions or discussion about the definition of child sexual abuse.

- *Information for teachers (not appropriate for presentation to students):*
 - *Behaviours which constitute sexual abuse include: sexually suggestive behaviours, suggestive comments, exposing of genitals, exposure to pornography, fondling or touching private or sexual body parts, masturbating in front of a child, oral sex, penetrating the anus or vagina with any object and prostitution.*
 - *It should be reinforced that none of these behaviours are OK and they are never the child's fault. Even if the child didn't say NO or even participated willingly, engaging in sexual activity with a child is a crime. All adults have a responsibility to protect children and keep them safe from abuse.*
- ❖ In small groups students play the card game (appendix 9). The cards are placed face down in the middle of the group. Each group member takes turns to select a card and to read it to the group. Students decide if the suggested situation is an example of sexual abuse or is not sexual abuse. The card is placed on Pile A (sexual abuse) or Pile B (not sexual abuse). A group member records group responses to share with the class.
- The teacher guides discussion about each situation by calling on responses from students, clarifying any misunderstandings and providing information where it will be helpful.
- ❖ Inform students that the government has made rules about classifying television programs, movies, films, videos and computer games so children will not be exposed to programs which are frightening or harmful. No one should be forced to watch, or



main idea

I can recognise abuse. Emotional abuse is words and actions which hurt children's feelings and harm the way they think about themselves. Neglect occurs when children are harmed because they do not receive enough food, care and attention or medical care. Emotional abuse and neglect are not OK and are never the child's fault.

accidentally find themselves watching, programs they feel uncomfortable about.

Ask students about the various classifications and what they mean. (eg PG - parental guidance, M - mature viewers 15 years and over, A - adult themes, L - some unsuitable language, V - violence, S - sexual references, D - drugs, N - nudity.)

Remind students that if children feel uncomfortable about looking at any pictures or programs which show sexual body parts and are forced to look at them, this is abuse. Even if children do not feel uncomfortable about such pictures or videos, it is still abuse.

conclusion

- ❖ Engage students in a favourite class game to dispel any tensions.

Emotional abuse and neglect

field building

- ❖ Revise what is meant by the word *care*. (Care is having a liking or fondness for someone or something, showing attention to or looking after someone or something. Care is being concerned about or providing for the well-being of someone or something.)
- ❖ Examine the term *needs* and compare it with *wants*.

In pairs, students brainstorm a list of things they *need* to have when they go to the park to play with their friends. Students then make a separate list of things they might *want* to have when they go to the park to play with their friends.

- ❖ In groups, students find a picture from a magazine of a baby or young toddler.

Students paste the picture in the centre of a large sheet of paper and record around it what the baby would need to be safe and healthy. Encourage students to consider the baby's body, feelings and thinking. If appropriate, students may record their responses in three sections on the page.

Share responses and display sheets or retain for core learning. The activity may be taken further by doing the same with a picture of a child about the same age as students. Compare both sheets.

- ❖ Inform students that one opposite of *care* is *neglect*. Read the story, *A Secret Place*, by Julia Draper and discuss how the garden was neglected at the beginning of the story, how it changed and the reason for its change.

Create a shared definition for *neglect*. (Neglect is not paying attention to, or showing no care for, something or someone.) Discuss examples of objects or things that could be neglected eg shoes, clothes, a room, a fish tank, a fence, a vacant block of land, a house or a building, pets, plants, a car, a tractor.

On one half of a folded sheet of paper students individually draw one of these objects as it would look if it were neglected. On the other half students draw the object as it would look if it was being cared for. Display.

core learning

- ❖ The teacher informs students that children have certain basic needs in order to be safe and healthy in body and mind. These needs are based on children's rights. Revise the rights that children have. (To be safe, to have their bodies respected, to have their thoughts and feelings respected and to be treated fairly.) Children's needs which are based on their rights are called *basic* needs.

Remind students that these needs can be different in different situations. For example, in some places children do not need to wear shoes to be safe and well. In some places children do not need food from shops because in their area enough food can be grown for them to eat. Some children live in very large families and are happy to share a bed with other children. Some children need to have medication every day so they can stay well.

Students form groups to make a list in response to one of the following:

- children's *basic* food needs
- children's *basic* clothing needs
- children's *basic* housing needs
- children's *basic* medical needs
- children's *basic* emotional needs.

Share and discuss responses.

- *This may be a sensitive area for discussion where there are students who have experienced hardship, trauma, abuse or neglect and their basic needs for safety and well-being have not been met. Special sensitivity is also needed where there are students who have experienced separation from, or loss of their main caregivers. Strategies for talking about sensitive issues, such as maintaining confidentiality within the classroom, and protective interrupting may be necessary. Refer to page 9 of the Introduction.*
- *Private discussion with these students, if appropriate, may assist the teacher to decide how the student may best be supported within the school.*

- ❖ The teacher informs students that adults have a responsibility to ensure that children's basic needs are met. Sometimes it can be difficult for adults to provide for the needs of their children. Often other adult members of the family or close adult friends will look after children when their parents need help.





If this doesn't happen, and carers cannot provide for the children's basic needs, there are people and services in the community whose job it is to help these carers. The government has a special responsibility to make sure these services are there and that people can use them.

Discuss:

- Who are some people who care for children? (Include relevant people and services in the community such as The Smith Family, The Benevolent Society, The Society of St Vincent de Paul, Community Services Centres, The Salvation Army, health centres, schools, homework centres, after-school care and church and youth groups.)

Remind students that in some situations, parents and carers may not know about some of these places, or how to seek help from them. They may need support from others to do so.

Reinforce the definition of *neglect* by reading the following:

Where adults and carers refuse to provide for the needs of their children and refuse to seek help, this is called neglect. Neglect which causes harm to children is not OK. It is abuse.

- *It may be useful to clarify that, although older children may provide care for younger children, they are never responsible for making sure that younger children are not harmed by neglect. Adult carers should ensure that there is enough food for their children and that they are not in situations where they might be harmed. When older children babysit younger children, they may take on the responsibilities for caring for them and making sure that they are safe, but this is only for the time that they are babysitting.*

- ❖ Inform students that you are going to read a story about a child called Mardi who is neglected. It is not a true story, but sometimes children are neglected by their adult carers as Mardi is.

Mardi lives with her mother and father. Her Dad is rarely home. His work requires a lot of travel so he is away from home for many days at a time. Sometimes Mardi's Mum doesn't get out of bed all day. Mardi's Mum is sad most of the time. Mardi tries to be a help to her as much as she can.

Mardi looks after herself. She makes her own lunch if she can find any food in the house but often she can't find enough food. Mardi gets herself ready for school each day. Often her Mum doesn't even say goodbye to her.

At school Mardi's friends sometimes tease her for always being hungry and eating other students' leftovers. Mardi makes jokes

about her 'big appetite' to cover up her embarrassment. Her friends often ask Mardi when her parents will come to school so she makes up stories about how her parents are always being involved in important business. After a while her stories don't sound very believable.

When Mardi gets home she is happy just to see that her Mum is still OK. Sometimes her Mum is up and in a good mood. When she is, Mardi tells her about her schoolwork and they tidy up the house together. Mardi likes these times. However, most of the time no one is interested in Mardi's school work or even if she is happy or OK.

One afternoon Mardi is cutting an orange and she cuts her hand very deeply with the knife. It won't stop bleeding. Mardi tries to get her Mum out of bed so she can help her. Her Mum just mumbles and goes back to sleep. Mardi feels sad, scared and very alone.

Mardi ties up her hand with a cloth. Her Dad doesn't come home that night. Her hand never heals properly. It keeps getting infected. Mardi doesn't know how to look after the cut and her Dad won't take her to the doctor. Mardi stays away from school for a long time because she is ashamed of the injury. She feels sad and empty inside.



Students form pairs and summarise the story together. The teacher poses the following questions:

- What were some important points about Mardi's story?
 - Was Mardi neglected? (Yes.) How? (Mardi did not have enough food. She didn't receive enough care or attention from her Mum or her Dad so she would be safe and feel loved. She did not get necessary medical treatment when she was injured.)
 - How did Mardi try to cover up her neglect? (She made up stories and stayed away from school to hide her injury.)
 - Why do you think Mardi covered up the neglect? (Mardi might have thought she was to blame and she didn't deserve to be safe and protected. Mardi might have wanted to avoid causing trouble for her family. She might have been afraid that she would be taken away from her family. Mardi didn't know that there are people in the community who could help her mother and father so they could take better care of Mardi. These people rarely take children away from their families.)
 - Did Mardi have the right to be safe, cared for and protected? (Yes. This is the right of all children. Adults have the responsibility to make sure all children are protected. Adult carers also have the responsibility to take care of their children. Neglect is not OK.)
- ❖ The teacher informs students that sometimes a child's emotions and thinking can be harmed even though they look healthy on the outside. Words or actions that continually hurt children's feelings can change the way they think about themselves and children can think that they are no good and that no one likes them. They can



believe that they don't deserve to be cared for or to have their rights respected. This is never true. All children deserve to be cared for and to have their rights respected.

Remind students about some of the scenarios or stories, such as *Don't hurt me, Mama* or Mardi's story, that have been read previously. Discuss the following questions where relevant:

- How did Mardi's situation influence the way she felt?
- In the story, *Don't hurt me, Mama*, why was it hard for the girl to make friends with Mrs Hawkins, the lady upstairs?
- How did the girl's situation influence her feelings and thoughts?

Inform students that part of caring for children is showing them attention and being concerned about the way they feel. Children need to have love and attention.

Define *emotional abuse* by reading the following:

When people who are supposed to be caring for a child continually use words and actions that hurt that child's feelings and thoughts, this is called emotional abuse. Emotional abuse of children is never OK. Children have the right to be cared for and to have their feelings and thoughts respected.

Emotional abuse, like neglect, happens when *adults* who have a responsibility to care for their children don't do so and harm is caused to the child's feelings and thinking. When children and young people hurt each other's feelings and thoughts this is harmful and also abusive, but it has other names like bullying, teasing, threatening and harassing.

- ❖ Display as an overhead or chart, scenarios which might constitute emotional abuse (appendix 10). Unmask statements one at a time for discussion by students.
 - *The teacher may need to monitor discussion by students to gauge understandings. Students who have learned to solve problems by being 'tough' are likely to minimise the impact of emotional abuse on people.*

extension

Domestic violence

- ❖ Read the story *A Family That Fights* by Sharon Chesler Bernstein. On the board, using a web diagram record the names of the children in the family. (Henry, Claire and Joe.) Brainstorm and record the feelings and thoughts that the children had in response to their father's behaviour. Some positive responses should be included.

Discussion based on the following questions:

- Were the children experiencing abuse? (Yes.)
- What type of abuse were they experiencing? (Emotional abuse.) Why? (Their father did not hit them but they felt sad, angry, scared and helpless because of his behaviour.)
- If the children were good all the time, would it stop the fighting in their home? (No. The children were not to blame for the fighting. Even if children are difficult they do not deserve abuse.)
- Why do you think their father fights in their home? (The children's father might have a problem. He might not be able to express his anger in OK ways. He is to blame for the emotional abuse. He has a responsibility to behave in an OK way and not harm his children.)
- What could the children do to be safer? (Refer to the information section at the end of the story.)

In pairs, students write or draw how the family situation might change if the father goes to get help from special people in the community. If relevant it may be necessary to discuss situations where the mother and the children go to stay with friends, relatives or at a shelter. Police intervention, including Apprehended Violence Orders, may also need to be discussed.

It may be helpful to conclude with an activity where students use a local telephone book to locate the telephone numbers of services which are available to help families when there is domestic violence. Include services that help parents who are having difficulties as well as children's services.

It is important that the activity is closed with positive solutions.

- *Special sensitivity is required where there are students who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence.*
- *Strategies for talking about sensitive issues, such as confidentiality within the classroom, returning discussion to general situations and protective interrupting may be necessary. Refer to page 9 of the Introduction.*
- *If concerns are held about the safety of a particular student they should be referred to the principal for notification.*
- *Alternatively, a notification can be made by a school staff member to the local Community Services Centre.*



main idea

There are internal signals and external signs which can help me recognise situations where I might be at risk of harm.

Indicators of risk

field building

- *Before commencing activities from this focus area students need to have revised understandings about external warning signs, feelings and body warning signals and the concept of 'being safe'.*
- *Some students who have experienced abuse or trauma may have more difficulties with the concept of being safe and may need additional work in this area and in the area of children's right to be safe. This could be carried out as pre-learning or revision in a one-to-one situation or in small groups. The school counsellor or other appropriate school staff might assist.*
- *These students may then act as 'experts' in revising concepts for introducing the topic.*
- *It is important not to generalise or categorise particular places, people or situations as always being safe. Abuse often occurs in familiar 'safe' locations, with familiar 'trusted' people. Most situations have the potential to be unsafe. Encourage students to describe feelings, body signals and external signs which they relate to feelings of safety. It is important that students talk about "I feel safe when..." rather than "I am safe when..."*

- ❖ *Revise the terms *internal* (inside) and *external* (outside). In groups students compile lists of internal and external components of a number of items eg a person, the classroom, the school, a car, a computer, a house.*

- a person (internal - organs, blood, nerves, feelings)
 (external - hair, nose, clothes)
- the classroom (internal - students, class members, desks)
 (external - playground, toilets, other students)

- ❖ *Examine the term *risk*. Create a shared definition. (To take a risk means to do something when you are not sure how it will turn out.)*

Remind students how there can be a sense of adventure and fun in taking risks. *Safe risk taking* means thinking about what might happen and acting to lessen the chances of anything going wrong.

Discuss:

- *What are some 'safe' risks? (Riding a horse wearing a helmet. Roller blading down a hill wearing a helmet and kneepads.)*

- *Some monitoring of students' responses may be required to ensure that dangerous risks are not included and the teacher is not seen to be condoning safe risks which are illegal or which involve inappropriate behaviour.*

- Can you take a 'safe' risk where there is danger involved? (No. The word *risk* means there is always a chance things won't turn out as you expect. Where danger is involved, safety cannot be guaranteed. If something goes wrong, harm will often occur.)
- What are some dangerous risks? (Swimming in irrigation canals, smoking, drink driving, playing with a dog that doesn't know you.)

❖ Revise the following kinds of feelings. In groups, students record a definition for one and role play an example of their own:

mixed feelings	experiencing different or opposite feelings at the same time eg – feeling proud that your friend won an award but being envious of his or her success.
changing feelings	when a feeling changes (usually unexpectedly) eg – trusting someone and then seeing that person steal something of yours.
confused feelings	when you are unsure about how you feel and about what to think eg – when you are getting different messages from the same person about whether you are their friend or not.
uncomfortable feelings	when you feel uneasy, surprised, a bit worried or nervous eg – when someone you don't know very well gives you a big hug.

Share responses and role plays as a whole class. Discuss body reactions or signals which might be experienced in the different situations. Identify the signals that could be *warning signals*.

- *Debriefing may be required after each role play. See the Introduction, page 8.*
- *Students who have difficulties in identifying and articulating their feelings may need further examples and discussion of feelings. They may need further work in discussing the feelings of characters in books or videos and relating these to their own experiences and responses. Suggestions of books are provided in the book list.*

core learning

- ❖ The teacher informs students that when children are hurt or harmed by other people, it is most often by people they know. People known to a child can be more likely to cause harm because they spend time with the child, they can be alone with them, they know how to use power over the child and they can try to influence the child to keep a secret. Strangers can also harm a child but harm often comes from someone a child knows.





Reassure students that most people they know will never harm them, however it is a good idea to be able to recognise when they may be at risk of being harmed. Warning signals, such as body signals or feelings, and external signs can be indicators of risk.

In pairs, the students complete the worksheet *Warning signs and signals* (using appendices 11 and 12). Students consider each warning signal provided, decide whether it is an internal signal or an external sign and paste it in the appropriate column. Share responses as a whole class.

Alternatively, discuss as a whole class and using enlarged copies of each appendix, create a class chart. Charts will be used in a later activity.

- *Ensure that students understand that individual indicators on their own may not necessarily mean risk of harm eg often there are good reasons for adults needing to be alone with children.*
- *When there are a number of indicators or when one indicator gives strong feelings of discomfort or confusion then there may be the risk of harm.*

- ❖ Revise the definition of *trust*. (Trust is believing that another person will be fair to you or do the right thing by you.) Display the definition for reference later in this activity.

Discuss how trust is built. (Trust is built through shared good (or positive) experiences, over time.)

In groups, students record some warning signals (internal and external) that might be experienced if someone's trust was broken (eg feeling let-down, a broken promise, inappropriate behaviour, confusing behaviour, feeling worried or scared about something that is said or done by a person, being forced to keep a secret which should not be kept, a gift given for a favour.)

Inform students that broken trust can be a strong indicator of being at risk of harm.

- ❖ The teacher informs students that the following story describes a child who is at risk of being harmed. It is not a true story, but things like this sometimes really happen.

Ask students to listen carefully to identify any 'risk' indicators or warning signals as the story is told. If they hear something that could be an indicator of risk, students are to raise their hands briefly.

Display the *Warning signs and signals* master chart (appendix 12). All the asterixed segments of the story contain a warning signal which is included on the chart.

Gabby was nine. Her favourite game was soccer. Gabby and her brother played soccer with the local team every Saturday. The field was a long way from their house so Gabby's Dad or their Step Mum, Fran, would drive them and watch them play.

Sometimes they had to miss a game if their parents were too busy to take them. Everyone felt disappointed when this happened.

This year a new person came to help the coach. His name was Issy. Issy lived in the same street as Gabby and her family. Issy wore cool clothes. He had nice eyes and a friendly smile. Issy offered to drive Gabby and her brother to and from soccer practice but Gabby's parents said no. They said they didn't know him well enough.

On Saturdays Issy started to come and talk with Gabby's Dad or with Fran. He laughed and joked with them. He was friendly with all the parents of the team.

One Saturday Gabby's Dad invited some of the soccer people over for lunch after the game. Issy offered to come and help. He started a game of soccer in the backyard with the kids and their parents. It was great fun. When the others left, Issy helped Gabby's Dad and Fran clean up.

After that day her parents said they would be happy if Gabby and her brother walked to Issy's house and drove with him to practise on Saturdays. Gabby and her family had started to trust Issy.

*Everything went well for a while. Then some Saturdays when they arrived, Issy would not be ready and he would get changed in front of Gabby and her brother***(inappropriate behaviour)*.*

*Issy started asking Gabby to come earlier so they could watch some soccer videos before they left***(special attention, trying to be alone)*. One time the video was R-rated and not about soccer***(sexual videos)*. Issy told Gabby that she must not tell anyone about the video***(a secret)*. Gabby didn't tell anyone but she stopped coming early after that. She wondered if she still trusted Issy***(changing feelings)*.*

*The next time, when they arrived, Issy asked Gabby's brother to wait on the front verandah and he closed the front door***(isolation, closed door)*. He told Gabby he would give her ten dollars if she would scrub his back in the shower***(a bribe or a gift for a favour)*. Issy told Gabby that she would have to keep this a secret from her brother and her parents or he would not be their friend anymore***(a threat)*.*

*Issy had never actually touched Gabby but she still felt funny and mixed-up about their relationship***(confused feelings)*.*



Discussion based on the following questions:

- What kind of relationship did Gabby have with Issy? (He was a stranger at first but he became a close family friend.)
- How did Issy build up trust with Gabby and her family? (He was kind and friendly, he talked to her parents, helped them and became a close family friend.)
- How did Issy break the trust? (Issy acted in inappropriate ways. He tried to bribe Gabby. He threatened her to keep secrets which should not be kept.)



- What were some warning signals that might have helped Gabby recognise she was at risk of being harmed? (Refer to examples marked ** in the story.)
- Was Gabby wrong not to tell anyone about the video? (No. Although it would have helped Gabby if she had told, it is sometimes very hard for children to talk about things like this.)
- Was Gabby to blame for Issy's behaviour? (No. No child is ever to blame when an adult behaves inappropriately. Issy probably knew what he was doing was wrong. This is probably why he tried to bribe Gabby and made a threat so she might keep his behaviour a secret.)
- What could Gabby do at the end of the story? (Gabby could say NO if she could and GO as soon as she could. She could think about how she would like this problem to be resolved. Gabby could talk to a friend or an adult to get advice and support. If she felt unsafe she should TELL an adult.)

- *Protective strategies are incorporated into this theme but are explored more fully in Theme 3.*

conclusion

Human pretzel

- ❖ All students join hands to form a large circle. Without breaking hand contact, students tangle themselves by going under, over, in and out of each other's arms. Students then, one at a time and maintaining hand contact, try to untangle themselves.

- *This activity is helpful in dispelling tensions at the close of a session involving discussion of sensitive issues.*
- *An alternative activity will be required where there is limited classroom space or with students who have limited mobility.*

extension

- ❖ The teacher assigns to each student a warning signal or external warning sign from the class chart. Students individually publish a page describing the warning signal or sign, some body reactions which might be involved and what the signal or sign might indicate. Students' work is compiled to form a class book titled *Warning signs and signals*.

Identifying risk situations, people and places

field building

- *Before students participate in activities from this focus area*
 - *they need to have established understandings about warning*
 - *signals and signs which can indicate risk of harm.*
- ❖ The teacher poses the following statement and questions for discussion:
- As children grow older, they begin to become more independent. They can do more things for themselves and by themselves.
 - What kinds of things can you do now that you couldn't when you were younger?
 - What kinds of things are you now allowed to do that you weren't allowed to do when you were younger?

Brainstorm a list of activities that students are now allowed (or soon will be allowed) to do independently.

eg Dress selves, prepare meals, look after younger children, go to the park without an adult, catch a train or a bus without a parent or caregiver, go to the movies with friends, be at home alone, spend their own money, go to tutoring or activity classes alone, go fishing without an adult, stay for training after school, go to a camp, sleep over at friends' houses, raise orphan lambs or poddy calves.

- *Where relevant, ensure that the list reflects the expectations and limitations of children from all cultural groups within the school community. Suggestions may be asterisked with 'most students' and 'some students' to accommodate individual differences within the classroom. The teacher should model affirmation and appreciation of the range of responses that represent the views of different groups within the community.*
 - *Ensure that individual students are not singled out as being 'unusual'. This might require the teacher adding statements such as, "There are lots of other children who don't do that either because they are following special rules which are important to their families."*
- ❖ Create an enlarged map of the local suburb, town or neighbourhood. Identify significant locations such as main roads; shops or shopping centres; schools; police, fire and ambulance stations; hospitals; petrol stations; churches, temples or mosque; parks; sports grounds; safety houses; health and community service centres; and child care centres.
- Tag in red, the places where students believe they could go for help if they felt unsafe. Display and retain for further work in core learning activities.

main idea

Some situations, people and places might be more likely than others to put me at risk of harm and abuse.



- ❖ Incorporate some activities about the Safety House program. Teachers will need to check first whether the program is active in the local area. If appropriate, invite a local police officer to talk with students about safety houses.

core learning

- ❖ Divide a large chart or board into three columns. In the left hand column brainstorm a list of places where students feel safe. Leave a space between each suggestion.

In the second column, brainstorm for each place, some characteristics which suggest safety.

In the third column, brainstorm for each place, some alternative characteristics which might at times indicate that a person should stop and think about his or her safety.

- *Ensure that the language of possibility is used in recording and discussion eg "...might happen..." "could happen."*
- *Where extreme or explicit examples of risk are suggested these should be sensitively edited with an explanation such as, "This might have happened to some children in the world but it is very rare and is unlikely to happen to you. Most children will never experience this, so let's concentrate on some risks that could occur in our community".*

Inform students that the characteristics in the third column are common indicators that can help you know if different places are likely to be safe or if there might be risks to the safety of a person who is there at the time.

- ❖ The teacher reminds students that, although most places in their community are safe, when they are on their own or with a friend they need to be aware of what is happening around them and think about the safety factors of their situation.

Revise the five factors that can help determine the safety of a situation - WHO? WHAT? HOW? WHERE? WHEN? Record them on the board or a chart.

Refer to the map of the suburb or neighbourhood created in field building.

Take two or three familiar locations and discuss for each some factors that can identify the location as being safe. eg

The shops or the shopping centre:

WHO? There are lots of people there. Many people work in shops and their job is to help people. These people will usually help children if they feel unsafe. There are security officers in some larger shops. Their job is to protect shoppers.

WHAT? Shopping centres often have security cameras which monitor isolated or risky places in the shops. Shops usually have public phones so you could call someone if you feel at risk. In an emergency you can dial 000 without using money or a phone card.

HOW? If you are alone you are less safe. If you are with friends you are safer. If you are with trusted adults you are safest.

WHERE? Isolated areas in shopping centres may not be safe.

WHEN? Outside normal shopping hours there are not many shoppers or workers around.

The local park:

WHO? Parents and caregivers are usually present in the park.

WHAT? Play areas have equipment which is safe to use. Paths and seats are placed so people can view play areas.

HOW? If you are alone you are less safe. If you are with friends you are safer. If you are with trusted adults you are safest.

WHERE? Isolated areas in the park, including the toilets, may not be safe.

WHEN? During the day parks are usually safe. In the evening and at night they might not be safe.

- *As an extension activity, students could be assigned*
- *particular neighbourhood locations to research and to present*
- *information about the safe and risky aspects of their*
- *assigned area.*

- ❖ Students form pairs or small groups to determine the safety of a range of situations using copies of *What if?* scenarios (appendix 13). Encourage students to consider factors which can help determine safety (WHO? WHAT? HOW? WHERE? AND WHEN?). Students consider each situation and determine the levels of safety. Share responses as a class group, discussing some reasons for responses.

- *Levels of safety: scenario 1 - possible risk, 2 - possible risk, 3 - at risk, 4 - possible risk, 5 - possible risk, 6 - at risk, 7 - possible risk, 8 - at risk.*

- ❖ Students generalise to answer the question:
 - What are some situations, people and places where I should trust my feelings and think about my safety?





Record students' suggestions. Group similar responses and combine those which are similar. Publish on a class chart. eg

Situations, people and places where I should trust my feelings and think about my safety.

*An **absence of people** passing by, or in view of an area can reduce safety.*

***Isolated or empty places** can be unsafe because others cannot see what's happening.*

*The presence of a **gang or group** who want to cause trouble can threaten safety.*

***Breaking rules** can put your safety at risk.*

*Keeping silent about **bribes, threats or secrets** which shouldn't be kept can jeopardise safety.*

*The presence of **weapons** can threaten safety.*

*When **illegal drugs or excessive alcohol** is used, the safety of everyone present can be at risk.*

***Violence** in any setting, including the school or home, threatens the safety of everyone, even bystanders.*

*You can be at risk in your **home or a familiar place**.*

*You can be at risk even from **people you know** and trust.*

*Having **warning signals** can help you identify when you are at risk.*

Trust your feelings and stop and think.

NB. Remind students that these situations on their own may not necessarily indicate risk. Safety can depend on different factors (such as WHO? WHAT? HOW? WHERE? WHEN?) which are happening at the same time. For example, you would probably not be at risk being in an isolated place with a trusted adult and you probably are not at risk in a museum or other place where weapons are kept locked away safely.

- ❖ The teacher informs students that each year more children and young people are hurt when they are at *home* than when they are in their neighbourhoods or when they are travelling.

Brainstorm some items in homes which have the potential to cause harm eg cleaning and gardening preparations and farm chemicals which are poisonous; glass objects; knives; hot appliances (such as stoves, heaters, open fires and irons); areas that involve climbing (such as trees, high rocks and roofs); swimming pools and water tanks; old fridges or chests which you could be trapped in; medications which are not meant for you or are not used as directed; tools you are not able to use properly yet; matches and lighters.

Discuss some things that children can do to be safe with these items.

- Although this focus area concentrates on recognising risk situations, strategies for safety can be discussed where relevant (or dealt with in integrated activities). For example,
- “If you are feeling unsafe or at risk because you are on your own and a group of young people you don’t know is hassling you, you need to be ready to act for safety. What are some things you could do?”

conclusion

- ❖ Students form small groups. The teacher has prepared a set of cards using appendices 14 and 15 for each group. Cards are placed face up in the middle of the group. Students take turns to match a *risk indicator* card with its corresponding *meaning* card. If members of the group agree with the match the cards are placed in pairs on the side. Continue until all cards are matched.

- For some groups of students it might be helpful to discuss both sets of cards before the group activity or before completing as a class activity.

extension

- ❖ The teacher informs students that many children and young people *live* in situations where they are frequently at risk and their safety is often threatened. Sometimes these children experience harm and injury but they continue to live in the situation. There can be many reasons for this. Often it is the behaviour of a family member that puts children and families at risk or causes harm or injury to them. Situations like this are extremely hard to talk about and it can be difficult to act to be safer.

Pose the following question for discussion:

- Why might it be difficult to take action to be safer? (The child might be at risk of harm in the family home. The child will probably want to keep living there and to stay with the family. There may be no other place for the child to go.)
- What kinds of feelings and thoughts can make it difficult to act for safety when it is a family member who puts your safety at risk? (You might love the person and not want him or her to get into trouble. You don’t want that person to be angry with you. You don’t want to bring shame to the family. The person may be depended upon to support the family. The person may be nice most of the time. The person may promise to change his or her behaviour. You may think all families behave this way.)
- What can children in this situation do to receive help? (They could talk to a trusted adult. Adults have a responsibility to protect children and should intervene so the child will be safe. There are people who work in agencies in the community whose job it is to do this. These people can help the family work out what is best to do so they will be safe.)





- *The following story gives a detailed account of a situation of domestic violence. It accurately represents the feelings and responses of all family members involved. It also provides a model of effective and positive intervention.*
- *However, caution needs to be taken before using this book with students. It is recommended that the teacher reads the book in advance to gauge the response of students in the classroom, as well as their parents, to the detailed nature of the story.*
- *Although the story has a positive ending, the teacher may need to be prepared for strong reactions from some students.*
- *Extra support may be provided by team teaching with a support teacher or the school counsellor.*

❖ Read the story *Hear My Roar* by Dr Ty Hochban. Discussion based on the following questions:

- What is the name of the situation that Lungin and Anna experienced at home? (Domestic violence.)
- What were some things that Orsa did to Lungin and Anna that harmed them or put their safety at risk?
- Is physical harm the only type of harm that might occur in situations of domestic violence? (No. The mother and child could have hurt feelings, hurt thinking and property could be damaged.)

The teacher informs students that domestic violence can involve constant shouting, ongoing insults, refusing to allow family members outside contact with other people and withholding money when it is needed.

- Would this behaviour be OK if you saw it happen outside the home, such as in a park or shopping centre? (No. Any actions which cause harm to another person and are not accidental are not OK. They are forms of abuse.)
- Why do some people try to keep domestic violence a secret? (People do not want to get loved ones into trouble. They may be afraid that telling someone will make things worse. They might be too embarrassed or scared, they might not know who to tell. They might not want to bring shame to themselves or to their family. They may believe nothing can change. They might believe it's their fault.)
- In the story, what did Lungin and Anna do so that they could be safe? (They went to see the doctor, who was also an elder in the community, to ask for help.)
- What can be done about situations of domestic violence? (Helpful and appropriate information is provided at the end of the book *A Family That Fights*.)

- When raising the issue of violence within families, it is important that strategies for safety are discussed in some detail. Inviting discussion about this issue, which is likely to have been experienced by a number of students in any one class, requires offering strategies for safety and opportunities for support.
- Protective interrupting (see the Introduction, page 9), more private discussion as a follow up, if appropriate, and referral to the school counsellor may be required. If concerns are held about the safety of a student these should be reported to the principal for notification or to the local Community Services Centre.

Effects of abuse

field building

- Before participating in activities from this focus area students need to have developed skills in identifying and articulating their feelings and the feelings of others. They should also have understandings about physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children.
- ❖ Briefly revise emotional and mental harm (harm to feelings and thinking). Share some examples. Discuss the similarities between the two (they are internal, the harm is invisible but they affect the way you act).
- ❖ Create shared definitions for the terms *emotional well-being* and *mental well-being*. eg
 - *Emotional well-being* is being comfortable in your feelings most of the time. Some things will still upset you, but you can seek support from trusted people to help you deal with them.
 - *Mental well-being* is being able to think clearly most of the time and make sensible decisions about things for which you are able to take responsibility. You are able to think about a problem and about how it might be solved.
- ❖ Discuss the concept of valuing yourself. Create a shared definition. (When you value yourself, you recognise your strengths and accept your weaknesses.)
 Discuss the benefits of valuing yourself eg you are more prepared to try new or difficult things, you are not so worried about failing and you are less likely to get into ‘hot water’ for not being able to do something when you thought you could.
 Inform students that it is important to have an accurate self concept. If you imagine you have more weaknesses than you really do you may not ever try anything new. If you imagine you have more strengths than you really do you may let others down when you can’t do the things you said you could, or put yourself in danger.

main idea

Abuse and neglect can result in emotional and mental harm as well as physical harm.

Abuse and neglect can affect the way children value themselves. They can affect the way children feel, think and act. Abuse and neglect are never OK.

Point out that we do not all have to be 'Michael Jordans' but we will be happier and achieve more when we really understand what we are good at and when we need to have help.

- ❖ Students form groups of three or four members. The teacher has prepared a *self concept wheel* (appendix 16) for each group, using cardboard and pins. Students take turns to spin the wheel twice. The first time they identify a time when they did well on a task associated with the particular category. The second time they identify a time when they did quite poorly on a task associated with the particular category.

Whole class discussion:

- What was it like to tell others about things you did well and not well?
- If you do well in some categories and not in others, what does that mean?
- What would it be like if everyone was good at everything?
- *Small groups could make 'self concept wheels' with their own categories and pass these on to other groups to use.*
- What did you learn from this activity that could help you in this classroom?

core learning

- ❖ Remind students that when children are harmed or injured - physically, emotionally or mentally - and it is not accidental, this is called *abuse*.

Read the following statements to students, as a class or in pairs, and ask them to decide whether they describe situations which are *abuse* or *not abuse*.

- May slips when she is tagged playing softball. As she lands she fractures her wrist. (*not abuse*)
- Ted can't find his carer after school, one afternoon. After fifteen minutes the carer turns up and explains that he was delayed by traffic. (*not abuse*)
- During an argument, Ellen's friend calls her a nasty name and upsets Ellen. (*not abuse*)
- Someone from Sam's sports team insults and teases Sam every week. (*abuse*)
- Harry's babysitter often tells him that his parents go out a lot because they think Harry is a pain to have around. (*abuse*)
- Pat knocks over something valuable and her parents yell loudly at her and tell her she was being careless. (*not abuse*)
- An angry carer pushes Sid against the heater and holds him there for several minutes. (*abuse*)

Explain that if children experience abuse for a long time it can affect the view they have about themselves and the value they place on themselves. People who abuse sometimes do this by continually insulting, putting down and threatening children, so they develop an incorrect idea of their strengths and weaknesses. It is important that children talk to a trusted adult if they experience abuse, so action can be taken to help stop the abuse.

- ❖ Students form groups of six members. Distribute the unfinished story about Danny (appendix 17), giving each member a different segment. Explain to students that the child in this story is abused. The abuse is affecting Danny's thinking, feelings and behaviour. The story is made up, but similar situations can happen to children. Ask students to read the story segments in their groups and to imagine that the character Danny is their friend. Students determine the correct sequence of the story.

- For some groups of students it may be more appropriate for
- Danny to be a girl or the abuser to be a mother.

Read the story together.

Danny is a friend of yours. Danny is a great frisbee thrower. He also enjoys playing the guitar and is very talented.

After school you often go to the park with friends and play. You often throw the frisbee together for hours. After playing in the park you and Danny usually go home to do homework. Danny practises guitar.

Danny is a great friend most of the time but every now and then he acts a bit 'funny'. He often has headaches or stays home from school 'sick'. Or sometimes he comes to school but he's a bit smelly and his clothes aren't washed. Every now and then Danny stops talking to anyone and gets a bit aggressive. One time he smashed his guitar. Later he said it was an accident and his Mum bought him a new one.

Another time Danny was nearly falling asleep at lunchtime. When you asked if he was OK, Danny asked if you ever wet the bed or had trouble sleeping. When you looked puzzled he told you to forget it and ran off.

In the middle of last summer, Danny had thick, red marks on his neck and wore his jumper all week. He refused to take it off. He got really angry with anyone who gave him a hard time about it and got into a physical fight with a friend.

Lately Danny has stopped playing his guitar and the other day he asked if you wanted it. You notice Danny has a bruise under his eye.

Yesterday Danny was kind of quiet all day and he stayed in all lunchtime. He said he wanted to finish his project but it looked perfect to you.

Today Danny won't throw the frisbee around and he won't talk much. He just says he's really useless and he doesn't know why you bother to be his friend because he's so stupid.

Danny doesn't want to go home, even when it gets dark. You tell Danny you have to go or you'll be in big trouble for being unsafe.





Then Danny asks if he can come and stay at your house.

You feel very funny about this. Danny has never stayed at your house before and you don't stay at his house. It's a school night. You wonder what your parents will say.

Danny starts throwing rocks at the light in the park. He tells you he doesn't care if he gets arrested. He tells you he doesn't care about anything much. Then he kicks his foot hard into a wall. It must really hurt.

You invite Danny to your place but say you can't promise that he'll be able to stay the night. Danny is walking slowly. Suddenly he stops and tells you that he can't go home. He tells you that his father bashes him every night. He says that his father hates him and it's got so bad lately he's scared his father will kill him.

Danny wants you to promise that you will never tell another person what he's told you.

In their groups students identify some of Danny's feelings, thoughts and behaviours in the story that could show he was affected by abuse and neglect. Students list these under the headings: feelings, thoughts, behaviour, school life/social life and health.) The table at appendix 18 may be used.

- ❖ Class discussion based on the following questions:
 - What were some of Danny's feelings, thoughts and behaviours in the story that could show he was affected by abuse or neglect?
 - How could people easily miss the signs of abuse that Danny showed? (They could mean other things. eg Danny might have bruised his neck falling off his bike. He might have been sad because his dog had died. It is difficult to recognise abuse unless a person tells you about it. Children who experience abuse are often told to keep it a secret or they feel too ashamed to tell.)
 - Is Danny to blame for the abuse? (No. Children are never responsible for abuse. It is the abuser who is responsible. Abusers usually know that their behaviour is wrong which is why they often use threats, put downs and insults which affect a child's idea of his or her self worth. Then a child will be less likely to tell.)
 - Why are children less likely to tell about abuse if they do not value themselves? (Children might believe that they are not good and they deserve to be abused. They might think they are to blame. They might think they are so bad, nobody would believe them.)
 - Why do you think Danny is doing things which would seem to only hurt himself? (Danny probably does not value himself. He may believe he hasn't got any good points or strengths. He may have begun to hate himself and wants to hurt and punish himself. He may not be able to see any way out of the situation.)

- What are some situations in the story which suggest that Danny had a low opinion of himself?
- What thoughts would Danny have to change before he began to feel OK? (Danny has a right to be safe and to be respected. He is a worthwhile person and a good friend. The abuse is not his fault and does not mean that Danny is bad. His father has a problem and needs help so the abuse can stop.)
- Why might Danny find it more difficult to TELL about the abuse because he is a boy? (Boys and young men might think that they should be able to protect themselves or stop the abuse. Boys and young men may falsely worry that their masculinity might be questioned, particularly if they are sexually abused.)

conclusion

- ❖ Returning to their groups students list the messages that they, as friends of Danny's, could give to help him get his view of himself into perspective. Remind students that the messages should be a true reflection of Danny's strengths, eg telling Danny that he is a brilliant student, if he wasn't, would not be helpful. Share responses as a class.

- *Students may need practice at devising such messages.*
- *The teacher could begin by modelling examples of feedback about students in the class to demonstrate accuracy and sincerity in giving positive and useful message to others.*
- *The teacher could explain that this is part of accepting and respecting others for what they are.*

extension

- ❖ Read the novel *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler* by Gene Kemp at ongoing intervals with students. Revise and consolidate concepts of abuse and self concept.



