

# TOOLKIT

## FOR COMMUNITY PSS WORKERS

Community-based Mental Health and  
Psychosocial Support in Sierra Leone

# Acknowledgements

This manual was compiled thanks to the support of the members of the Psychosocial Support Working Group, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Children's Affairs. Members of the working group include Trócaire (lead agency), Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS), Child Welfare Society (CWS), Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), Enabling Access to Mental Health in Sierra Leone (EAMH-SL), Goal, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Medical Corps (IMC), IsraAid, LemonAid, Mental Health Coalition of Sierra Leone (MHC), Médicos del Mundo (MDM), Plan International, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Health Organization (WHO). All activities relating to the development and dissemination of the PSS Toolkit were funded by Trócaire Sierra Leone, Cordaid/Dutch Joint Response Ebola and CAFOD/ Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC).

The working group would like to extend special gratitude to Dr. Fiona Shanahan, Joshua Abioseh Duncan, George Bindi, Ming Holden, Florie de Jager Meezenbroek, Ella Syl-MacFoy, Michael Solis and Maria Flavin for their written and editorial contributions to the Toolkit and Training of Trainer's manual. The working group also acknowledges Mohamed Kamara, who illustrated all images included in the two publications, as well as Trócaire's Development Education team for the final design of the Toolkit and Information Guide.

## Forward

It is with great appreciation that the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs acknowledges the completion of the Psychosocial Support Toolkit and accompanying Information Guide. These resources have been designed for and by actors based in Sierra Leone who have committed themselves to responding to the mental health needs of our people over the years.

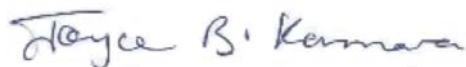
From the Civil War (1990-2001) to the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease in May 2014, Sierra Leoneans have demonstrated remarkable resilience through the darkest of our country's times. Much of this resilience can be attributed to the support Sierra Leone received from committed international and national NGOs, counsellors, and healthcare professionals. Many of these actors have supported Sierra Leone during humanitarian crises, and some have taken it upon themselves to install key capacities within our own people, guaranteeing the sustainability of their efforts.

A coalition of such organisations, the Psychosocial Support Toolkit Working Group, came together in July of 2015 with the idea of uniting their knowledge and tools for promoting mental well-being. They have worked tirelessly to bring together their resources and package them in a way that will enable frontline community psychosocial support workers to provide much needed services to people, even in very remote areas. From the young girl who is trying to overcome a violent relationship, to the worried parent or caretaker struggling to provide food for his or her family, many can benefit from the tools presented.

Whilst this is not a one-stop solution for psychosocial support in Sierra Leone, the Toolkit is a valuable resource for those Sierra Leoneans who want to contribute to strengthening each other's mental well-being and resilience.

On behalf of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Trócaire, the lead agency of this initiative, as well as all of the organisations that have taken part in the Toolkit's development. We believe that this resource will be able to bring about positive changes in the lives of people who need it most, and we are excited to see it being used across the country.

Sincerely,



**Joyce B. Kamara**  
Deputy Director  
Children's Affairs Directorate  
Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs  
Government of Sierra Leone

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	2
Foreword .....	3
A Quick Guide to Identifying Tools .....	6
Acronyms .....	7
<b>SECTION 1: Introduction</b> .....	8
What is Psychosocial Support? .....	8
Confidentiality .....	8
Who Should Use the Toolkit? .....	9
How will this Toolkit help you, the PSS worker? .....	13
Tips to Keep in Mind .....	13
<b>SECTION 2: Creating a Safe Space</b> .....	14
Tool 1: Participatory Assessment- Perceptions of Community Members .....	16
Tool 2: Basic Individual Assessment .....	19
Referral Pathways .....	19
Monitoring Progress .....	20
<b>SECTION 3: PSS Tools</b> .....	21
Tools to Strengthen Relationships .....	22
Tool 3: Introduction Activities (Source: IFRC, LemonAid) .....	23
Tool 4: Social Mapping and Sababu (Source: IsraAid, Trócaire, AJLC and IMC for Social Mapping; Meredith Newlin for Sababu) .....	24
Tool 5: Community Mapping Exercise .....	26
Tool 6: Mediation (Source: AJLC and JPC) .....	27
Tool 7: Changing Perspectives (Source: IFRC) .....	28
Tool 8: Fisher Person (Source: LemonAid) .....	29
Tool 9: Gratitude Pairs (Source: LemonAid) .....	30
Tool 10: Tree of Life (Source: Save the Children) .....	31
Tool 11: Circle of Joy (Source: IsraAid) .....	32

TOOLS TO FEEL CALM AND RELAXED .....	34
Tool 12: Breathing exercises- Belly Breathing (Source: EAMH-SL, PFA manual) .....	35
Tool 13: Tensing/Releasing exercise (Source: EAMH-SL, PFA manual) .....	36
Tool 14: Body Scan (Source: EAMH-SL) .....	37
Tool 15: Getting Grounded: Tree Pose Exercise (Source: EAMH-SL) .....	38
Tool 16: Positive 'Hold' with Self Affirmation (Source: EAMH-SL) .....	41
Tool 17: Loving Kindness Exercise (Source: EAMH-SL) .....	42
Tool 18: The Wave of Light (Source: EAMH-SL) .....	44
Tool 19: Basic Yoga Exercises (Source: EAMH-SL) .....	45
Tool 20: Mirroring Exercise (Source: EAMH-SL) .....	46
Tool 21: Two Trees Exercise (Source: EAMH-SL) .....	47
Tool 22: The Hexaflex exercise (Source: Commit and Act adapted from (Harris, 2009)) .....	49
<b>TOOLS TO COPE WITH LOSS AND GRIEF .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Tool 23: Group Session: Loss and Grief (Source: CAPS) .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Tool 24: Bridge of Hope (Source: IsraAid) .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Tool 25: The Bowl of Possibilities/Wishing Well (Source: IsraAid) .....</b>	<b>56</b>
Annex 1: Basic Individual Assessment .....	57
Annex 2: Resilience Measure for Adults .....	59
Annex 3: Child and Youth Resilience Measure .....	60
Annex 4: Mediation Agreement (Source: JPC – adapted from Timap for Justice) .....	61
Annex 5: Tree of Life .....	63

# A Quick Guide to Identifying Tools

Tool #	Title	Why use this tool?	Page
1	Participatory Assessment – Perceptions of Community Members	Understanding the views, issues and needs of different community members and identifying actions that respond to them	16
2	Basic Individual Assessment	Understanding the views, issues and needs of individuals identifying actions that respond to them	19
3	Introduction Activities	Sharing positive traits and cultural similarities and differences	22
4	Social Mapping and Sababu	To support people in feeling more connected to others	23
5	Community Mapping Exercise	To support people in reflecting on their community and identifying sources of support and things they would like to change	25
6	Mediation	To support people in resolving conflicts	26
7	Changing Perspectives	Help people understand the power of choice	27
8	Fisher Person	To talk about forgiveness	28
9	Gratitude Pairs	To talk about forgiveness	29
10	Tree of Lifes	To support groups of people to reflect on their experiences collectively	30
11	Circle of Joy	Developing cooperation and shared joy	32
12	Breathing exercises- Belly Breathing	Relaxation	34
13	Tensing/Releasing exercise	Relaxation	35
14	Body Scan	Relaxation	36
15	Getting Grounded: Tree Pose Exercise	Relaxation, good preparation for Tree of Life exercise	37
16	Positive 'Hold' with Self Affirmation	Relaxation, coping strategies	39
17	Loving Kindness Exercise	Relaxation, coping strategies	39
18	The Wave of Light	Relaxation	41
19	Basic Yoga Exercises	Relaxation	42
20	Mirroring Exercise	Relaxation, connection with others	43
21	Two Trees Exercise	Relaxation, connection with others	44
22	The Hexaflexercise	Supporting people to think clearly	45
23	Group Session: Loss and Grief	To support people experiencing loss and grief	49
24	Bridge of Hope	Healing and sharing emotions	51
25	The Bowl of Possibilities/Wishing Well	Recognizing and expressing needs/desires	52

# Acronyms

AJLC.....	Access to Justice Law Centre
CWS .....	Child Welfare Society
CAPS .....	Community Association for Psychosocial Services
COOPI .....	Cooperazione Internazionale
EAMH-SL .....	Enabling Access to Mental Health in Sierra Leone
FSU .....	Family Support Unit
IFRC.....	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMC.....	International Medical Corps
JPC.....	Justice and Peace Commission
IOM .....	International Organization for Migration
MdM.....	Médicos del Mundo
MHC .....	Mental Health Coalition
PFA.....	Psychosocial First Aid
PHU .....	Peripheral Health Unit
PSS.....	Psychosocial Support

# Section 1: Introduction

Sierra Leone has experienced several emergencies in the past, including conflict, disease, and environmental disasters caused by climate change. More recently, the Ebola outbreak (2014- 2015) had a major impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of the people of Sierra Leone.

This Psychosocial Support (PSS) Toolkit is meant to provide tools for delivering PSS services to children and adults in Sierra Leone. The PSS toolkit takes into account IASC Guidelines and provides a range of resources that have been proven to work in Sierra Leone. The tools also take into account important differences based on whether those receiving support are women, men, girls or boys.

Although the idea for this Toolkit **arose during the Ebola outbreak** of 2014/2015, the Toolkit is not limited to the care of Ebola survivors and their families. The tools and skills provided are meant to be used if other crises arise in Sierra Leone, as well as for projects that have nothing to do with Ebola. Drawn from all regions of Sierra Leone, this Toolkit is intended for practical use to promote psychosocial wellbeing, providing frontline PSS workers with ideas and ways of working with people.

## What is Psychosocial Support?

Psychosocial support refers to any type of local or outside support that helps with people's psychosocial well-being and mental health. This Toolkit focusses on community psychosocial support, which is aimed at helping people who are facing difficult situations. Treating mental disorders is something that goes beyond the scope of this Toolkit.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is very important to creating a safe space for individuals to receive psychosocial support. The information relating to individuals participating in PSS must be kept secret and should not be discussed outside the safe space.

### There are three important aspects of confidentiality

- Protect:** This means protecting the person's information from others.
- Inform:** This means communicating with the person how any information collected will be used.
- Provide choice:** This means discussing with clients under what circumstances confidentiality must be broken.

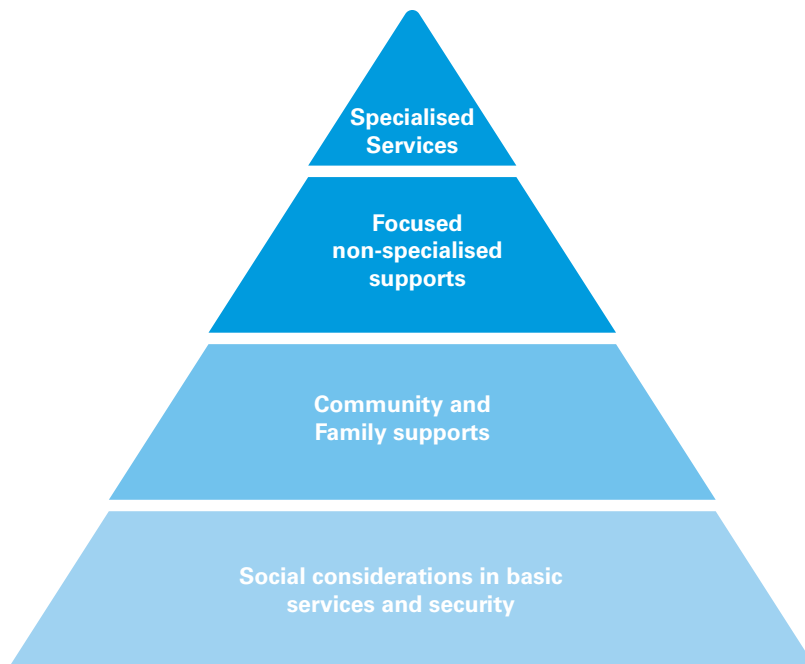
The cases in which confidentiality must be broken are i) in the case where there is a threat to the life of the individual or to the life of another person or a threat of serious bodily harm, ii) in cases where there exists violence and abuse of children (eg. beating up of children, neglecting children and their well-being), and iii) in cases where there is a threat of a serious crime (including but not exclusive to murder, rape or child abuse).

In the case of i) it is the duty of the PSS worker to assess the individual's intent and ability to carry out this harm and act on this if there is a clear and present immediate danger. Frontline PSS workers should always know who to refer these kinds of cases to if they arise. In Sierra Leone, referrals can be made to the District Mental Health Nurse or a Family Support Unit (FSU). It is important to discuss referrals with the individual and create confidence in that individual that their information will be further protected and why this referral is needed.

<sup>1</sup>This manual was developed in line with: The Government of Sierra Leone Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Strategy 2015 – 2018; The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (2007); The Sphere Standards, particularly standard 2.5 on Mental Health (2011).



## Who Should Use the Toolkit?



IASC Intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support

**Psychosocial support is provided on four different levels, as pictured in the pyramid:**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Level 4</b> (top of the pyramid):  | Mental health experts who provide specialised support                                 |
| <b>Level 3</b>                        | PSS workers who provide non-specialised support (e.g. support from community workers) |
| <b>Level 2</b>                        | Communities and families  |
| <b>Level 1</b> (base of the pyramid): | Actors that promote better and safer services, often through advocacy                 |

This manual is meant for frontline PSS providers and community support structures in Sierra Leone, focussing on Levels 1 to 3. Examples of those who might use the toolkit are:

- Mariatu is a social worker who works with women survivors of violence.
- Abu Bakar is a Child Protection Programme Officer who provides PSS to children.
- Both Mariatu and Abu Bakar use the PSS tools in this manual in their daily work, modifying it when needed for people with specialised needs.
- Mariatu and Abu Bakar often refer people to community-based supports (e.g. youth groups) and sometimes specialised supports, such as the Mental Health Nurse.



### Level 3 and 2:

- Fr. Joseph, Pastor Jeneba and Imam Ishmael are religious leaders who provide people with support and guidance.
- They have completed training in listening skills, psychosocial first aid and more specialised PSS, especially for people who have lost loved ones.
- They encourage people to use family and community supports and also refer to more specialised support, such as PSS specialists or the Mental Health Nurse.
- They also have people they can turn to for guidance and support in their churches or mosques.



### Level 2:

- Aminata is a women's group leader and Mohammed is a youth leader.
- Aminata and Mohammed have completed training in psychosocial first aid, listening skills and referral.
- They are under supervision from Mariatu but have not completed advanced training in PSS.
- They both use PSS tools when leading their groups, such as when they map community resources and risks.
- They refer to more specialized support where needed, to psychosocial workers (Level 3) like Mariatu or Abu Bakar or to the Mental Health Nurse (Level 4).



### Level 1:

- Safiatu is a Livelihoods Programme Officer of an NGO and Saidu is a Livelihoods Volunteer.
- As part of their livelihoods programmes Safiatu and Saidu take psychosocial concerns into account. For example, they think of ways to make sure that women do not face risks of abuse or violence.
- When they work with groups in communities, situations sometimes arise where PSS tools might be useful.
- When any conflicts in communities emerge, Safiatu and Saidu might use the PSS Toolkit to help ease tensions or resolve problems.
- They seek advice and refer to community workers (Level 2), PSS workers (Level 3) and mental health nurses (Level 4).



Below is a flow chart for deciding how to use the manual:

(Please tick the boxes)

**Are you a PSS worker with training in psychosocial support? You might be a:**

- PSS programme officer in an NGO, INGO or UN agency
- A professional with training in PSS, such as a social worker, teacher, religious leader or PHU nurse
- Are you similar to Mariatu, Abu Bakar, Fr. Joseph, Pastor Jeneba or Imam Ishmael?

**Are you a community support worker? You might be a:**

- Women’s group leader, INGO, NGO or UN staff member
- Religious leader or PHU nurse without advanced training in PSS
- Are you similar to Aminata, Mohammed, Safiatu or Saidu?

**Have you been trained on how to refer people to PSS support services?**

Yes

No

**If YES, answer the following questions:**

**If NO, please read about making referrals later on in this manual.**

**Are you being supervised by someone?**

Yes

No

**Do you know someone trained in PSS in or outside of your organisation that you can talk to about your experiences and get advice on your decisions?**

Yes

No

**Can you meet or call this person at least once a month, or more often when you start working with a new group?**

Yes

No

**If YES, answer the following questions:**

**If NO, your organisation will need to set up supervision before you start this work.**

**Are you from the community where you are working?**

Yes

No

**Does your organisation currently have programmes in the community?**

Yes

No

**Do you have strong links with support structures in the community (women's groups, youth groups, religious communities, men's groups, health promotion groups)?**

Yes

No

**If YES, have these groups requested additional psychosocial support?**

Yes

No

**Do you speak the mother tongue of the people you work with?**

Yes

No

**If NO, can you work with someone who does speak the language and train them to provide PSS?**

**Do you plan to work with the group over a period of time (e.g. 8-12 weeks or longer), not necessarily just doing PSS**

Yes

No

**Do you have enough time for this work?**

Yes

No

**Do you have enough funding to carry out this work?**

Yes

No

**Do you have the time and resources to provide regular follow up after the programme ends?**

Yes

No

**If all YES, you can start using the PSS toolkit!**

**Tip:**



It is important to speak in the participant's mother tongue (this may not be Krio) as people can express themselves much more fully in their own language.

**Tip:**



If you don't speak the local language, you can co-facilitate your work with someone who can speak the language and has PSS knowledge.

**Tip:**



Very short term or one off activities are not recommended, unless you have an existing relationship with the group and can offer further support. Sometimes you can provide special short-term assistance to groups (e.g. resolving conflicts), as long as your normal support continues.

**Tip:**



Without enough time or money, it will be very difficult to carry out high quality PSS work.

# How will this Toolkit help you, the PSS worker?

## This Toolkit serves several purposes:

- It will let you know when to provide PSS.
- It will strengthen your capacity to provide the right kinds of PSS.
- It shares tools that you can use and that are specific to Sierra Leone.

Frontline PSS workers in Sierra Leone can incorporate the tools of this Toolkit into their existing community work.

The Toolkit is meant to be flexible so PSS workers can adapt it to different situations. Below is a sample outline of a session with a group on strengthening relationships and social integration. This is only an example and participants should have a voice in designing their own sessions.

### Tip:



Opening prayers should be performed for every religion present at the session so as not to leave anyone out.

### Tip:



Ground rules should be developed at the first session with a new group. You can keep using these rules and make changes to them in future sessions.

## Outline of a sample session:

1. Opening prayers
2. Remind group of ground rules
3. PSS worker facilitates a discussion of the goals of session (as defined by the participants).
4. Ice breaker or team building activity – e.g. sing a group song
5. Introductory activity to the main issue of the session strengthening relationships (e.g. Tool 3)
6. Tool on Strengthening Relationships (e.g. Tool 4: Social Mapping and Sababu or Tool 5: Community Mapping)
7. Grounding, calming and relaxation activity (e.g. Tool 10: Deep Belly Breathing)
8. Check-in and closing circle
9. Evaluate the session with participants and share homework assignment (if using homework)

## Tips to Keep in Mind

The Tools from this manual seek to promote psychosocial well-being and mental health. When selecting tools, it is important to remember that they should promote:

- ✓ A sense of safety
- ✓ Calming
- ✓ A sense of self and of community
- ✓ Connectedness
- ✓ Hope

## When carrying out psychosocial support in Sierra Leone, services should:

1. Be carried out with men, women, children and different tribal or religious groups, adapting tools when necessary to respond to specific needs.
2. Encourage participation.
3. Do no harm to participants.
4. Build on local capacities and resources in Sierra Leone.
5. Link with wider support systems.
6. Be interconnected at family and community levels, as well as with health experts.

### Section 2: Creating a Safe Place

This section is about creating a safe space for participants who are receiving psychosocial support services. The tools are useful for everyone who works with people, not just those who are doing PSS as part of their work, as safe spaces are important to have when dealing with a range of issues.



#### Mariatu and Abu Bakar:

This section isn't new to us. We have done a lot of these kinds of exercises before but we are always looking for opportunities to refresh our skills and pass on our experience to others. Often we work individually with people or with families and so we are looking forward to learning more about facilitating larger groups.

#### Fr. Joseph, Pastor Jeneba and Imam Ishmael:

Our pastoral work involves listening to people when they are in distress and offering religious guidance. It is different to PSS but there are some similarities.



#### Aminata and Mohammed:

We have a lot of experience leading groups as a director of a women's CBO and as a youth leader, but often challenging situations arise that can make it difficult to communicate well with others and to guide the group.

#### Safiatu and Saidu:

In our livelihoods programme we mostly do distributions and our training has not focused on listening to people, but a lot of our work involves communicating with people in communities. We would like to improve our skills to make sure our programmes fit their needs.



#### Tips about which listening tool to consider and for what purpose

- Reflective Listening is seeking to understand a speaker's idea, then offering the idea back to the speaker, to confirm the idea has been understood correctly. It attempts to "reconstruct" what the client is thinking and feeling and to relay this understanding back to the client. Reflective listening can be used for a one-to-one sessions with someone who needs to release emotions or stress.
- Deep Listening is when we sit with another person and just listen to what they have to say. We do not offer solutions, reframe their experiences, verbally contain and acknowledge their feelings, or any of the other methods we would usually use. Using deep listening is good in group sessions and is restorative in nature. More personal care might be needed in some cases, but one-to-one sessions aren't always necessary.
- Listening Circles are used for self-care. They can be used with self-help groups to provide care in crisis situations and can be used between people, families and communities. Active listening skills are predominantly used which means not only listening to what someone is saying with words, but also to how they say it through their voice and body. Active listening also involves letting the speaker know that he or she has been heard.

**Culture plays a very important role in the pattern of communication in our rural settings. Service providers should be very sensitive to avoid issues that would deter effective service delivery:**

- In some religious settings shaking hands with the opposite sex is a taboo – when such is the case, keep to the best acceptable practice.
- Mix groupings can be sensitive in different cultural settings, especially mixing children above age 12 and adults. It is important to take the community's suggestions into account.
- Adults tend to be more comfortable in receiving care from people of the same sex than from people who are much younger or are of the opposite sex.
- Children below 12 years normally can take part in mixed group sessions.

**Tips for activities:**

- **Community seating** might not allow you to form circles for sitting. Be creative. You might want to arrange face-to-face seating. You could use benches or mats to form a square.
- Making **eye contact** depends on things like culture, age and whether you are a woman or man. It may not always be appropriate to make eye contact with an elderly person or someone of the opposite sex.
- PSS workers should use a **supportive communication style** to communicate with others. This means communicating with concern, understanding, respect, empathy and confidence in the abilities of the other person.
- For all activities, it is important to remind participants of the **ground rules**, especially confidentiality. There should also be enough time for the **debriefing** and the centering exercise. A longer centering exercise may be necessary if people express intense emotions during the debriefing.

**Informed consent:** It is important to obtain informed consent before doing any interviews, as will be done in the following activity. An example of how to do this is provided here.

Hello, my name is  and I work for . We have been working in  (area) to  (type of work) for  (period of time). Currently, we are talking to people who live in this area. Our aim is to know what kind of problems people in this area have, to decide how we can offer support. We cannot promise to give you support in exchange for this interview. We are here only to ask questions and learn from your experiences. You are free to take part or not.

If you do choose to be interviewed, I can assure you that your information will remain anonymous, so no-one will know what you have told us. We cannot give you anything for taking part but we would greatly value your time and responses. Do you have any questions? Would you like to be interviewed?

1. Yes  2. No

Please sign or make your mark to show you agree:  Date:

Creating a safe space for those who will benefit from PSS begins with the assessment. An **assessment** is something that is carried out to acquire and understanding of the needs of an individual or people in a community and what issues are affecting them. As a result of the assessment, a PSS worker can identify ways to respond. For instance, if a community has been affected by a sickness or a natural disaster that causes lives to be lost or sickness, PSS work can be orientated to respond to people's grief or loss while helping them to relax and connect with their emotions.

This section provides two tools for carrying out participatory assessments, both with communities and on an individual level. These tools are meant to be helpful examples for PSS workers. It is important to note that these are not the only assessment tools used, and they can be modified to suit the PSS worker's needs.

# Tool 1: Participatory Assessment - Perceptions of Community Members



**PURPOSE:** Understanding the views, issues and needs of different community members and identifying actions that respond to them



**TIME:** 1-2 days    **AGES:** 12 years or older    **GROUP SIZE:** 5 individuals should participate in total, in one-on-one interviews.



**RESOURCES:**

**Materials:** Tool 1 printed out, pen, notebook.  
**Optional:** Flip chart, markers, objects such as stones leaves etc. to use in ranking.



**STEP ONE: PREPARATION:**

- Print out the tool that immediately follows after this section. Fill out the date, participant number, location and interviewer information on the tool. You can use a flip chart to write these details out on larger paper with the individual doing the assessment.
- Place out the flipchart and markers.
- When you meet the interviewee, introduce yourself, give an overview of what the interview will involve and complete informed consent.

**STEP TWO: ACTIVITY**

- Complete the Participatory Assessment Tool that follows this summary.

**STEP THREE: DEBRIEF**

- Thank you for meeting with me today. The information you have given me has been very useful and will help us to plan our activities.
- What happens next: there will be a report and we will use it to plan our programmes in the future.
- Do you want to ask me any questions?
- Prompts:
  - Have we done anything that has not been good or that has made things worse?
  - Has anyone else done things that have not been good or have made things worse?
  - Is there anything you would like to talk about a bit more?
  - Is there anything else I can do differently?
  - I am still here to help, if you would like to talk to me or someone else about how you are feeling just let me know and I will try to get you some more support.
- It is important to obtain informed consent prior to interviewing people. If interviewing people younger than 18 years old, it is important to get informed consent from their parents/guardians.



**PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT**

Date:  Participant number:

Location:

Interviewer information:

**SECTION 1: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION**

1. "What kind of problems do [GROUP OF INTEREST] have because of the [Ebola, flood, other] situation? Please list as many problems that you can think of."
2. "What other kind of problems do [GROUP OF INTEREST] have because of the [Ebola, flood, other] situation? Please list as many problems that you can think of." The respondent may now list a few more problems. You would then continue with the question until the respondent gives no more answers.
3. "Do you have any personal problems because of who you are in the community? " (as a mother, farmer, woman elder, teenager, etc.)

Enter all problems into the table below with a short description for each problem:

**Table 1.1 List of problems (of any kind)**

Problem	Description
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	

**SECTION 2: PSS AREAS**

Classify the types of PSS problems.

**Table 2.1 Problems and Corresponding PSS Areas**

Problem (List problems from Table 1.1)	PSS Area (e.g. problems related to i) relationships, ii) feelings, iii) thinking, iv. behaviour)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	

**Tip:** 

Interest groups can include women, men, the elderly, teengage girls, young children, etc.

**Tip:** 

- Examples of problems related to relationships can include domestic and community violence, child abuse, family separation.
- Problems related to feelings could deal with sadness or fear.
- Problems related to thinking could deal with worrying.
- Problems related to behaviour could deal with violence, drinking or using other substances.

**SECTION 3: RANKING**

“You mentioned a number of problems, including [READ OUT ALL PROBLEMS NAMED IN Section 1 ABOVE]. Of these problems, which are the top three most important problems? Why?”

**Table 3.1 Ranking of Top 3 Most Important Problems with Explanations**

Problem (List problems from Table 1.1)	Explanation (Write down what the reasons are for why each problem is so important)
1.	
2.	
3.	

**SECTION 4: DAILY FUNCTIONING AND COPING**

“Sometimes [NAME A PROBLEM FROM TABLE 3.1] may make it difficult for a person to perform their usual tasks. For example, things they do for themselves, their family or in their community. If a [INSERT GROUP OF INTEREST] suffers from [NAME AGAIN THE PROBLEM LISTED FROM TABLE 3.1 ABOVE], what kind of tasks will be difficult for them?”

**Table 4.1 Impairment of Daily Activities**

Repeat for each problem mentioned in Table 1.1	
Mental health/ psychosocial problems (as listed in Table 1.1)	Affected task
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

**SECTION 5: PROBING**

- 5.1 Have you experienced problems in your relations with other people? If yes, what type of problems? (e.g. do other people stigmatize you, do you not get support from others, are you not involved in community activities as you would like?)
- 5.2 Have you been experiencing problems related to your feelings? If yes, what type of problems? (e.g. sadness, anger, or fears)
- 5.3 Have you been experiencing problems related to the way you think? If yes, what type of problems? (e.g. concentrating, thinking too much, not remembering things)
- 5.4 Have you been experiencing any problems related to how you behave? If yes, what type of problems? (e.g. do things because you are angry, do things that others found strange, doing things you regret)

**SECTION 6: SOCIAL SUPPORT AND COPING**

“I am especially interested in learning more about [INSERT ANY RELEVANT PSYCHOSOCIAL AND MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS MENTIONED ABOVE]. Can you please answer the following questions?”

- 6.1 Could you tell me how [INSERT PROBLEM] affects your daily life?
- 6.2 Have you tried to find support for this problem?
- 6.3 Could you describe how you have tried to deal with this problem? What did you do first? And after that?
- 6.4 Have you received support from others in dealing with this problem?
- 6.5 Who gave you this support?
- 6.6 What kind of support did you get?
- 6.7 To what extend did this help to deal with the problem?
- 6.8 Do you feel you need additional support with this problem?

Repeat for all mental health and psychosocial problems

**Tip:**



“Sometimes [fear of violence in the home] may make it difficult for a person to perform their usual tasks. For example, things they do for themselves, their family or in their community. If a [woman] suffers from [fear of violence in the home], what kind of tasks will be difficult for [her]?”

**Tip:**



Probe further if necessary. The ideas in parentheses give you suggestions for how to do this.

## Tool 2: Basic Individual Assessment



**PURPOSE:** Understanding the views, issues and needs of an individual and identifying actions that respond to them.



**TIME:** 30-45 minutes    **AGES:** 12 years or older    **GROUP SIZE:** Done individually



**RESOURCES:**

Materials: Tool 2 printed out, pen and notebook.



**STEP ONE: PREPARATION:**

- Print out the tool that immediately follows after this section.
- Greet the client warmly and thank them for coming to see you (or welcoming you to their home).
- Explain give an overview of what the interview will involve and complete informed consent.

**STEP TWO: ACTIVITY**

- Complete the Participatory Assessment Tool that follows this summary.

**STEP THREE: DEBRIEF**

- **Thank you for sharing your feelings. The information you have given me has been very useful and will help to identify what kind of support might be useful for you.**
- **Agree upon next steps.**
- It is often difficult for people to seek help with emotional health and it is very important that we do everything possible to ensure that the person has a good experience, feels good about their decision to seek help, and will feel comfortable returning to the service or group.
- If the person has come with a family member or elder, you should greet this person and show proper respect by saying "I appreciate you being here today Sir/Madam, and it is important for this kind of work that I talk directly to [name of person in difficulty] about how he/she is feeling, I hope that you will understand." You should then speak directly to the person who is experiencing difficulties rather than speaking to others about them.
- Remember to say that all information collected will be done in a confidential manner and that their participation is voluntary.
- If the person is at risk of harm, or of harming themselves or others you must immediately refer to the appropriate authorities.
- Give interviewees your contact details or contact details for your organization so that they can follow up with you for further support

**Referral Pathways**

The following is a list of referrals that you can make based on the types of difficulties people share with you in the assessment.

**Difficulties sleeping:** refer to the Mental Health Nurse for sleep hygiene psycho-education while maintaining PSS support.

**Loss of interest** in daily activities to a significant degree – not washing, dressing, etc.: refer to Mental Health Nurse while maintaining PSS support.

### Referral Pathways (continued)

**Seeing or hearing things** that other people cannot – if person is distressed by this and does not give it a religious or spiritual explanation, refer to the Mental Health Nurse while maintaining PSS support. If it is religious or spiritual in nature and causing distress, discuss coping strategies with them.

**Heavy alcohol or drug use:** refer to Mental Health Nurse while maintaining PSS support.

**Sadness:** if bereaved or grieving provide support with grief and loss, if no cause for sadness refer to Mental Health Nurse.

**Fright:** if the person interviewed is afraid of someone or something in life, make attempts to get them to safety. If their fright has no current cause, provide basic support to promote safety. If their fright is severe and there is no apparent current cause, refer to the Mental Health Nurse.

**Risk (Self Harm, Safety, Suicide):** “I understand that this is a difficult thing to talk about, but sometimes when people have been under a lot of stress and life is difficult they feel like hurting themselves or other people in order to feel better. I was wondering if you have ever felt this way?”

**If the person is at risk** of harm, or of harming themselves or others you must immediately refer to the appropriate authorities. In most cases, this primary contact will be with the Mental Health Nurse at the District Hospital and you will need to accompany the person to visit them. Don't leave them until they have received appropriate care and are safe.

For more information about referrals, consult the **National Mapping Exercise** by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and IMC on Who is doing What, When and Where in Sierra Leone.

### Monitoring Progress

It is important to monitor progress of PSS interventions to understand what impact they have on the participants. This can be done by using monitoring tools **before** carrying out PSS work and **after** completing this work.

Trócaire has adopted the **Resilience Measure** questionnaire to monitor the resilience of its PSS programme participants, designed by the Resilience Research Centre. This is a 28-item questionnaire that explores the resources (individual, relational, communal and cultural) that contribute to a person's resilience.

- The first tool can be used with adults (see Annex 2), while the second can be used with children and youth (ages 19-23) (see Annex 3).
- The tools can be administered at the beginning and the end of a programme to measure progress and change in individuals and their social surroundings.
- It is recommended that an adult reads out these questions to the participant to ensure that he or she understands. This is best completed one-on-one, although it can be done in groups if necessary.
- These tools should be translated and spoken in the mother tongue of the participant. In Sierra Leone, this should be done in local languages if the person feels more comfortable with a local language than Krio.
- The person administering the tool should circle all responses. Each of the columns should be totalled and added up to come up with an **overall resilience score**. Scores can be compared at the beginning and end of a PSS intervention.

# Section 3: PSS Tools

These tools are designed to be used by PSS workers in communities. The tools presented are looking at the following areas:

1. Strengthening relationships
2. Relaxation
3. Coping with loss and grief

### GENERAL SAFETY TIPS:

- Activities could remind people about difficult experiences they have had and could cause distress. It is important that you tell the participants this and let them know that they don't have to talk about anything they don't want to talk about, and can stop the activity at any time.
- Pay close attention to the participants. If they show signs of discomfort you should gently tell them that if they want to leave it there and stop that is fine with you.
- Make sure referral pathways are in place and you are ready to refer people for further support if needed.
- Make sure participants have your contact details (or contact details for your organisation) so that they can follow up if they need further support between meetings.
- You should prepare a list of contacts that you can give to participants, and bring them to every meeting.

## TOOLS TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS

The following tools encourage participants to look at their relationships and to respond to challenges collectively. They help them to find different ways in which they can build and strengthen their relationships and support systems.

Note that any text in *ITALICS* should be spoken.



## Tool 3: Introduction Activities

(Source: IFRC, LemonAid)



**PURPOSE:** Sharing positive traits and cultural similarities and differences.



**TIME:** 15 minutes

**AGES:** 6 and older

**GROUP SIZE:** 5-40 people.  
If larger than 15 people, break into groups for small group sharing.



**RESOURCES:**

- Paper and pen/pencil (possible to use a stick and draw the diagram on the ground).



**PROCESS:**

**STEP ONE: ACTIVITY**

- Ask participants to draw a circle in the middle of your paper.
- Ask them to write their name in the middle of the circle.
- From that, draw 6 lines from the middle of the circle outward.
- On each of the lines, ask them to write a word that positively describes who they are and then to circle the one that is most important to them.

**Sharing**

- If you have a group of more than 15 people, each person can briefly say their name and then say the word they circled.
- If fewer than 15 people, they may briefly say their name, say all the words they wrote, then share the word they circled and why.

**STEP TWO: CULTURAL SHARING**

- Ask all participants to bring in something from their culture to share.
- Take time (3-5 minutes per person) for people to tell about what they brought.

**STEP THREE: DEBRIEF**

- Ask participants if they learned something new about someone.
- Ask if it was difficult to think of 6 different positive things that described them.



**SAFETY:**

- This activity does not pose any safety issues.
- Make sure referral pathways are in place and you are ready to refer people for further support if needed.
- Make sure participants have your contact details or contact details for your organization so that they can follow up if they need further support between meetings.

## Tool 4: Social Mapping and Sababu

(Source: IsraAid, Trócaire, AJLC and IMC for Social Mapping; Meredith Newlin for Sababu)



**PURPOSE:** How to identify supportive people and think about those relationships.



**TIME:** 30 minutes

**AGES:** 8 and older

**GROUP SIZE:** Can be done with one person, or in a group if there is trust within the group.



**RESOURCES:**

- Stone, flowers, leaves, twigs and any other objects around you.



**PROCESS:**

**STEP ONE: PREPARATION**

- Gather stones, flowers, leaves, twigs and other objects.

**STEP TWO: WARM UP**

- Begin with a warm-up activity/ group song/ energizer/ focuser.

**STEP THREE: RELATIONSHIP CONNECTIONS**

- Ask everyone to place an item on the ground that represents them.
- Ask them to use the remaining objects to show the people they have relationships with or who are in their life. There are three levels: "Close", "Closer" and "Closest".
- Give time to allow the participant to add their friends, family, neighbours, people they work with, schoolmates, religious leaders and any other important people in their lives.
- Ask the following questions:

Heart connected:

Who is closest to you? Who do you really care about?

Mind connected:

Who do you learn from? What are you learning? Who do you teach?

Body connected:

Who gives you with food and shelter? Who is your blood relative?

Inside connected:

What makes you feel good inside? Who shares your values?

**STEP FOUR: SHARING**

- Once the picture is completed: ask them some questions about the map they have created so they can share more with the group.



#### STEP FOUR: SHARING (CONTINUED)

- Sample questions:
  - Can you tell me a bit more about X (person in the closest circle)?
  - What kinds of things do you do together?
  - What things do you have in common?
  - Who else is in your picture?
  - Can you tell me a bit more about your picture?
  - Is there anyone in the picture that you have a different kind of relationship with since the crisis happened, either good or bad?
  - Have there been any changes in your relationships?

#### STEP FIVE: HEART CONNECTION VISUALISATION

- Grounding – Ask everyone to breathe, and imagine tree roots attaching the feet to the ground. (5 minutes)
- Ask them to focus on their heart, have them think of what it looks like, then have them see a strong cord. Attach this cord to their heart and then attach the other end of the cord to who/whatever else they want to connect with.
- Have them imagine that their heart is beating at the same time as the attached heart. Allow a few minutes to enjoy this connection.
- End by saying “whenever you are ready you can slowly and gently come back into the room”

#### STEP SIX: DEBRIEF

- Did you learn something new about yourself or others?
- I am still here to help. If you would like to talk to me or someone else about how you are feeling just let me know and I will try to get you some more support.
- Clean-up. Return objects to where you found them. Keep written material safe and secure.



#### ALTERNATIVES:

##### The Sababu Method

- Ask participants to use their hands to list the five most supportive people in their lives, one on each finger.
- On the palm imagine enjoyable activities.
- Use the wrist as a place to imagine a comforting proverb.
- Draw the hand on to a piece of paper as a record that you and the person can look at later.



#### SAFETY:

- This activity might remind people about difficult and/or distressing experiences. You should not probe about these events in detail.

## Tool 5: Community Mapping Exercise



**PURPOSE:** How to map communities, think about relationships, and talk about what people appreciate and find challenging in their communities.



**TIME:** 1 hour      **AGES:** 8 and older      **GROUP SIZE:** 5-25



### RESOURCES:

- Space where everyone can sit together in groups
- A3 paper
- Drawing material (markers, pastels, crayons, or charcoal) for everyone
- Masking tape



### PROCESS

#### STEP ONE: MAPPING

Ask the participants to draw the following:

- Draw what you see in your community.
- Draw the things you like as well as those things you wish to be different.
- Draw some things or people that you appreciate, care about, and are grateful for.

#### STEP TWO: CHANGES

Now start a new paper and ask the participants to draw the following:

- Draw what you want to see in your community: hopes, changes etc.
- Draw yourself and anyone else you would like in this new community.

#### STEP THREE: SHARING

- Have everyone share the community maps.

#### STEP FOUR: DEBRIEF

- What effect do you think your community has on you?
- How do the different parts of your community bring you closer to some people and farther away from others?
- What did you learn about someone else's community?
- Why do you think we did this exercise? What do you think we can learn from this?



### ALTERNATIVES:

- Group participants by communities.
- Along with mapping, they could make a **collage** with imagery and words.
- The exercise could also be a personal map or a map about their families/peer groups.
- For children you can use the idea of animals.



### SAFETY:

- Little to no safety issues to flag. Drawing maps collectively works best when participants trust each other and there are not significant power differences (age, gender, social location).

## Tool 6: Mediation (Source: AJLC and JPC)



**PURPOSE:** Conflict resolution and improving relationships.



**TIME:** 2 hours

**AGES:** 18 and older

**GROUP SIZE:** N/A



**RESOURCES:**

- A confidential space



**PROCESS:**

### STEP ONE: PREPARATION

- Meet each party individually and confidentially.
- Take note of potential solutions suggested, and what matters to each party in the conflict. Come to as good an understanding of the situation as you can.
- Ask them if they would like someone (either personal or professional) to come and support at the mediation session.
- Ask both parties to sign an "Agreement to mediate" form; OR, a respectable individual within their community can serve as witness to their verbal consent.
- Answer any questions they may have and agree a time and date.

### STEP TWO: MEDIATION SESSION

- Introductions and outlining the session.
- Statements given by each side.
- Each side makes a list of what they want to discuss and the order in which they want to discuss them.
- Each side think of possible actions, and agree on them together.
- Both sides write their agreement (see for a sample Annex 4), or a respectable individual within their community can serve as witness to their verbal consent.

### STEP THREE: DEBRIEF WITH ALL INVOLVED

Debrief by asking the following to those who participated in the mediation:

- What are you taking away from the mediation?
- Did you learn something new about yourself or others?

### STEP FOUR: FOLLOW UP

Two weeks after the mediation session to see if agreements are being kept. If they are not, set up another mediation session.



**SAFETY:**

- When making home visits, visit with a work colleague OR meet in an open, public place.
- This exercise is best done by a respected and unbiased (as possible) member of the community who won't take sides with one person or another.
- Private meetings can be taken at any time during the process should either or both parties want a brief, confidential conversation with the mediator or their support people.

## Tool 7: Changing Perspectives (Source: IFRC)



**PURPOSE:** Help people understand the power of choice.



**TIME:** 1 hour      **AGES:** 8 and older      **GROUP SIZE:** 5-25



**RESOURCES:**

- A space where participants can sit together in, either groups on the floor or benches, or around tables.
- A3 paper
- Drawing media (markers, pastels, crayons, or charcoal) for the entire group.
- Masking tape



**PROCESS:**

**STEP ONE: COLOUR FINDING**

- Ask participants to tell you the main colour found in the room. All should agree on what that is.
- Ask them to look for another specific colour. Allow them some time to find it in different places in the room.
- Ask them to choose another colour and look for it.
- Ask them if they were able to find all the colours in the room.
- Explain that just because we noticed the first colour first, that doesn't mean it is the only colour that exists.
- Ask them if they noticed many other colours when they were looking for the colour requested.

**STEP TWO: CONNECTION WITH EMOTIONS**

- Make the connection between emotions in their life. All of the emotions are there but we can choose which ones we want to focus on, and what we choose defines what we are going to see.

**STEP THREE: DEBRIEF**

Debrief by asking the following questions:

- Why do you think we did this exercise? What do you think we can take away from this?
- Was there ever a time you thought one way about somebody, and something happened to make your thinking change?
- Has someone in your life ever helped you to think differently about a certain situation?
- What factors around us make us think the way we do?



**SAFETY:**

- Little to no safety issues to flag.

## Tool 8: Fisher Person (Source: LemonAid)



**PURPOSE:** To talk about forgiveness.



**TIME:** 15-20 minutes    **AGES:** Children and adults    **GROUP SIZE:** n/a



### RESOURCES:

- Open space
- Rope or something to use as a line



### PROCESS:

#### STEP ONE: ACTIVITY

- Ask for someone to be a volunteer fish.
- Tell the fish that its job is to not get caught.
- Another person (can be the PSS service provider) is the fisher person. The fisher person casts its line to catch the fish.
- The fish catches the hook and swims around.
- The fisher person can't go into the water or he/she will drown.
- The fish can't come onto the land or it will die.
- The fish is in its own environment and is swimming. The fisher person is getting tired.
- You ask the group, "What should I do?" (Usually someone will say cut the line, and you do, and let the fish go.)

#### STEP TWO: DEBRIEF

- Talk about how hooking the fish is like unforgiveness. You don't let the fish off the hook but it takes the fisher person the most energy to keep the fish on the hook.
- Talk about how forgiveness is a choice, and can repair and heal you.



### SAFETY:

- This activity might remind people about difficult and/or distressing experiences. **You should not probe about these events in detail.**
- Ensure that participants are aware that they are free to leave at any time, not answer questions or not participate in activities they aren't comfortable with.
- Clarify that there is further support available should anyone experience distress.
- Remember that two facilitators should be present to ensure that support can be offered straight away.

## Tool 9: Gratitude Pairs (Source: LemonAid)



**PURPOSE:** Talk about forgiveness.



**TIME:** 15-20 minutes    **AGES:** 8 and older    **GROUP SIZE:** 2 people or more



**RESOURCES:** Open space



### PROCESS:

#### STEP ONE: Gratitude Pairs

- Pair people up, either asking them to pick someone, or counting them off in pairs.
- Have one person tell the other person three things that they are grateful for about that person.
- Have them look into the person's eyes and tell them something specific, and then have them wait at least three seconds before going on to the next thing they are grateful for.
- The person receiving the compliment must only say, "Thank You".
- After the first person says three things they are grateful to their partner for, they switch roles.

#### STEP TWO: Debrief

Debrief by asking the following questions:

- How did it feel to be the person giving gratitude?
- How did it feel to receive the gratitude?



### ALTERNATIVES:

- The activity can be done with children. They can say one thing they like about the other child. The child receiving the compliment can be asked to say thank you. After this is completed, the children can switch roles.
- This activity might remind people about difficult and/or distressing experiences. You should not probe about these events in detail.
- Ensure that participants are aware that they are free to leave at any time, not answer questions or not participate in activities they aren't comfortable with.
- Clarify that there is further support available should anyone experience distress.
- Remember that two facilitators should be present to ensure that support can be offered straight away.

## Tool 10: Tree of Life (Source: Save the Children)



**PURPOSE:** Self-examination through visualization.



**TIME:** 45 minutes - 1 hour **AGES:** 14 years and older **GROUP SIZE:** Any



### RESOURCES:

- Photocopies of the Tree of Life (enough for each participant). If you do not have photocopies, the image of a tree with roots, a trunk, branches and fruits can be easily drawn on paper. (See Annex 5 for a copy of the Tree of Life).
- Flipchart paper
- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Tables and chairs



### PROCESS:

#### STEP ONE: PREPARATION

- Photocopy or draw the Tree of Life for each participant. Draw a larger version of the Tree of Life on flipchart paper. Set up the tables and chairs with pens, pencils, or markers in the middle for communal use.

#### STEP TWO: WARM UP

- Begin with an ice breaker/energizer activity. This can involve breaking into pairs and having people introduce one another to the larger group, yoga stretches, or dancing.

#### STEP THREE: OVERVIEW

- Overview the plan for the session by saying the following: Today we will be doing an activity called Tree of Life. Trees are full of life, and their different parts represent many things.

#### STEP FOUR: TREE OF LIFE (20-30 MIN)

- Give each person an outline of a tree. Demonstrate the larger version of the tree on flipchart paper, and list what each part of the tree represents in one's life:
  - Roots: family history (surnames, parents/grandparents, home town/ community).
  - Trunk: important influences (people/ friends, books/films/music, school).
  - Branches: life as experienced (interests/hobbies/clubs/sports/travel).
  - Fruits: important events (achievements, successes).
- Ensure each person understands what each section of the tree represents. You will have to do this with spoken words for those who cannot read. (Note to Facilitator: You may want to give some examples from your own life to get people thinking.)
- Leave 20-30 minutes for each participant to complete their own Tree of Life.
- Walk around. Provide help where necessary.
- Bring the group back together in a circle once everyone has prepared their trees.
- Allow time as needed for participants who would like to present their tree to the others.

## Tool 10: Tree of Life (Continued)

### STEP FIVE: DEBRIEF

Ask participants the following:

- How comfortable did you feel sharing your tree?
- Did any of you feel uncomfortable? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about the individuals/groups in the room today?
- How does our upbringing impact who we are today?
- How do past events contribute to our sense of self?
- Are there some things that you did not want to present? What types of things do you avoid talking about in your past? – you don't need to answer this, but maybe think about it.
- What things made you happy to present?
- Were there any moments during which you began to realize that something you thought was small impacted you in a big way?
- How does our learning/discussion from today relate back to our day-to-day life and community living?



### ALTERNATIVES:

- This activity can also be done as a conflict or problem tree. This is particularly useful for people who might be dealing with a challenge or difficult life situation.
  - Roots: root causes of the problem (family life, community, culture, etc).
  - Trunk: events that contributed to reinforcing the problem (bullying, negative conversations, friend's stories, etc).
  - Branches: feelings associated with problem (hurt, frustration, etc).
  - Fruits: actions or attitudes that we may see as a result of a deeper problem (stand-off attitude toward new groups of people, shyness, fights at school, etc).



### SAFETY:

- Personal disclosure about one's self can be stressful for some individuals. References to the group agreement beforehand may help to remind participants to respect the safe space mentality.
- Make sure to have participants volunteer to present. Do not push anyone to talk if they are not comfortable.



## Tool 11: Circle of Joy (Source: IsraAid)



**PURPOSE:** Enhancing concentration and focus; exploring movement in a different way; developing cooperation and shared joy.



**TIME:** 15 minutes      **AGES:** Children      **GROUP SIZE:** Any



**RESOURCES:**

- An open space



### PROCESS:

- Divide the group into small groups of 5 and make a circle.
- Instruct that participants will think of one movement (i.e. jumping up and down, shaking their head, taking a deep breath) or a sound, and one person will try to remember everyone's moves by going in the circle and demonstrating them.
- Facilitator goes first, introduces movement/sound, and then steps out.
- Then the next child goes in the middle, demonstrates the facilitator's move, add their move/sound, and then steps out.
- Another child then steps in the circle, repeats the two previous movements, adds their movement, and then goes out of the circle.
- Repeat until everyone in the circle goes and tries to remember everyone's movements. If someone forgets a move, the group must begin again.

### FACILITATOR TIPS:

- Encourage the group to refrain from helping the participant right away.
- Allow participants time to remember by themselves before assisting.
- Remind that help is always available.

### DEBRIEF

Ask participants the following:

- o What was the experience like? Was it hard? Challenging?
- o Were you able to remember everyone's' movements?
- o Did everyone remember yours?
- o Which movement was the hardest? Which movement was the easiest?



### ALTERNATIVES:

- For children ages 12 and older: Form a larger circle with more children to see if the whole group can do it together.
- For children ages 12 and older: Have the whole group in a circle. Every child chooses something they like to do (e.g. play soccer, sing, dance, etc.) and takes turns going in the middle of the circle doing their movement. Then on a second round, a child will go in the middle, do their movement, and then call out someone's name and do that person's movement. Then the child whose name was called goes in the circle, does his/her movement and calls out another child's name and does his/her movement. Repeat until everyone has gone.



**SAFETY:** Little to no safety issues to flag.

## SECTION 4: TOOLS TO FEEL CALM AND RELAXED

These exercises are to help participants to feel calm and relaxed.

These exercises should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.

Feeling calm and relaxed is very important for good mental health, and for dealing with difficult situations and emotions.



## Tool 12: Breathing exercises - Belly Breathing (Source: EAMH-SL, PFA manual)



**PURPOSE:** Helping people to calm down when they are stressed, angry or upset.



**TIME:** 15 minutes

**AGES:** All

**GROUP SIZE:** Groups of different sizes or with one person.



**RESOURCES:**

- Open space



**PROCESS:**

If it is helpful, let participants know that when we are stressed, our breathing becomes shallow, high in our chests, and we forget to breathe deeply into our bellies.

**Instruct participants with the following:**

- Close your eyes.
- Bring your hands to your lower belly with your two middle fingers touching.
- Relax your shoulders.
- Take a long, deep, gentle breath in, and so that your belly gets bigger (keep your shoulders relaxed). You should find that your middle fingers will pull apart slightly as the belly expands with the breath.
- Breathe out slowly, feeling how the belly comes in and the middle fingers touch again.

Do this abdominal breathing a minimum of ten times (Breathe In/Breathe Out x 10).



**ALTERNATIVES:**

With children, you can explain that when they breathe in they are slowly blowing up their tummy like a balloon, and when they breathe out, the air is going slowly out of the balloon again.



**SAFETY:**

The exercise should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.

## Tool 13: Tensing/Releasing exercise

(Source: EAMH-SL, PFA manual)



**PURPOSE:** Releasing tension in the body.



**TIME:** 15 minutes

**AGES:** All

**GROUP SIZE:** groups of different sizes or with one person.



**RESOURCES:**

- Open space



**PROCESS:**

- Begin standing/sitting/lying down.
- Breathe in, tense everything in your body – make your hands into fists, draw your shoulders back, brace your legs, squeeze your toes, squeeze your face muscles.
- Breathe out deeply through your mouth (a big sighing sound), releasing all the tension. Let the shoulders and hands soften. Let the legs be really heavy, toes relaxed. Relax the belly, the face, the jaw, and feel the skin of the face softening.
- Repeat this several times. Notice the difference between tensing and releasing. Enjoy the feeling of softness and heaviness when you relax. With each breath out, imagine you are letting any bad feelings melt away into the ground.  
You can explain: By tensing our muscles and then releasing them, we can see where we are holding tension. We can relax these areas and release the stress also.



**ALTERNATIVES:**

**Using Hands to Release Stress**

Provide the following instructions:

- Make a fist with one hand.
- Take a breath in and imagine you are squeezing any worries, anger and frustration you feel into your fist. Hold your breath.
- Now squeeze your hand really tight, taking hold of those worries. Breathe out deeply, releasing your fingers and letting the stress and worries go.



**Safety:**

The exercise should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.

## Tool 14: Body Scan (Source: EAMH-SL)



**PURPOSE:** Relieving stress and tension.



**TIME:** 30 minutes

**AGES:** All

**GROUP SIZE:** groups of different sizes and individually.



**RESOURCES:**

- Open space



**PROCESS:**

Guide the participants through this session with the following instructions:

- Sit or lie down in any way that you feel comfortable. Close your eyes.
- Feel the rising and falling of your belly with each in-breath and out-breath.
- Take a few moments to listen to your whole body, from head to toe, the feeling of the air on your skin, and the places where your body touches the floor or chair.
- Take a deep breath in, and breathe out any tension in your body.
- Now concentrate on the tips of your toes. See what you feel there.
- Imagine, as you breathe in, sending the breath down into your toes. As you breathe out, release all tension from the toes.
- Imagine a feeling of relaxation beginning to flow from the tips of your toes across the soles and tops of your feet. This feeling of relaxation may be warm, or cool, or simply calm and soft.
- Let this feeling of relaxation start to flow up to your ankles, and then past your ankles to your calves, shins and knees.
- Let this feeling of relaxation rise up the legs to the front and back of the thighs. Breathe in some softness into the whole of the legs, and breathe out, imagine all the heavy muscles of the legs relaxing down away from the bones.
- Allow the feeling of relaxation continue to spread up through the body, into the lower belly and back. Allow the belly to soften.
- Allow the flow of relaxation to rise higher, travelling up your back and belly, to your chest and upper back. Feel the area around your collarbones widen and relax. Allow there to be softness at your heart. Allow your shoulders to relax down into the ground.
- Let your upper arms relax, then your elbows, lower arms, and wrists. Feel the relaxation spread to your hands. Feel your opened palms, the softness at the tip of each finger and thumb. Let your hands be heavy, and relaxed.
- Allow your shoulders to relax even further. Allow the neck to be long and easy, as the feeling of relaxation flows higher, into the back of the skull (heavy and grounded).
- Feel the relaxation spread through your jaw, your mouth, your cheeks, and nose.
- Feel your eyelids, heavy and relaxed. Feel the softness behind the eyes.
- Notice your eyebrows relaxing and your ears relaxing.

## Tool 14: Body Scan (Continued)

- Your forehead feels cool and released.
- Let the relaxation spread further to the crown of your head.
- Your entire body now is relaxed and calm.
- Take a deep breath, breathing in openness and ease... and release the breath. Breathe out any remaining tension. (Do this three times)
- If you notice any remaining areas of tension, allow your awareness to rest here for a few moments. Breathe in, and let your breath flow into that area. Feel the breath out carry the tension away. Return to a sense of your whole body resting here, feeling the relaxation flowing throughout your whole body, from your head to your feet to your heart.



**SAFETY:** The exercise should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.

## Tool 15: Getting Grounded: Tree Pose Exercise (Source: EAMH-SL)



**PURPOSE:** Breathing and relaxation exercises to relieve stress and tension



**TIME:** 30 minutes

**AGES:** All

**GROUP SIZE:** groups of different sizes; or, individually.



**RESOURCES:** Open space



### PROCESS:

Find a space to stand in where you have enough room to stretch your arms out without touching anything/anybody. (If working with a group of children, you may like to ask them to form a circle, so they create a circle of trees.)

- Bring your feet hip-width apart, with your toes pointing forward.
- Rock slightly forward and back, and then find your centre point, standing tall. Relax your shoulders.
- Close your eyes.
- Think about your feet. Relax your toes, spread them wide.
- Imagine there are roots growing out from your feet into the earth, spreading wide, just like the roots of a tree.
- Imagine how strong those roots are. Just like a tree, those roots help you to be strong and steady, and grow up tall from the earth.
- Imagine those roots are helping you to draw in good things, just like tree roots. They help you to draw in nourishment, and they help you to grow stronger and taller.
- Feel how that goodness can travel all the way up through your body, through your legs, to your belly, up to your heart, growing tall like a tree, and up to the top of your head.
- Relax your shoulders.

## Tool 15: Getting Grounded: (Continued)



**PURPOSE:** Breathing and relaxation exercises to relieve stress and tension



**TIME:** 30 minutes

**AGES:** All

**GROUP SIZE:** groups of different sizes; or, individually.



**RESOURCES:** Open space



### PROCESS:

Find a space to stand in where you have enough room to stretch your arms out without touching anything/anybody. (If working with a group of children, you may like to ask them to form a circle, so they create a circle of trees.)

- Bring your feet hip-width apart, with your toes pointing forward.
- Rock slightly forward and back, and then find your centre point, standing tall. Relax your shoulders.
- Close your eyes.
- Think about your feet. Relax your toes, spread them wide.
- Imagine there are roots growing out from your feet into the earth, spreading wide, just like the roots of a tree.
- Imagine how strong those roots are. Just like a tree, those roots help you to be strong and steady, and grow up tall from the earth.
- Imagine those roots are helping you to draw in good things, just like tree roots. They help you to draw in nourishment, and they help you to grow stronger and taller.
- Feel how that goodness can travel all the way up through your body, through your legs, to your belly, up to your heart, growing tall like a tree, and up to the top of your head.
- Relax your shoulders.
- Now, keeping very quiet, open your eyes.
- You are still standing tall and strong, rooted like a tree.
- Lift your right foot, and place it at the inside of your right ankle, or higher at the side of your lower leg (not on your knee).
- Find your balance. Keep rooting through your left foot. You are steady and strong and balanced.
- Bring your hands to your heart in prayer position.
- If you want to grow your tree, breathe in and reach your hands up towards the sky, like you are growing your branches up towards the sunshine.
- Keep your focus, keep standing tall and balanced.
- If you want to, you can open your branches: breathe out and open your hands to shoulder width.
- Imagine your hands are like beautiful flowers. Circle your wrists, as if those flowers were just moving in the breeze.
- Keep your focus, but see what is around you as you balance.
- Breathe in, grow a bit taller, and reach higher to the sun.

## Tool 15: Getting Grounded: Tree Pose Exercise (Continued)

- *Breathe out, bring your hands back to your heart, balanced and steady.*
- *Release your right leg down.*
- *Repeat on the left hand side.*
- *When you've done both sides stand with the feet hip-width apart again.*
- *Close your eyes. Connect to your roots, find your centre. Breathe in deeply, breathe out deeply, breathe in deeply, and breathe out deeply.*
- *Open your eyes.*

### ALTERNATIVES:

This exercise can be modified for people with physical limitations or the elderly. The activity can be done without raising the legs, keeping both firm on the ground, and only moving the arms. The arm motions can also be done while seated if standing is not an option.

### SAFETY:

The exercise should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.





# Tool 16: Positive 'Hold' with Self Affirmation (Source: EAMH-SL)



**PURPOSE:** Promoting positive thinking through visualization and affirmation.



**TIME:** 30 minutes

**AGES:** All

**GROUP SIZE:** groups of different sizes and individually.



**RESOURCES:**

- Open space



**PROCESS:**

Guide the participants using these instructions:

- With one hand, take hold of a finger on the opposite hand.
- Squeeze the finger softly and breathe in, saying in your head 'I am calm'. Then, as you breathe out, relax the squeeze and say, 'I am kind, I am peaceful.'

These words are just an example. You can substitute many others. Examples: I am strong, I am loved, I am peaceful, I feel calm and relaxed (this is especially good when a child is upset), I am healthy, I am safe, I have light and joy inside my heart, I am blessed, I am special, I am helpful and caring, I am clever, I am perfect just the way I am.



**SAFETY:** The exercise should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.

## Tool 17: Loving Kindness Exercise

(Source: EAMH-SL)



**PURPOSE:** Exercise to feel loving-kindness through visualisation.



**TIME:** 30 minutes

**AGES:** all

**GROUP SIZE:** groups of different sizes and/or individuals.



**RESOURCES:**

- Open space



**PROCESS:**

**STEP ONE:** Relaxation

Guide the participants using these instructions:

- Sit tall in your chair or on the floor.
- Bring your hands to your lower belly. Relax your shoulders. Close your eyes.
- Take a long, deep, gentle breath in, sending the breath all the way down to your belly, so your stomach expands softly behind your hands.
- Sit tall in your chair or on the floor.
- Bring your hands to your lower belly. Relax your shoulders. Close your eyes.
- Take a long, deep, gentle breath in, sending the breath all the way down to your belly, so your stomach expands softly behind your hands.
- Breathe out slowly, feeling how the belly naturally draws inward as the breath exits the body.
- Breathe in again, deep into your belly, and feel the belly expand.
- Breathe out to let the breath release out. Keep breathing like this.
- You might like to imagine that when you breathe in, you are blowing up your tummy softly like a balloon, and when you breathe out, the air is going slowly out of the balloon again.
- (After about 10 breaths): Now just let your breath be natural and soft.

**STEP TWO: LOVING KINDNESS**

- Think of someone you really love. It can be anybody you want, it can even be an animal.
- Imagine that person or animal is standing right in front of you – really picture them there. What do they look like? Perhaps they have a pleasant familiar smell. Picture their eyes, and their smile. Imagine you are smiling back at them.
- Now, keeping your eyes closed, put your arms around yourself, and imagine that person is giving you a big hug, sending you love and strength.
- Squeeze yourself tight and enjoy that hug as that person hugs you, and sends you love and kindness. Hug them back, sending that love and kindness back to them.

## Tool 17: Loving Kindness Exercise (Continued)

- *(Facilitator: Leave a few moments silence)*
- *Now, imagine you let go of that person gently and take a step back. See them smiling at you, and smile back at them. Know that they are with you.*
- *When you are ready, bring your hands together in front of you and start to rub your palms together really fast, building warmth between your hands. Breathe in.*
- *As you breathe out, bring your hands over your eyes.*
- *Open your eyes into your hands, and blink.*
- *Reach your hands up to the sky, breath in.*
- *Breathe out, lower back to your lap.*



**Note:** Participants may also chose to pick a loved one they have lost. This can be a healing way to feel close to them, but be watchful that participants aren't getting very upset.

This activity has the potential to provoke deep emotions. Check in with your participants if they experience strong emotions and let them know that you are there for them to offer support and listen.

## Tool 18: The Wave of Light (Source: EAMH-SL)



**PURPOSE:** Releasing worry and stress.



**TIME:** 30 minutes

**AGES:** All

**GROUP SIZE:** Groups of different sizes and individually.



**RESOURCES:**

- Open space



**PROCESS:**

This exercise combines breath, movement and visualisation. It can help to release worry and stress.

Guide the participants using these instructions:

- *Find a comfortable standing position. Relax your shoulders. Feel the length in your spine, and through the top of your head.*
- *Place your left foot forward, grounding the feet again.*
- *Breathe in: float your hands forward and over your head, imagining you are drawing a wave of bright light above your head.*
- *Breathe out: move your hands downward, past the shoulders, as if you are showering yourself with a wave of soothing cool light.*
- *Keep this flowing for at least ten breaths. With each breath in, imagine drawing that wave of beautiful, healing light above you. With each breathe out, imagine that cool, shining light flowing down over you, taking your tightness and troubles away.*
- *Repeat on the other side, with the right foot forward. Breathe in the shower of light. Breathe out and let go of any negativity or tension you feel inside. Feel the flow of light cleansing and refreshing you.*



**SAFETY:** The exercise should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.

## Tool 19: Basic Yoga Exercises (Source: EAMH-SL)



**PURPOSE:** Relieving stress and tension; energizing participants.



**TIME:** 15-20 minutes

**AGES:** All

**GROUP SIZE:** Groups of any size and/or individually.



### RESOURCES:

- Open space



### PROCESS:

Guide the participants using these instructions:

- *Stand tall, feet hip distance apart.*
- *Breathe in: Reach your arms up to touch the sky.*
- *Breathe out: Fold down to touch the earth (diving down like a bird)*
- *Breathe in: Reach back to the sky (fly up like a bird)*
- *Breathe out: Fly down to touch the earth*
- *Stay here: Bend your knees deep, and let your arms hang down like a gorilla.*
- *Breathe in: Breathe into the back of your ribs.*
- *Breathe out: Sway your arms from side to side, like an elephant swaying its trunk. Come back to centre.*
- *Breathe in: Fly back up to reach the sky.*
- *Breathe out: Bring your hands to your heart in 'prayer' position. Feel your balance. Feel stable and centred.*
- *(Repeat up to 5 times.)*



### ALTERNATIVES:

Basic Exercise Sequence for Kids:

- Reach to the sky
- Fly to the earth
- Hang like a monkey
- Swing like an elephant
- Fly to the sky like a bird
- Bring your hands to your heart
- Relax and find your balance



**SAFETY:** The exercise should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.

## Tool 20: Mirroring Exercise (Source: EAMH-SL)



**PURPOSE:** Showing children how to work together and encouraging body awareness.



**TIME:** 30 minutes

**AGES:** 4-12

**GROUP SIZE:** Groups of any size.



**RESOURCES:**

- Open space



**PROCESS:**

- Put the children into pairs. One child is A, one is B.
- Demonstrate the exercise first before asking the children to do it themselves.
- Ask the children to face each other, with about a meter between them. They should keep eye contact, and they need to stay completely quiet – so quiet they could hear a feather drop! The exercise should be done in total silence.
- Partner A is going to start moving their hands very slowly (squeeze their hands, open their hands, circle the wrist, etc.). Partner B has to copy this movement at the same time, as if they were the mirror reflection of their partner.
- Partner A can let the movement become bigger, slowly reaching up, to the side, maybe bending down. All the movement should be very slow, so Partner B can follow at the same time.
- Let the children explore this in silence for 3 minutes.
- Swap roles: Partner B leads, Partner A mirrors.

**DEBRIEF:**

Ask the children the following:

- How does it feel to move all together?
- Were any moves difficult to follow?



**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Facilitator can start a movement and participants can follow this movement as closely as possible.
2. When the group is doing the movement together for a few moments the facilitator indicates the person next to him/her should now give a movement.
3. Group follows this movement TOGETHER.
4. Then next person, etc. Follow it around the circle so that everyone has a turn to lead



**SAFETY:** The exercise should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.

## Tool 21: Two Trees Exercise (Source: EAMH-SL)



**PURPOSE:** Encouraging partner work, body awareness, and positive relaxing actions.



**TIME:** 30 minutes

**AGES:** 4-12

**GROUP SIZE:** Exercise should be done in pairs.



**RESOURCES:**

- Open space



**PROCESS:**

Ask the children to find a partner (of a similar same height if possible). Ask them to stand facing each other, arms-width apart. They need to have enough space to stretch their arms to the side without touching anybody else. One partner should be A, and one B.

- *Facing your partner, stand with your feet hip distance apart, with your toes pointing towards your partner.*
- *Close your eyes.*
- *Stand nice and tall: let your back bone become long.*
- *Relax your shoulders.*
- *Think about your feet. Relax your toes, spread them wide.*
- *Imagine there are roots growing out from your feet into the earth, spreading wide, just like the roots of a tree.*
- *Imagine how strong those roots are. Just like a tree, those roots help you to be strong, and steady, and grow up tall from the earth. Imagine those roots are helping you to draw in good things, just like tree roots. They help you to draw in nourishment, and help you to grow tall.*
- *Feel how that goodness and tallness can travel all the way up through your body, through your legs, to your belly, up to your heart, growing tall like a tree, and up to the top of your head.*
- *Relax your shoulders.*
- *Now, keeping very quiet, open your eyes and smile at your partner.*
- *You are still standing tall and strong, rooted like a tree.*
- *Now, keep looking your partner in the eyes to keep your focus.*
- *Start to mirror your partner:*
- *Partner A: Lift your right foot, and place it at the side of your ankle, or higher at the side of your lower leg (not on your knee).*
- *Partner B: Lift your left foot, and place it at the side of your ankle, or higher at the side of your lower leg (not on your knee).*
- *Both of you find your balance.*
- *Keep rooting down through your standing foot. You are steady and strong and balanced.*

## Tool 21: Two Trees Exercise (Continued)

- *Bring your hands to your heart in prayer position.*
- *If you want to grow your trees together, breathe in and reach your hands up towards the sky, like you are growing your branches up towards the sunshine.*
- *Keep your focus, keep standing tall and balanced.*
- *If you want to, you can open your branches: breathe out and open the hands to shoulder width.*
- *Imagine your hands are like beautiful flowers, and circle your wrists, as if those flowers were just moving in the breeze.*
- *Keep your focus. Breathe in, grow a bit taller, and reach higher to the sun.*
- *Breathe out, bring your hands back to your heart, balanced and steady.*
- *Release your top leg down.*
- *Repeat on the other side.*
- *When you've done both sides stand with the feet hip-width apart again.*
- *Close your eyes.*
- *Connect to your roots, find your centre.*
- *Breathe in deep, breathe out deep, breathe in deep, and breathe out deep.*
- *Open your eyes and smile at your partner.*



**SAFETY:** The exercise should take place in a calm and safe environment with no noise interruptions.



## Tool 22: The Hexaflexercise

(Source: Commit and Act adapted from (Harris, 2009))



**PURPOSE:** Grounding participants in the present moment.



**TIME:** 45 minutes

**AGES:** Adults only

**GROUP SIZE:** Groups of different sizes.



**RESOURCES:**

- Open space



**PROCESS:**

(After every command allow a 10 second pause.)

### STEP ONE: LOOK AT YUSELF

- *There's a part of you that can notice everything that you see, hear, touch, taste, smell, think and feel.*
- *We don't have a good word for this in everyday language. I'm going to call it "look at yuself", but you don't have to call it that. You can call it whatever you like.*
- *Life is like a performance on a stage. And on that stage are all your thoughts, and all your feelings, and everything that you can see, hear, touch, taste and smell. Look at Yuself is that part of you that can watch the performance on the stage: focus in on any part of it, or step back and take it all in at once.*

### STEP TWO: SELF-OBSERVATION

- *So life is like a performance on a stage. On that stage are all your thoughts, and feelings, and everything you can see, hear, touch, taste and smell. In this exercise, you dim the lights on that stage and you focus on a single spotlight on your breathing. And now it is time to bring up the rest of the lights. This breathing is happening inside a body, so illuminate your body: sit up in the chair or on the floor, and notice your arms and legs, neck and head, chest and stomach.*
- *Your body is inside a world, so now illuminate the world around you. Notice what you see and hear, and smell, and taste and touch.*
- *There is a part of you that can notice everything in every moment. Notice what you are feeling. Notice what you are thinking now.*
- *I invite you now to sit up straight, let your shoulders drop and gently push your feet into the floor... and get a sense of the ground beneath you ... you can either fix your eyes on a spot, or close them, whichever you prefer.*
- *Now just take a moment to notice how you are sitting. Notice how you are breathing. Notice what you can see. Notice what you can hear. Notice what you can feel against your skin. And notice what you can taste in your mouth. Notice what you can sense or smell in your nose. Notice what you are feeling right now. Notice what you are thinking. And notice what you are doing.*

## Tool 22: The Hexaflexercise (Continued)

### STEP THREE: VALUES

- *Now take a moment to reflect on why you came here today. There is something that matters to you, something that is important deep in your heart that motivated you to come here.*
- *Search deep inside your heart to clarify what was important enough to make you come here today. Is it about improving your life? Personal growth? Learning new skills? Building better relationships? Is it about improving things at work? Perhaps it is about your health? Or about being a better parents or friend?*

### STEP FOUR: NAH DIS A WANT / COMMITTED ACTION

- *And now take a moment to reflect on how you got here today. You are here because you made choices and took committed action to get here. You had to get ready. You had to travel – perhaps you walked, or caught an okada (motorcycle taxi), or a minibus. You had to invest time and effort and energy to get here. Perhaps getting here brought up some uncomfortable thoughts or images or feelings for you. And yet... here you are.*
- *Right now, in this moment, notice that you are taking action. You are sitting here, doing an exercise – that perhaps feels unusual – and you probably have lots of thoughts moving around your head, and all sorts of feelings in your body. There are so many things you could be doing right now, and yet you have chosen to be here, taking action to improve your life.*

### STEP FIVE: CONTACT WITH THE PRESENT MOMENT

- *Now, for the next few breaths, I'd like you to focus on emptying out your lungs: really push all of the air out of them so that there is nothing left inside. And then allow them to gently fill, all by themselves.*
- *Really notice the breath – notice it flowing in and out. Observe it as if you are a curious scientist who has never encountered breathing before, or a child who has noticed their breath for the first time. Notice that once the lungs are empty, they refill all by themselves. You can take a deep breath if you want to, but notice that your breath just happens. And now I invite you to undertake a challenge...for the next few minutes, keep your attention on your breath...observe your breath as it flows in and out*

### STEP SIX: MEMBA / CONNECT TO THE BREATH

- *You will find this hard, because your mind is a masterful storyteller. It will tell you all sorts of interesting stories to grab you and pull you away from what you are doing.*
- *See if you can let those thoughts come and go, as if they are merely passing by like people going to market – just passing by, outside your house – and keep your attention on your breath.*
- *Notice your breath flowing in and out. Notice the rise and fall of your chest. Notice your stomach moving.*
- *Let your mind chatter as if it is a radio playing in the background. Don't try to turn it off, that's impossible. Just let it play in the background and keep your attention on your breath.*

**STEP SEVEN: ACCEPTANCE / LET IT BE**

- *As we continue, the feelings and sensations in your body will change. There may be pleasant feelings – such as relaxation and calmness. And there may be unpleasant feelings – such as frustration or boredom or anxiety. See if you can allow those feelings to be exactly as they are in this moment.*
- *Don't try to control your feelings, just let them be – regardless of whether they are pleasant or unpleasant – and keep your attention on your breathing.*
- *Again and again you will drift off into your thoughts. As soon as you realise, acknowledge it, and focus your attention on your breath.*
- *You are not trying to relax! The aim is to let your feelings be as they are, to feel whatever you feel without a struggle. If you're noticing a difficult feeling, then silently say to yourself, "Here's a feeling of frustration," or, "Here's a feeling of anxiety." Acknowledge it is there, and keep your attention on your breath.*



**SAFETY:**

- This activity might remind people about difficult and/or distressing experiences. You should not probe about these events in detail.
- Ensure that participants are aware that they are free to leave at any time, not answer questions or not participate in activities they aren't comfortable with.
- Clarify that there is further support available should anyone experience distress.
- Remember that two facilitators should be present to ensure that support can be offered straight away.

## SECTION 5: TOOLS TO COPE WITH LOSS AND GRIEF

These exercises are for participants who have lost someone and are grieving them. Grieving is an important process and these exercise provide participants a way to express this loss and grief in a safe and healthy way



# Tool 23: Group Session: Loss and Grief

(Source: CAPS)



**PURPOSE:** Group exercise to help understand feelings of grief.



**TIME:** 45-60 minutes

**AGES:** Adults

**GROUP SIZE:** 4-8



**RESOURCES:**

- Either mats, chairs or benches for sitting.



**PROCESS:**

**STEP ONE: INTRODUCTION**

- *In life many of us have lost someone or something that we love. For instance, loss occurs when someone we love died or is separated, as losing a sister, brother, father, mother, friend, or relative. The experience of losing someone that we love is a painful experience that hurts us; therefore grief is made up of a mix of displeasing feelings such as sadness, frustration, loneliness, annoyance, and anger, among others.*

**STEP TWO: PROCESS EMOTIONS**

Guide participants by saying the following:

- *Think about a beloved one who has passed away or has been taken away from you, a beloved one who has been very important for you.*
- *Think about what this person has meant to you and in your life.*
- *Please, one by one, could you say the name of your beloved one, your relationship with him/her, and what that person has meant for you in your life? (Answering this question is optional.)*
- **(Note to facilitator:** Usually participants express their grief when they have not completed the mourning process. The Facilitator listens to participants, empathizes with them, and lets them understand that their feelings are normal. Facilitator proposes a practical exercise, such as deep breathing, to help them manage the emotions concerning the grief they are feeling.)

**STEP THREE: ENVISION THE LOVED ONE**

Guide participants by saying the following:

- *Please close your eyes.*
- *Think about what you like about the lost beloved one.*
- *Think about a moment/situation that you lived with that beloved one.*
- *Think about the day when that moment/situation happened.*
- *Think about the place where that moment/situation happened.*
- *Think about all elements that were in that moment/situation (e.g. other people, things, plants, etc.). Think about what was going on. Think about what both of you were doing.*

**STEP FOUR: EXPRESS EMOTIONS**

Guide participants by saying the following:

- *It is important to learn how to relieve or to heal our grief, in order to be able to remember our beloved ones without suffering. As a first step for healing our grief it is needed to express our feelings, even if they are related to sadness, grief, anger or any unpleasant feeling. So venting (releasing) our emotions (e.g. fear, anger, despair, sadness, grief, etc.) will help us to relieve our suffering. We learn to exercise mindfulness about what we feel, in order to facilitate the healing process of our grief without avoiding or blocking the memories of our loved ones.*

## Tool 23: Group Session: Loss and Grief

(Continued)

- *Facilitator then asks participants about what are they currently feeling (e.g. What are you feeling here and now? What is making you feel the memory that you are evoking right now?).*
- *Facilitator listens to the expression of participants' feelings. It is possible that participants will express a wide array of emotions, including not feeling much at all. Facilitator reminds everyone that all emotions expressed by participants are normal (e.g. it is normal what you are feeling, it is part of your life, it is in connection with your memories. It is important to remember our beloved ones because they are part of us.)*

### STEP FIVE: ACCESSING LOVING FEELINGS AND MEMORIES

Guide participants by saying the following:

- *Please close your eyes again.*
- *Think about a beautiful and happy moment/situation that you lived with that beloved one. A situation in which that person was doing something nice to you (e.g. taking care of you, expressing his/her love to you, playing with you, joking with you, chatting together, etc.).*
- *Think about the sensations you had in that moment/situation (e.g. smells, sounds, flavors/tastes, etc.).*
- *Think about what you were feeling at the very moment/situation when your beloved one was doing something nice to you. [pause here and allow participants time to think]. Now try to keep with you what you were feeling at that very moment/situation and think about how it feels to have those pleasant emotions right here and now.*
- *So while you are feeling such pleasant emotions, think about how beautiful it is to keep this memory, because it helps keep the memory of your beloved one alive in your mind. It helps you to feel his/her love for you. The love expressed to you by your beloved one is always with you and alive in your mind. You are able to feel his/her love for you in any moment you want. The love you felt once never dies.*

### STEP SIX: DEBRIEF

Guide participants by saying the following:

- *Ask the participants: How do you feel here and right now, after this exercise?*
- *Facilitator tries to find out if participants are feeling some relief or peace of mind after the exercise, re-emphasizing that the love of the person who passed away is always there.*
- *Facilitator encourages participants to practice this exercise in order to get rid of the grief little by little and to start feeling at peace with their memories, transforming their emotions from unpleasant feelings to pleasant ones.*



### SAFETY:

- *This exercise is likely to generate very strong emotional reactions. The facilitator has a supporting role to listen to participants, let their emotions occur naturally. You should not probe about these events in detail.*
- *Clarify that there is further support available should anyone experience distress.*
- *Remember that two facilitators should be present to ensure that support can be offered straight away.*

## Tool 24: Bridge of Hope (Source: IsraAid)



**PURPOSE:** Healing and sharing emotions.



**TIME:** 15-20 minutes    **AGES:** 8 years and older    **GROUP SIZE:** Groups of varying sizes.



**RESOURCES:**

- Paper, crayons and markers



**PROCESS:**

- Fold the paper in half.
- On the left side of the page, ask participants to draw something that has made them unhappy.
- On the right side, ask them to draw something that has made/makes them happy.
- In the middle of the page where the fold is, ask them to draw something that will help them get from the left side to the right side (i.e. a bridge, a boat, a person walking across, etc.).
- Hang images up on wall (or group on the floor) and encourage sharing.

**DEBRIEF:**

Ask participants the following:

- How was the experience?
- How was it to put these two different events on paper?
- Did it help to visually see it?
- What is the purpose of the bridge/boat, etc. in your drawing?
- How do you change from being unhappy to being happy? (Go around and get ideas from each other about how we can do that.)



**ALTERNATIVES:**

*For children ages 10 and younger:*

- These children may draw too big or too much on one side and not have enough space for the bridge/boat part. Have them fold the paper into three parts:
  - Have them draw on the left fold their unhappy event;
  - And on the right fold, their happy event;
  - In the middle fold, have them draw a bridge, a boat, or anything that can connect from one side to the other.



**SAFETY:**

- This activity might remind people about difficult and/or distressing experiences. You should not probe about these events in detail.
- Clarify that there is further support available should anyone experience distress.
- Remember that two facilitators should be present to ensure that support can be offered straight away.

## Tool 25 The Bowl of Possibilities/Wishing Well (Source: IsraAid)



**PURPOSE:** Recognizing and expressing needs/desires.



**TIME:** Until each person had a turn

**AGES:** All ages, good for children

**GROUP SIZE:** Groups of varying sizes.



**RESOURCES:** Open space



### PROCESS:

- Participants stand in a circle.
- Instruct participants that the centre of the circle is like a big magical calabash. They can express a wish, a need and “take it” from the calabash.
- Instruct that they will think about the following: “What do I need today?”
- Each will take a turn stepping forward and verbally expressing what they need for today and make a gesture that embodies that (i.e. “I need patience today;” followed by a gentle touch of the hands to the heart).
- Then have rest of the group repeat “She/he needs patience” followed by gesture.
- The participant steps back and the next one goes.
- Have everyone take turns sharing his or her needs.
- Repeat exercise if the group seems to need another round.

### DEBRIEF

Ask participants the following:

- *What did you need today?*
- *How does it feel to ask for what you need?*
- *Was this helpful?*
- *Can you see yourself using this on your own?*



### SAFETY:

- Ensure that participants are aware that they are free to leave at any time, not answer questions or not participate in activities they aren't comfortable with.
- Clarify that there is further support available should anyone experience distress.



# Annex 1: Basic Individual Assessment

## General Information:

Name:	<input type="text"/>
Preferred name:	<input type="text"/>
Date of Birth:	<input type="text"/>
Contact details: (Address/ phone number)	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

## Questions:

- What brought you here today?
- How long have you been having this problem?
- What do you think has caused this problem?
- What kinds of things do you do to feel better or address this problem? (Can you list five things you do to feel better?)
- Who are the people closest to you, who you can turn to for support?

If the person indicates significant emotional stress or difficulty with daily activities, some of the following follow up questions may be appropriate:

Do you have any problems sleeping at night?

Have you lost interest in your daily activities?

Have you been seeing or hearing things that other people can not hear?

Have you been feeling sad or unhappy recently?

Have you been scared or frightened recently?

How much alcohol have you been drinking recently?

Have you used any illicit drugs?

## ASKING FOR A MEDICAL HISTORY

Are you taking any herbal medicine tablets?

Have you had any physical illnesses in the past?

Are there any illnesses that run in the family?

Has anyone else in your family had a similar problem to you?

Has any medicine made you sick in the past? (you are looking to see if a person is allergic to a medicine)

## SAFETY QUESTIONS

How much have you been eating and drinking over the past few days?

Is anyone hurting you?

Have you ever thought of hurting yourself or anyone else?

## Annex 2: Resilience Measure for Adults

To what extent do the sentences below describe you?	Not at all	A little	Some-what	Quite a bit	A lot
1 I have people in my life who I can respect.	1	2	3	4	5
2 I share/cooperate with people around me.	1	2	3	4	5
3 Getting and improving qualifications and skills is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4 I know how to behave in different social situations.	1	2	3	4	5
5 My family is supportive towards me.	1	2	3	4	5
6 My family knows a lot about me.	1	2	3	4	5
7 If I am hungry, I can usually get enough food to eat.	1	2	3	4	5
8 I try to finish activities that I start.	1	2	3	4	5
9 Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me.	1	2	3	4	5
10 I am proud of my ethnic background.	1	2	3	4	5
11 People think that I am fun to be with.	1	2	3	4	5
12 I talk to my family/partner about how I feel.	1	2	3	4	5
13 When things don't go my way, I usually fix them without hurting myself or other people (for example by using drugs/alcohol or being violent).	1	2	3	4	5
14 I feel supported by my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
15 I know where to get help in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
16 I feel I belong in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
17 My family cares about me when times are difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
18 My friends care about me when times are difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
19 I am treated fairly in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
20 I have opportunities to show others that I can act responsibly.	1	2	3	4	5
21 I know what I'm good at.	1	2	3	4	5
22 I participate in religious/traditional activities.	1	2	3	4	5
23 I think it is important to help out in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
24 I feel secure when I am with my family.	1	2	3	4	5
25 I have opportunities to apply my abilities in life (like using skills, working at a job, or caring for others)	1	2	3	4	5
26 I like my family's culture and the way my family celebrates things.	1	2	3	4	5
27 I like my community's culture and traditions.	1	2	3	4	5
28 I am proud to be a citizen of Sierra Leone.	1	2	3	4	5

## Annex 3: Child and Youth Resilience Measure

To what extent do the sentences below describe you?	Not at all	A little	Some-what	Quite a bit	A lot
1 I have people I look up to.	1	2	3	4	5
2 I cooperate with people around me.	1	2	3	4	5
3 Getting an education is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4 I know how to behave in different social situations.	1	2	3	4	5
5 My parent(s)/caregiver(s) watch me closely.	1	2	3	4	5
6 My parent(s)/caregiver(s) know a lot about me.	1	2	3	4	5
7 If I am hungry, there is enough to eat.	1	2	3	4	5
8 I try to finish what I start.	1	2	3	4	5
9 Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me.	1	2	3	4	5
10 I am proud of my ethnic background.	1	2	3	4	5
11 People think that I am fun to be with.	1	2	3	4	5
12 I talk to my family/caregiver(s) about how I feel.	1	2	3	4	5
13 I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others (for example by using drugs and/or being violent).	1	2	3	4	5
14 I feel supported by my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
15 I know where to go in my community to get help.	1	2	3	4	5
16 I feel I belong at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
17 My family stands by me during difficult times.	1	2	3	4	5
18 My friends stand by me during difficult times.	1	2	3	4	5
19 I am treated fairly in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
20 I have opportunities to show others that I am becoming an adult and can act responsibly.	1	2	3	4	5
21 I am aware of my own strengths.	1	2	3	4	5
22 I participate in organized religious activities.	1	2	3	4	5
23 I think it is important to serve my community.	1	2	3	4	5
24 I feel safe when I am with my family/caregiver(s).	1	2	3	4	5
25 I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others).	1	2	3	4	5
26 I enjoy my family's/caregiver's cultural and family traditions.	1	2	3	4	5
27 I enjoy my community's traditions.	1	2	3	4	5
28 I am proud to be a citizen of Sierra Leone.	1	2	3	4	5

# Annex 4: Mediation Agreement

(Source: JPC - adapted from Timap for Justice)

## MEDIATION AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT is made on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_

BETWEEN \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ of the one part and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ of the other part.

WHEREAS the Justice and Peace Commission is an independent, registered, civil society organisation that provides free justice services to indigent Sierra Leoneans.

AND WHEREAS the Justice and Peace Commission legal aid programme has as its objects inter alia, the mediation of disputes between individuals.

AND WHEREAS both parties are desirous of settling their dispute and have approached the Justice and Peace Commission in furtherance of same.

NOW THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSES AS FOLLOWS:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ agrees as follows:

i) \_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

iii) \_\_\_\_\_

iv) \_\_\_\_\_

v) \_\_\_\_\_

vi) \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ agrees as follows:

i) \_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

iii) \_\_\_\_\_

iv) \_\_\_\_\_

v) \_\_\_\_\_

vi) \_\_\_\_\_

# Annex 4: Mediation Agreement

(Source: JPC - adapted from Timap for Justice)

## MEDIATION AGREEMENT Continued

3. PROVIDED ALWAYS AND IT IS HEREBY EXPRESSLY AGREED that both parties having freely consented to the above conditions and obligations and the Organisation serving as guarantor as such, any breach of the said conditions and obligations will be considered absolutely unacceptable AND the aggrieved party with the support of the Organisation MAY consider legal action.
4. BY SIGNING UNDERNEATH we agree to be bound by this AGREEMENT.
5. THIS AGREEMENT having been recorded in English was read to me in Krio//Mende/ Temne/ Loko/Limba and I understand same to be true, correct, and a representation of my wishes.

\_\_\_\_\_

THE PARTIES HAVING CONSENTED TO THE ABOVE AGREEMENT THE ORGANISATION HEREBY GIVES ITS SUPPORT AND APPROVAL.

## MEDIATOR

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

IN THE PRESENCE OF:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP TO PARTY: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

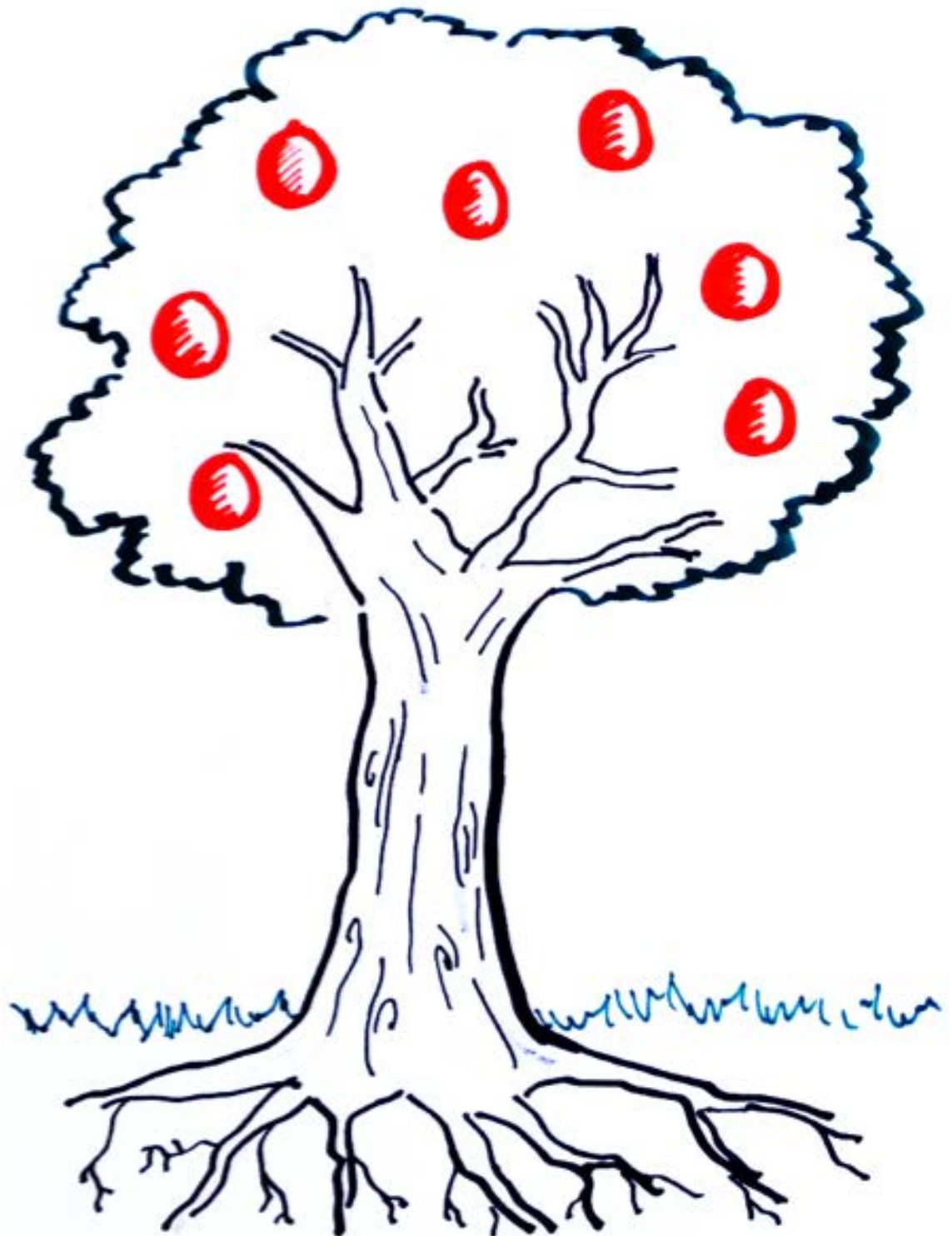
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP TO PARTY: \_\_\_\_\_

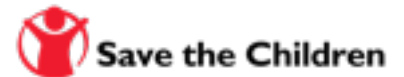
SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex 5: Tree of Life



This manual was compiled thanks to the technical support of the members of the Psychosocial Support Working Group in Sierra Leone:

This manual was compiled thanks to the technical support of the members of the Psychosocial Support Working Group in Sierra Leone:



This manual was financially supported by:

