

I DEAL

Peer Relations



Module

of War Child's I DEAL intervention



Who is my friend? Am I a friend?



War Child Holland is an independent international non-governmental organization. The organization invests in a peaceful future of children affected by armed conflict. War Child Holland is part of War Child International, a network of independent organizations.

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THEME INTRODUCTION

We are not alone in this world. Many other people are surrounding us: in the family, the community, the country, and the world. We hold different relationships with different people. These relationships, or bonds, are important. They can help us – or cause trouble.

Peers can be friends, brothers, sisters, and classmates. Peers are all those children that appear in the child's environment; with whom he/she has a certain relation, and who are in the same age group. Peer relations are an important factor in a child's behavior.

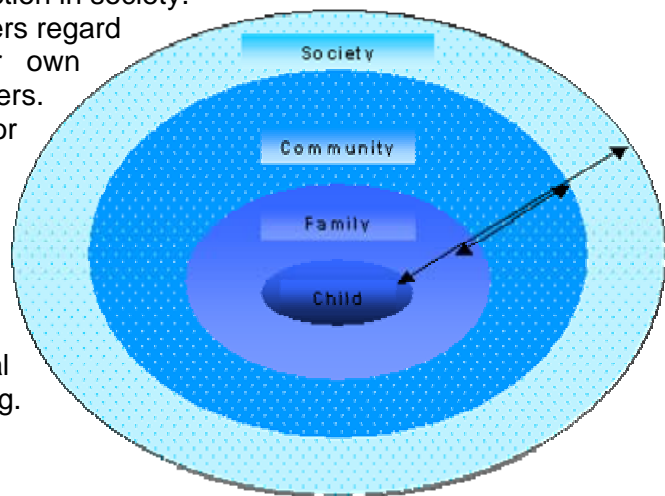
Relations

The human being is a social being. When we are born, we completely depend on the care of others (our caregivers) to stay alive. From our earliest moments we are related to other people.

While growing up, the network of relations expands: apart from our family relations we find ourselves involved with friends, peers, teachers or other important people in the community or society.

Through relations we learn how to function in society. We develop an awareness of how others regard us. We learn how to control our own behavior to make it acceptable for others. The input from 'the other' is crucial for developing 'the self', the appropriate (gender) role, and appropriate social behavior. Our personal morality is formed by interaction with others.

Relations also provide us with the warmth, the emotional and physical support that we need as a human being.



Ecological model

Relations with peers

In this module we will focus on the child's relationships with peers. The term *peers* refers to all those children that appear in the child's environment with whom he/she has a certain relation, and who are in the same age group. Peers can be friends, brothers, sisters, and classmates.

Children learn many of their social skills through their peers. This process starts around pre-school age (from 3-6) and continues through middle childhood (6-11) and adolescence (12-18).

Unlike adult-child relationships, peer relationships are based on equality between participants. Children can negotiate the terms of their relations with peers and friends in ways that are not possible with adults. They develop a capacity for friendship and

solidarity based on *reciprocity* (“I do something for you, and you do something for me”). From each other, peers learn lessons about right and wrong, loyalty, and empathy. They experience what happens if they hurt someone's feelings or betray someone's trust.

Children often define and exercise their peer relations through play. WCH recognizes positive peer interaction as one of the five protective factors of children's well-being. For that reason we use (guided) play throughout I DEAL. The exercises in this module attempt to promote positive peer relations.

Children that are forming sustainable friendships and attain acceptance within their peer groups are more likely to do well in school and, in the long run, in life. Close friendships provide adolescents in particular with the basis for developing greater self-knowledge. One needs a good friend for mutual reflection. Young people tend to discuss their problems, feelings, fears and doubts with best friends rather than with their parents. Peers, especially good friends, help each other to think through their issues more clearly and competently.

Goals of this module

Children have more ‘tools’ to engage in positive peer interaction

The module tries to meet this goal through the following three sessions:

Session 1: Who are my peers?

Goal: Children have identified the different relations they have with peers

In this first session, the children learn to realize who their peers are: brothers, sisters, friend, classmates, et cetera. You will make them aware of their social environment.

Session 2: Difficult situations with peers

Goal: Children have learned ways to deal with difficulties regarding peer interaction

The second session gives the children insight in the kind of interaction they experience with their peers. You will discuss ways of communication and the complications every relation faces.

Optional session 2a: How to deal with conflict?

Goal: Children have learned peaceful ways to deal with conflict

If, in session 2, you have encountered too many conflict situations to be dealt with in one single session, add an extra session from I DEAL module Conflict and Peace, session 3 ‘How to deal with conflict’. It will elaborate on peer conflict (solving). You can call it session 2a.

Session 3: Friendship

Goal: Children have learned to give and receive support/care from their peers and friends

In the third session, you will make the children understand what friendship means. They will have to see why people need elements like trust and cooperation in order to build up a sustaining friendship. You will make them reflect on these and other elements.

SESSION 1: WHO ARE MY PEERS?

Goal: Children have identified the different relations they have with peers

Methods: Group talk
Exercises
After talk

Resources: large sheets of paper, pencils (preferably colored)



Exercise 1: Cover the space – peer version

Orienting on possible peer relations (10-15 minutes).

1. Ask the children to just walk around in a marked space - without talking or making contact with others. Just walking by themselves.
2. Tell them to try and walk around without touching anybody. Let them use the whole space. This means they will constantly trying to fill up empty spaces.
3. Tell them that, when you clap, the children must quickly form groups of 2, 3 or 5.
4. Repeat this several times, until you see people are able to respond correctly to those instructions.
5. Add the following instructions: at the clap, the little groups that form must freeze in an image of 'peer relation'. Examples: 2 friends that meet; a 1 brother and 2 sisters having a fight; 5 classmates having fun.



Group talk

In this exercise you have just expressed different relations that exist between peers. That is the theme for the coming weeks: what kind of relationships do you have with your friends and the other children around you.



Note: the group may think that it is about sexual relationships. That is not the case. Sexual relations will be a theme in the BIG DEAL programme.



Exercise 2: The people around me

Discovering elements defining a good relationship (20 minutes).

1. Ask the group what they think the following proverb means: "No man is an Island". Give the children some time to answer.
2. Explain them that we all have relationships with a lot of people around us. That some links are strong, others weaker.
3. Divide the group into small groups of about 4 children..
4. Instruct the children to discuss in their group: how can you see if a relation is a good relation?

5. After 5-10 minutes, ask each small group to present what they found.



Note: as facilitator you have to make sure that some elements will be mentioned, like trust and honesty; loyalty and faith; confidence and confidentiality; open communication; and warmth and love.



Group talk

As you see, many things are important in each relationship (give a short summary of the elements found). Now we will look at *with whom* we have relationships.



Exercise 3: Social mapping

Mapping and analyzing one's personal peer environment (40 minutes).

1. Give every child a piece of paper and a pencil.
2. Ask everyone to draw themselves (or their name) in the middle of the paper.
3. Tell them to draw their peers around them on the paper: friends, classmates, brothers/sisters, neighbor's children et cetera. The distance between the 'own' circle and a particular peer may express something about the particular relationship.
4. Ask them to draw lines between their own circle and the peers. At that line, let them indicate how they feel about that particular relationship: good/bad, strong/not strong, supportive or not et cetera. This way, everyone makes a map of his or her own peer relationships.



Note: give the children hints on how to indicate their feelings about the different peers. Closeness to 'themselves' in the center and choice of materials and colors can express how they feel about the different relations.. Steps 5 & 6 of the exercise are optional. If there is little time you may want to skip those steps and go directly to step 7.

5. Get back to the elements found in exercise 2. Make the children recall them.
6. For these elements, ask them to mark each of the relationships on their social map. Marks between 1 and 5: 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = neutral, 4 = good, 5 = excellent.
7. Close the activity by a short 'exhibition' of different maps. Make the children observe differences and similarities in the maps.



Group talk

How did you like making your own social map? Looking at your own map, what did you discover? Which relationships would you like to improve? What do you think you need to do to improve your relationships with others?



Assignment for next time

Think about these questions. Choose one peer that you think needs to get some friendly word from you. Find a moment between now and next session to give him or her a compliment.



Exercise 5: Pass the bird

Closing game (5-10 minutes). Feel free to use another closing game, though.

- 1. Make the children form a circle.*
- 2. Make a 'cup' of your two hands. Tell the group that you are holding a very small bird in your hand. And that you are going to pass the bird around the circle.*
- 3. Let the imaginary bird pass around the circle once. Tell the children that they must be very careful, as it is a very small bird.*
- 4. Pass the bird around again and ask the children to whisper or say something nice to the bird. Like: hello little bird, I like you because your wings are so beautiful.*
- 5. Pass the bird around another time, ask the children to whisper the name of their good/best friend(s).*
- 6. Tell the children that the bird wants to fly but that it needs their help. Cautiously throw it across the circle to each other and catch.*
- 7. Let someone 'throw' the bird up in the air and everyone wave goodbye.*

SESSION 2: DIFFICULT SITUATIONS WITH PEERS

Goal:	Children have learned ways to deal with difficulties regarding peer interaction
Methods:	Group talk Exercises After talk
Resources:	None



Exercise 1: Follow the sound

Warming up (5-10 minutes)

1. *Form a circle.*
2. *Make everybody in the circle step forward and backward with his or her right foot in the same rhythm (left foot stays put).*
3. *Hold still for a moment while the group keeps going.*
4. *When they are 'back' (with their right foot) you step forward with a certain sound & movement. When the group steps forward, you step back, getting your in a 'counter rhythm'. Ask the group to copy your sound and movement.*
5. *Go on making a variety of sounds and movements that the group can imitate. Vary in volume, emotional expression, and size of movements. The more varieties you come up with, the more you stimulate expression and imagination.*
6. *After this round, (different) children can take the lead.*

Group talk



Welcome everybody! How was your week? Did you do your assignment? Who wants to share about his or her 'friendly word'? If you did not do it, what kept you from doing it? *(Try to invite the children to share their experiences.)*

Today we will look at difficulties you can have with peers. It is nice and helpful to have friendships. On the other hand, you sometimes have fights or quarrels with your friends, or with other children around.



Exercise 2: Listening

Discovering the power of attention (15 minutes).

1. *Divide the group in pairs. Let the pairs sit down while facing each other. Let them decide who is number 1 is and who 2.*
2. *Tell **all** children to start talking to their partner about any subject they like. However, the partner is also talking, meaning that everybody is talking at the same time! Children should try to make their partner listen to them.*

3. *After 1 minute make a sound (drum or whistle) to indicate that all should stop talking.*
4. *Ask the children how they have experienced their partner not listening.*
5. *Now instruct the numbers 1 talk to their number 2. The numbers keep quiet but pretend not to be interested at all. Ask them to overtly show boredom, or shake his head (show disapproval).*
6. *After 1 minute, change: now numbers 2 talk and numbers 1 are bored.*
7. *Blown the whistle after 1 minute and ask how the children experience the other not being interested in their story.*
8. *Now ask the numbers 1 talk to their partner. This time, number 2 is really listening, overtly showing interest.*
9. *After 1 minute make numbers 1 and 2 change roles.*
10. *One minute later, ask how the children experienced somebody listening to them.*



Group talk

Relationships are about interacting and communicating with each other. In this exercise, we used words – but not only words. Lots of messages are being communicated without words (*ask the children how; make sure you identify several examples of non-verbal communication*).

In working, playing and living together we do not always understand each other. This session we will work on the difficulties that can arise between peers. We must think of fights, bullying, and ‘peer pressure’ – when a child feels pressured to do something ‘bad’ because of social pressure from his/her peer group.



Exercise 3: Image work

Expressing problems in peer relations, and finding solutions (50 minutes).

A: Group Image

1. *Ask the children to stand in a circle*
2. *Invite them to name a difficult situation. Stimulate them to express how they feel in such a situation.*
3. *If they hesitate, give your own example of a fight, an argument, or feeling betrayed.*
4. *Choose one of the situations mentioned. Ask every child, 1 by 1, to step into the circle and express his/her own feelings to that situation **in a still picture**.*
5. *When all children entered the circle, ask them to make a sound and gesture to express those feelings at your clap (the whole group at once)*
6. *Clap.*

B: Image of a theme

1. *Divide the children in small groups (5 or 6 children). Let each small group chose their own ‘difficult situation with peers’ to portray.*
2. *After a while, invite each group to show their image to the rest.*
3. *Ask questions like: who can see what’s being portrayed? Do you recognize this situation? How do the different people feel? How can this situation have started?*

4. *Let the children choose one of the shown images that they think is important for them, personally.*

C: Bringing the image to live

1. *The group that first showed the chosen image will now start acting. Direct them on how to start the play. Explain the actors that when you clap (or shout freeze) during the scene, they have to freeze in the position they are in (like an image).*
2. *When stopping the scene (with a clap/freeze), ask the actors and the 'audience' (the rest of the group) about what they see, what they think or feel about the scene. With another clap you can start the scene again.*
3. *At any time replace the actors by other children, in order to give more children a chance to play.*
4. *On the basis of the plays, and in addition: discuss solutions for the problems shown. What could be done to improve this nasty situation?*
5. *Let the children play out these alternatives.*



Note: after each image, let the children recapture/analyze what situations are being portrayed.



Group talk

Please come and sit in a circle. Think of the scenes we played, and the roles you played and the things you saw. What made you feel good? What made you feel bad? What have you learned from it? (*Discuss how they can use this in their daily lives.*)



Assignment for next time

For next time: think of one peer that you have (had) difficulties with. Could you think of something you could do to make up or improve the situation? Think of something small, and put it into practice it before next session.

If you do not have trouble with any peer, think of someone you would like to get to know better and take an initiative to get to know that person before next session.



Exercise 4: Applause!

Closing statement (1 minute).

Close with a big yell and ask everybody to applaud for each other's performance and openness.



Note: if you think that there are too many issues the kids have to deal with, add extra session 2a (this is Session 3 of the I DEAL module on Conflict & Peace).

OPTIONAL SESSION 2A: HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT?

Goal:	Children have learned peaceful ways to deal with conflict
Methods:	Group talk Exercises After talk
Resources:	None



Exercise 1: Human knot

Cooperative problem solving (5-15 minutes).

1. Ask a volunteer to step out of the room/venue and wait until he/she is called back.
2. Ask the remaining group to form a big circle, holding hands and begin to form as many tangles by crossing over and under without breaking the circle. What one sees after doing this is a tangled structure of people's hands together.
3. Ask the volunteer back and inform him/her that the challenge is to untangle the structure to form a perfect circle making sure that people keep holding hands at all times.
4. The group is now a human knot. Ask around 5 volunteers to untangle different structures.



Note: if the group is too big make 2 groups and let 2 volunteers do the untangling; the group that is untangled first is the winner!



Group talk

How did you like to untangle the human knot? What did you do to solve it? When do we face 'knots' in our lives and how do we undo them?

Last time we acted out some difficult situations between peers (*recall some of last session's examples*). Now this session we want to look more closely at important skills that we can use to deal with *conflicts*.

What is important when dealing with a conflict? (*Make the children answer and list those answers. See if it can be connected to the skills below. If they do not mention the skills below, bring them forward yourself.*)

1. Listening skills.
2. The ability to take another person's perspective. To see a conflict from the side of the other person.
3. Avoiding the 'you versus' statements. For example: "I felt angry because...." Is better to cool things down than "YOU made me angry because...". This way, you are not blaming or attacking the other person.



Exercise 2: Resolving a conflict

Using drama to resolve conflict (60 minutes).

1. *Pick one of the conflict scenes of the previous session*
2. *Invite the children to think about the conflict /quarrel.*
3. *Now let us try to resolve this conflict using the following steps:*

I- Clarify the Needs: *ask the two main characters of the conflict to describe what it is they need (they have to listen very well to each other).*

II- Identify the main issue: *ask the children (the audience) to summarize the main issue of the conflict: what is this conflict essentially about? Then ask the group what could be the common quest/solution for the two opponents.*

III- Generate alternatives: *ask the group to list different possibilities. They should only generate ideas, and refrain from criticizing ideas of others.*

IV- Evaluate alternatives: *what do the different parties like about the ideas? What do they not like? If one party doesn't like an idea, how could it be improved? Do the ideas meet the needs that were expressed at stage I? Is it realistic?*

V- Choose a solution: *together with the group and the two opponents, choose a solution. Make sure everyone has the same understanding of the solution.*

4. *Ask the children to act out the solution. Let them and make it a very lively and expressive scene!*
5. *If there is time left, take another conflict and do the same!*



Exercise 3: Zip zap boing

Closing game (5-10 minutes)

1. *Ask the group to stand in a circle and explain that we will pass around an **imaginary** ball. We will do this by a gesture combined with the word zip, or zap or boing.*
2. *First you pass the ball to your left or right, you say 'ZIP' (and need to make the gesture of passing the ball).*
3. *Then you pass the ball to someone across (anyone except for your neighbors), and you say 'ZAP'.*
4. *When you do not want to receive a ball passed to you - through a 'zap'-, you say 'BOING', and that means the ball is given back to the person who gave it to you, who then needs to zip or zap someone else.*
5. *Practice the instructions step by step; first a few rounds 'zip', then a few rounds 'zap', few rounds zip & zap, lastly add 'boing' to the game.*



Note: Zif zaf zoef is very similar to this game, but has slightly different rules; In this game you say ZIF when passing to the left, ZAF when passing to the right, and ZOEF when passing it across the circle. Make sure if using both that participants don't get confused. Then it's best to choose to introduce only one of the two.

SESSION 3: FRIENDSHIP

Goal: Children have learned to give and receive support from their peers and friends

Methods: Group talk
Exercises
After talk

Resources: pens/pencils/crayons/papers/paint/brushes, enough for every child to use, 6 (colored) cards in the shape of flower leaves, one round flower heart



Group talk

How was last week? Did you do your assignment? Who wants to share his experiences? (If they didn't do it, what was keeping them from doing it? How can those children be stimulated to still do the assignment?)



Exercise 1: Back to back

Cooperation and building of trust (15 minutes).

1. Let the children make pairs with about the same length/weight. The 2 children stand back to back with their knees slightly bent (so that the backs fully rest against the other)
2. Do a little pushing contest (each child tries to push oneself backwards).
3. Then make the children squat while they're still back-to-back. Then let them come up back to back (supporting each other by leaning on the other's persons back).
4. Finally let the pairs 'tangle their elbows' and then bend back and forward while staying back to back (so that one lies on the back of the other).



Note: this is a very physical exercise. Be careful!



Group talk

What they think of this game? What is necessary for this game to succeed? (Children answer, or you help them: it is all about trusting one another!) How does this relate to friendship and peer relations? Do you trust your peers? When would you call someone a real friend? Today we are looking at the many aspects of friendship.



Exercise 2: Drawing together

Experiencing non-verbal cooperation by passing a drawing around (45 minutes).

1. *Divide the children in groups of 4 or 5. Give each child an A4 paper and 4 or 5 different colors. Each child picks 1 color.*
2. *Ask every child to start a drawing.*
3. *After one minute, make a sound which means the kids have to stop drawing (the drawing is not finished yet, that's OK, that is the whole purpose of this exercise)*
4. *Let the children pass their drawings to their neighbor on the right hand side. Everyone continues with the drawing they just received (they have to continue THAT drawing, not make their own separate drawing on the paper).*
5. *Continue until every child gets his/her own drawing back. Let them look at the drawing: is it nice? Is it what you had in mind when you started?*

Drawing in Pairs

1. *Split the groups up in pairs.*
2. *Each pair gets one piece of paper and some pens/crayons.*
3. *2 children take turns to draw on 1 piece of paper without speaking. It can be a free drawing, each child just adding something. The children can also draw at the same time, but make sure the paper is big enough and that they do not only stay on their part of the paper: it has to be one drawing, not 2 separate ones.*

Group Drawing

1. *Now let 4 pairs join each other so you have groups of 8 children. Give each group a large piece of paper (e.g. 2 flipchart papers together).*
2. *Let the children work simultaneously around that large piece of paper. Ask them to draw about a certain theme (about friendship in this case). The children are NOT allowed to speak during the drawing process!!*



Group talk

Evaluate the different exercises: What was it like to make a drawing together? Was it hard not to speak? How did you communicate? What was your role in working together? Some of you took the lead, others followed. Did others always follow your ideas? Did you adapt to what the others were drawing? Both are important to make a nice drawing.

How would you perceive someone adapting to your ideas? How have you been changing your ideas according to someone else's input?

How did you feel during the game: what made you happy, what frustrated you? Were there any conflicts? Let the children reflect on how this relates to friendship: you also have to accept another person's idea sometimes, and if it works well, you can create beautiful things together. If on the other hand you do not accept or appreciate the other person's input (to the drawing/to the friendship) it will easily cause frustration or conflict.

The next exercise is about other elements of friendship.



Exercise 3: Flower of friendship

Finding the elements of friendship (25 minutes).

1. Take the 6 colored cards in the shape of flower leaves (which you have prepared beforehand) plus the round flower heart. In the heart of the flower, write the word 'Friendship'.
2. Divide the group into 2 groups. Each of the facilitators takes a group.
3. Tell your group to write down 'Trust' and 'Working together' on two flower leaves.
4. Ask the group for other things that are important for friendship. Make everyone think of his/her best friend. In a circle, one by one the children can say the name of their friend and a reason for their friendship: "My friend is (Name). I like him/her so much because".
5. Write down the reasons being mentioned. Cluster them so that there are still 4 elements.
6. Complete the flower by writing these elements on the 4 remaining flower leaves.



Group talk

Together we have created the *Flower of friendship*. A flower is a living creature, which needs to be continuously watered. What could you do to make the flower grow even bigger? (Let them come up with suggestions to take care of their own 'flowers of friendship'.)



Module evaluation

Evaluate the module, by presenting questions like:

- What have you learned about this theme?
- What was easy, what was difficult for you?
- Did you already use something you learned in I DEAL in your daily life?
- If so, how? If not, what is keeping you from using it?
- Did you miss anything? What else would you have liked to learn about this theme?



Exercise 4: Pass the gift

Closing game (10-15 minutes).

1. Make the children form a circle.
2. Spread your hands as if you are holding a small box (imaginary), and tell them that you are holding a very nice gift in your hands. You will pass this gift around and everyone will get a chance to unpack the gift! But they will need to use their imagination; the gift changes every time!
3. Pass the gift to your neighbor (thanking them for all the good work they've done). This child needs to unwrap and imagine there is a certain gift in it. They can show this without speaking (for example, if the gift is a mango, the child can start eating it, if the gift is a watch, the child can put it on his wrist). The others in the group can guess what was in the box.
4. Then the child passes the box to his neighbor, who again unwraps and shows what kind of gift he has gotten.

5. *Go around until each child has taken its turn.*



Note: if the group is large and this would cost too much time as a closing game, split up in two groups, each group with one facilitator.