

I DEAL

# Relations with Adults



Module

of War Child's I DEAL intervention



*How do I interact with adult people?*





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.

War Child programs strengthen psychosocial development, contribute to peace-building processes and advocate for the rights of children and youth, applying the power of creative arts and sports.

War Child Holland has programs in Afghanistan, Colombia, DR Congo, Georgia, Israel and Palestinian Territories, Kosovo, The Netherlands, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda.

## Relations with Adults

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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.

*Important adults can be parents, grandparents, other caregivers, teachers, etc. Adult support is important for children's healthy development and well-being.*

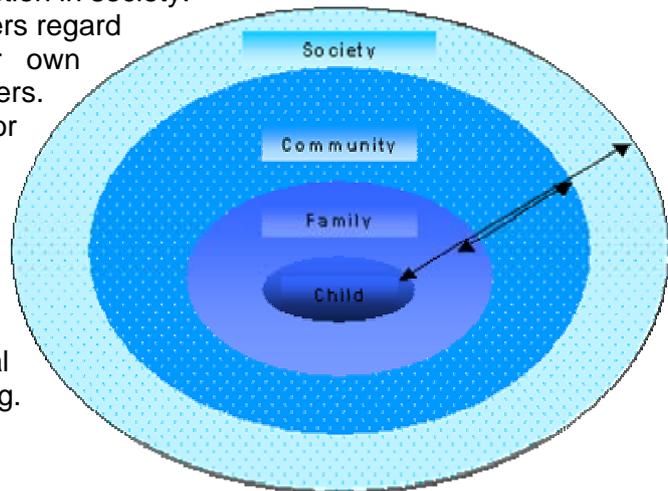
### **Relations**

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 adults**

In this module we will focus on the child's relationships with adults. Every child needs both the physical, emotional, social and moral support from relevant adults in order to grow and develop – both physically and mentally.

Parental warmth, expressed in both physical (e.g. hugs) and verbal ways (e.g. praise of achievements and expressions of love and care), has been found to be a universal phenomenon. Parents or other direct caregivers can provide the best support a child needs. Children, receiving attention and care, feel safe and are better able to explore the world and develop different skills. Parental support has a positive influence on psychological well-being, self-esteem, and achievement of children.

Support of other adults is also essential, e.g. grandparents, neighbors, and teachers. Through their relations with adults children form their identity and learn about cultural norms and values. Interaction with adults helps them to develop into functional members of their societies.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, a lack of attention from relevant adults can be extremely destructive. Lack of parental warmth can result in aggression, school misconduct, emotional unresponsiveness, and depressive symptoms.

The same applies, in an even worse way, to negative attention from adults. Abuse and neglect seriously endanger the child's development.<sup>2</sup>

### **Goals of this module**

Children have more 'tools' to maintain or restore positive relations with the important adults in their lives

#### **Session 1: My caregivers**

Goal: Children have explored the relations they have with the (most) important adults in their lives, with a focus on their caregiver(s)

In the first session you will make the children aware of the role of the care giving adults in their life. The children will discuss how to relate to these adults in their personal life.

#### **Session 2: Other important adults in my life**

Goal: Children have explored difficult situations with other important adults and ways of dealing with those situations

The second session will focus on the other important adults the child meets in his/her life. In many cases, this will be teachers (but this can differ in different settings). Some of those relations are positive, but in a lot of cases, problems occur. You will make them reflect on their role as a child and make them aware of a healthy position towards those adults.

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<sup>1</sup> Besides working with children on relations with adults, War Child also involves adults like parents and teachers in its interventions.

<sup>2</sup> This module is about regular, acceptable problems between adults and children. Should you identify cases of serious abuse or neglect, you should report this to your superior, in order to decide what steps to take.

## SESSION 1: MY CAREGIVERS

Goal:	Children have explored the relations they have with the (most) important adults in their lives, with a focus on their caregiver(s)
Methods:	Group talk Exercises After talk
Resources:	large sheets of paper, pencils (preferably colored), markers/chalks and board



### Exercise 1: Cover the space – version on adults

*Emotionally orienting on possible adult relations (10 minutes).*

1. Ask the children to walk around the space - without talking or making contact with others. Just for them selves.
2. Tell them to try and cover 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 children must freeze in an image of adults (individual images) and child-adult relations (group images). Examples: teacher in a classroom, mother-child, angry father, happy family, a teacher with a proud pupil et cetera. Encourage them to be creative, think of different images that are nice for the children to portray!



### Group talk

In this exercise you have just expressed different relations that exist between you and adults. That is the theme for the coming two sessions: who are the important adults in your life? What kind of relationships do you have with them?

We will also discuss problems or difficulties that you may have with your parents, teachers, or other adults. Together we will find out what we can do to improve our relationships with them.



### Exercise 2: Social mapping of adults

*Mapping and analyzing one's personal (social) environment (30 minutes).*

1. Give every child a piece of paper and a pencil.
2. Ask everyone to draw a circle in the middle of the paper, in which to write their own name/draw themselves.

3. Tell them to think of the most important adults in their life (parents, grandparents, teachers, neighbors, et cetera). For each adult they draw a circle and fill them in with the names or titles of those adults (they can also just draw the adult if they prefer that). The distance between the 'own' circle and a particular adult may express something about the particular relationship.
4. Ask them to draw lines between their own circle and the adults. 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 their own relationships with adults.



*Note: make sure the children express, as honestly as possible, how they feel about the different adults they portray in their maps. How close are they to the centre? Which materials do they use? What do the colours say?*



### **Group talk**

How did you like making you 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? *Invite the children to explain what they have drawn, and why.*



### **Exercise 3: Advantages and disadvantages of being MY caregiver**

*Experiencing the role of a caregiver (25 minutes).*

1. Tell the children to place themselves in the role of their personal caregiver (most of the time a parent). Explain that these are the people providing their daily care: mother, father, grandparents, others.
2. Let the children walk around imagining that they are on of their caregivers. Let them try out different behavior that suits their role: being in a hurry, working, preparing food, doing other tasks that fit the role.
3. Make the children think about this question: what is a nice thing about being this person? Then ask them to do a movement or gesture representing this. (If needed, give them an example, e.g. a hugging position, but let everyone think of their own movement)



*Note: do not let the children think too long about the movement; it should be spontaneous.*

4. Let the children come together in a circle. Ask somebody to show the movement they made. Invite every other participant that recognizes this feeling, to repeat the movement.
5. Go round the circle, pointing at participants to show their movement plus comments.
6. Make the co-facilitator write down these points.
7. Keep going until everybody has had one turn OR until there are no new points raised.
8. Let the children disperse again and make them think about the next question: What is the most difficult thing about being this person? Again ask them to do a

*movement or gesture representing this. (If needed, give them an example, e.g. carrying a heavy bucket of water.)*

9. *Let the children come back together in a circle. Ask somebody to show one of the movements they made this time, depicting a difficulty. Invite every other participant that recognizes this feeling, to repeat the movement.*
10. *Make the co-facilitator write down these points.*
11. *Keep going until everybody has had one turn OR until there are no new points raised.*



### **Group talk**

We just did an exercise that made you stand in your caregivers' shoes. It made you look at the world from his or her perspective. If you play to be your mother, father or other caregiver you will better understand him or her. Did you experience that? This can help us to respect our caregiver, even if you do not always like what he or she tells you.

In the next exercise you will be yourself again☺.



### **Exercise 4: Peer to peer advice**

*Sharing problematic situations with peers (20-25 minutes).*

1. *Divide the group into pairs.*
2. *Ask the children to think of a difficult situation, recently occurred between themselves and a caregiver.*



*Note: if the children cannot think of a situation, remind them of the things they portrayed in their drawing in exercise 2, or of a 'difficult point' mentioned in exercise 3.*

3. *Invite them to share this situation with the peer they have been linked to. Ask the peer to listen carefully and not to interrupt while the situation is being told.*
4. *Invite the peer to ask questions.*
5. *Ask the peer to try and give his/her advice: what would he or she have done? What could have been done to improve the situation?*
6. *After a few minutes, let the pairs change roles.*
7. *Re-unite the whole group for an evaluation. Ask for examples of the problem situations having been discussed. Make a list of the (types of) advice that has been given.*



### **Exercise 5: Repeat the Rhythm**

*Closing game; getting into a rhythmic mode all together to relax (5 minutes).*

1. *Form a circle.*
2. *Clap, vocalise or play a simple rhythm. Explain that everyone should repeat your rhythm after you.*
3. *Do your rhythm again, the whole group repeats.*
4. *Let your neighbour do the same: he/she makes a short rhythm, the whole group repeats.*

5. *Go around the circle until it is your turn again.*



**Assignment for next time**

Think of something you would like to know from the past of an important adult in your life. This can be your parent but also your grandmother or uncle. Questions are for example: What were you like as a child? What games did you play? Did you go to school? What did you want to be when you grew up?

If you have the opportunity, ask that adult your question before next session.

## SESSION 2: OTHER IMPORTANT ADULTS IN MY LIFE

Goal:	Children have explored difficult situations with other important adults (like teachers) and ways of dealing with those situations
Methods:	Group talk Exercises After talk
Resources:	large sheets of paper, pencils, markers/chalks and board



### 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 movements. The more varieties you come up with, the more you stimulate expression and imagination.*
6. *Ask one of the children to take the lead. And another.*



### Group talk

Welcome back everybody! Who has done last week's home assignment? What did you ask your caregiver? What has he or she told you? What have you learned from this, did it raise more questions?

Last time we learned about dealing with difficult situations with our caregivers. This session we will focus more on our relationship with the other adults – for example teachers (*and/or other important adults, depending on the group*).

Let us first find out what possible difficulties you are experiencing with other adults. Does anyone have an example of a difficult situation or a problem he/she has with an adult (other than his/her caregiver)? Search your memory. We will first make a list, and then we will make small drama scenes.



## Exercise 2: Listing the problems

*Listing difficulties and problems with teachers and/or other adults (10 minutes).*

1. Invite the children to mention difficult situations, or even problems that they experience with teachers (or, if they do not attend school, other important adults). Make sure you have at least 4 situations.
2. List these on the board/flipchart.
3. If more than 4 situations are mentioned, let the group decide on the 'top 4' of difficult situations. Let the group 'rate' the situations: at each one the group has to clap; the louder they clap, the higher the situation is on the list.
4. Now each child can decide which situation he/she wants to zoom in to. Each corner of the room/venue will represent one problem situation. Tell the children that you will count to 3 and at three they have to run to the corner of the situation they identify with most.



## Group talk

You have decided which problem situation you find most important. Now we will have to bring this situation to life by making a drama scene of it. Each group will make their own drama about the problem situation they chose. So let us play!



## Exercise 3: Dealing with adults – the play

*Expressing problems in relations with adults and finding solutions (50 minutes).*

1. The children stay in the same groups (so 4 groups in total, each has their 'own' problem situation). Give the children 10 minutes to make a drama scene. Ask the children to cooperate and create the scene together. The scene should be short; maximum of 10 minutes!



*Note: not every child can play the leading part in the play. Still, make sure that everyone has a role. Supporting roles are important roles, too!*

2. Let each group appoint someone to be the director of the scene; he or she can keep the overview.
3. During the creation of the scene, both leading- and co-facilitator should walk around and assist the children. Help them put together a short but comprehensive performance that captures the problem situation.
4. Assign a 'stage' and a location for the 'audience'. Let each group play their scene. Make sure you mark a clear start and end for the scenes (by a clap or an announcement). Let the audience show their appreciation by applauding after the scene (and the 'performers' can make a bow).
5. After each scene, analyze the problem situation that has been displayed. Ask the group questions like:
  - Did the group identify with the situation in the play?
  - How did this problem arise? Which were the causes?
  - What could one do to improve this situation?



*Note: this is time-consuming, so be conscious of the time!*

6. *Invite someone, who put forward a solution, to act it out right away in the scene. Restart the scene at the point where the solution comes in.*
7. *Help the children reflect on the solution just acted out. Is it realistic? Who will take these steps in real life? Can the children do something to help each other with this?*



*Note: be creative with this exercise. The goal is for children to reflect on the problems that they encounter in their daily lives with teachers (and/or other non-care giving adults). Let them find out what **THEY** can do to improve these situations. In the scenes they can 'practice' new behavior.*



*Note: other (participatory) drama techniques could as well be used to serve this goal (e.g. sculpting or video production).*



### 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: Group photograph

*Closing game; closing the module with a positive group feeling (5-10 minutes).*

1. *Ask the group what kind of picture they would like to have taken. A picture of a happy group? A sad group? A group in a special occasion? (For example, a class that has just graduated, a big family reunion, a group of teachers etc.)*
2. *Install yourself in front of the group; play being a photographer.*
3. *Count 1-2-3: on 3 everybody poses as the group image they have chosen. Take the (imaginary) picture and dismiss them.*