

Session overview

This session allows the young person to explore what feeling safe looks like in their life, and what and who offers them the feeling of safety. This will allow discussion around safe places and people.

Information for practitioner

It may be useful to record discussions in some way, whether on paper or online format, as the feeling of safety may change as sessions progress. It can be useful to look back and reflect, to show the young person how things change.

You may need to offer your own examples of what makes you feel safe to encourage conversation.

Pre-session action

Select a *“Looking after yourself”* exercise in advance for the close of the session.

Resources needed for this session

- Paper and pens

Session

Check in with the young person as to how they have been since your last session together. Are there any thoughts or feelings that you may need to reflect on and address before you begin this session.

Inform the young person what we are going to do in this session, sharing the overview.



Paper and pens

- **What is safety and what does it look and feel like for you?**

Using the paper and pens, create a visual representation (for example, a thought shower, ecomap or drawing) in a way that the young person feels comfortable expressing themselves (this allows the young person to refer back to what is safe for them) of the different examples of things that help them feel safe. This may include: people, animals, places, sights, sounds, smells, fidgets, something tactile, visualisation, reading, a movie/TV, distraction, and movement.



It is important to break some of these down further to gain a better understanding. For example, the young person says they feel safe in their bedroom or at home; what does that really mean? At home could mean because Dad is there and I can hear him working or cooking, it could mean because the dog is there. Being in their bedroom could be more specific to items within the room or the smell or its look.

- **How does it feel to be safe?**

Refer back to the session on *“Managing and understanding emotions”* and the emotions wheel to bring out some of the different positive emotions that come with feeling safe.

- **Are there times and/or places when you don't feel safe?**

Discussions may include: where are you, what are you doing, who are you with, what is happening – try and elicit what it is that makes them uncomfortable/unsafe.

- **How does it feel when you don't feel safe, what happens?**



It may be useful here to consider the dynamic between emotions, bodily responses and behaviours covered in the foundation session “*managing and understanding emotions*”.



This discussion provides us with the potential to identify triggers to be able to prevent the feeling of being unsafe. It may also be useful here to refer to some of the “*Looking after yourself*” exercises as a support.

- **How do I create a sense of safety in different places for example, when I am at school/at the shops/at a friend's?**



Discussion should include who needs to be aware and how we might tell them. There is an opportunity to produce something that can be provided to school or parent/carer to help the young person in their recovery.



Reflection on this session:

Overall reflection is that we can't always be safe at every moment of time or we would never do anything or go anywhere! However, it is important to be able to take appropriate risks from a place of safety and to know that the safe place will still be there.



Looking after yourself exercise to close