

# CYCLE ON "CREATING SAFE SPACES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE "

## Workshops for mothers and fathers: 3rd meeting: What we convey through language



The activities listed below are designed so that they can be easily implemented following this guide.

We have calculated the time in order to be able to plan the session (90 'in total). Either complete the entire contents or just one of the activities.

The text for addressing participants is in italics.

For all the meetings, chairs should be placed in a circle, with no tables, leaving a large space in the middle where participants can move freely.

# 3rd meeting: What we convey through language

## MAIN GOAL OF THE MEETING

To identify how, through language, we help think and encourage listening and how the emotional functions of the family can be developed.

## PHRASE OF THE DAY (this phrase will be hung on a mural and written in the languages of the participants)

As adults, we are responsible for applying limits to the impulsiveness of childhood and the omnipotence of adolescence, but we will only achieve this if we communicate with them lovingly and if we understand that it is very difficult for our children to abandon the idea that everything is possible and that they can do anything.

## MATERIAL

A player, sheets of paper with phrases to hang on the wall (hang them on the wall before the start of the meeting if possible. If not, they can be spread over a row of tables or the dynamics can be changed as indicated in the description of the activity), signs to classify and analyse the phrases, classification of the phrases (answer key), 3 coloured stickers for each participant, cartoons (four of each), blue-tac, music for the relaxation activity.

## GREETINGS AND WELCOME (15')

Welcome everyone informally upon arrival. As we wait a moderate amount of time for everyone to arrive, ask how their week has been, whether anything has happened since the last time that they want to share. Also ask what they remember from the previous meeting (if the group does not want to speak, we can use the phrase of the day: for example, we can ask what the "impulsiveness of childhood" or "omnipotence of adolescence" means and why it is so difficult to abandon these attitudes, but will not go any further into depth).

We will see whether anyone is missing. Where this is the case, we will ask if anyone in the group knows anything about the person not present. We will ask whether anyone from the group could find out (contact them, call them, ask someone they both know, etc.) if they do not arrive later on we will ask how the fact that someone is missing affects them and how it makes them feel if everyone has turned up. We will repeat the fact that, as a group, we experience situations similar to those experienced as a family, as discussed at the previous meeting (we will not remove the chair of those who are not present until they have explicitly cancelled their place).

If anyone attends who did not come on the first day:

We will ask those joining today for their name. We will ask the entire group to briefly explain what we have done the previous two days (if this is the case, we should give them the initial questionnaire).

We will remind them that everyone can propose a piece of music for the relaxation activity over the coming days.

## RELAXATION (5')

With soft background music (preferably suggested by the group members), we will ask everyone to close their eyes if they want to and to alternate three breaths (breathe in for two seconds and out for four) while making a very strong fist (as if you were trying to squeeze a sponge) before opening your hand and letting it fall (opening and closing your fist three times. Breathe in when you close it and out when you open it). Try to relax your whole body every time you breathe out. To make it easier, focus on a different part of the body every time. We will repeat this two or three times. *It is important to spend a few minutes doing this activity because, although there is a lot to do, everyone must feel well in order to be able to absorb everything, to be able to experience, so that something new can come up. If not, we would fall back into the same old habits.*

## MAIN ACTIVITY (40')

Introduction: *Do you know what the word "infant" means? It is a word that comes from Latin and means "without words". An infant is a person who is not yet able to speak, who does not yet have any words. Adults know how to speak and we have words, but sometimes it is as if there were still a small child inside us who is unable to use the words properly. Sometimes, adults are carried away on impulse and we lose the ability to speak, despite being conscious of what we are saying. We often limit ourselves to repeating what we have heard many times, repeating what our parents told us without thinking too hard about what we are saying and why we are saying it. We don't always agree with the education we been given, and we would often want to do it differently but we don't know how. We will stop and think today about our words, about what we convey when we speak. Stopping like this will help us build a form of education that is closer to what we want for our sons and daughters. (5')*

Step 1: Hand out three coloured stickers to each participant. Ask them to walk around the room, reading the phrases that have been hung up. Each person can walk around individually or in the company of someone else (they do not have to read all the phrases). They must place a coloured sticker on the three phrases that most resemble what is often said at home. Observation: If the phrases cannot be spread around the space, they can be passed around. In this case, instead of giving out coloured stickers, hand out a marker so that they can mark all the phrases that are said. (10')

Step 2: Form groups of four people (using the cartoons. There will be four of each, e.g., if there are twelve people in the group, three different cartoons will be needed). Form a group with the people who have the same cartoon. (5')

Step 3: Hang different signs visible to everyone to classify and analyse the phrases (listen carefully, explore, take an interest // Validate, celebrate, show gratitude // Discredit, judge, label // Blackmail, threaten, punish (no relationship between cause and effect) // Demand, impose // Deny // Give up // Depends). Distribute all the phrases among the different groups along with a bit of blue-tac. Each group must classify the phrases received. They will hang them under the corresponding signs. (10')

Step 4: The phrases of each group will be analysed in a session guided by the workshop host. Questions will be posed such as: (10')

- How might a son or daughter feel when we discredit them? And how do we feel if they discredit us? What impact does our self-esteem have?
- How do we feel when we receive a threat?
- What do we provoke when we demand something? Does "Why are you telling me something I already know" sound familiar? Could we make them feel guilty?
- Why do we sometimes deny the obvious? And what leads us to give up? What makes us despair? We might have to know our children better and what they need to be able to communicate this? (*we will talk specifically about this the next day*).
- Does saying "no" educate?

## REFLECTION SPACE IN A CIRCLE (15')

A circle should be formed to do this activity, as explained in the file for the first meeting.

*This circle rotates to the right and we can freely share the reflections that arise from the work we have just done. Despite this, we suggest some questions to expand on the debate.*

Some questions for reflection:

- Can we hurt with language? (*There is a saying that: Words will scratch more hearts than swords*). Do we normalise small acts of violence with language?
- Does the way in which we speak make it more difficult for us to reach agreements?
- Might we speak differently depending to our origins? Do you agree with the inheritance received?
- Is sexual or gender-based discrimination possible through language?
- And when our children speak to us, do we take their words literally or try to understand what is behind what they are saying? (If a son says wants to be an astronaut, what should I understand he is saying?)

Final reflection:

*It is important to say everything that we must say to our children, but we must find the right way to do say it. When we speak, we must be aware of what we are conveying, as well as with our tone of voice and our attitude. We must avoid the small acts of violence we normalise through language. To reach our children, it is very important to speak lovingly and be open to understanding them. This is the only way of gaining their trust, and we can not let them down.*

## ENERGY BOOSTING ACTIVITY (5')

*Form two concentric circles so that everyone has someone in front of them. The one on the outside will turn to the right and the one on the inside to the left. When the workshop host says, the circle will stop and we will say something nice that we would like to say to our children to the person standing in front of us. Repeat this several times.*

## ENDING ROUND (10')

- *How do you feel? Will you take anything with you from everything we have shared today?*
- *Those of us who have prepared the workshop would like you to remember that education requires firmness but always respect and love.*
- *Remember that it is important not to lose the flow of the workshop and that you must attend. Being able to attend is a privilege. If, in spite of everything, you are unable to attend, you must inform us (give a contact phone). Should any problems arise, think about whether you could count on someone to come in your place so that you don't miss it.*

**TOTAL TIME: 90 MINUTES**

1. DON'T SHOUT!
2. A DIFFICULT PERIOD

Is doing it like this OK? Shall we see if we can do it some other way?

Slowly... Tell me what you think has happened.

Tell me, I'm listening.  
Let's see if we can  
understand it.



Tell me slowly because I want  
to understand it properly.

So, what I understand at  
present is that...

Are you stupid? I don't  
think you get me!

Haven't you finished  
yet?!!!

You're doing it on  
purpose to make me  
angry!

You'll never be able to  
do that!

Is this what they teach  
you at school?

How many times do I  
have to tell you?!!

You're being really bad!



I'll tell your dad if you  
ignore me.

You're not going out with  
your friends if you don't make  
your bed.

If you don't tidy your room I'll  
throw away everything that's  
not in its place.

I'll count up to three, if  
not...!

If you carry on like this,  
you're going straight to  
bed!

I'll give you a smack!

Will you shut up?!!! I can't  
hear the TV!!!

Do as I say, right now!

Look at me when I'm  
talking to you!



Don't lie to me!!!

You won't get down  
from the table until I say  
so.

It's all OK! That doesn't  
hurt!

I do not know why you're making a mountain out of a molehill... Your friend can say what she likes!

Have you failed? That  
teacher is clueless...

You never pay any  
attention!

There's no  
understanding you!

Take the mobile phone  
and leave me alone for a  
while!!



Just let it be! I don't  
want to hear another  
word from you!

Congratulations!

I really love you!

Thank you!

At times like this, I'm so happy  
to be your mum.

**NO!!!**



**Listen carefully,  
explore, take an  
interest**





**Validate,  
celebrate, show  
gratitude**

**Discredit, judge,  
label**

**Blackmail,  
threaten, punish (no  
relationship between cause and  
effect)**

**Demand, impose**

**Deny**

**Give up**

**Depends**

<b>What we say</b>	<b>What we convey</b>
Is doing it like this OK? Shall we see if we can do it some other way?	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
Slowly... Tell me what you think has happened.	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
Tell me, I'm listening. Let's see if we can understand it.	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
Tell me slowly because I want to understand it properly.	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
So, what I understand at present is that...	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
Are you stupid? I don't think you get me!	Discredit, judge, label
I'm not sure.	Discredit, judge, label
You're doing it on purpose to make me angry!	Discredit, judge, label
You'll never be able to do that!	Discredit, judge, label
Is this what they teach you at school?	Discredit, judge, label
How many times do I have to tell you?!!	Discredit, judge, label
You're being really bad!	Discredit, judge, label
I'll tell your dad if you ignore me.	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect



You're not going out with your friends if you don't make your bed.	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
If you don't tidy your room I'll throw away everything that's not in its place.	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
I'll count up to three, if not...!	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
If you carry on like this, you're going straight to bed!	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
I'll give you a smack!	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
Will you shut up?!!! I can't hear the TV!!!	Demand, impose
Do as I say, right now!	Demand, impose
Look at me when I'm talking to you!	Demand, impose
Don't lie to me!!!	Demand, impose
You won't get down from the table until I say so.	Demand, impose
It's all OK! That doesn't hurt!	Deny
I do not know why you're making a mountain out of a molehill... Your friend can say what she likes!	Deny
Have you failed? That teacher is clueless...	Deny

You never pay any attention!	Give up
There's no understanding you!	Give up
Take the mobile phone and leave me alone for a while!!	Give up
Just let it be! I don't want to hear another word from you!	Give up
Congratulations!	Validate, celebrate, show gratitude
I really love you!	Validate, celebrate, show gratitude
Thank you!	Validate, celebrate, show gratitude
At times like this, I'm so happy to be your mum.	
NO!!!	Depends

**Alphabetical order**

<b>What we say</b>	<b>What we convey</b>
Don't lie to me!!!	Demand, impose
Slowly... Tell me what you think has happened.	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
So, what I understand at present is that...	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
Take the mobile phone and leave me alone for a while!!	Give up

Is this what they teach you at school?	Discredit, judge, label
I really love you!	Validate, celebrate, show gratitude
I'll count up to three, if not...!	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
Tell me, I'm listening. Let's see if we can understand it.	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
At times like this, I'm so happy to be your mum.	Validate, celebrate, show gratitude
I'm not sure.	Discredit, judge, label
Are you stupid? I don't think you get me!	Discredit, judge, label
Congratulations!	Validate, celebrate, show gratitude
Is doing it like this OK? Shall we see if we can do it some other way?	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
Tell me slowly because I want to understand it properly.	Listen carefully, explore, take an interest
Do as I say, right now!	Demand, impose
Thank you!	Validate, celebrate, show gratitude
Have you failed? That teacher is clueless...	Deny

You're doing it on purpose to make me angry!	Discredit, judge, label
I'll give you a smack!	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
Just let it be! I don't want to hear another word from you!	Give up
Look at me when I'm talking to you!	Demand, impose
It's all OK! That doesn't hurt!	Deny
You never pay any attention!	Give up
There's no understanding you!	Give up
I do not know why you're making a mountain out of a molehill... Your friend can say what she likes!	Deny
You won't get down from the table until I say so.	Demand, impose
NO!!!	Depends
You'll never be able to do that!	Discredit, judge, label
How many times do I have to tell you?!!	Discredit, judge, label

I'll tell your dad if you ignore me.	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
If you don't tidy your room I'll throw away everything that's not in its place.	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
You're not going out with your friends if you don't make your bed.	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
If you carry on like this, you're going straight to bed!	Blackmail, threaten, punish, no relationship between cause and effect
You're being really bad!	Discredit, judge, label
Will you shut up?!!! I can't hear the TV!!!	Demand, impose