

## Fun Friends

### Session 1

#### My Family and I

First activity - being able to describe who you are, where you live, members of your family, what you like to do - favourite toys, games, pets etc. Your age, birthday, favourite - foods, colours, friends, sports, holidays. Practice answering the questions with a big brave voice and if you want in a silly voice to make your family laugh. Remembering to smile!

This helps develop a strong sense of self and your place in the world.

You can then draw a picture of your family and label your picture with as much detail as you want - maybe doing a favourite activity. Your mam/dad or anyone living with you can maybe have a think and draw a picture of when they were little and what their favourite activity was and you can compare together.

You can also, if you would like, draw your home - remembering the happy times spent in your home, what happened, who was with you. Again your mam/dad or anyone living with you at the moment could draw their favourite memory and happy times from their childhood. What are the similarities and differences?

Explain that we all have similarities that we all share, for example - we all have families, we all laugh, we all cry, we all love yummy food, birthday parties, we love hugs and cuddles and playing, having fun. We all cry and we all have hearts and it's important that we can keep sharing experiences together.

And, if you can remember: -

Each night - either dinnertime, bath time, bedtime - say at least one positive happy thing for the day - it can be as small as a hug from Mum!

End of first session.

## **Second Session**

### **Understanding Feelings in Ourselves**

#### 4 basic feelings

Ask your child - what are the 4 basic feelings - happy, sad, worried and angry - can you make that expression with your face.

Play a game - you make a facial expression and can they guess what that is. Then change and let your child make the expression and you guess what it is.

Explain that everyone can feel happy, sad, angry or worried and it is normal and OK. What counts is what we choose to do with our feelings. We can choose to yell, throw a temper tantrum, run away, break things, kick, punch - all very unhelpful things to do because they can hurt other people's feelings. Or instead, we can choose to drink water to calm down, take deep breaths, go for a walk/run, cuddle any pets, wash our face with cold water, hug mum or dad, say sorry, talk about our feelings with a calm voice - we can all try to do this, sometimes it is easy, sometimes it is not!

#### **HELPFUL HINT**

It may be helpful to refer to the unhelpful things - like kicking, yelling etc as 'thumbs down' and the helpful things as 'thumbs up' ideas. Your family can enjoy playing games where each of you can come up with ideas of what you could do with certain feelings and then put your thumbs up or down!

#### **Additional Activity**

##### **Lollipop stick/paper plates**

Make paper puppets with different faces on them - sad, happy, worried and angry. You can then use these to express how you are feeling or even do a puppet show!

### Session 3

### Understanding Feelings in Other People

Understanding feelings in other people and helping them feel better - teaching your children to 'feel what other people feel' to develop empathy skills. Teaching children that it is important to help others if they can.

#### **Picture 3a**

One Koala child is alone near the tree while other koala children are having fun playing together with a ball or climbing trees with a friend.

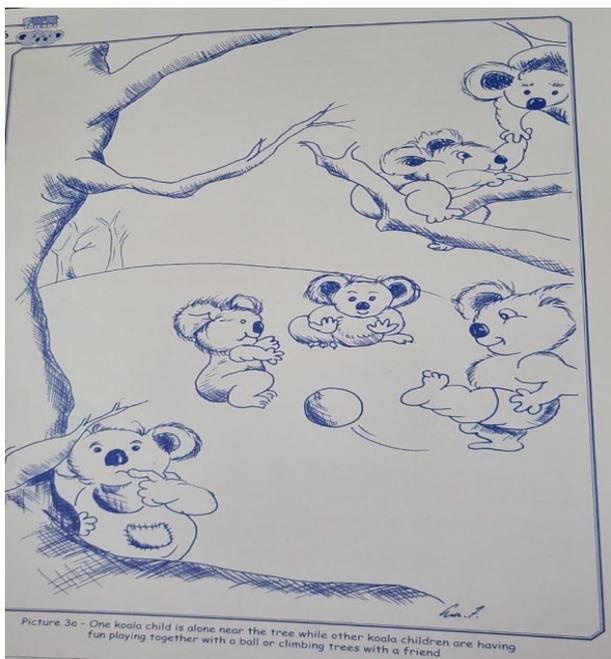
Discuss the picture with your child -

Ask them what are the koalas doing in the picture.

Can you identify the different feelings the koala children may be having in the drawing

What could they do to make the lonely koala feel better. You can help coming up with ideas - talk to the koala, smile, play, hug, share a toy, ask them to join in with the other koalas etc.

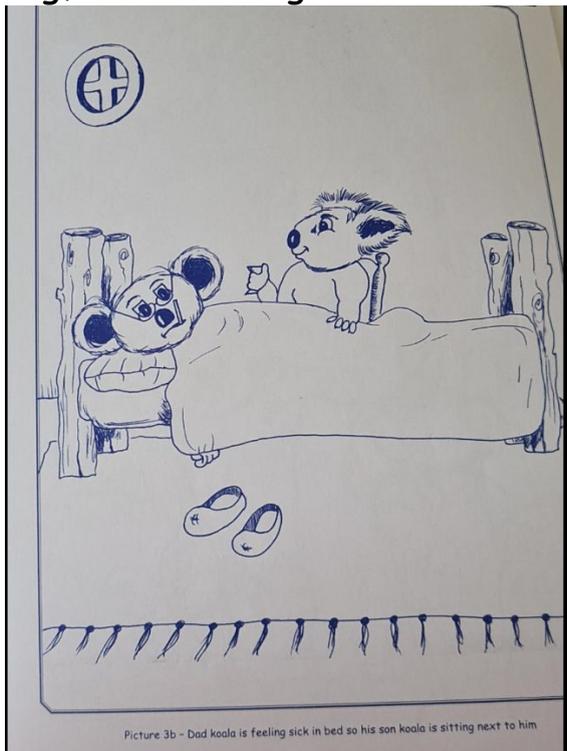
Ask your child to identify the feeling the koala climbing the tree may be experiencing. What could the koala, already on the tree, do to help the koala trying to get on the tree? What would the koala climbing feel once he got to the top? How would the koala that helped the other feel if his friend made it to the top of the tree?



Dad Koala is feeling sick in bed so his son is sitting next to him. Ask - how might dad koala be feeling? Encourage them to come up with lots of different feelings - sore, sad, miserable, lonely, bored, unhappy, helpless etc.

How might the boy koala be feeling? As many ideas as possible - sad for his dad but glad he can help him feel better, loving towards his dad, helpful, kind, generous etc.

How can they help make dad feel better? Read him a book, give him a drink, prepare some food, sing him a song, offer him a hug, make him a get well soon card, ask what he needs etc.



### Multiple family activities

Can you find koalas without a facial expression and can you guess what that koala may be feeling and why. What might have happened? Can you tell a story about them?

eg. 2 koalas were climbing up a tree and moving across one of the branches to get to yummy gum leaf, but the branch snapped and oops down he came with a thump!

What do you think the koala who fell may be feeling? His friend was watching him fall. What do you think he may be feeling?

Remember there are no right or wrong answers.

Is there anyone else in the picture that might need your help?



### Additional Activities

Look through a picture book/magazine/photographs - can you identify feelings in the pictures - why may they have felt this way, what could have happened - most importantly can they come up with ideas on 'what is the best thing to do to help them feel better'

## Session 4

### Understanding body clues

Paying attention to what your body is telling you - listen  
Breathing slowly/milkshake breathing  
Relaxation games

One of the koalas has butterflies in his tummy, his heart is beating fast and he looks worried.

There are other body clues our body can give us when we are feeling worried, scared, sad or angry. For example, we can get a headache, tummy ache, get sweaty, get goose-bumps, have red cheeks, tears, sore throat, shaky legs and it may be hard to go to sleep at night. This does not mean that you are getting sick! It only means your body is being your friend and giving you warning signs that you need to relax, take deep slow breaths, make your body soft like a rag doll, have a drink of water, wash your face, hug mum or dad, play with a pet or even talk about the problem that you are feeling.

You can help with this by playing the 'robots and rag doll game' - ie. stiffen like a robot and then go limp like a rag doll. Children usually love playing this game and it helps them get used to differentiating tension and relaxation in their bodies.

Draw a picture of yourself - ask them to draw inside the picture anything else that may happen to their own bodies when they are feeling nervous or scared. Talk about your own body clues - because everyone is different.

Colour in red anybody clue that they experience when they get upset or scared.

Explain that everyone feels worried and nervous when difficult things happen. It is normal and healthy. It is what we choose to do with our feelings that counts most.

What fun and calming things can we do when we are feeling nervous, upset or scared. Eg. hugs, cuddles with favourite toy/pet, bubble bath, riding your scooter/bike, walking the dog, skipping, singing, dancing, gardening, baking a cake with mum or dad, playing games etc.

Can you then draw a picture of yourself doing something you enjoy and that makes you happy which they can do to help themselves calm down when they are feeling upset or scared.

### Milkshake breathing

Lie on the floor with a pillow under your feet, or on a blanket. Eyes closed. Take 5 very deep slow breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Imagine you are breathing in through your nose calm happy feelings and breathing away angry and sad feelings out through your mouth. The wind is blowing those sad, worried and angry thoughts far away from you. Now make all your muscles as hard and stiff as possible, then relax, shake your arms and your legs gently. Repeat the tensing and relaxing again.

Now imagine your favourite park/beach/place - imagine all the fun things you can see there, all the sounds you can hear, all the beautiful scents you can smell, the tastes of the yummy foods you can eat and drink and what you can feel.

### Additional Activity

Before doing milkshake breathing you can practice the song learnt in the program. Use the tune for Twinkle Twinkle Little Star for this song

We can fill our lungs with air  
Like we've got balloons in there  
Then we breathe out soft and slow  
Making bubbles as we go.

## Session 5 and 6

### Learning about 'Red (unhelpful) and Green (helpful) thoughts

Learning about red (unhelpful) and green (helpful) thoughts. Understanding the difference between the two types of thoughts and how they make you, and other people around you feel. You could use your lolly sticks to create happy faces coloured in green and sad faces coloured in red.

The red lolly stick can be used when feeling sad, scared, angry thoughts.

The green lolly stick can be used when feeling happy and brave thoughts.

Red STOP - unhelpful way of thinking we call it red thinking and when that traffic light turns red we must STOP this way of thinking which is unhelpful just makes us upset and sad - so we try our best to stop these thoughts.

Green GO - helpful way of thinking we call it green thinking - GO - just like green traffic lights when driving the car. When the traffic light turns green we must go. This way of thinking is helpful and makes us brave and happy. We always try our best to do this way of thinking "GO" and "GROW". The more we think like this the braver and happier we become and feel.

You can come up with different situations where they may be thinking about red and green thoughts :-

For eg. Going to bed at night - you may be feeling sad because you do not want to go to bed or you do not want to be alone. You could be thinking - you are scared of the dark, scary shadows, someone's hiding under the bed - you are thinking red (unhelpful) thoughts - STOP - red traffic light - let's change that way of thinking.

You can choose to think that you are safe and cosy in your beautiful warm bedroom which is right next to mam and dad's bedroom. You can think you are going to have lovely dreams about your friends, family and holidays. Thinking like this is helpful because it makes you feel brave and happy and makes the whole family happy too. Green Thinking - GO

You can demonstrate red and green thoughts using a traffic light. Draw a traffic light on cardboard or paper with emphasis on the red and green lights - green means *GO*, red means *STOP*. The green light represents green thoughts and the red light represents red thoughts. We *GO* with green thoughts and we *STOP* with red thoughts. The orange light can be seen as time for changing red thoughts to green thoughts.

Red thoughts - I can't do it , I don't want to try, I'm silly, It's too hard, I give up  
Green Thoughts - I can try, I'm brave when I try, I can do it, I can get help if I ask,

### SONG

We're stomping on our red thoughts, our red thoughts, our red thoughts. We're stomping on our red thoughts. *STOMP STOMP STOMP*

We're blowing away our red thoughts, our red thoughts, our red thoughts. We're blowing away our red thoughts. *WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH*

We're tearing up our red thoughts, red thoughts, red thoughts. We're tearing up our red thoughts - *AND THROWING THEM IN THE BIN!*

We're thinking of our *Green* thoughts, green thoughts, green thoughts, We're thinking of our green thoughts and feeling happy inside.

### Practice

To identify red thoughts and how we can turn them into green thoughts.

Relaxation strategies - maybe every day for 10 minutes - milkshake breathing

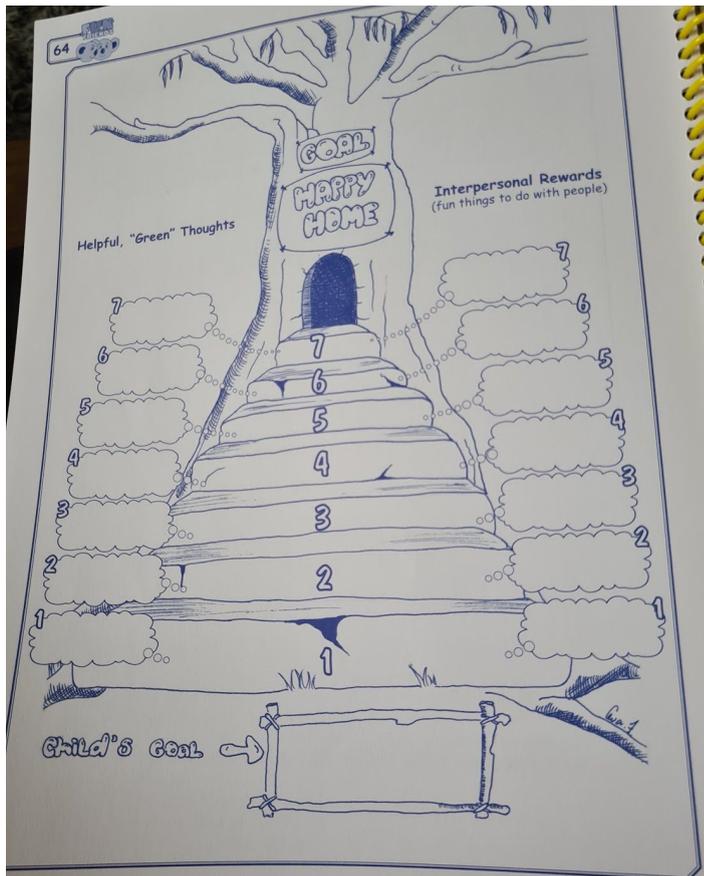
Continue praising and rewarding your child for being brave.

Write down red thoughts and throw them away - discuss how to change them to green thoughts which you can keep and make a collage.

### Session 7

## Learning to Set Goals and Trying to do New Things

Helping your children to break difficult, challenging goals into small, easy achievable steps.



Example of something you could visually use and draw.

Write the goal they would like to achieve on the bottom step, before writing a more difficult goal onto the second, third and fourth steps. Each goal should only be slightly more difficult than the last. You should practise each step every day, or every two days, until you reach your goal.

Then you will arrive at the bright brave home when your goals have been achieved or your families goals have been achieved.

You can do one each set goals for yourselves or do one as a family. Break the goal into very small easy steps for each day of the week. The easiest step starts at the bottom step one - day one, step two - day 2 etc. Once you have reached the top you can have a celebratory party.

Remember to reach the door of the house you have to practise each step many times on that day, so it is easy the next day to climb to the next step. It's important to reward small steps for trying and giving it a go - a reward could be anything you want - baking a cake, sticker, watching favourite TV show/film.

Goals can be about varied things your child would like to learn - remember to always start with easy goals so your child has a sense of mastery and achievement for example :-

- . smiling more
- . looking people in the eye
- . sleeping in your own room
- . winning the battle against red thoughts
- . learning to ride a bike/scooter
- . learning to try or eat different foods
- . being brave
- . learning to get dressed in the morning
- . brush your teeth properly
- . tidying up after yourself
- . helping to set the dinner table and do the dishes
- . helping mum and dad more

It is important that each person in the family is trying to be a positive role model. You can also try something new and show how brave you are!

Goal setting is a lifelong process - we can all improve in kindness, tolerance, relaxation and being open to learning new tasks and exploring new adventures!

## **Session 8**

## Learning how to be a good friend

Learning about the ways in which we can be good friends - smiling, sharing, helping and listening. Encourage to always try and do these things with your family, friends and new people as well.

What makes a good friend? How are you a good friend?

For eg. your friend/family - fallen off their bike when they were learning to ride without stabilisers and they have hurt their knee. How are they feeling? If you were there what could you do to help and be a good friend?

What other scenarios can you think of when you were a good friend.

Use praise when they show they are listening, helping, smiling and sharing throughout the week.

Continue assisting them to identify their red thoughts and how you can turn them into green thoughts.

Practise relaxation strategies every day for at least 10 minutes

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Continue praising and rewarding your child for being BRAVE!

## Session 9

### Learning about Rewarding Ourselves

The importance of rewarding ourselves when we have been brave or have tried something new - giving ourselves a pat on the back!

Review the coping step plan in Session 7 and see how you are getting on with them - individually and as a family. Talk about rewards that your child can receive for trying their best, climbing the steps and achieving their goals! Try to encourage rewards that involve doing things with others like playing their favourite game, having their favourite meal etc. Remember these types of rewards are more powerful and long lasting in terms of positive childhood memories - not material possessions which tend to be forgotten with time.

Continue to develop a Coping Step Plan, rewarding them as they climb each step. You may wish to gradually develop more Step Plans once your child has experienced some success with the first one.

Continue assisting your child to identify red and green thoughts.

Relaxation and just being brave.

## **Session 10** **Learning about Role Models in Our Lives**

People who may teach us many useful things and help us learn about ourselves and life in general. Explain how important it is to pay attention and listen carefully to grandparents, teachers, parents, older brothers/sisters - they can teach us very much. There are so many things to learn every day. Let's choose to pay attention.

Explain that you have role models too. Talk about your role models as a child, and now as an adult. Explain what you admire in such a person, what you can learn from him/her. We can all learn new things every day, no matter how old we are!

In summary a role model is someone who helps, who cares, who is brave, or who tries difficult things. Role models can be family members, extended family members, teachers, people in the community etc.

Continue climbing the first Coping Step Plans and developing new ones.

Continue assisting and identifying red and green thoughts.

Practise relaxation strategies and praise and rewards for being BRAVE!

## **Session 11**

### **Learning about Support Teams in Our Lives**

Groups of people - family, friends and teachers - who are there for us in good and bad times and help us stay strong and cope well with whatever life throws our way.

Support teams help us be resilient and bounce back from difficult times. It is very important that you help build friendship groups, spend time with family and form support networks in the school community.

Explain what a pyramid is. The bottom is big and it gets thinner as we move to the top, just like a triangle. The older, bigger people are on the bottom, giving the others support and a helping hand. We need younger people who can be lighter to go to the top, to get a better view, and do newer things!

It is important that younger and older family members get together and support each other. The older people support and help the younger ones and vice-versa.

It is important for us to talk to our family and friends about our feelings - both happy and sad. Sharing the way we feel is wonderful, because we can get support from the people we love. They can help us find solutions for problems and also tell us about times in their lives when similar things happened to them and what they did about it.

When we are really happy about something it is also so nice to have people to share our happiness with and we can celebrate with a party!

You can share when you felt sad or happy - who were your support networks? How did they help?

Again continue practising :- Coping Step Plan, RED and GREEN thoughts, relaxation, reward and praise.

## **Session 12**

### **Learning to be happy with Our Efforts!**

Celebrating finishing the Fun Friends Family program.

Sharing happiness by spending special time doing fun things with family and friends and eating yummy food.

We have finished - this is very happy, exciting time that deserves a PARTY!

We all have to keep practising every day for many, many years all of those activities we have achieved.

Share times in your family life when you had fun celebrations and parties. Look at old photo albums and share the memories.

## CONGRATULATIONS

You have graduated.

You have successfully completed the program.



# GRADUATION CERTIFICATE

for the

# FUN FRIENDS PROGRAM

**Congratulations**

You have learnt to be brave and  
happy, to be kind to others,  
and how to make friends.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Group Leader