

Facilitator's Guide

Give us a break! Plus

www.giveusabreak.org.uk



**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**



Education Resources



Give us a break! Plus

Contents

Section 1

Foreword	
Introduction	
Theoretical principles	
Target group	
Facilitator prerequisites	
Planning a group	
Summary of the five phases	
Relaxation	
Frequently asked questions (FAQ)	

Section 2

Boardmaker Online	
Phase plans	
Acknowledgments	



Section 1

Foreword

This guide, and the accompanying online materials, are designed to enable trained *Give us a break!* facilitators to deliver *Give us a break!* groups to children and young people who have additional support needs and also to children younger than those targeted by the original programme.

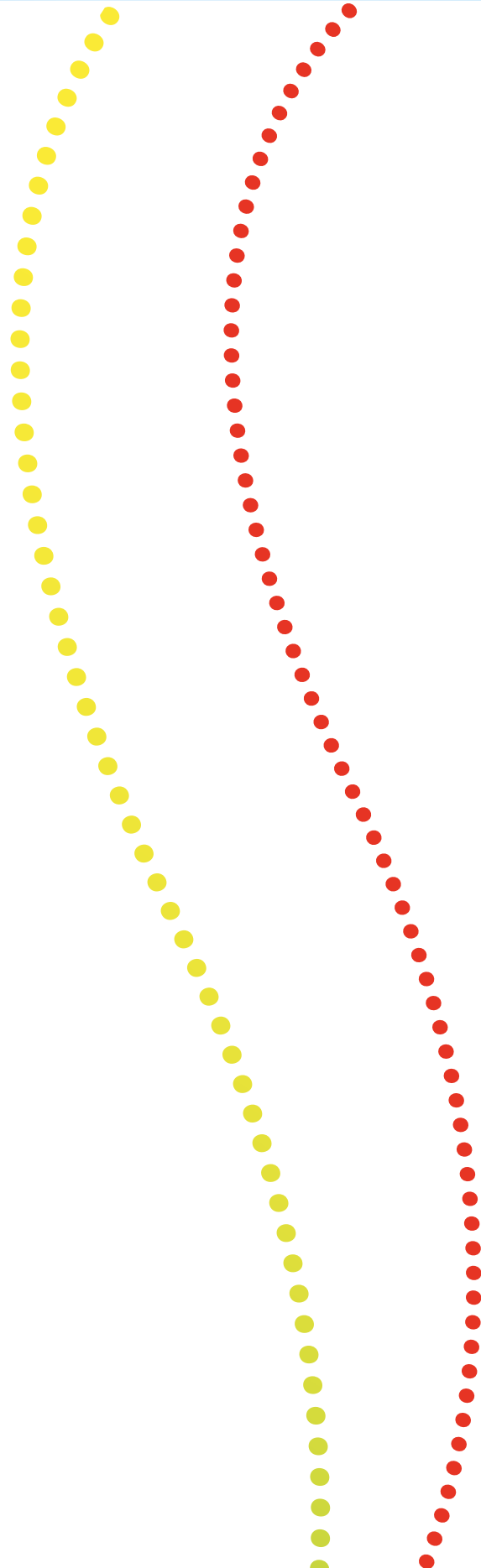
We wish to stress that the materials complement the original *Give us a break!* pack and do not represent an entirely new programme. The overall aim is to equip *Give us a break!* facilitators with resources and guidance to deliver *Give us a break!* in a more flexible and tailored way, according to the needs of the group.

Give us a break! Plus will allow the programme to be delivered to a wider range of young people at various developmental stages and levels of need. Piloting of this guidance and accompanying resources in primary and secondary school settings highlighted the need to be flexible, both in terms of the resources that can be used and the frequency and duration of group meetings. Facilitators delivering *Give us a break! Plus* will need to deliver the programme in a way that is tailored to group needs, and be more selective in the use of resources.

This guide presents the programme in five broad phases with associated resources that are either presented or signposted on the *Give us a break!* website. Resources can be selected according to the needs of the individuals within the group. The *Give us a break!* team may add resources to the *Give us a break!* website over time, and we would encourage group facilitators to share with us any new materials that they find particularly useful, so these too can be added to the website.

Paul McGill

Senior Educational Psychologist
On behalf of the *Give us a break!* team



The logo for 'Give us a break! Plus' is located in the top right corner. It features the text 'Give us a break!' in a large, bold, yellow font with a blue outline, and 'Plus' in a smaller, bold, blue font below it. The text is centered within a white circle that is surrounded by several overlapping, colorful rings in shades of blue, pink, and yellow. The background of the top section is a light blue gradient.

Give us a break! Plus

Introduction

The original *Give us a break!* programme was launched in 2009 and was produced by South Lanarkshire Council's Psychological Service in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and NHS Lanarkshire. It is a group work intervention for children and young people aged 10-14 years who are facing issues relating to negative change, loss and bereavement. Evaluation of the programme has demonstrated that participants develop effective coping strategies and improved emotional literacy skills that help them to adapt to the negative changes that they have experienced.

Whilst *Give us a break!* is well embedded in South Lanarkshire Council, and in some other parts of the UK, feedback indicated that a programme adapted for children and young people with additional support needs was required. The adapted programme has been developed by the *Give us a break!* team in South Lanarkshire Council Psychological Service, along with practitioners in the additional support needs and mainstream sectors in South Lanarkshire Council. It is appropriate for use with primary and secondary school pupils, and young adults who have entered post-school destinations who are continuing to struggle with issues around negative change, loss and bereavement. In addition, these materials will be appropriate for some younger children, who require a programme and materials that are better suited to their developmental stage than the original pack.

The guide provides guidance on delivering *Give us a break! Plus* to young people with a range of additional support needs. Section 1 offers advice on how to establish a group and provides clear guidance on how to deliver each of the five phases. Section 2 provides detailed phase plans which include the Aims; Learning outcomes; Suggested activities and Resources and sources for each phase. Alongside each phase plan, there is a planning tool which can be used to plan the selected activities and resources for each phase.

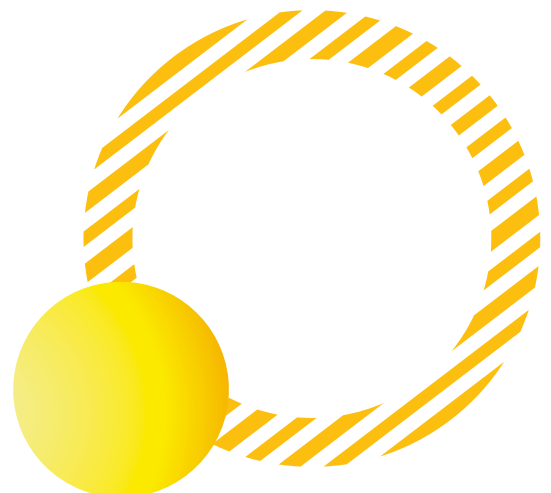
The programme is divided into phases with notional time allocations to allow facilitators more flexibility in the delivery of the content in response to the needs of their group. The original *Give us a break!* programme assumes that groups will meet weekly over eight weeks.

Give us a break! Plus acknowledges that young people with additional support needs may need more time to understand and engage with certain aspects of the programme and therefore shorter and more frequent sessions may be required.

The resources that come with *Give us a break! Plus* are in the form of an online resource bank rather than a physical pack. This will allow facilitators to print and adapt only the resources that they need, and will also mean that new resources can easily be added. It is anticipated that some of the resources in the original *Give us a break!* pack will also be suitable for young people with additional support needs, and facilitators should feel free to use them as they see fit.

The *Give us a break!* website has a document that illustrates how the programme links with Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes.

www.giveusabreak.org.uk



Theoretical principles

As with the original *Give us a break!* programme, *Give us a break! Plus* and the accompanying resources are informed by positive psychology and solution-focused methods. This means that there is a strong focus on personal strengths and sources of support, and that details of individuals' problems are not explored systematically, but are acknowledged sensitively and addressed by promoting effective, individualised coping strategies.

In practice this means that there is emphasis on:

- recognising emotional responses to events
- listening actively when emotional pain is expressed, and showing empathy
- recognising character strengths and external resources to cope with the change or loss
- identifying, sharing and maximising effective coping strategies within the group
- exploring future possibilities, rather than dwelling on the negative impact of past events

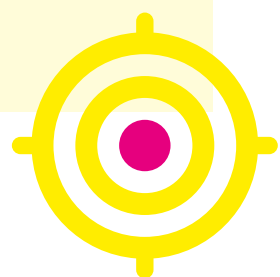
Target group

Children and young people who have experienced one or more of the following could be supported by this intervention:

- Parental separation
- A sibling leaving home
- Moving house
- Loss of a family member or friend
- Becoming looked after / accommodated
- Transition point within education
- Change of teacher or support assistant
- Long-term illness of a relative or friend
- Employment status change within the home
- Transgender identity
- Death of a family pet

This is by no means an exhaustive list. The key factor is that the change has had a negative impact on the young person and that there are concerns about their capacity to cope. As in the original *Give us a break!* there should be some passage of time after the change, to allow for a period of natural grieving. We advise that a period of six months should have passed before the young person joins a group.

Facilitators will need to consider carefully the composition of the group, to ensure that the types and levels of support needs, and the dynamics of the group are such that it runs smoothly.



The logo for 'Give us a break! Plus' is located in the top right corner. It features the text 'Give us a break!' in a bold, yellow, rounded font with a blue outline, and 'Plus' in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font below it. The text is enclosed in a white circle with a thick red border. The background of the top of the page is light blue with several overlapping circles in shades of yellow, orange, and red, some with patterns like dots or stripes.

Give us a break! Plus

Facilitator prerequisites

Give us a break! groups are always delivered by two trained facilitators. This allows for peer support between facilitators - in terms of the planning of a group and the delivery of the sessions, and the ongoing debriefing and fine-tuning that may be required in order to best meet the needs of participants.

Only trained *Give us a break!* facilitators will deliver the *Give us a break! Plus* programmes. Facilitators will have had experience of working with children and young people with additional support needs and must have participated in initial facilitator training coordinated by the *Give us a break!* team.

As with the original *Give us a break!*, facilitators must be working within an organisation that has a Child Protection policy and have a line manager who can support them with committing the necessary time to plan and deliver a *Give us a break! Plus* group.

Planning a group

Step 1: identifying participants to form a group

Page 4 outlines the reasons for considering a young person's inclusion in a group. It is important to stress that experiencing such change is not sufficient in itself to take part in a group. Many young people are able to adapt to change by accessing supports from those close to them and many have their own coping mechanisms. However, this is not true of all young people. Dialogue with parents/carers and the young person themselves is required in order to establish whether or not *Give us a break! Plus* should be offered. In some cases, a young person will already be working with Social Work and/or CAMHs and group facilitators should liaise with these agencies to discuss the appropriateness of the programme. If the young person is accessing an intervention aimed at addressing the impact of negative change, it may not be the right time to be involved with a *Give us a break! Plus* group. It is important that young people are fully consulted about being part of a group, and that *Give us a break!* leaflets are used to provide written information to children and young people and parents and carers.

It is recommended that for the *Give us a break! Plus* programme, groups should be no more than four in number and no fewer than two. However, there may be occasions where one-to-one input is appropriate. Please consult with the *Give us a break!* team for guidance.

There is no need for the participants to have all experienced the same form of negative change, nor do they need to be of the same chronological age though developmentally, they should be similar. Siblings may join the same group, or be separated. Decisions around this should be informed by the young people themselves; the family; their school and the facilitators.

Locality groups can be formed to bring together young people in close geographical proximity, in order to create a viable group. For example, if a few establishments have one nomination each, a group could be hosted in one of the establishments, with participants from elsewhere being transported in. This is current practice with the original *Give us a break!* programme. On some occasions, young people are placed in groups other than their own school if it is clear that this would assist them to engage more effectively with the programme.

Step 2: identifying facilitators

Two trained facilitators (i.e. those trained in the original programme) will need to be identified to run the group and both need to meet the requirements outlined in page 5. It is important that facilitators can dedicate the time required for the planning, delivery, evaluation and debriefing responsibilities that are core tasks of running a *Give us a break! Plus* group. As well as planning for each session, facilitators should also plan and agree how to manage situations where a participant becomes distressed and requires some supported 'time out'. This may entail one-to-one active listening and reassurance to support re-engagement.





Give us a break! Plus

Step 3: arranging a suitable venue, equipment and times


Give us a break! Plus groups need to take place in enclosed, comfortable settings that provide privacy and security for participants. There should be comfortable seating, enough space for drawing and writing activities and for relaxation exercises. Facilitators may wish to consider providing participants with a light snack and a drink at the start of each session. This can help with making participants feel at ease. Facilitators may also need access to a break-out space in order to support a distressed young person. Access to audio equipment may be also required.

The stationery and other equipment normally required to run a group are listed in the guidance notes for each phase. The resources are contained in the online resource bank for *Give us a break! Plus*. These are available on the *Give us a break!* website.

The five phases are structured to allow facilitators flexibility in terms of the timings for each session. Facilitators will need to consider carefully the specific needs of their group and their own working arrangements in order to timetable group sessions. Delivery may be one long session per week, or shorter sessions, provided more frequently. Facilitators will need to be flexible with their diaries in order to provide sufficient time slots for the group. The particular time slot for a session will need to be planned carefully. In a school setting it may be helpful to run sessions immediately prior to a break in order to allow participants space to readjust to the classroom environment. Thought also needs to be given to which lessons participants are being withdrawn from in order to take part.

Step 4: data collection

A pro forma to gather essential information from parents/carers and young people before the group begins is provided (See the *Give us a break!* website). This will ensure that facilitators have the information required to enable participants to engage fully with the group. These are to be used by facilitators, so that pre and post-intervention data can be recorded and analysed. Facilitators should set aside time to gather and review this data, look for changes, and feed this information back to the young people and their families.



Summary of the five phases

It should be emphasised that guidance and resources from the original *Give us a break!* are relevant and can be adopted in the delivery of *Give us a break! Plus* groups.

Each phase has its own detailed guidance and resources on the *Give us a break!* website. The aim of this section is to provide a summary of the phases.

A minimum time requirement has been stipulated for each phase (see the Phase Plans in Section 2 and on the *Give us a break!* website), rather than a definitive amount of time for a set number of meetings, as in the original programme. This is to allow for more flexibility in the delivery of the programme but also to ensure that the group only moves onto the next phase when the core learning outcomes for the current phase have been achieved.

It is important that the learning aims in each of the five phases are followed, so that there is coherence and consistency in the delivery of the programme. Judgments on the timings of sessions should be based on the needs of the group and on the context in which the group is being delivered. Ideally, the sessions should take place in the same room throughout the programme, and there should be gaps of no more than one week between each session.

The five phases are as follows:

- Getting to know you
- Understanding feelings
- Loss and change
- Coping strategies
- Celebration and consolidation

Phase 1 Getting to know you (minimum 1 hour)

The first phase aims to help participants to get to know each other and the two facilitators. Group rules should be agreed at this point. The importance of group cohesion is very high in *Give us a break! Plus* and, in this first phase, it is crucial that enough time and effort is spent settling the group. There should be a safe and supportive atmosphere and facilitators should encourage good rapport amongst participants, as this correlates with positive outcomes. Phase 1 also aims to begin to support participants to develop self-awareness and gain an understanding of their current personal strengths, not only in preparation for the next phase, but also for active use throughout the programme. Some groups may need a few sessions to achieve sufficient cohesion and engagement before proceeding to Phase 2.

Phase 2 Understanding feelings (minimum 2 hours)

The main theme of this phase is emotions and the introduction of emotional literacy skills. It begins with helping participants to develop an awareness and understanding of emotions, as a foundation for moving on to learn more about emotional responses to loss and change. Activities include group discussions about emotions and our experiences and awareness of them, including physical and sensory changes that we may notice in our bodies.





Give us a break! Plus

Phase 3 Loss and change (minimum 3 hours)

This phase explores loss and change and its impact on participants. It aims to help the participants to understand the concept of change, and the difference between the changes that we can control and those that we cannot. This phase focuses on the very reason for participation in the group and involves sharing the impacts of the negative changes.

Facilitators should look for opportunities to elicit, observe and comment on adaptation to change, in order to prepare the participants well for the next phase.

Phase 4 Coping strategies (minimum 2 hours)

This phase focuses on building and consolidating participants' coping strategies, culminating in participants setting individual goals for coping with the loss. This may involve revisiting an activity to help consolidate the previous learning, or sharing examples in the group of how participants have used their coping strategies. So, for example, if strength cards were used previously, these might be revisited in order to consolidate knowledge and awareness of how to make good use of personal strengths. Participants should be encouraged to highlight each other's strengths as they have observed them during the group sessions.

Encouraging participants to share their experiences and to give examples of what works for them is an important part of this phase and will naturally include talking about feelings. Discussions will highlight a range of strategies, which may include ways of thinking positively and ways to relax, but should also include thinking about people who can offer support and helpful things to do with others.

Relaxation should be highlighted and, by this point, participants are likely to be able to indicate their preferred form of relaxation, e.g. mindfulness; sensory bottle; listening to calming music, etc.

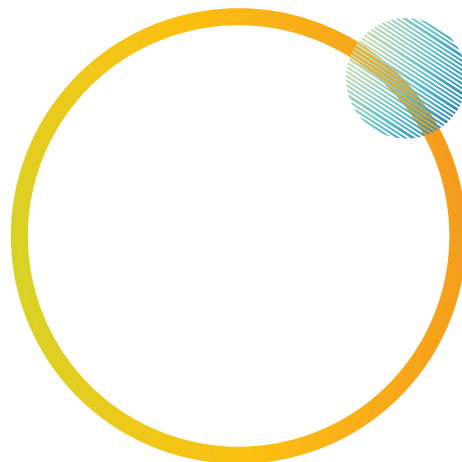
Phase 5 Celebration and consolidation (minimum 1 hour)

A celebration event marks the completion of the programme. Certificates are provided for participants in recognition of their engagement with the programme and their accomplishments in terms of skills acquisition. Parents/carers and other key adults in the young person's life may be invited to the celebration if participants wish for this to happen. Facilitators should consider other options for linking with parents/carers in order to provide two-way feedback about the outcomes of the programme.

Whilst this is a less formal part of the programme, it is a very important one, as it allows participants to reflect on what they have enjoyed about being part of the group and what they have gained from it. It also provides more opportunity for reinforcing coping strategies.

Facilitators can judge what possibilities there might be for the group to continue to share and support each other. At least one face-to-face 'recall' meeting would be a helpful way to bring participants and facilitators together to review progress and generate options for ongoing support. Typically recall sessions happen approximately 4-6 weeks after the completion of the programme.

Remember to complete both participant and facilitation evaluations. (See the *Give us a break!* website for required documents).



Relaxation

It is recommended that relaxation techniques are practised during each group session. Relaxation practice may be appropriate at the start of group session, or at the end, or even immediately after a particularly challenging activity. There is good evidence that relaxation practice mitigates stress responses and facilitates a sense of coping.

The relaxation techniques used are:

- Breathing
- Muscle relaxation
- Guided relaxation

For each of the three techniques, a choice of exercises is provided within the online resources. These are all short and use simple language, and include visuals where possible.

One or two of the relaxation exercises should be practised with the whole group during each session of the programme. Facilitators may also offer relaxation exercises with young people on a one-to-one basis, depending upon the needs of the individual.

The physical, cognitive and sensory needs of each participant should help to inform the choice of the relaxation technique or exercises. Individuals with significant physical needs may require further one-to-one support from a group facilitator. It may also be appropriate to consult with an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist to ensure that there is appropriate seating and positioning.

Young people with learning difficulties may require more opportunities to practise a specific relaxation exercise. Staff should model an exercise on a number of occasions. The same one or two relaxation techniques or exercises may be practised on a weekly basis throughout the programme to allow pupils to become familiar with the process and the script.

For example, the group facilitators may carry out a simple breathing exercise followed by a muscle relaxation exercise every week. Young people may be encouraged to build on their muscle relaxation exercise every session by starting with the arms and then moving on to the legs, toes etc. the following session.

Visualisation practice is more difficult since it involves abstract mental processes or an understanding of complex internal states such as 'tension' and 'relaxation'. Visualisation scripts should be kept very simple, with the use of visuals as a means of helping participants to understand what is being described.

Throughout relaxation sessions, participants can be encouraged to use simple language to describe where in their body they feel stressed/calm (e.g. tummy/head) etc. and what this feels like (e.g. smooth/bumpy).

See the *Give us a break!* website for sources of information on relaxation practice.



Give us a break! Plus

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)



This section is designed to provide support to facilitators in the delivery of the phases. It is complemented by the Phase Plan (on the *Give us a break!* website) document that details aims, learning outcomes, resources required and ways to evaluate readiness of participants to transition to the next phase.



Phase 1 Getting to know you (minimum 1 hour)

Q. What if the participants are from different schools?

You may need to factor in a little bit more time in this phase, undertaking 'warm up'/'ice breaker' activities. It is important that the group gels as well as possible, so the investment of time is worthwhile. There are ideas in the online resources bank, and in the original *Give us a break!* pack. Remember that there is flexibility in the delivery of every phase, so a few meetings may be required to develop group cohesion in this first phase.

Q. What if the ice is not being broken easily?

It can be difficult for some young people to feel at ease and for a whole group to engage in the same way with an ice breaker at the first or second meeting of a group. Try joining in yourself with a simple, fun activity, like a mime or mimicking an animal sound. This can help to generate some humour and helps the participants to feel more at ease with the facilitators. Consult with the group about very simple, short games that they like. They might have some good suggestions that they are all comfortable with. Again, bear in mind that a quiet participant might be as engaged as more active participants. It could be worth approaching them at the end of a session to check how they are finding the group so far.

Q. What can facilitators do if a young person appears to be disengaged?

Some young people may appear to be disengaged but are quite possibly benefitting from being part of the group, and may continue to present this way throughout, or play a more active role as time passes. Either way, gentle encouragement is required and facilitators could speak with school staff and parents/carers to help to gauge what the young person is indicating about the group. Ultimately, a young person may choose to leave the group. We would always want the young person to be choosing to take part, rather than being compelled to attend. If it is clear they do not wish to participate at this point, they could leave the group and consider taking part in a group at another point in time.

Phase 2 Understanding feelings (minimum 2 hours)

Q. What can facilitators do if participants are finding it difficult to describe feelings?

There are lots of resources to support this, such as Boardmaker symbols and emojis; and bear in mind that there is no pressure to rush a group through a phase. Sharing simple examples of feelings about things that happen around us, and sharing things that we notice in our bodies that relate to emotions should help. Summarising what has been covered at the end of a session, and devoting time for revision at the start of a new session should also help to build and reinforce understanding. Active learning and visually-based approaches to teaching will help. For example, stepping along a picture of a staircase or thermometer on the floor to show a measure of current feelings and changes of feelings.

Q. How can you build deeper understanding of feelings?

Supplementary questions could be used after participants are secure in their initial understanding. Questions such as the following may help:

‘And what made you feel sad/angry/upset, etc.?’ (use the words that the child/young person has used)

‘How long did you feel sad/angry/upset for?’

‘Are there other times when you have felt sad/angry/upset?’

‘Is there someone who can normally tell when you’re feeling xxxx?’

‘What did you notice about yourself when the feeling changed from xxxx?’

‘What was the new feeling that came after you felt xxxx?’

It may be the case that the participant requires additional support with emotional literacy. That might be possible to organise outside of the group, within the curriculum, as well as spending more time on relevant activities within this phase.

Q. What are some good solution-focused questions to ask if participants are expressing negative feelings?

The first thing to emphasise here is that it is very important to acknowledge and validate the negative feelings being expressed and named. Spending a little time hearing the pain, prior to going on to exploring possibilities for change allows you to show active listening and empathy.

There is definitely no expectation that participants grasp the concept of solution-focused approaches, nor is there an expectation that they would always respond positively to them.

Nor is there a need for facilitators to use the terminology. However, in terms of supporting a strengths-based approach and positive thinking, the following are simple, solution-oriented questions that may be really helpful:

‘When did you last feel a bit better?’

‘What is helping you to feel better?’

‘When is it even just a tiny bit easier?’

‘What will you notice when things are even better?’

‘What will other people notice about you when things are better?’

‘What will you do to help you to feel better?’

‘What is the first thing that you will try to do?’

Give us a break! Plus

Phase 3 Loss and change (minimum 3 hours)

Q. What if participants are struggling with the concept of change in their life and the passage of time?

The piloting of this version of *Give us a break!* indicated that some young people may find it difficult to understand and discuss events and changes over long periods of time. The life events activity in the original *Give us a break!* pack may therefore be too challenging. It may be necessary to spend a longer period of time, using visually-based resources to illustrate simple changes, such as: night and day; seasons of the year; baby and older child. This could then lead into grouping changes into ones that are fast and ones that are slow. In turn, this should help to build understanding of changes that we can control and those that we cannot.

Q. What if participants are struggling with the concept of control?

Simple examples should help to highlight control. E.g. switching a light on and off in the room. Then asking about who controlled that. Then generating ideas about things that we can do ourselves (i.e. control) in life. Similarly, examples could be discussed that show that control is not always possible for us. There are activities in the online resource bank for this, and if more time is required, then this time should be invested to allow participants to develop their understanding.

Q. What if participants are struggling with linking feelings to things that we can control/cannot control?

This is potentially a very challenging part of the programme and is likely to need a good amount of time devoted to it. It is important that the young people understand that many things in life are unexpected and unplanned. Sometimes these things can make us happy, as they can be nice surprises, but sometimes they can be things that make us upset. The key skill that we want young people to develop is to identify individual strategies that work to help them to manage their feelings better. So, again solution-focused questions can be used to elicit what works for them in feeling better. Sharing within the group can help to stimulate ideas about strategies. Making drawings of 'what helps me' can be an effective sharing activity and way to reflect again on what they find helpful. Once again, the emphasis needs to be on personal strengths and external resources that the young person can access to understand the loss or change.

Parents/carers and school staff members may be able to assist with strategies that might be useful, where a participant is struggling to come up with their own.



Phase 4 Coping (minimum 2 hours)

Q. What if participants do not manage to produce a coping plan?

There is no expectation that every participant produces written work in this version of *Give us a break!* Drawings could suffice, or photographs displaying an activity. The emphasis should be on group-based support and generating ideas around the room, rather than on participants working solely as individuals to create a written plan. Facilitators should look for evidence that participants have identified something that can help to reduce negative emotions. Great emphasis needs to be placed on capacity to cope, and personal strengths, and by this point participants should be able to identify at least one strength that helps them to cope when things are difficult.

Generating a tangible plan in an accessible format can be really helpful, as this acts as a visual cue or reminder when the group has its next meeting. Perhaps it could be a whole-group plan couched in general terms, if participants continue to struggle with creating individual plans.

Q. What if participants do not engage with the 'noticing' activity?

The 'noticing' activity needs to be encouraged so that young people develop awareness of things being better and how they can help themselves to feel better following the loss or change. Ask if anyone has said to them what they notice about them. The other group members could also be encouraged to say what they notice when things are going better for the person. Likewise, a parent/carer, or school staff member could be consulted with, in order to prompt them to notice small, positive changes.

Phase 5 Celebration and consolidation (minimum 1 hour)

Q. What if participants do not agree on a way to celebrate at the end?

Suggestions could be drawn out of hat as a solution. Creating a lighter atmosphere through participants being asked to bring in a game and play music can be helpful ways to make the final meeting feel like a celebration. Sometimes limiting options can be helpful, rather than the choice being too wide, and more challenging to process and decide upon.

Q. What if participants do not want to break up as a group?

Consideration could be given to ways of reconvening as a group, or having contact in some other way as a means of support. Parents and carers should be consulted, in terms of practicalities and any consents required for sharing of contact details.

Q. Is there a budget for funding celebration activities?

Facilitators and participants can discuss suitable activities for the celebration at the completion of the programme. If funds are required for the celebration these are usually met in-house by facilitators and/or establishments.



Section 2

Phase plans

This section contains the plans to guide facilitators through the delivery of the five phases. The resources are from the following sources:

- The original *Give us a break!* pack
- The *Give us a break!* website, under the *Give us a break!* Plus link
- Websites of other organisations

Facilitators should choose which resources to use for each group session (meeting). There is a blank document for each of the five phases. These documents can be photocopied and used as a planning tool. The documents contain only the Aims and Learning outcomes columns, to enable facilitators to list activities planned.

Boardmaker Online

For learners who have additional support needs, Boardmaker can be used to facilitate access to the '*Give us a break!*' programme. Boardmaker Online has options available to create symbol-based communication and visual supports in print or interactive versions. A '*Give us a break!*' group has been created within Boardmaker Online and the resources are available to anyone who has an account.

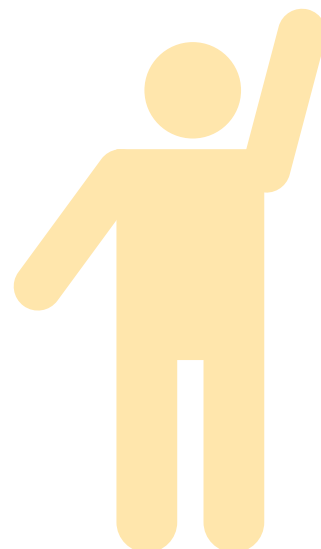
To access these resources, go to the Boardmaker Online login web address:
<https://login.tobiidynavox.com/Account/Login>

Then type in your login details if you already have an account, and click the login button.

Select the '**Community**' drop down tab near the top of the screen, and then select '**Browse Groups**'

Type '**Give us a Break**' in the searchbox

The group will then appear



Give us a break! Plus

Phase plan

Phase 1: Getting to know you (Minimum 1 hour)			
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities	Resources and sources
<p>To enable participants to meet other group members and facilitators and start to get to know each other.</p> <p>To support participants with recognising the aims of the group and to establish group rules.</p> <p>To enable participants to begin to identify their strengths and recognise strengths in others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will identify the names of all group members and facilitators. Participants will demonstrate an understanding of the aims of the group by sharing best hopes. Participants will identify the group rules. Participants will identify what they are good at. Participants will identify what others are good at by engaging in active listening activities. Participants will engage in group activities and take turns. Participants will be introduced to relaxation skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators welcome everyone to the group and explain what the group is about, using language and visuals appropriate to the needs of the participants. Participants introduce themselves to each other. Facilitators lead a discussion and make a poster regarding the ground rules of the group (to display during each session). Participants share best hopes from taking part in the group. Ice breaker games (see online sources). Participants show a picture of themselves doing their favourite thing and share this with the group. Participants learn more about each other - e.g. play music and pass the object - when music stops, participant tells group something about them/their family/their house etc. Simple relaxation activity e.g. a simple breathing exercise. Participants are asked to practise at home before the next session. (Can use scripts from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) Participants to indicate feelings via a simple dial/indicator at end of session (can use emojis/Boardmaker symbols as appropriate). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo of participant doing something they enjoy Visual timetable template (visual to show activities in this session) Activity visuals Group check-in / feelings dial Friends rules Getting to know you (from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) Boardmaker strengths visuals Boardmaker things I like to do All about me 5 things I like about myself Strengths cards (from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) Active listening skills (from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) Relaxation script(s) Folders for participants to keep activities in Flipchart and pens http://re-route.co/expressions-all-about-me-primary-high-school-monday-family-week-resource/ www.actionforhappiness.org www.activityvillage.co.uk/ice-breaker-games www.drleventhambelfer.com/friends-group-posters.html www.freemindfulness.org/download https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/ https://icebreakerideas.com/ice-breakers-for-kids-games-activities-questions/ www.time-management-abilities.com/icebreaker-games-for-small-groups.html https://jillkuzma.wordpress.com/cooperative-group-game-ideas/

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Phase 1: Getting to know you (Minimum 1 hour)			
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities	Resources and sources
<p>To enable participants to meet other group members and facilitators and start to get to know each other.</p> <p>To support participants with recognising the aims of the group and to establish group rules.</p> <p>To enable participants to begin to identify their strengths and recognise strengths in others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will identify the names of all group members and facilitators. • Participants will demonstrate an understanding of the aims of the group by sharing best hopes. • Participants will identify the group rules. • Participants will identify what they are good at. • Participants will identify what others are good at by engaging in active listening activities. • Participants will engage in group activities and take turns. • Participants will be introduced to relaxation skills. 		

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Phase plan

Phase 2: Understanding feelings (Minimum 2 hours)			
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities	Resources and sources
<p>To support participants in understanding their feelings and that these feelings are normal.</p> <p>To establish who the important people are in the participant's life and start to introduce a range of feelings in relation to these people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will start to show an understanding of feelings appropriate to their cognitive level. Participants will identify who the important people are in their lives. Participants will begin to link feelings to the important people in their lives. Participants will continue to practise relaxation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feelings - match feelings with an activity e.g. happy - party/sad - sore finger/worried - someone not there/excited - birthday/angry - iPad not working. Encourage participants to share experiences of times when they have experienced different feelings. Feelings thermometer/map - use to support participants to associate feelings with experiences they have had. Feelings wall activity from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack. Emotions Jenga: playing Jenga with feelings labels on the blocks. Stress in my body: discuss feeling stress in areas of the body. Share photos of family/important people in their lives and discuss links with feelings onto sheets of paper. Relaxation/mindfulness techniques. Indicate feelings about session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group check-in: feelings dial/ thermometer/map. Boardmaker feelings flashcards Feelings visuals Feelings social story Feelings charades/bingo cards (from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) Feelings wall (from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) Emotions Jenga Inside Out worksheets Inside Out board game of emotions Linking feelings to people Relaxation script(s) Mindfulness visuals www.twinkl.co.uk/ www.emotionworks.org.uk/ https://childhood101.com/exploring-emotions-jenga-game/ https://childhood101.com/helping-children-manage-big-emotions-our-emotions-card-game-printable/ https://printablecrush.com/download/inside-out-game/ http://re-route.co/expressions-all-about-me-primary-high-school-monday-family-week-resource/ www.tes.com/teaching-resource/freebie-inside-out-emotions-worksheets-11753608

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Phase 2: Understanding feelings (Minimum 2 hours)		
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities
<p>To support participants in understanding their feelings and that these feelings are normal.</p> <p>To establish who the important people are in the participant's life and start to introduce a range of feelings in relation to these people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will start to show an understanding of feelings appropriate to their cognitive level. • Participants will identify who the important people are in their lives. • Participants will begin to link feelings to the important people in their lives. • Participants will continue to practise relaxation. 	Resources and sources



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Phase plan

Phase 3: Loss and change (Minimum 3 hours)			
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities	Resources and sources
<p>To continue/revise work on who the important people are in the participants' lives and start to introduce a range of feelings in relation to these people.</p> <p>To enable participants to become aware that change occurs in everyone's life.</p> <p>To introduce the concept of change; help participants there are some things in life that we can control and other things that we cannot.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will refresh and develop their understanding of feelings. • Participants will again link these feelings to the important people in their lives. • Participants will begin to identify what change actually means. • Participants will show awareness of changes that have happened in their lives. • Participants will be able to connect feelings to these changes. • Participants will recognise through social stories that there are lots of different kinds of loss/change. • Participants will learn more about the journey associated with adapting to the negative change that has occurred. • Participants will continue to practice relaxation/mindfulness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision activity linking feelings to the important people. • Use pictures and symbols of people and events to share with rest of group; discuss feelings relating to events. • What change is – script with concrete examples. • Things we can and cannot change activity. (From original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack). • Change games (use web links). • Social stories for different types of loss – use and adapt. • Discuss where we can feel things in our body when we experience change – group task with body map. • Relaxation/mindfulness techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group check-in: feelings dial/thermometer/map. • Boardmaker feelings flashcards • Boardmaker symbols • Pictures of family members • My Life Journey (from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) • Important people in my life • Feelings social story • How do I feel social story • Change social story examples • Things that make me • Body communication aids, such as body outline activity from, Lessons for Living • www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx • https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/ • www.isixsigma.com/training/training-materials-aids/change-game-engaging-exercises-teach-change/ • www.samaritans.org/scotland/how-we-can-help/schools/deal-deal-resources/coping-strategies/coping-changes/ • http://activities.com/change_management/CopingwithChange.html

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Phase 3: Loss and change (Minimum 3 hours)			
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities	Resources and sources
<p>To continue/revise work on who the important people are in the participants' lives and start to introduce a range of feelings in relation to these people.</p> <p>To enable participants to become aware that change occurs in everyone's life.</p> <p>To introduce the concept of change; help participants there are some things in life that we can control and other things that we cannot.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will refresh and develop their understanding of feelings. • Participants will again link these feelings to the important people in their lives. • Participants will begin to identify what change actually means. • Participants will show awareness of changes that have happened in their lives. • Participants will be able to connect feelings to these changes. • Participants will recognise through social stories that there are lots of different kinds of loss/change. • Participants will learn more about the journey associated with adapting to the negative change that has occurred. • Participants will continue to practice relaxation/mindfulness. 		

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Phase plan

Phase 4: Coping (Minimum 2 hours)			
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities	Resources and sources
<p>To enable participants to develop a sense of managing the negative change that they have experienced.</p> <p>To build capacity of the participants in adapting positively to the negative change.</p> <p>To support participants with the use of internal and external resources in problem-solving.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will develop an understanding of the concept of coping and coping strategies. Participants will develop their own repertoire of coping strategies. Participants will share coping strategies in the group. Participants will learn how to plan to use their coping strategies. Participants will deepen their sense of the support network that surrounds them. Participants will learn to recognise signs that they are coping. Participants will begin to consolidate their knowledge and skills from Phases 1-3. Participants will continue to use relaxation/ mindfulness techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion about coping – understanding the concept. Understanding using own strengths and getting help from others. My coping plan – simple individual plan about ways of coping (internal and external) Noticing when the feelings get better – when the plan is working. Knowing when to change the plan, when it's not working. Put together a memory box including pictures and personal items of the loved one. Create a sensory bottle. Ways of reducing stress including sensory activities (see online sources) Revisit the “important people in my life” activity and discuss the ways in which they support coping Relaxation / mindfulness techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group check-in/feelings dial/map/ thermometer Boardmaker feelings flashcards What makes the stress go away? Someone I love has died Memory box How can I cope better? How calm and I? When I am calm Strength cards (from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) Goals ladder and goal setting (from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) Important people in my life Coping cards Sensory bottle items https://childhood101.com/managing-big-emotions-best-resources-to-use-with-kids/ www.theoottoolbox.com/sensory-coping-strategies-for-kids/ https://sensoryprocessingdisorderparentsupport.com/sensory-calming-activities.php www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/educationandlearning/specialeducationalneeds/PersonCentredPlanningTools.pdf

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Phase 4: Coping (Minimum 2 hours)		
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities
<p>To enable participants to develop a sense of managing the negative change that they have experienced.</p> <p>To build capacity of the participants in adapting positively to the negative change.</p> <p>To support participants with the use of internal and external resources in problem-solving.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will develop an understanding of the concept of coping and coping strategies. • Participants will develop their own repertoire of coping strategies. • Participants will share coping strategies in the group. • Participants will learn how to plan to use their coping strategies. • Participants will deepen their sense of the support network that surrounds them. • Participants will learn to recognise signs that they are coping. • Participants will begin to consolidate their knowledge and skills from Phases 1-3. • Participants will continue to use relaxation/mindfulness techniques. 	Resources and sources

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Phase 5: Celebration/Consolidation (Minimum 1 hour)			
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities	Resources and sources
<p>To consolidate the knowledge and skills developed in the programme thus far.</p> <p>To provide participants with a sense of celebrating the success of their learning.</p> <p>To enable participants to transfer their knowledge and skills gained into their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will identify and share what was helpful for them in the programme. Participants will learn to reflect on their experiences within a group. Participants will have a plan in place for coping with negative change and negative feelings. Participants will learn how the programme has benefitted their peers. Participants will learn to enjoy celebrating their learning and participation in the group. Participants will integrate relaxation/ mindfulness techniques into their lives. Participants will be supported in identifying any unmet needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration – snacks/music to create a ‘party’ atmosphere. Sharing favourite thing from the programme. Sharing what has been learned from the programme. Reinforcing the plan from Phase 4: how I am going to use my plan and who needs to help me to stick to the plan. Sharing about what has changed – things in my life that are better now: group discussion. How this will help me to cope with new problems – group discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose resources from phase 1 – 4 as appropriate Certificate (from original <i>Give us a break!</i> pack) www.playmeo.com/activities/debriefing-activities/paired-share-debrief/ www.edutopia.org/blog/22-powerful-closure-activities-todd-finley

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Phase 5: Celebration/Consolidation (Minimum 1 hour)		
Aims	Learning outcomes	Suggested activities
<p>To consolidate the knowledge and skills developed in the programme thus far.</p> <p>To provide participants with a sense of celebrating the success of their learning.</p> <p>To enable participants to transfer their knowledge and skills gained into their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will identify and share what was helpful for them in the programme. • Participants will learn to reflect on their experiences within a group. • Participants will have a plan in place for coping with negative change and negative feelings. • Participants will learn how the programme has benefitted their peers. • Participants will learn to enjoy celebrating their learning and participation in the group. • Participants will integrate relaxation/ mindfulness techniques into their lives. • Participants will be supported in identifying any unmet needs. 	Resources and sources

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