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# 6.1 | WELCOME (15 MIN)

## WELCOME

Welcome participants warmly and enthusiastically when they arrive at the session.

## TAKE A PAUSE

**Take a Pause** with the participants. You can make it brief (about a minute):

* Close eyes
* Focus on thoughts, feelings, and body sensations (15 seconds)
* Focus on breath (30 seconds)
* Expand focus to the entire body and sounds (15 seconds)
* Open eyes

Remind participants that they should try to **Take a Pause** before reacting to their children when they do something that annoys or angers them.

This may help them respond in a less negative and violent way. **Take a Pause** can even be a couple deep breaths!

## CHECK-IN

Parents check into the group by sharing how they feel at the beginning of the session. They should describe their emotion, where they feel it in their body, and what thoughts are associated with it.

You can model this: “I feel anxious. I feel it in my shoulders. I am worried about having enough money this month for food,” or “I feel proud. I feel it in my chest. I have almost completed the ParentChat programme!”

## PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Take the time to review all the different steps of the exercise: stretching, isolations from head-to-toe, and shaking down the body.

Remember that the most important thing is to *breathe!!!*

# 6.2 | CORE LESSON – PROGRAMME REFLECTION

## SILENT REFLECTION

The programme reflection gives participants an opportunity to look back on their experiences, and to notice how they and their relationship with each other may have changed.

Take the participants through a visualization of the entire programme drawing attention to key moments, Parenting Tips, Building Blocks, and experiences that may have arisen:

1. Ask participants to close their eyes and sit in a comfortable position.
2. Ask them to recall what their lives and relationships were like when you visited them at their homes before the programme began.
3. Guide participants through each session as you describe building theHouse of Support:
   1. Setting Positive, Realistic, and Specific Goals
   2. Spending One-on-One Time Together
   3. Giving Praise and Positive Instructions
   4. Establishing Household Rules and Routines
   5. Using Positive Discipline (Redirect and Consequences)
   6. Solving Problems Together as A Family
4. Ask participants to think about their experiences watching videos, discussing tips during sessions, and practicing skills with each other at home.
5. Ask them to think about whether their goals for themselves and their relationships with their children have been achieved or have changed.
6. Ask them to think about how they have changed, how their children have changed, and how their families have changed.
7. You might want to ask the following questions:
   1. How helpful have you found the Mayor Konektà programme?
   2. How is your relationship with your child different from before you started the programme?
   3. What are the main skills or things that you learned from the programme? How are these different from the way you related to your child before?
   4. How would these skills help you/your child develop as human beings?
   5. What do you think are the long-term consequences or benefits of these skills?
   6. Do you see yourself continuing to use them?
   7. What kind of support do you need to continue using them?
8. Ask the participants to open their eyes.

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## ART ACTIVITY

After the reflection, distribute paper and crayons for the art activity. Ask the participants to draw pictures that relate to some of the following questions:

1. What was their relationship with their child like before the programme?
2. How has the relationship changed? How have they changed? Their child? Their family?
3. What was the most important/significant thing that they learned? Why was this significant?

Participants share their drawings in pairs and then as a larger group.

After each participant shares, they place their picture in the middle of the circle as if giving an offering to a communal fire within the House of Support.

***Please note:*** *Allow every participant to share but try to keep the sharing brief (1-2 minutes each). You can draw a picture and share too!*

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# 6.3.| CORE LESSON – MOVING ON

At this point in the session, the focus shifts to the future. The programme ending can be a very emotional time for participants. Many may feel anxiety about the next chapter in their lives. It is important to provide families with some support and encouragement.

The next activities help families identify ways of continuing to support one another.

“Stone Soup” is a story about community building that is shared with the families to help them take ownership of their own skills, knowledge, and each other!

Depending on how much time is available and whether there is a separate celebration planned, you may want to tell this story during the community celebration.

## STORY – STONE SOUP

*(traditional tale as narrated by Jamie McLaren Lachman)*

| There was once a beautiful village. The people of this village were always happy because they never needed anything. They had livestock, fruits, and vegetables, as theirs was a very fertile village. They never knew suffering.  However, after some time there was drought. There was no more rain and their livestock was dying. Times became difficult because now there was hunger in the village. The people stopped talking to each other because everyone was focusing on their own problems.  One day an old woman came to this village carrying a big black pot on her head and a small brown bag. When she arrived in the middle of the village, she placed the big black pot on the ground and sat next to it to take a rest. No one saw this woman, except a little boy who was out playing that day.  When the boy saw this old woman, he asked her "What are you doing with that big black pot?"  "I am going to make some Stone Soup!" answered the old woman. This confused the boy. Who ever heard of such a thing as Stone Soup?  Because he was a curious boy and always full of questions, he asked, "Can I please help you?"  The old woman was very happy when he asked to help. "Of course, you can! Go and get some water and collect some wood, my child," she said.  So, the boy collected some wood in the nearby forest. As the old woman was busy making the fire, he went down to the river to fetch some water.  By the time the boy returned with water, the old woman had a large, warm fire burning.  She placed the big black pot on the fire and poured in the water. She then opened her small brown bag and took out a shiny, round white stone. She placed it in the big black pot and began to stir, humming an old cooking song.  Soon, the water began to boil. The old woman licked her lips and said to the boy, “Mmmmm…this is going to be a delicious pot of Stone Soup.”  It wasn’t long when the others began to notice the fire burning in the middle of the village. One by one, they left their homes to see what was happening.  "What is going on here?" asked one man. The boy answered, "She is cooking Stone Soup!"  Those who were there exchanged looks as if they had never heard of such a thing. Stone Soup?  The news spread fast and throughout the village. All the villagers left their homes to see this crazy old woman and her Stone Soup with their own eyes. As the people were arriving, the old woman continued to stir the pot while humming.  When she noticed that that there were many people gathered, she stopped stirring and tasted the watery soup. "Mmmmmmm… This is going to be the most delicious soup. It is just missing something. If only there were some onions…”  One woman had a few old onions that she had been saving. They were small and wrinkly but still good to eat. “I have some onions,” she offered. She fetched them from her home, chopped them up, and added them to the big black bubbling pot.  After a little while longer, the old woman tasted the soup again. “Yes, this soup is going to be so good. But it is missing something…. If only there were some more….”  “Vegetables!” said a voice from the crowd, “It needs more vegetables. I have some spinach. It’s not much but you can use it.” Another person brought a couple of old potatoes. Someone else had a cabbage. Another garlic. Carrots. A pumpkin. Salt. An old scrawny chicken. Some chillies. Spices.  *[At this point, the storyteller can ask people for suggestions what to put in the soup]*  The smell of the soup filled the village. It reminded people of the old days. They began to talk to each other, exchanging stories and news, even jokes. Laughter was heard again for the first time in many years.  At last, the old woman stopped stirring. She tasted the soup and declared with a twinkle in her eye, “This Stone Soup is nearly ready. And so much to eat. I wonder if you will help me finish it please.”  Everyone went back to his or her homes and brought bowls and spoons. Even though there were so many people, there was just enough for each person. They ate the soup until they were all full. And it was the most delicious Stone Soup they had ever tasted.  When they were done, the villagers brought out their drums and other musical instruments and began to sing songs and dance. They sang and danced until dusk. Then, the villages thanked the woman and returned to their homes chatting with each other. Once again, there was the sound of laughter and song in the air that evening.  As the evening stars began to shine, the old woman was left alone in the middle of the village. She gathered the white stone in her small brown bag and placed her big black pot on her head. Without a word of farewell, she slowly began to walk down the windy road that led out of the village.  Before she could leave, the boy saw her and ran to her. "Why are you leaving?" he asked.  “My work here is done,” the old woman replied. “But we need someone like you to help us,” said the boy.  She reached into her small brown bag and handed the boy the white stone. “You have all the ingredients that you need to make Stone Soup.” Then she slowly walked down the road. The boy watched and waved until he couldn’t see her any longer.  The villagers never saw that woman again. But life in the village continued to thrive – in the best of times and the worst of times they never lost their connection to each other again as they continued to make the most delicious Stone Soup.  *The end.* |
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## DISCUSSION – KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING

Lead a discussion to help participants to identify specific ways in which they can continue to support each other. Useful questions to help prompt discussion may include:

1. What are some of the ingredients that we have in our community to continue supporting us as families?
2. In what ways can we continue to support our children’s development and our lives after the programme?

You can suggest that someone takes the responsibility for getting the group together if participants suggest staying in contact or continuing to meet regularly.

For peer support groups, it is important to identify the following:

* Person (or people) responsible for organizing the support groups
* Decision about how to meet: Online? In person? If so, where and when can families meet?
* Can help be provided by an organisation?

## REVIEW – TIPS FOR CONTINUING SUPPORT:

1. Keep practicing all the Parenting Tips that you used
2. There may be other families who have done the Mayor Konektà programme in your neighbourhood. Start your own Parent Support Group!
3. Learn what services and support you can get in your community.

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# 6.4 | CLOSING

## LOVING KINDNESS EXERCISE

Participants learn one last stress reduction activity – a Loving Kindness exercise.

This activity helps participants connect with a sense of loving-kindness towards themselves and their children and families. It brings closure to the culminating activity while reconnecting participants to a sense of wellbeing and calmness after all the excitement and anticipation for the closing.

**Suggestions for leading the Loving Kindness activity:**

*NOTE: Use the below text as a guide to leading the**activity.*

*Just like* ***Taking a Pause,*** *you can pause for about 5 seconds at each [Pause] in the text. It is helpful to follow your own instructions during the pause.*

**Step 1: Preparation**

Sometimes when we are experiencing stress, feeling alone, or just needing support, it can be helpful to send thoughts of loving kindness to ourselves.

This exercise helps us to become more grounded and present – which increases wellbeing and balance – helping us to manage stress, illness, and difficulty. [*Pause* ]

Find a comfortable sitting position, your feet flat on the floor, your hands resting in your lap. [*Pause* ]

Close your eyes if you feel comfortable. [*Pause* ]

**Step 2: Becoming Aware**

Ask yourself, “What is my experience in this moment?” [*Pause* ]

Notice what thoughts you are experiencing. Notice if they are negative or positive. [*Pause* ]

Notice how you feel emotionally. Notice if your feelings are pleasant or unpleasant. [*Pause* ]

Notice how your body feels. Notice any discomfort or tension. [*Pause* ]

**Step 3: Opening to Loving Kindness**

Connect to your heart in a kind and gentle way. You may want to place one hand on your heart or chest. [*Pause* ]

You can then say the following words silently to yourself [*Pause* ]

May I be peaceful. [*Pause* ]

May I be safe. [*Pause* ]

May I be healthy. [*Pause* ]

May I be happy. [*Pause* ]

May I feel loved. [*Pause* ]

*Repeat slowly once or twice taking your time between each phrase.*

If you feel comfortable, you can also send thoughts of loving-kindness to your children, your partner, your family, and anyone else who is close to you in your life. [*Pause* ]

May you be peaceful. [*Pause* ]

May you be safe. [*Pause* ]

May you be healthy. [*Pause* ]

May you be happy. [*Pause* ]

May you feel loved. [*Pause* ]

*Repeat slowly once or twice taking your time between each phrase.*

**Step 4: Expanding Awareness**

Allow your focus to expand to the whole body. [*Pause* ]

Allow your focus to expand to the sounds in the room.[*Pause* ]

When you are ready, open your eyes. [*Pause* ]

**Step 5: Reflecting**

Take a moment to reflect on your experience.

When you are ready, open your eyes. [*Pause* ]

Remember that you can do this activity at any time whenever you feel like you need extra support.

## 

## ONGOING HOME ACTIVITIES

***IT IS WHAT YOU DO AT HOME THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE!***

It is important to remind participants that they need to continue keeping their House of Support strong and healthy even though this programme has come to an end.

The home activities are a great way for parents to stay connected to the programme by actively engaging in positive relationship building.

Families should be encouraged to reward themselves whenever they do a home activity!

* Spend **at least 5 minutes** of **One-on-One Time** each day with your child.
* Keep the Sunshine of Positive Attention shining on you and your children.
  + Continue to **praise** your children, yourself, and others in your family
  + Try to **give positive, specific, and realistic instructions** to each other
  + Be **calm and clear** when talking about things that are important to you.
* Continue to build awareness of emotions and your ability to communicate about them
  + Try to be more **aware of your own emotions and the emotions of others.**
  + Ask your child about how they are feeling at least **1 time a week**.
  + Practise **I Feel Statements** when talking about emotions at least **1 time a week**.
  + Remember to **Take a Pause** whenever a conflict or difficult situation comes up.
* Try to maintain stable and strong household routines.
  + Be consistent and appreciative with **rules and responsibilities.**
  + Continue to be consistent with **household rules.**
* Work together with your child when experiencing difficulties
  + **Work together** with your child whenever a problem or conflict comes up in your family. **Use the 4 Steps of Problem Solving.**
  + Be realistic, immediate, reasonable, and consistent when using **consequences**.
* Do something nice to **reward yourself** for your hard work in the Mayor Konektà programme!

# 6.5.| CLOSING CELEBRATION

## CERTIFICATES

Hand out certificates of completion to parents at the end of the session. This is a simple recognition for their accomplishment in finishing the programme.

## COMPLIMENT CIRCLE

Parents take turns praising each other. Encourage participants to make eye contact and use the name of other participants.

Then parents take turns praising themselves for something specific that they did well.

The compliments can be about anything as long as they are sincere.

## EMOTIONAL CHECK-OUT

Model the emotional check-out by describing your emotion, where you feel it in your body, and what thoughts are associated with it.

For example, “I am feeling happy. This happiness is in my eyes. I am happy to have learned about how to create fair rules together.”

***Thank and praise the families for their commitment to making loving and nurturing relationships together!***