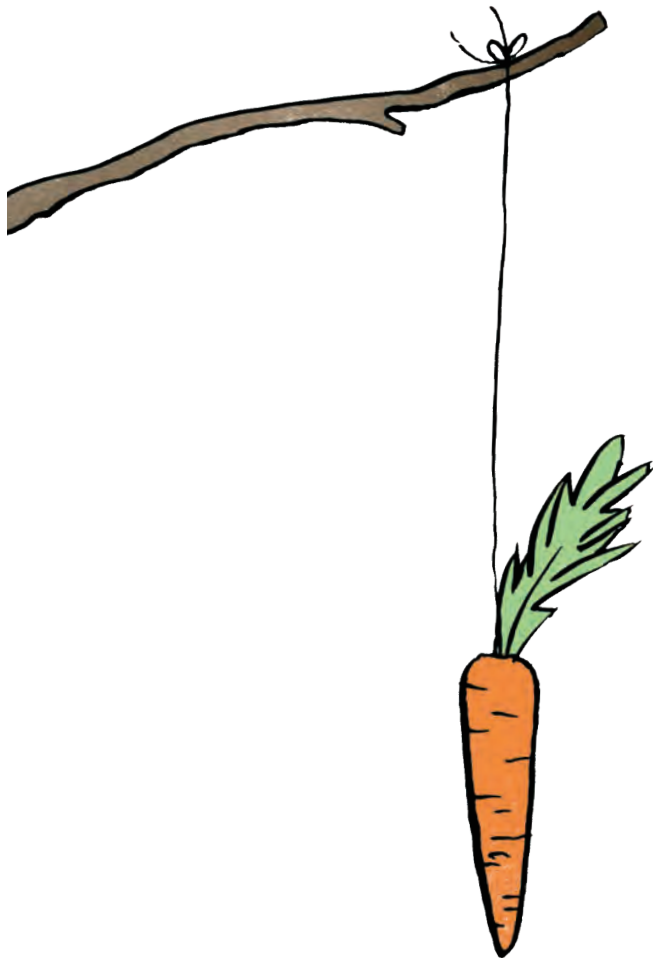


# VOCATION SUPPORTING WELLBEING

WRITTEN BY REIMA LAUNONEN



We often assume that the carrot and stick approach is the main motivator for work. The incentive for work is expected to come mainly from money and other external benefits: inspiring and vocational work is just for artists and priests. You seldom hear people laud their work and tell how great it is.

However, a calling can be found anywhere. At the end of the day, it means one simple thing: the right person at the right place finds their work meaningful and important.

**My mother feels her job as a cleaner is her calling. For her, the meaningfulness of a cleaning job comes from the duties involved: genuinely seeing the results of your work and being able to help people in their daily lives. Thus, my mother has wanted to work in a challenging environment: she finds it more rewarding to clean a warehouse of 1,000 employees than an office that may be more manageable, but your contribution is not as obvious.**

Vocation is about genuinely enjoying your work and finding it rewarding. Thus, a true calling can be found at a supermarket till, behind the wheel of lorry as well as heading a multinational corporation.

An activity which is done for the joy of doing it is internally motivated. The activity itself feels meaningful, significant and rewarding, instead of just doing it for the reward that it brings. Hobbies are a good example of internally motivated activities. In working life, there is naturally always the outer motivation: most of us have to earn our living. However, all too often, we limit our outlook on this one aspect and forget all about the inner motivation of our work. Enjoying your work is a significant source of well-being.

According to research, work that feels meaningful has a significant impact on health and wellbeing. Those who are inspired by their work are less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety or fall ill. And most importantly, those who enjoy their work are more satisfied with their life in general and feel happier. People who feel enthusiastic about their work are also invaluable for their employer. Not only do they infect others with their enthusiasm and are less likely to take sick leave, but research also shows the contribution of

internally motivated employees' to be 16-100 % higher than that of those who are not devoted to their work. Employees who enjoy their work also enjoy better quality free-time, because work has not consumed all their energy, but rather has left them feeling more energetic. Thus, being enthusiastic about your work benefits the individual as well as the work community. It is about life values that bear fruit.

## Inner motivation can be promoted

Inner motivation flourishes in a hospitable environment. Firstly, people need to feel that they can operate more or less freely. At its simplest, this means that people are free to choose their job and the sector they work in. Ideally, everyone could work fairly independently and choose their tasks based on their level of vibrancy. People should gradually be able to adapt their job description to meet their strengths and interests to the extent it is possible within their daily work. In addition to freedom, being able to develop and learn new things also promote inner motivation. Furthermore, it is important to be able to enjoy your skills and to experience a sense of accomplishment. For inner motivation, it is essential to feel that you do something that matters. This is largely based on how we perceive things. The key to those working with children and families is to be able to see their work as valuable despite the fact that the results can only be seen in years to come as the children grow up. Illuminating the significance of our work is also a great tool for self-management and managerial work. This is something that should be discussed, for example, in performance reviews. We are all important and understanding that is key to our wellbeing.

It is of primary importance to look after our own coping and wellbeing. Only then are we able to encounter new families and support the development of new children time after time. Positive feedback from colleagues and family and a warm, inspiring working environment also provide resources for work.

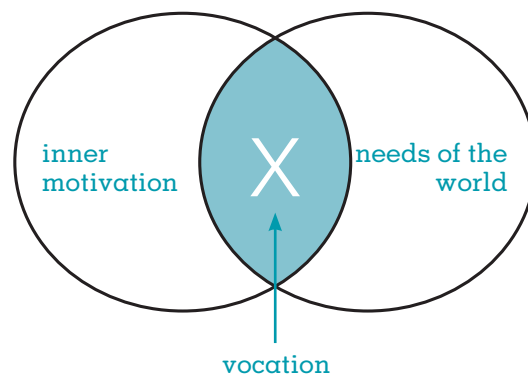
## Vocation brings together inner motivation and work life needs

Work that responds to our inner motivation can be called a vocation. A job fits like a glove when it serves a person's inner motivation and offers a positive and inspiring environment that supports wellbeing.

A vocation differs from inner motivation because a vocation means that everyone is a winner: the employees and the employer, our nearest and dearest as well as the society as a whole.

## "Meaningful work" exercise

The exercise is based on methods for tuning your work, which can help make your work more engaging and allow you to emphasise your strengths and objects of interest. The aim is to make micro changes to your work, in other words, to promote the things that motivate you and reduce the factors that eat away at your enthusiasm.



## Steps

- A. List all your tasks on, say, Post-it notes.
- B. Arrange the notes into three piles based on the following principles (you can also number the notes):
  - 3. Tasks which you find rewarding and significant and which provide you with genuine motivation.
  - 2. Tasks which you do not consider to be your passion, but which you can live with and are part of your professional expertise.
  - 1. Tasks which you do not like and eat away at your motivation.

The aim is to maximise category three tasks in your daily work. Category two tasks are those which in a best-case scenario could rise to the top category with your growing skills and work-related objectives. Even if they remained in category two, they are still part of your professional expertise and your work. With regards to those tasks in category one, you should consider if they are an essential part of your work or could you give them up or potentially delegate them to someone else who would find them motivating. It might be a good idea to consider whether there could be a technological solution for doing the tasks in category one. The aim is to have as few tasks in category one as possible.

When tuning your work, it is worth remembering Frank Martela's 3R model: recognise, realise and react. Write down all your tasks so that you recognise all the factors that make up your daily work. It is important to realise how those factors impact your motivation; react in a way that allows you to strengthen the motivating factors, and reduce the number of non-motivating tasks.

# FRIENDSHIP SKILLS CARDS

The Friendship Skills cards have been designed to allow children to practise their social skills. These 20 cards can be used to demonstrate conflict situations and skills for resolving them. The Friendship Skills cards feature both child and adult figures. The cards depict different situations in children's mutual relationships, and they can be used to discuss social skills.

The Friendship Skills cards are child-oriented, and they are helpful for practising being a part of a group.

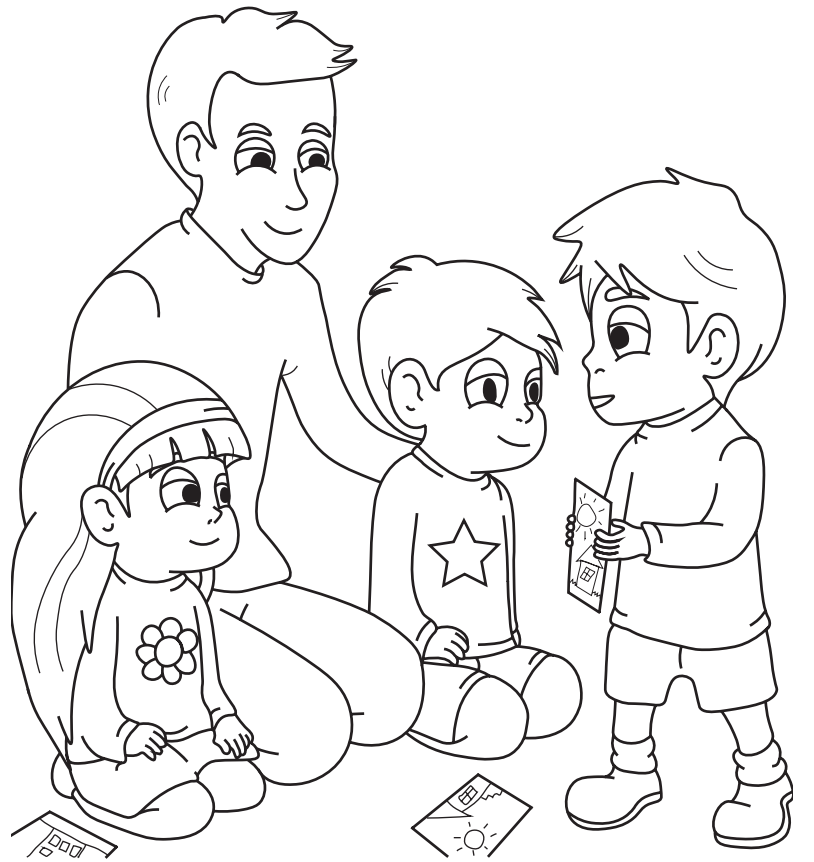
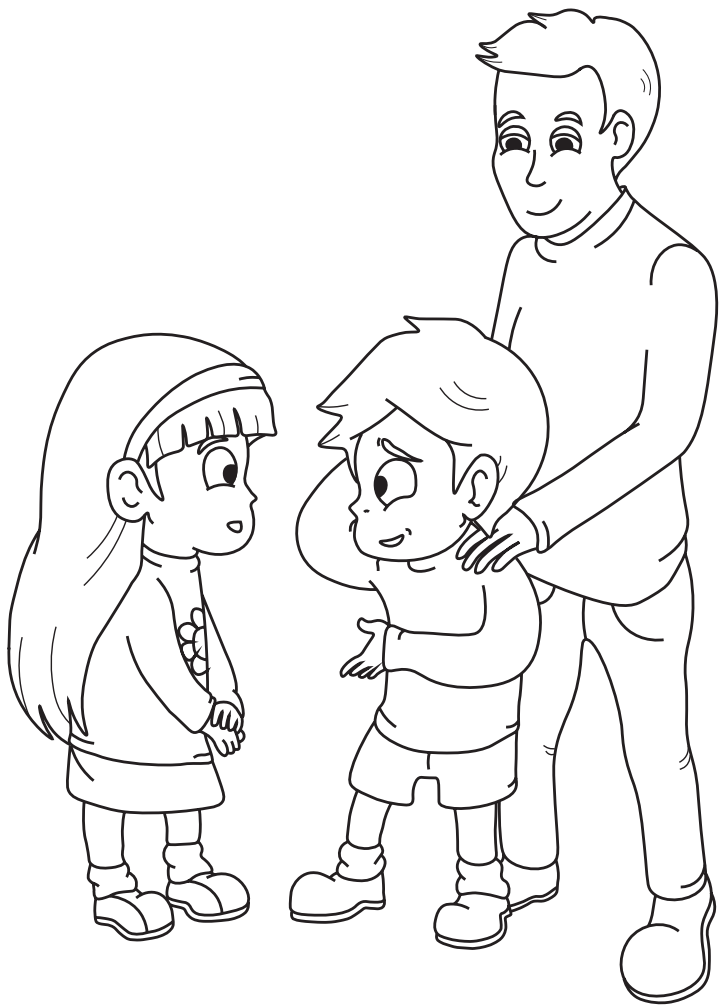
## Ideas for the Friendship Skills cards

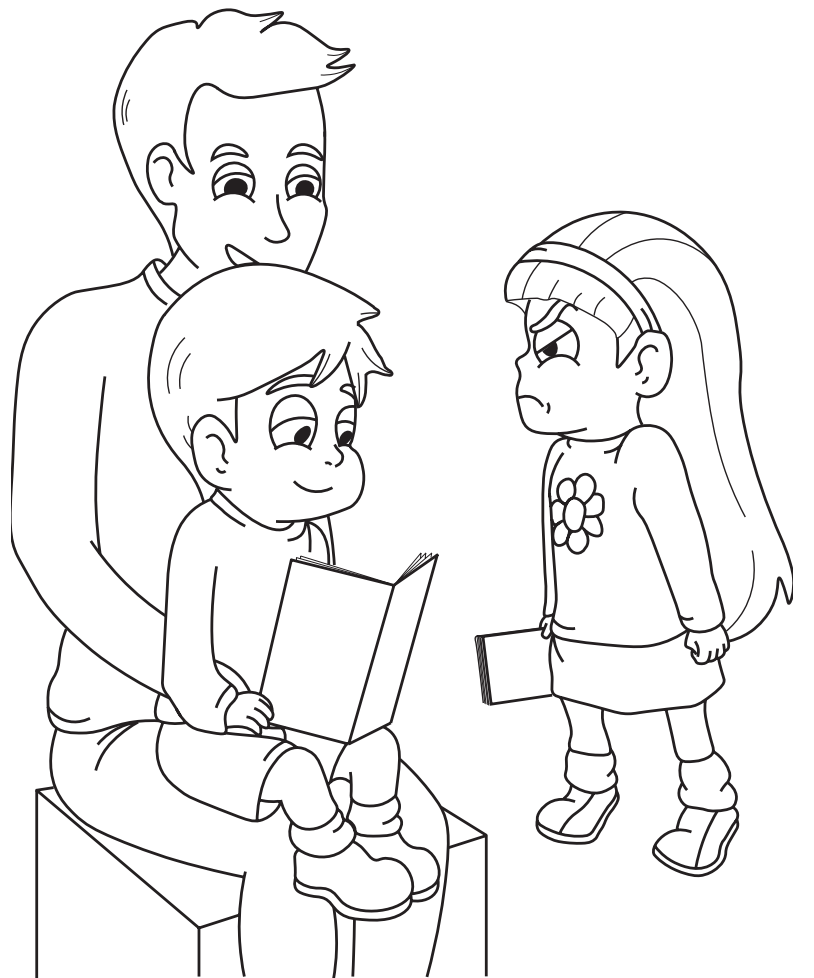
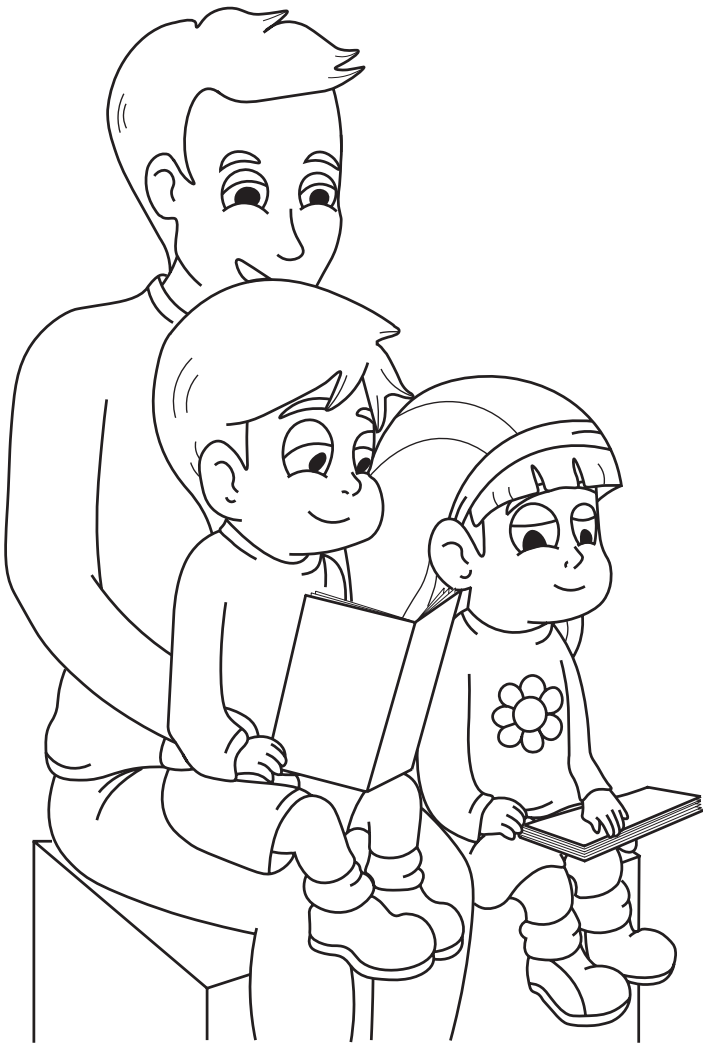
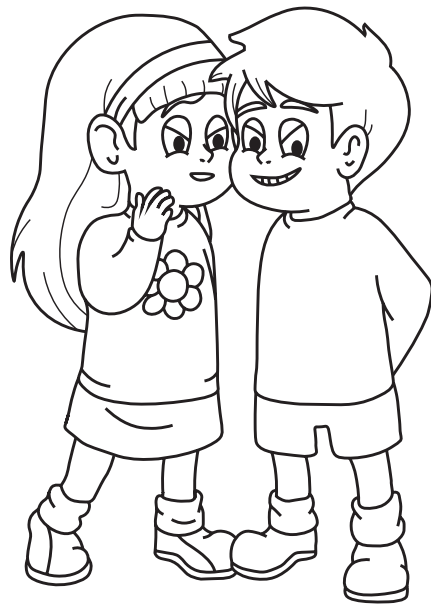
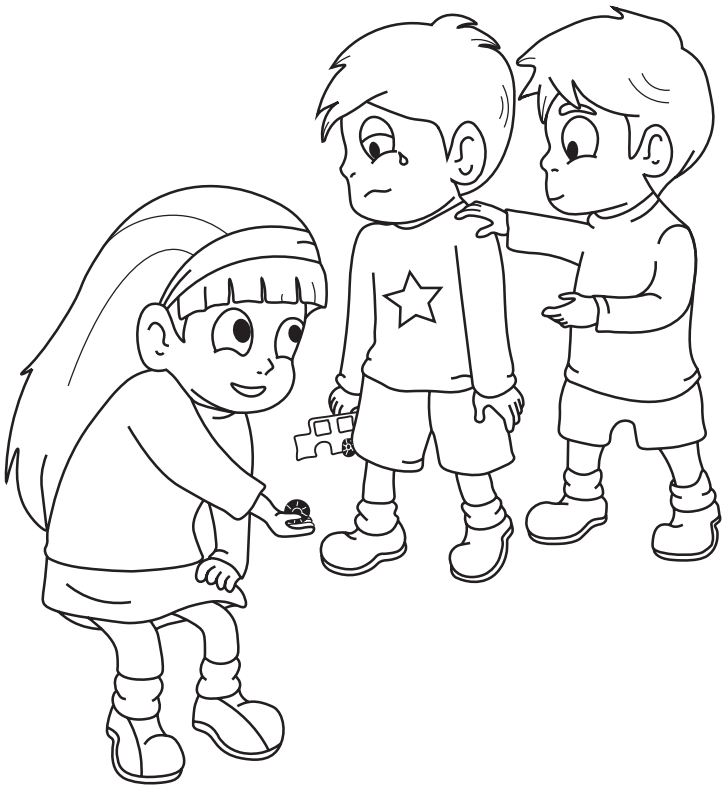
- **MIMING GAME:** Children mime the events in a Friendship Skills card in pairs to the other children, and the other children try to guess based on the clues what is happening in the card.
- **SURPRISE CARD:** The picture cards are placed in a box or a bag. The children get a chance to pick one card at a time and tell the other children what is happening in the picture.
- **SMILEY FACES/SAD FACES:** The children categorise the Friendship Skills cards based on desirable and undesirable ways of being a part of a group. A green smiley face and a red sad face are placed on the table. The children can divide the cards into positive and negative groups as they see fit.
- **VERBALISING EMOTIONS:** The group discusses the situations described in the cards. How would it feel if you were in a situation such as this? What kinds of emotions would it evoke?
- **FROM AN IMAGE TO A STORY:** The group discusses what is happening in a chosen Friendship Skills card. Adults help the children come up with a story for the events in the card. What is happening in this picture? What may have happened before? What could you do in a situation such as this? What might happen after this event?
- **CARD ON THE WALL:** One of the positive Friendship Skills cards is chosen and placed on the day care centre's wall for one week. The image will remind children of an important social skill, and the children get to practice the skill with their friends for one week.
- **OUR GROUP'S RULES:** Using the Friendship Skills cards, the children come up with rules for the group. The children get to choose their favourite pictures which are then glued on a large piece of cardboard with a headline such as Our group's rules. The events in the pictures can also be labelled as desirable and avoidable. For example, a helping picture might have a green smiley face next to it to show that in our group we help our friends. The red sad face can be attached next to a picture of shoving and pushing to show that in our group, no one is allowed to push a friend.

The exercises can be done with an adult, in pairs or in a group of children.

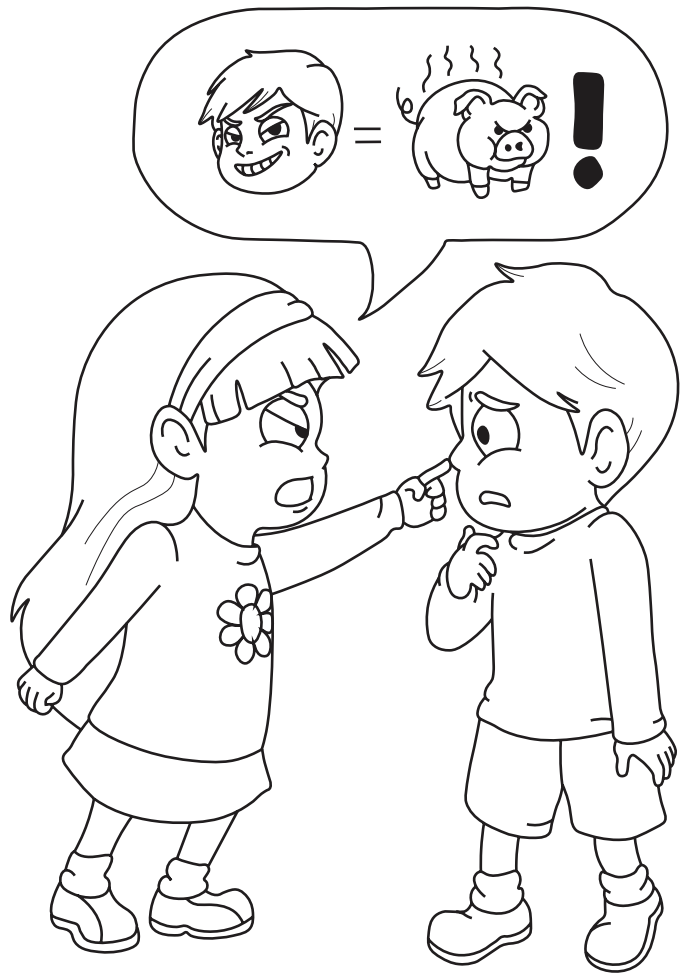
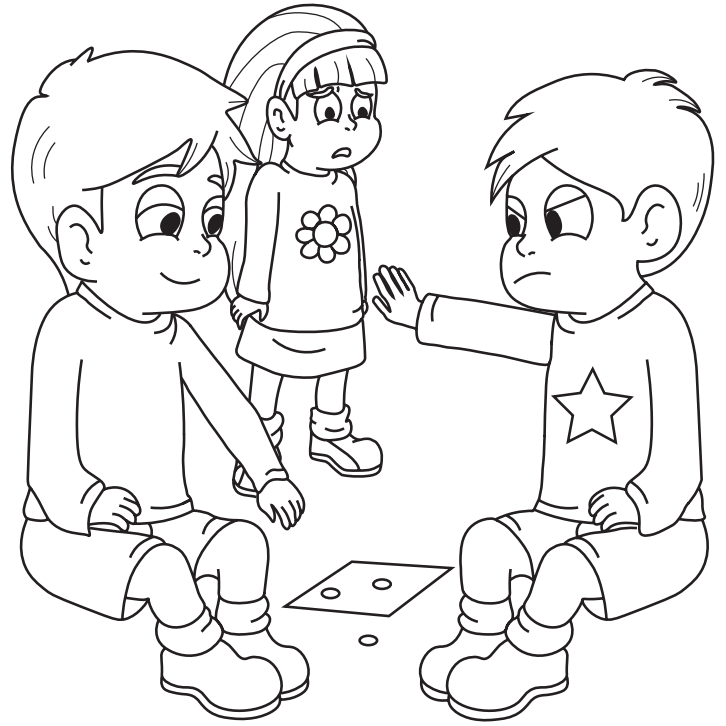
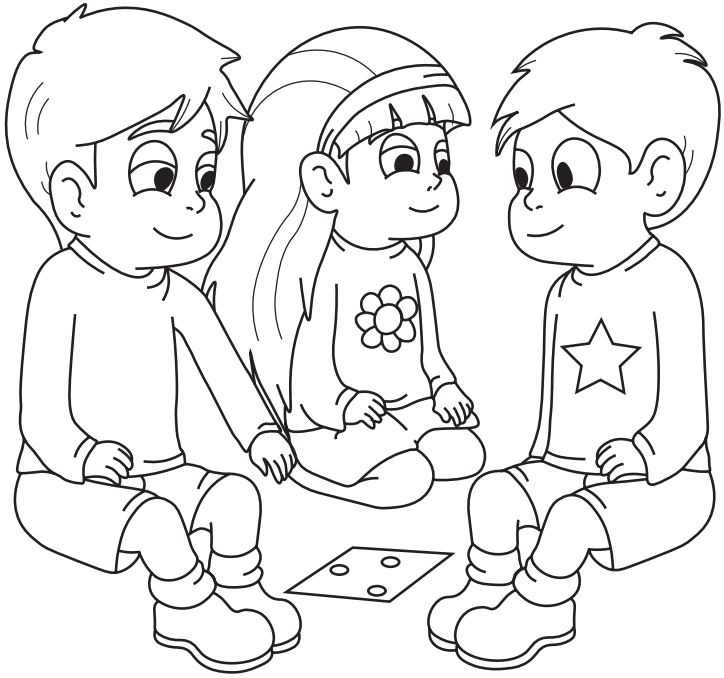
### Example questions to stir conversation

- What is happening in this picture?
- What happened before this event? What about after it?
- How do you interpret the pictures?
- Which situations that are a part of your daily life can you find among the pictures?
- What does an apology mean?
- Is it easy to apologise?
- Why is it important to apologise if you have hurt someone's feelings?
- Have you ever forgiven another person?
- Have you ever asked a friend to play with you?
- How would you feel if you were left alone?
- What do you do when you feel angry?
- How does it feel when you are pushed and shoved?
- What does it mean to calm down?
- Is it easy to calm down?
- What does bullying mean?
- Have you ever been bullied?
- Have you ever helped a friend?
- Have you ever been helped?
- When can you help someone else?
- Do you know how to listen to a friend?
- Have you ever been in a situation in which no one listens to you even if you wished they did?
- When do you thank a friend?
- Do you remember to ask an adult to help out in conflicts?

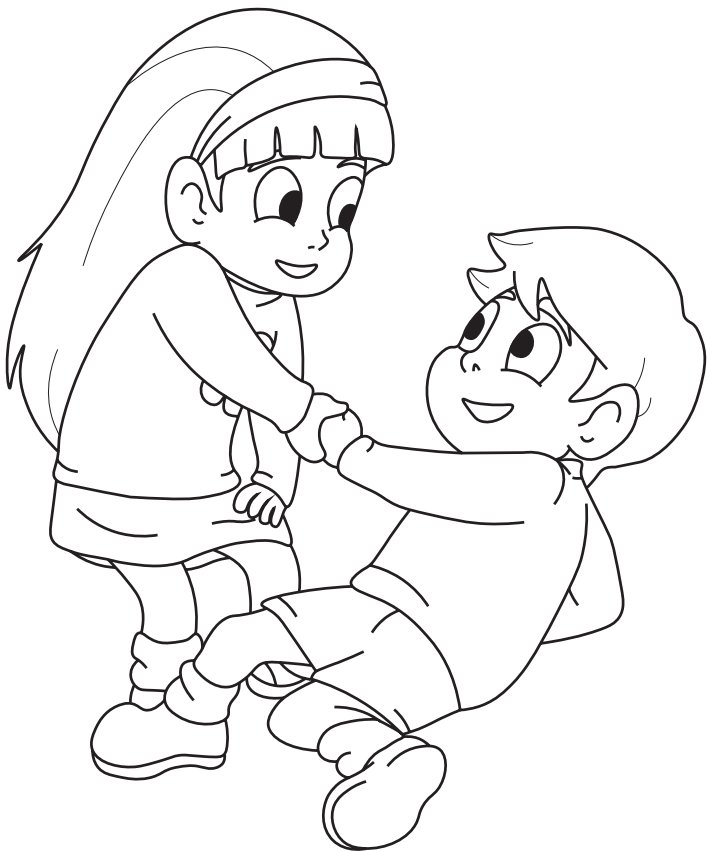
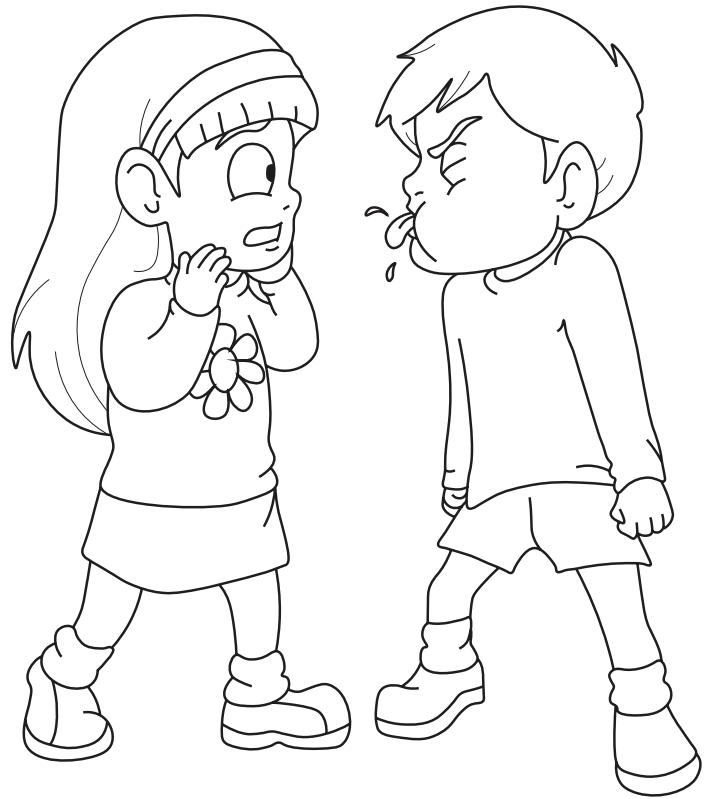
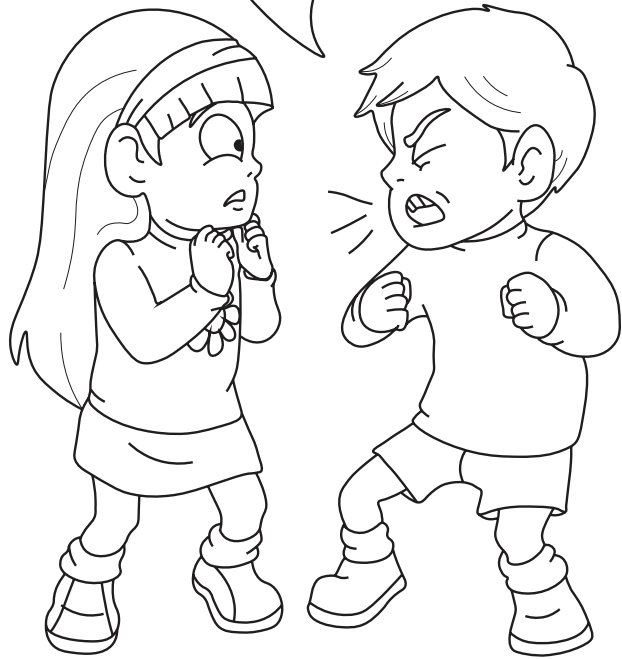
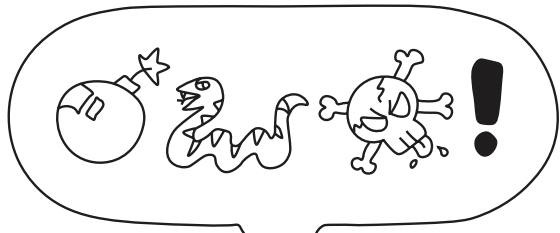


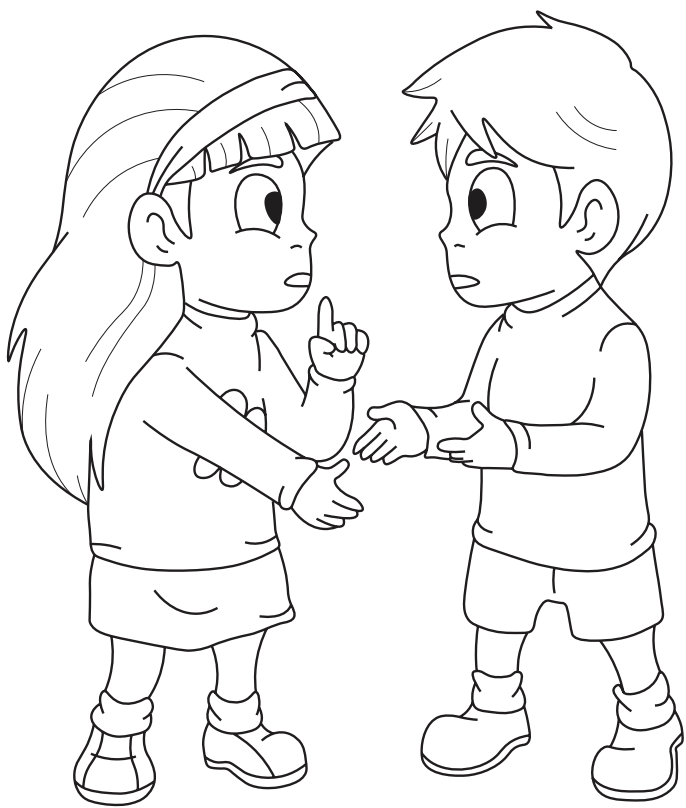












# AN EXAMPLE FOR MENTAL HEALTH SKILLS' ANNUAL WHEEL

- What is your day care centre's Annual Wheel like?
- Which activities are repeated on an annual basis?
- What kinds of shared events do you have throughout the year?
- What kinds of wellbeing events do you organise annually for staff?
- What deeds and things related to children's mental health could you include in your Annual Wheel? Compare with the Pinwheel of Wellbeing.
- You can also utilise the Annual Wheel also in pre-primary education.  
The material is well suited to pre-primary and primary education.

## Dates

10 Oct World Mental Health Day  
28 Oct Story-telling day  
16 Nov International Day of Tolerance  
20 Nov Universal Children's Day  
14 Feb Valentine's Day  
21 Mar International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination  
1 June Global Day of Parents  
Mother's Day  
Father's Day

## Social Skills Wagon

IN FEBRUARY (VALENTINE'S DAY)

Social skills can be practised using Friendship Skills cards, fairy-tales, stories and exercises. Themes could include topics such as no bullying; including everyone in; apologising and forgiving; negotiation skills, and practising good manners (looking people in the eye, saying please and thank you, waiting for your turn).

## Emotions Wagon

IN APRIL (OR SPRING)

The aim is to go through different emotions and learn to verbalise them. Coping with your emotions is also a topic for the Emotions Wagon. Emotional skills can be practised using Emotions cards, fairy-tales, stories and exercises. Parents are invited to a parents' evening with the topic emotional skills.

## Children' Safety Net Wagon

IN NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER (FATHER'S DAY, CHRISTMAS) OR MAY (MOTHER'S DAY)

Consider the importance of relationships. Children draw their safety network, and parents can help fill in the picture. The group can celebrate the Universal Children's Day.

## Rest Wagon

IN JUNE (BEFORE SUMMER HOLIDAYS)

Children too need a holiday from day care. The group discusses holiday plans and practise relaxation by doing relaxation exercises. The day care centre's summer trip.

## Daily Routines Wagon

IN AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER

Routines are important to children. Parents fill in a "daily routines clock" in which they draw and write about their child's daily routines. The aim of the clock is to get parents to think about what constitutes a good day for children. The children make a picture diary of their daily routines, and the group discusses the importance of routines. The day care centre could hold a parents' evening on the Hand of Mental Health theme.

## Children's Safety Net Wagon

IN AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER (FOR EXAMPLE WHEN DAY CARE OR PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION STARTS).

The aim is to emphasise the importance of adults. The day care centre could organise an evening for those adults included in the children's safety nets. The invitees could include parents, godparents, grandparents or neighbours. The discussions should be about the importance of safe adults in children's life. It is a good idea to use the Children's Safety Net poster and tools for this topic.

## Developing Child Wagon

IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER (WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY, UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY, UNITED NATIONS DAY)

The group discusses children's rights using fairy-tales and exercises. Furthermore, the children make an inchworm featuring skills that they would like to develop in the next few months.

Children's development and adjustment to day care is discussed with parents.

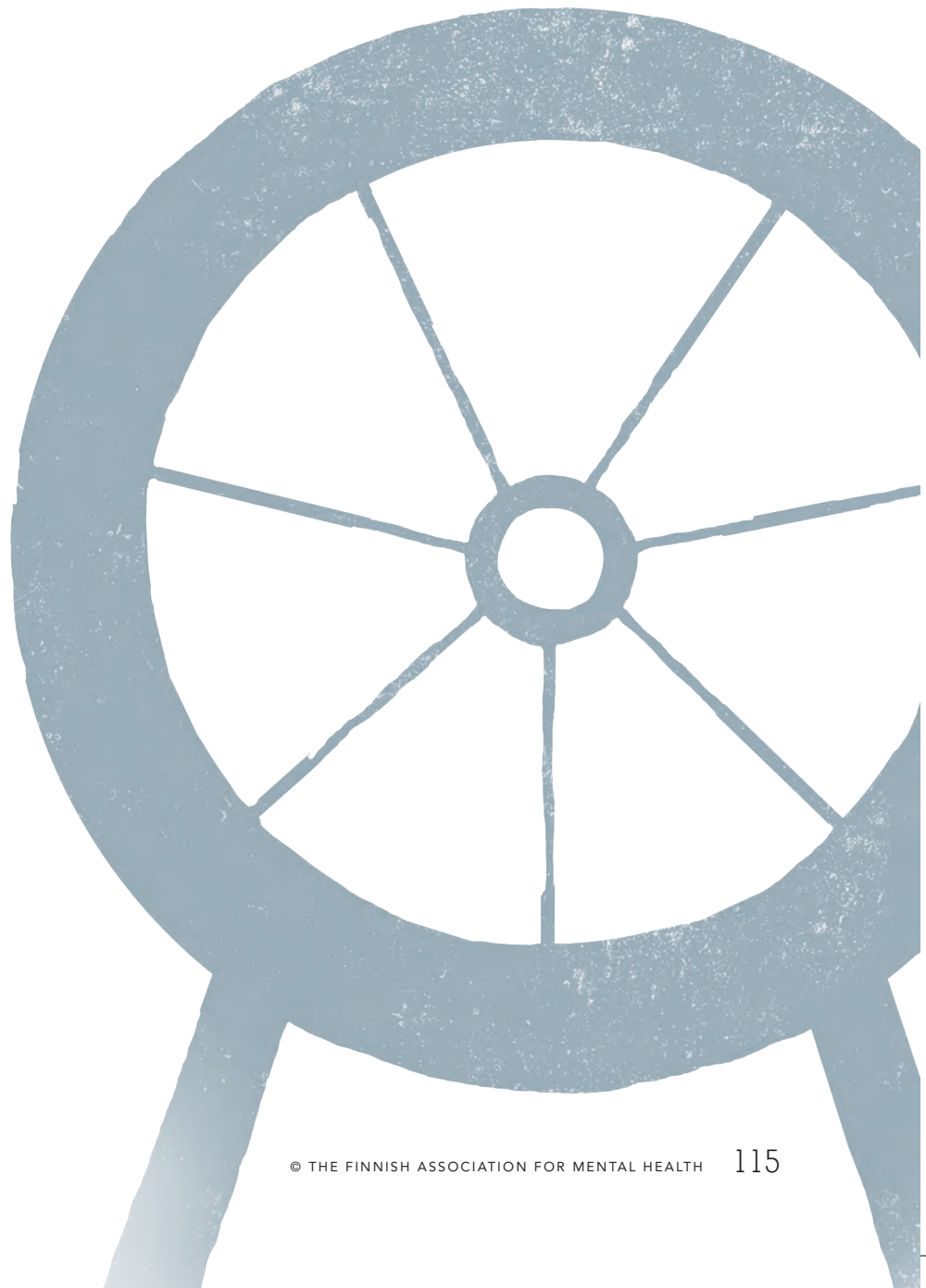
## Self-esteem Wagon

IN JANUARY

Children participate in different self-esteem exercises. They receive encouragement and positive feedback. Parents are reminded about the importance of supporting children's self-esteem and self-image.

## Extra wagon: Crisis and coping and coping strategies

This wagon is used whenever it is needed in the year. For example, if there is a specific need to discuss a crisis or loss.







# MENTAL HEALTH SKILLS' ANNUAL WHEEL





DECEMBER

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JULY

JUNE

EXTRAWAGON