



Learning Environments that Advance Rights and Nonviolence



Parent and Community Engagement Guide

A Parent and Community Engagement Guide on Positive Discipline, Child Safety, and Well-being





Learning Environments that Advance Rights and Nonviolence

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This **Parent and Community Engagement Guide** is part of the LEARN Toolkit for primary schools and is designed to support school leaders, teachers, and facilitators in conducting meaningful conversations with parents, caregivers, and community members around positive discipline, child protection, emotional well-being, and school safety. The LEARN Toolkit comprises a series of integrated resources that promote nurturing, respectful, and inclusive learning environments for all children.

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LVCT Health

Sonning Suite, Suna Road Off Ngong Road,
P.O. Box 19835 – 00202
Nairobi, Kenya
Email: info@lvcthealth.org
Website: www.lvcthealth.org

Caring Communities

**A Parent and Community Engagement Guide on
Positive Discipline, Child Safety, and
Well-being**

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Introduction

Welcome to the Parent and Community Engagement Guide, a key component of the LEARN initiative dedicated to creating safe, nurturing, and respectful school environments for every child. Violence against children in schools remains a serious concern impacting learners' emotional well-being, academic performance, and overall development. It undermines the essential trust between children, teachers, parents, and the community, creating fear and resentment instead of respect and growth.

No school can effectively tackle this challenge alone. Preventing and addressing violence against children requires committed collaboration between school leaders, parents, and the wider community. Parents and community members play a crucial role in shaping attitudes, beliefs, and practices around discipline and child safety. Their active participation, understanding, and support are essential for any meaningful, lasting change.

This guide has therefore been carefully developed to empower school leaders, including headteachers, Board of Management (BOM) members, guidance and counselling teachers, and classroom teachers, to confidently and compassionately engage parents and community members. It provides practical, detailed talking points, evidence-based insights, and empathetic responses to facilitate sensitive yet critical conversations around positive discipline, child protection, emotional safety, and mental health. We recognise these conversations may be challenging, especially when addressing strongly held traditions such as corporal punishment.

This guide is designed to support facilitators in respectfully and constructively navigating these sensitive topics. By fostering dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect, we aim not only to challenge harmful practices but also to strengthen partnerships. Together, parents, schools, and communities can build a cohesive support system, ensuring every child is protected, valued, and emotionally secure, both at school and at home. Your role as facilitator is vital. Each conversation you facilitate has the potential to shift attitudes, foster shared understanding, and build a collective commitment towards creating safer schools and healthier communities. Thank you for taking on this meaningful and impactful role. Together, we can make schools places of safety, respect, and compassion, where every learner can truly flourish.

Purpose and Audience

The primary purpose of this Parent and Community Engagement Guide is to:

- Equip school leaders and facilitators to confidently engage parents and the broader community in meaningful dialogue about child safety, discipline, and well-being.
- Provide detailed, practical talking points on critical topics including positive discipline, child rights, emotional safety, and mental health.
- Address common beliefs and misconceptions about corporal punishment respectfully and clearly, using evidence-based insights.
- Strengthen collaboration between schools, families, and communities to foster safer, more nurturing, and emotionally healthy environments for all children.

This guide is specifically designed to support the following groups:

- Headteachers
- Members of the Board of Management (BOM)
- Classroom Teachers
- Guidance and Counselling Teachers
- Other school administrators or leaders involved in community engagement, parental meetings, and safeguarding responsibilities.

Your role as facilitators in these conversations is critical: you guide dialogue, shape understanding, and encourage collective action towards safer, healthier, and more respectful school communities.

How to Use This Guide

This engagement guide has been developed with flexibility in mind. You can use it effectively across multiple settings, such as:

- **Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) meetings:** Regular or special sessions for targeted discussions.
- **Community gatherings and stakeholder engagements:** Broader discussions involving community leaders, parents, and caregivers.
- **School assemblies and event days:** Dedicated occasions where the entire school community gathers to focus specifically on child safety, discipline, and emotional health.
- **Workshops and awareness sessions:** Short, focused training or sensitisation sessions for parents or community groups.

Each session in the guide provides comprehensive and ready-to-use talking points that can stand independently. While you can select and deliver topics individually according to specific audience needs, delivering them sequentially is strongly encouraged. This ensures progressive, coherent understanding among your audience.

Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment

Building trust, respect, and openness is critical for productive conversations with parents and community members. The following guidelines will help facilitators confidently create and maintain a welcoming atmosphere where every participant feels comfortable expressing themselves, sharing experiences, and exploring sensitive topics:

- **Warm Welcome and Clear Introduction:** Start each session by warmly greeting everyone, acknowledging their attendance and commitment. Clearly explain the purpose of the gathering, highlighting the shared objective of creating safer, more supportive schools for all children. Emphasise your appreciation of participants' time and willingness to engage in these important conversations.
- **Setting Ground Rules Together:** Invite parents and community members to collaboratively establish simple ground rules. This encourages ownership and ensures everyone feels their voice matters. Suggested ground rules include:

- **Respectful listening:** Allow each person to speak without interruption.
- **Confidentiality:** Ensure shared personal experiences remain within the group.
- **Non-judgmental dialogue:** Promote understanding and empathy, avoiding blame, shame, or hostility.
- **Open-mindedness:** Encourage genuine curiosity, honesty, and willingness to consider new perspectives, even when challenging traditional beliefs.
- **Inclusivity:** Create an environment where every participant, regardless of age, gender, or social background, feels equally respected and valued.
- Display these ground rules visibly throughout the session and revisit them gently if tensions or conflicts emerge.

- **Managing Sensitive Conversations Thoughtfully:** Topics such as discipline, child protection, emotional well-being, and experiences of violence or trauma can be emotionally charged. Recognise and acknowledge that these issues may evoke strong emotions or defensive reactions rooted in personal or cultural beliefs. When sensitive subjects arise:

- **Validate emotions:** Acknowledge participants' feelings respectfully. For example, say, "I understand these topics can bring up strong emotions, and it's completely normal to feel passionate about our children's safety."
- **Maintain neutrality:** As a facilitator, remain calm, balanced, and empathetic. Refrain from personal judgments or taking sides.
- **Refocus the dialogue:** Gently steer discussions back to the shared goal of promoting children's safety and well-being, reminding everyone of their collective responsibility. You might say, "Let's remember we are all here because we care deeply about the safety and happiness of our children."
- **Encourage empathy and perspective-taking:** Use thoughtful questions to help participants see issues from a child's point of view, such as, "How might a child feel in that situation? What message do we want children to receive from how we discipline them?"
- **Offer breaks if needed:** If discussions become heated or emotionally overwhelming, suggest a short pause to allow participants to reflect and regain composure.

- **Encouraging Community Voices:** Actively invite quieter participants or underrepresented groups to share their perspectives, ensuring diverse voices are heard. Use inclusive language, eye contact, and gentle encouragement. Example prompts could be:



- "We'd love to hear thoughts from parents who might not have spoken yet."
- "Does anyone have experiences or ideas from their own family or community they would like to share?"

- **Handling Defensiveness or Conflict During Sessions:** Sometimes, a participant may become upset, argumentative, or walk out. Prepare yourself to respond with calm and clarity. If this happens:



- Remain neutral. Do not argue or match the energy.
- Acknowledge emotion: "I hear that this is upsetting, and that is okay."
- **Redirect gently:** "Let us pause for a moment. We are here to learn from one another with respect."
- Take a short break if needed to lower tension.
- Follow up privately with the individual afterwards to listen and offer support.
- If necessary, involve the headteacher or safeguarding focal person if conflict continues.

- **Facilitator Prompts You Can Use:**



- "These topics can touch us deeply. Thank you for your honesty."
- "Let us take a breath and remember we are all here for our children."
- "This might be hard to talk about, and that is okay."
- "I want to acknowledge your courage in raising that concern."
- "Let us hear from someone who has not spoken yet."

- **Closing with Positivity and Respect:** End every session positively by summarising key points of agreement, acknowledging differences respectfully, and reinforcing the importance of continued dialogue. Encourage ongoing reflection and express gratitude for participants' openness and willingness to engage.



By intentionally creating this safe, respectful, and inclusive environment, you foster trust, deepen understanding, and build a united commitment toward protecting and nurturing every child within your school community.

Participatory Approach to Engagement

Your primary role as a facilitator is to foster meaningful, two-way conversations. To facilitate effectively:

- **Encourage Active Participation:** Ask reflective, open-ended questions that invite parents and community members to share experiences and perspectives. **Examples include:** "Can you share how discipline was handled when you were growing up, and how that impacted you?" "What kind of relationships do you want your children to have with their teachers and peers?"
- **Use Clear, Relatable Language:** Speak in simple terms everyone can understand. Avoid technical jargon or abstract concepts. Use familiar scenarios and straightforward examples from daily life to illustrate points.
- **Respond to Concerns with Empathy:** Many parents or community members might defend practices such as corporal punishment based on tradition or fear of losing parental authority. Always start by validating their positive intentions: "I understand you want your child to grow up respectful and responsible. Let us explore how positive discipline can achieve this effectively, without causing emotional harm."

Facilitator Responsibilities and Preparation

To ensure smooth and effective engagement, you as a facilitator must:

- Thoroughly read and internalise each session's talking points beforehand.
- Prepare emotionally and mentally to handle sensitive or controversial discussions calmly and respectfully.
- Practise your responses to anticipated challenging questions to boost your confidence during facilitation.
- Familiarise yourself fully with your local child protection policies and referral mechanisms, so you can act promptly and appropriately if any safeguarding concerns or disclosures arise during the session.

Materials and Resources Required

For smooth, confident, and effective facilitation of community and parental engagement sessions, have the following materials prepared and readily available:

- **Copies of the Engagement Guide:** Provide clear, easily readable copies for facilitators to reference throughout the session. If possible, prepare summarised handouts for parents and community members highlighting key points, messages, or reflections to take home.
- **Notebook and Pens:** Use these to discreetly and accurately record any sensitive disclosures, concerns, or notes for follow-up. Facilitators should have their own notebook or journal designated specifically for these engagements to ensure confidentiality and professionalism.

- **Flipcharts, Markers, and Chalkboards:** Use these visual aids to clearly display and reinforce session themes, key messages, ground rules, and participant feedback. Engage participants by writing their contributions visibly, affirming their input, and fostering a collaborative learning environment.
- **Local Child Protection and Support Contact Details:** Clearly display contact details for your designated safeguarding officer, school guidance counsellor, child protection helplines (such as Childline 116), and local community support services. Ensure that this information is easily visible and accessible during and after the session, empowering parents and community members to seek additional support or information as needed.
- **Prepared Resources for Parents and Community Members:** Provide simple printed reference materials, handouts, or brochures on child rights, positive discipline strategies, signs of abuse, and emotional well-being. Include easy-to-understand information on what steps to take and who to contact if parents or community members have ongoing concerns or questions.

By ensuring you are fully prepared with these essential materials and clear safeguarding procedures, you will help create an environment where everyone feels secure, respected, and supported to share openly and confidently. This preparation enhances your ability to effectively facilitate meaningful, transformative conversations with parents and community members, ultimately contributing to safer, healthier, and more nurturing environments for all children.

How the Sessions Are Organised

This guide is structured to take parents, caregivers, and community leaders on a journey from awareness to action. The sessions begin by exploring why violence must stop and what harmful discipline looks like, followed by an introduction to children’s rights and positive alternatives. As the sessions progress, participants explore how to build emotionally safe homes and schools, strengthen mental health and communication, and work together as families, teachers, and communities to protect children. The later sessions focus on recognising serious risks, creating safe digital and school environments, and turning discussion into shared action. This order supports deep reflection, opens space for mindset change, and helps adults build practical skills for creating safer, more respectful spaces for children. This comprehensive engagement guide covers essential topics in clear, practical detail, including:

Session Title	Key Content Areas
Session 1: Why Violence in Schools Must Stop	- Forms and impact of violence (physical, emotional, sexual, peer-related) - Hidden harms: how violence affects learning, trust, and mental health - What violence looks like in school, home, and community settings
Session 2: Recognising Harmful Discipline	- The difference between discipline and punishment - Corporal punishment myths vs. evidence - How harmful practices are passed down and normalised
Session 3: Understanding Children’s Rights	- What are children’s rights and why they matter - Rights-based parenting and schooling - Linking rights to responsibilities in age-appropriate ways
Session 4: Positive Discipline – A Better Way	- Principles and examples of positive discipline - How to guide children with empathy, structure, and consequences - Responding to misbehaviour without violence
Session 5: Building Emotionally Safe Homes and Schools	- What emotional safety means for children - How emotional safety improves learning and behaviour - Supporting children through stress, fear, or sadness
Session 6: Supporting Children’s Mental Health and Well-being	- Signs of distress or emotional struggle - What parents and teachers can do early - How to access help and build resilience
Quick Reference: Recognising Signs of Distress in Children	- Behavioural, emotional, and physical signs - What to say and how to respond - When and where to seek help

Session Title	Key Content Areas
Session 7: Talking and Listening – Communication with Children	• Importance of two-way communication • Listening without blame • Helping children express feelings and ask for help
Session 8: Safe Communities for Safe Children	• Community-based risks: peer violence, neglect, exploitationRole of neighbours, faith leaders, and local networks • Building child-friendly and protective spaces
Session 9: Digital Safety and Respect in a Connected World	• What children do online and common risks • Helping children build safe habits and respect boundaries • Monitoring without control
Session 10: What to Do When a Child Is at Risk	• Recognising red flags and early signs • How to respond and report concerns • Referral and support options for families
Session 11: Strengthening Parent–Teacher Relationships	• Why mutual respect and communication matter • Supporting each other as caregivers and educators • Practical tools for home–school collaboration
Session 12: Creating a Whole–School Culture of Respect and Safety	• The school as a role model for safety • Making child protection everyone’s responsibility • Parent involvement in school safety
Session 13: Sustaining Change – What Can We Do Together?	• Community pledges and shared action • Parent support groups, child rights clubs, BOM engagement • Keeping dialogue and momentum going
Closing Summary: Sustaining the Conversation and Commitment	• Reflecting on the journey • Ideas for continued learning and advocacy • Final commitments and next steps

Each topic should include:

- **Key Talking Points (ready to speak aloud):** These are concise, clearly phrased messages the facilitator can read or paraphrase directly when leading a session. They should use simple, conversational language and capture the main ideas of the session. These points help ensure consistency and accuracy in how sensitive or technical content is presented.
- **Real-life Examples or Scenarios:** These are short, relatable stories or situations that illustrate the topic in action. They may be drawn from typical community, school, or family contexts. Scenarios help parents and caregivers connect abstract concepts (such as emotional safety or positive discipline) with familiar daily experiences. They can be used to spark discussion, reflection, or problem-solving in the group.

- **Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses:** This section anticipates frequent questions, doubts, or objections that may come up during the session. For example, parents may worry that certain approaches are unrealistic or may question how children will learn discipline without punishment. The facilitator is provided with respectful, non-judgmental ways to respond to these concerns, using affirming language and values-based reasoning.
- **Tips for Community Dialogue:** These tips guide facilitators on how to create a safe, inclusive space for discussion. They may include prompts to encourage quieter voices, strategies for de-escalating tension, or reminders to link the topic to local parenting and cultural practices. These tips support meaningful participation and respectful debate, especially where sensitive topics like violence, rights, or emotional needs are involved.
- **Reflection or Take-home Discussion Questions:** These are open-ended questions that parents can think about after the session, discuss at home with family members, or bring to the next community gathering. They reinforce the key messages of the session and encourage ongoing learning beyond the immediate session. They are especially helpful for building connections between school-based work and parenting at home.
- **Facilitator Self-Evaluation Table:** This table supports the facilitator in reflecting on how each session went during the pilot phase. It includes structured prompts to review delivery, parent engagement, clarity of content, and areas for improvement. The reflection helps identify what worked well and what could be strengthened in future sessions. It is also a tool for capturing facilitator experiences across different settings, ensuring the guide can be refined based on real delivery challenges and successes. Facilitators are encouraged to complete the table immediately after each session while their observations are still fresh.
- **Quick Reference Guides:** These are one-page inserts included within the guide to support facilitators and parents in navigating complex or sensitive topics. Each guide presents key definitions, legal or policy context, and practical messaging that can be used during sessions. The language is conversational and accessible, helping facilitators speak with confidence and clarity. The guides are designed to be read aloud, paraphrased, or displayed when introducing topics such as corporal punishment, rights and responsibilities, or emotional well-being. They also provide a shared foundation for community discussion, ensuring that legal standards, values, and key messages are consistently understood across all sessions.

Facilitator Note on Session Duration and Time Adaptation

Each session in this guide is designed to be delivered in 15 minutes or less during school–parent meetings, community gatherings, or other structured settings. This short format allows facilitators to introduce important ideas, spark reflection, and encourage continued dialogue without overwhelming participants or disrupting other agenda items.



To make the most of this time, facilitators are encouraged to:

- Focus on one or two key ideas per session
- Use local language, familiar examples, and relatable stories
- Allow brief discussion or reflection while keeping the session moving
- Avoid trying to cover every detail in one sitting
- Refer to earlier topics or link forward to future sessions for continuity.

However, actual delivery time may vary depending on the audience size, setting, and topic sensitivity. Some sessions may prompt strong emotions or deep discussion, and facilitators should be prepared to adapt while maintaining focus on the core message. **Here are tips for the different settings where this guide can be used:**

For Large PTA Meetings or School Assemblies:

- Select a few key talking points rather than all content
- Use one clear real-life story to reinforce the message
- Limit discussion to a few brief reflections or questions
- Encourage follow-up conversations in smaller groups later

For Small Group or Community Dialogues:

- Allow more time for open-ended sharing and questions
- Use all talking points and examples to foster deeper understanding
- Facilitate short role plays or reflective activities if time allows
- Capture participant ideas on a flipchart to revisit in future sessions.



General Time Management Tips:

- Begin and end on time to show respect for participants
- Use a watch or visual cue to pace the session smoothly
- If emotions run high, offer a short break and resume with care
- Emphasise that conversations will continue. No single session needs to solve everything.

This flexible approach ensures sessions remain practical, respectful of participants' time, and easy to integrate into existing school or community routines. By adjusting your delivery style based on the group and context, you help create space for meaningful engagement, reflection, and long-term change.

Safeguarding and Disclosures

During conversations about child protection, discipline, and emotional well-being, it is possible that children, parents, or other community members might disclose experiences or concerns related to violence, abuse, or neglect. As a facilitator, your responsibility is significant but clear: your role is not to investigate, counsel, or resolve the issue yourself, but rather to listen, document, reassure, and immediately follow established procedures to ensure the safety and protection of the child or individual involved.

Here are detailed guidelines to help you manage safeguarding concerns sensitively and professionally..

Create an Environment of Safety and Trust	• From the outset, clearly communicate that the session is a safe space for sharing concerns and experiences. • Reinforce confidentiality guidelines while also clearly stating that if anyone discloses a situation involving harm or danger, you have a duty to report to appropriate authorities to ensure their protection and support.
Listen Calmly and Compassionately	• If a disclosure occurs, remain calm, attentive, and composed, even if the details shared are distressing or emotional. • Provide focused attention, maintain gentle eye contact, and avoid interrupting or expressing shock or disbelief.
Respond with Affirmation and Empathy	• Immediately validate the individual's courage in sharing sensitive information by saying something reassuring like: "Thank you for trusting me enough to share this with me. You have done the right thing." • Use simple, empathetic language to reassure the person disclosing: "I am here to help and support you. You are not alone in this."
Clearly Document the Disclosure	• As soon as possible after the conversation, discreetly and confidentially document exactly what was said, using the person's own words. • Note the date, time, location, context of the disclosure, and any other relevant observations (such as the individual's emotional state or any visible signs of distress).
Report Promptly and Confidentially	• Follow your school's established safeguarding procedures without delay. Immediately inform your designated safeguarding officer, headteacher, or the appropriate child protection authority. • Ensure the documentation is securely handled and passed on only to authorised personnel.

Provide Immediate Guidance and Support	• Clearly outline the next steps to the individual who disclosed: explain briefly who you will report to, what typically happens next, and reassure them that professional support will be provided promptly. • Maintain confidentiality by not discussing the disclosure with others who are not directly involved in safeguarding processes.
Follow-up and Aftercare	• Check back privately with the individual in a caring, discreet way to reassure them that actions have been taken and support is ongoing. • Ensure ongoing care through referral to a trained counsellor, guidance teacher, or relevant external services for emotional and psychological support.
Maintain Self-care and Professionalism	• Acknowledge your own emotional reactions and seek confidential support from a colleague or supervisor, if needed. • Remember safeguarding issues can be emotionally challenging for everyone involved. Prioritise your emotional well-being and seek support if you feel overwhelmed or distressed.

Addressing Challenging Questions and Concerns

We recognise that conversations around discipline, particularly moving away from corporal punishment, often raise difficult and sceptical questions from parents and community members. Throughout this guide, we have thoughtfully provided detailed, comprehensive responses to many common and challenging questions or concerns that parents frequently raise during conversations and engagements.

These questions have been gathered from extensive interactions with parents and community dialogues, reflecting genuine concerns, traditional beliefs, and common misunderstandings. For each topic discussed, particularly around corporal punishment, child safety, emotional well-being, and positive discipline, you will find:

- Clearly articulated, empathetic responses to parental concerns.
- Evidence-based explanations, presented sensitively and respectfully, to help shift understanding and build agreement.
- Practical examples and relatable scenarios to illustrate how positive discipline and child-centred approaches effectively promote better behaviour and emotional growth in children.

Key Takeaways for Facilitators

As a school leader, teacher, or facilitator, you hold a powerful role in shaping how your community understands child safety, emotional well-being, and discipline. Here are the most important principles to carry with you into every session:

- **Positive discipline fosters long-term learning and respectful behaviour.** Unlike corporal punishment, which relies on fear, positive discipline builds understanding, empathy, and responsibility in children. It creates internal motivation to behave well, not just to avoid punishment, but to do what is right.
- **Violence, in all its forms, harms children's development.** Physical punishment, verbal humiliation, neglect, and peer bullying all leave emotional wounds. These may not always be visible, but they deeply affect children's ability to learn, form relationships, and feel safe.
- **Emotional safety and mental health are not optional, they are essential.** A child cannot thrive in school if they are anxious, fearful, or emotionally distressed. Their ability to focus, relate to others, and absorb new knowledge depends on feeling safe and valued.
- **Discipline and protection are shared responsibilities.** Schools cannot do it alone. Lasting change requires strong, consistent partnerships between teachers, parents, guardians, community leaders, and school administrators. We all share a role in modelling the behaviours we hope to see in children.
- **Your facilitation can transform attitudes.** These conversations are not just about sharing information. They are about shifting beliefs that have been passed down through generations. By listening well, responding with empathy, and offering clear, practical alternatives, you help families rethink what it means to raise children with dignity and respect.
- **You are a bridge-builder.** When parents feel included and respected, they are more likely to listen, reflect, and join the journey of positive change. Use this guide to bridge knowledge gaps, build trust, and foster shared understanding.

Final Words of Encouragement

Every dialogue you initiate, no matter how simple, plants a seed. A seed of reflection, of questioning harmful norms, of reimagining how we relate to children. The path to transforming school culture is rarely easy. It involves challenging long-held beliefs, addressing sensitive topics, and sometimes facing resistance. But every respectful conversation moves us forward.

Change does not happen overnight. It happens in small, repeated moments. when a parent pauses before shouting, when a teacher chooses empathy over punishment, when a child feels brave enough to speak up because they know they will be heard.

You are not alone in this effort. You are part of a growing movement of educators, caregivers, and community leaders who believe that all children deserve to feel safe, supported, and respected. Your dedication, your consistency, and your courage to speak about what matters most will ripple outward, impacting learners, families, and entire communities.

Hold on to your purpose. Let your tone be one of warmth, strength, and inclusion. Encourage dialogue, even when it is uncomfortable. And most importantly, keep showing up with empathy, clarity, and hope.

Together, we are building stronger relationships, more compassionate schools, and a safer future for all children. Let us walk this journey hand in hand, one conversation, one mindset shift, one act of care at a time.

Glossary of Key Terms

This glossary provides simple definitions of key terms used throughout the guide. Facilitators can refer to this list when preparing for sessions or explaining concepts to parents and community members.

Board of Management (BOM):	The school's governing body, made up of parents, teachers, and community leaders. BOM members help ensure discipline and safety policies are followed.
Bullying	A repeated behaviour where one or more children deliberately hurt, intimidate, or exclude another child. It may include hitting, name-calling, spreading rumours, mocking, or online harassment. Bullying causes emotional harm and is a form of peer violence.
Caregiver	Any adult responsible for a child's daily care, such as a parent, guardian, grandparent, or foster carer.
Child Protection	The systems, laws, and actions put in place to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, and exploitation of children at home, in school, and in the community.
Corporal Punishment	The use of physical force intended to cause pain or discomfort as a form of discipline. It includes hitting, slapping, caning, pinching, or making children kneel or stand for long periods. Corporal punishment is banned in Kenyan schools and is considered harmful to children's development and emotional well-being.
Digital Safety	The knowledge, behaviours, and practices that help children stay safe when using phones, the internet, social media, or digital devices. It includes managing online risks, respecting privacy, and encouraging responsible digital habits.
Emotional Abuse	Non-physical actions that damage a child's self-esteem, confidence, or sense of safety. This includes shouting, threatening, mocking, name-calling, or silent treatment. Emotional abuse is often overlooked but can have long-lasting effects on mental health.
Emotional Safety	The experience of feeling secure, accepted, and free from fear, shame, or humiliation. Emotionally safe environments help children learn, express themselves, and grow confidently.
Mental Health	A person's emotional and psychological well-being. Good mental health helps children think clearly, cope with stress, build relationships, and enjoy life.
Neglect	The failure of caregivers or responsible adults to meet a child's basic needs such as food, shelter, supervision, emotional care, or education. Neglect places children at risk and is a form of violence under child protection laws.
Peer Support	The practice of children or adults supporting one another by listening, encouraging, and offering help during challenges. Peer support builds connection and shared responsibility.

(cont.)

Peer Violence	Aggressive or harmful behaviours between children or adolescents, often involving bullying, teasing, physical fights, or exclusion. Peer violence can happen in classrooms, playgrounds, online, or on the way to and from school. It can be physical, emotional, or sexual in nature.
Positive Discipline	A teaching approach that helps children learn respectful behaviour through empathy, structure, clear expectations, and consequences that guide rather than punish.
Positive Role Modelling	When adults demonstrate respectful, calm, and caring behaviour that children can learn from. Children often copy what they see. Positive role modelling is a powerful way to teach discipline, empathy, and responsibility.
Reporting Pathway	The step-by-step process for alerting the appropriate people or services when a child is at risk or has been harmed. A reporting pathway may include speaking to a guidance teacher, headteacher, safeguarding focal person, local chief, or calling a child protection helpline (e.g. Childline 116).
Resilience	A child's ability to recover from difficulties, adapt to change, and keep going despite setbacks. Resilience is strengthened by care, encouragement, and supportive relationships.
Safeguarding Focal Person	A designated individual within a school or community responsible for handling child protection concerns. This person receives reports of harm, coordinates referrals, and ensures appropriate follow-up under existing child protection procedures.
Safeguarding	The actions taken to protect children from harm, abuse, or neglect. This includes recognising risks, responding to concerns, and following proper reporting and referral procedures.
Trauma	Emotional or psychological harm caused by frightening, painful, or overwhelming experiences, such as violence, abuse, or loss. Trauma can affect a child's behaviour, learning, and relationships.
Two-Way Communication	An approach to speaking and listening where children are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings, and adults respond with respect and interest, not just instructions or correction.
Upholding Rights	Taking action to respect and protect the legal and human rights of children. This includes listening to them, keeping them safe, and treating them with dignity.
Violence in and Around Schools	Any act that causes physical, emotional, or sexual harm to children within school premises or on their way to and from school. It includes teacher-inflicted corporal punishment, peer bullying, sexual harassment, and unsafe journeys to school. It disrupts learning and damages trust between children and adults.
Well-being	A child's overall state of physical, emotional, and mental health. Children with good well-being feel safe, loved, capable, and connected to others.
Whole-School Approach	A coordinated effort by all school members, teachers, staff, parents, students, and leaders, to create a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment. This approach includes policies, practices, and relationships that protect and empower children.

SESSION 1

Why Violence in Schools Must Stop

Session 1:

Why Violence in Schools Must Stop

Session Overview: This session helps parents and community members understand the different types of violence children face in schools and how this violence, physical, emotional, sexual, or peer-related, harms children's development, trust, and learning. It highlights the hidden, lasting impacts of violence, challenges the normalisation of harmful discipline, and explains why stopping violence is not only a legal and moral responsibility but a practical step towards nurturing confident, respectful learners.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)

What Is Violence Against Children in Schools?

- Violence includes physical harm (e.g. caning, slapping), emotional abuse (e.g. shouting, mocking), sexual abuse, and bullying between learners. Even acts meant to "teach a lesson" can be violent and leave deep emotional wounds.
- Children also face violence from older students, teachers, neighbours, and sometimes family members.

The Hidden Harms of Violence

- Fear of violence causes stress, anxiety, and shame. These affect learning and behaviour.
- Children may withdraw, stop speaking up, or perform poorly in school.
- Violence teaches children that power comes from hurting others. This creates a cycle of abuse.

Why Stopping Violence Benefits Everyone

- Children who feel safe learn better, behave better, and ✓ respect others.
- Reducing violence improves school performance, teacher-child relationships, and family life.
- Schools where children are treated with care are more peaceful and cooperative.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

- **Example 1:** A girl avoids school because she is afraid of being caned for not doing homework. No one knows she is struggling to read. Without violence, her teacher could have discovered this and helped.
- **Example 2:** A boy is regularly called lazy and slow by a teacher. He loses confidence, stops participating, and believes he is worthless.
- **Example 3:** After a training on positive discipline, a school stops corporal punishment. Attendance rises, and children start reporting bullying because they trust adults to act fairly.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses

 **Concern:** “Violence teaches children to be tough and respectful.”

 **Response:** “It may seem so on the surface, but many children who experience violence carry pain, fear, or anger. True respect grows from feeling understood and supported, not from fear.”

 **Concern:** “If we stop using the cane, children will become stubborn.”

 **Response:** “Positive discipline is not soft. It uses firm rules and consistent consequences, but without hurting the child. It teaches children to think, take responsibility, and behave respectfully”

 **Concern:** “We are only trying to correct children when we beat them.”

 **Response:** “Correction is important. But correction does not need to cause pain. There are safer, more effective ways to correct children that build trust and lasting change.”

Tips for Community Dialogue

- Ask: “What kind of person do we hope our children become? Can fear and pain teach those values?”
- Share stories of change from other schools or communities.
- Encourage open conversation: “Let us talk about what discipline looked like in our day, and whether it truly helped us or harmed us.”
- Remind participants of the law: Corporal punishment is banned in Kenya, and safer alternatives are required by policy.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. What forms of violence do children in your community experience at school?
2. Have you seen children affected negatively by harsh discipline? What did that look like?
3. What are some ways adults can model respect, discipline, and safety without using violence?
4. What steps can we take as a community to stop normalising harmful discipline practices?

Facilitator Self-Evaluation Table

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SESSION 2

Recognising Harmful Discipline



Session 2:

Recognising Harmful Discipline

Session Overview: This session explores the difference between discipline and punishment, helping parents and community members reflect on their own experiences and beliefs. It challenges the myths surrounding corporal punishment and explains how harmful discipline practices, though often passed down through generations, can damage children's trust, self-esteem, and behaviour. The session lays the foundation for adopting more respectful, effective forms of discipline.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)



1. What Is the Difference Between Discipline and Punishment?

- Punishment focuses on causing pain or shame after a mistake. It includes caning, slapping, insulting, or isolating a child.
- Discipline is about teaching. It uses guidance, structure, and consistent rules to help children learn from their mistakes.
- The goal of discipline is long-term behaviour change, not short-term fear.
- Positive discipline teaches children why their actions were wrong and what they can do better next time.

2. Myths About Corporal Punishment

Myth: Beating a child shows love and responsibility.

✓ **Truth:** Love means guiding children safely, not hurting them.

Myth: Harsh punishment builds strong character.

✓ **Truth:** It often causes fear, resentment, or silence. Many children never forget being beaten or humiliated.

Myth: Children will not learn unless they are punished physically.

✓ **Truth:** Children learn best when they feel safe, respected, and supported to do better.

3. Why Harmful Practices Continue

- Many of us were punished harshly and were told it was the only way. These practices become traditions.
- Sometimes adults use harsh discipline when they are stressed, overwhelmed, or repeating what they saw growing up.
- By pausing to reflect, we can choose new ways that are safer and more effective.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

- **Example 1:** A parent whips their child for talking back, but later the child says they are afraid to speak at all, even when they need help
- **Example 2:** A teacher scolds and mocks a boy in front of the class. His classmates begin teasing him too, worsening his behaviour and self-worth.
- **Example 3:** A grandmother shares that when she started using time-outs and quiet conversations, her grandchildren became more cooperative and open with her.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses

 **Concern:** "I was beaten as a child and I turned out fine."

 **Response:** "Some children survive harsh treatment, but many carry hidden wounds. If we know better ways now, why not do better for our children?"

 **Concern:** "Punishment is the only way they will listen."

 **Response:** "Children may obey out of fear, but that does not build real understanding or responsibility. Discipline that teaches is more powerful and lasting."

 **Concern:** "If we do not punish, children will do whatever they want."

 **Response:** "Positive discipline still uses rules and consequences, but without fear. It helps children make good choices and learn from their mistakes."

Tips for Community Dialogue

- Invite people to reflect: "How did you feel as a child when you were punished harshly?"
- Emphasise that changing our ways does not mean we were bad parents. It means we are open to learning and improving.
- Use role play or storytelling to explore harmful vs. helpful discipline
- Reframe tradition: "Let us keep the parts of our culture that build children up, not break them down."

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. What kind of discipline did you experience growing up? What did you learn from it?
2. How do children in your home or community respond to harsh punishment?
3. What is one harmful practice you have seen that you would like to change or understand better?
4. What can we do as adults to model discipline that teaches, not punishes?

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SESSION

3

Understanding Children's Rights



Session 3:

Understanding Children's Rights

Session Overview: This session introduces the concept of children's rights and explains why they are essential in parenting, schooling, and community life. It encourages parents and community members to see rights as practical, everyday protections that help children thrive, not abstract or foreign ideas. The session also links rights to age-appropriate responsibilities, building a foundation for mutual respect, accountability, and cooperation between adults and children.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)



1. What Are Children's Rights and Why Do They Matter?

- Every child, no matter their background, has the right to be safe, loved, educated, and treated with dignity.
- Children's rights are not about spoiling children or removing adult authority. Children's rights do not mean children can do anything they want. They are about ensuring that every child has the chance to grow up healthy, confident, and respectful. They mean adults have a duty to care, protect, and guide responsibly.
- When we protect children's rights, we are protecting their future and our community's future.

2. Rights Are Not Foreign or 'Western'

- Children's rights are part of Kenya's Constitution and the Children Act. They reflect our shared values of care, protection, fairness, and family.
- African traditions have long protected children through family, community guidance, and respect for elders. Children's rights build on these strengths.

3. Children's Rights Are Practical

- A child's right to education means they attend school, are not made to do labour, and are taught in a safe environment.
- A child's right to protection means we do not allow violence whether from teachers, parents, neighbours, or peers.
- A child's right to be heard means we listen when they say they are afraid, unhappy, or unwell.

4. Linking Rights to Responsibilities

- Rights come with responsibilities. Children must also:
- Respect their parents and teachers
- Follow rules set with care
- Learn to make good choices
- Report when they or others are in danger

5. Teaching children responsibility starts with how we treat them. Children learn responsibility when they feel respected, heard, and guided with care.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A 10-year-old boy complains of fear at school because of frequent beatings. His parent says, "That's how we learned." But the child begins to hate school and performs poorly. Respecting his right to a safe learning environment means finding better ways to correct him without fear.

Example 2: A girl reports to her mother that her teacher makes inappropriate comments. Her mother says, "Do not talk back to elders." The child learns to stay silent. Respecting her right to protection and to be heard means adults must take such reports seriously.

Example 3: A community organises a day for parents and teachers to listen to children's ideas about school safety. Children say they feel unsafe on the walk home due to harassment. The community forms a rotating parent patrol. This is a rights-based solution rooted in local action.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses

 **Concern:** "Children's rights are making them too bold and disrespectful."

 **Response:** "It is a common worry, but rights do not mean children can do anything they want. Rights help us guide children with love and structure. Respecting a child does not mean losing control. It means teaching them how to respect others by being respected themselves."

 **Concern:** "In our time, no one talked about rights, and we turned out fine."

 **Response:** "That may be true for some, but many still carry fear, anger, or trauma from harsh punishment or not being listened to. Now we know better, and we can do better. Just like we improve farming or health practices, we must also improve how we raise children."

 **Concern:** "Talking about rights encourages children to challenge their elders."

 **Response:** "Rights do not remove respect. They help children grow into respectful adults by learning from adults who model fairness, kindness, and firm guidance. When a child is treated with dignity, they are more likely to treat others with dignity."

Tips for Community Dialogue

- **Start by asking:** "What does every child deserve, no matter where they are born?"
- Use local proverbs or traditions that value care for the young. For example: *'Mtoto wa mwenziyo ni wako'* (Your neighbour's child is also your responsibility).
- Reinforce that this is not about giving children power over adults. It is about shared responsibility, safety, and mutual respect.
- Emphasise that rights are about how we raise children, not whether we raise them.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. How did you experience discipline and protection as a child? What lessons do you still carry today?
2. Which of your child's rights do you feel most confident about protecting? Which ones feel more difficult?
3. What responsibilities can children take on at home or in school that help them grow into respectful, caring adults?
4. How can we as a community ensure that children feel safe, heard, and valued?

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Quick Reference for Parents, Teachers, and Community Members: Understanding the Law and Why Corporal Punishment Must End

What Is Corporal Punishment?

- **Corporal punishment** is any form of physical force used to discipline or control a child. It includes hitting, slapping, caning, pinching, or forcing a child into painful positions. It may also involve indirect physical punishment such as making a child kneel for long periods or miss meals.
- Corporal punishment is often justified as “discipline,” but its real effect is to cause pain or shame. It teaches children to fear, rather than understand.

Why This Matters

Many of us grew up in environments where corporal punishment, like caning, slapping, or whipping, was accepted and expected. It was believed to build respect, obedience, or strong character. But research, law, and children’s lived experiences tell us something different: violence harms more than it helps.

- Violence does not teach values. It teaches fear.
- Hurt children may comply briefly, but often carry emotional scars.
- Respect built through fear is shallow and short-lived.

This guide supports a shift away from violence and fear, and toward discipline that teaches, protects, and builds lasting respect.

What the Law Says in Kenya

- Corporal punishment is banned in all Kenyan schools.
- The Basic Education Act (2013) clearly states that no child shall be subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment in any institution of learning.
- The Children Act (2022) affirms the child’s right to protection from all forms of violence, including at school and at home.
- The Ministry of Education’s School Safety Standards require all schools to use non-violent, child-friendly discipline methods.
- Teachers and school staff found using physical punishment may face disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Why It Is Harmful

- Corporal punishment causes fear, shame, and emotional distress. It teaches children that hurting others is a way to solve problems.
- Children who are beaten may stop trusting adults, hide mistakes, or act out in anger.
- Violence does not improve long-term behaviour. It weakens relationships and emotional safety.
- Harsh punishment is often linked to poorer school performance, low self-esteem, and dropout.

Key Message for All Sessions

Discipline should never cause harm. It should shape behaviour through understanding, structure, and connection, not fear. The law, research, and tradition all agree: children thrive in safe, respectful environments.

What This Guide Promotes Instead

We are not saying children should do as they please. We are saying there are better ways to teach discipline. Ways that protect children's dignity and support lasting change.

This guide offers:

- Clear rules and consistent consequences
- Discipline that teaches, not punishes
- Kind but firm communication
- Respect for both adult and child roles

These approaches align with:

- Kenyan law and school policies
- African values of guidance, care, and community
- Global child development and protection standards

What You Can Say During Sessions

Facilitators may use or adapt these phrases when addressing concerns or questions:

- "In Kenya, physical punishment in schools is not allowed. Our role is to guide children in safer, more respectful ways."
- "This is not about removing discipline. It is about improving it, so it builds trust and responsibility, not fear."
- "Even when done with good intentions, hitting a child breaks their sense of safety. Let us teach with firmness and care."
- "We are not here to blame but to learn better ways, grounded in our laws, our values, and what we now know about child development."

SESSION 4

Positive Discipline – A Better Way



Session 4:

Positive Discipline – A Better Way

Session Overview: This session introduces positive discipline as a practical and respectful alternative to corporal punishment. It shows how adults can maintain authority, teach responsibility, and support good behaviour using clear boundaries, consequences, empathy, and firm guidance. The session reinforces that children thrive when they feel safe, understood, and supported to improve rather than shamed or hurt.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)



1. What Is Positive Discipline

- Positive discipline teaches children how to behave, not just punishes them when they make mistakes.
- It uses structure, routine, and calm correction not violence or humiliation.
- It builds responsibility and cooperation through respect, not fear.

2. Why Positive Discipline Works Better

- Children learn more when they feel safe and respected.
- It strengthens the parent–child relationship.
- It creates lasting behaviour change because it teaches the why, not just the what.
- It reduces shame and builds confidence.

3. Examples of Positive Discipline Strategies

- Set clear, age-appropriate rules and explain consequences calmly.
- Use time-ins, reflective pauses, or problem-solving instead of physical punishment.
- Praise effort, not just results. Encouragement builds motivation.
- Use consequences that teach, such as fixing what was broken or apologising sincerely.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A father starts using a calm voice and gives his daughter a chance to explain herself before deciding on a consequence. He finds they argue less and she is more open.

Example 2: A teacher sets a rule that when someone disrupts class, they must apologise to the group and help clean up after the lesson. Learners become more thoughtful about their actions.

Example 3: A grandmother uses a reward chart to encourage her grandchildren to complete chores and resolve disagreements without fighting. The children begin to feel proud of their progress.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses



 Concern:	"Positive discipline is too soft. Children will not take us seriously."
 Response:	"Positive does not mean permissive. It means being kind and firm. You can be in control without using fear."
 Concern:	"I do not have time for long conversations and rewards."
 Response:	"Small changes make a big difference. Even short, respectful corrections teach more than shouting or beating."
 Concern:	"Our children are too stubborn. They will not listen unless we punish them."
 Response:	Stubbornness is often a sign that a child does not feel heard. Positive discipline gives space for both structure and voice."

Tips for Community Dialogue

- Ask: "What discipline methods have worked for you without using fear or pain?"
- Encourage participants to share small, realistic actions they can try at home.
- Offer to role-play different responses to common misbehaviours.
- Reassure participants that trying a new way takes time, and progress is more important than perfection..

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. Which positive discipline strategy sounds realistic for your home or school?
2. What fears or doubts do you have about stopping corporal punishment?
3. What message do you want your child to learn when they misbehave?
4. What support do you need to try positive discipline more consistently?

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SESSION

5

Building Emotionally Safe Homes and Schools



Session 5:

Building Emotionally Safe Homes and Schools

Session Overview: This session helps parents and community members understand what emotional safety means and why it is essential for learning, behaviour, and mental health. It explores how stress, fear, and emotional pain affect children's ability to learn and behave well. Participants will reflect on how they can support children's emotional well-being through empathy, connection, and consistent care.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)



1. What Is Emotional Safety?

- It means a child feels secure, accepted, and free from fear or humiliation.
- Emotionally safe children are not afraid to make mistakes or express feelings.
- Safety includes how we talk to children, not just whether we hit them.

2. Why Emotional Safety Matters

- When children feel safe, they learn better, listen better, and relate better to others.
- Constant fear can block learning and damage trust.
- Emotional safety helps children build resilience and healthy coping skills.

3. What Threatens Emotional Safety

- Yelling, mocking, name-calling, and silent treatment can hurt just as much as physical punishment.
- Ignoring children when they are upset teaches them to hide emotions.
- Public shaming or comparisons damage self-worth.

4. How to Build Emotional Safety

- Listen without interrupting. Show you understand, even if you do not agree.
- Stay calm during conflict. Model the behaviour you want to see.
- Give consistent love, structure, and reassurance.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A teacher who used to shout at learners starts using calm breathing before responding. The class becomes more peaceful and focused.

Example 2: A parent starts validating their child's feelings: "I can see you are upset" instead of dismissing them. The child becomes less explosive and more willing to talk.

Example 3: A caregiver teaches her grandchildren to name their feelings using a chart. This reduces tantrums and increases cooperation.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses



 Concern:	"Children need to toughen up for the real world."
 Response:	"Children who feel safe and supported are actually stronger. They learn to handle challenges with confidence, not fear."
 Concern:	"If I comfort them too much, they will become weak."
 Response:	"Comforting builds emotional strength. A child who feels secure is better able to manage stress and behave responsibly."
 Concern:	"I did not grow up with emotional support, and I turned out fine."
 Response:	"You were strong to cope without support. But we want more for our children, not just survival, but joy and connection."

Tips for Community Dialogue

- **Ask:** "When did you feel truly listened to as a child? What difference did it make?"
- Use stories or images that show how emotional hurt affects children's confidence.
- Highlight how small changes in tone, words, and reactions can make a big impact.
- Encourage home check-ins asking children how they feel and what they need.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. What makes a child feel emotionally safe at home or in school?
2. What actions might accidentally harm emotional safety even if we mean well?
3. How do you respond when your child is upset or misbehaving?
4. What is one new habit you can try to support your child's emotional well-being?

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SESSION 6

Supporting Children's Mental Health and Well-being



Session 6:

Supporting Children's Mental Health and Well-being

Session Overview: This session introduces parents and community members to the basics of children's mental health. How emotional well-being affects learning, behaviour, and safety. It helps adults recognise signs of distress or emotional struggle, reduce stigma, and take early supportive action. It also explores how to create home and community environments where children feel heard, valued, and emotionally secure.



Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)

1. Mental Health Affects Every Child

- Just like physical health, mental health is essential for children to grow, learn, and build relationships.
- Children can feel anxious, stressed, sad, or overwhelmed even if they do not show it openly.
- A healthy mind helps a child concentrate in school, manage emotions, and build friendships.

2. Recognising Signs of Struggle

- Sudden changes in behaviour, such as aggression, silence, clinginess, or poor sleep may signal emotional distress.
- Ongoing sadness, fear of school, bedwetting, or loss of interest in play may be warning signs.
- Avoid dismissing these signs as "just a phase" or "attention-seeking."

3. What Parents and Adults Can Do

- Provide consistent love, structure, and open communication.
- Avoid yelling, threatening, or comparing children, especially when they are struggling.
- Let children know they can talk about emotions without shame. Use simple check-ins like "How are you feeling today?"

4. Getting Help Is a Strength, Not a Shame

- Some children may need more support from a teacher, school counsellor, or health professional.
- Early help prevents bigger problems. Encourage seeking support without fear.
- Adults should also care for their own mental health. It helps them care for children better.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A mother notices her son withdrawing after being bullied. She listens without blame, informs the teacher, and ensures the boy feels supported both at school and at home.

Example 2: A child is punished for refusing to eat. Later it is found she is sad because of problems at home. When the family talks openly and seeks help from the guidance teacher, the child begins to heal.

Example 3: A youth club creates a safe space where teenagers can talk about emotions, stress, and life challenges. Parents begin to see the value of normalising emotional conversations.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses



Concern: "Mental health is for adults. Children have no real problems."

Response: "Children experience big emotions too. What may seem small to us like bullying, family conflict, or loneliness can deeply affect their well-being."

Concern: "Talking about emotions makes children soft or weak."

Response: "Actually, it builds strength. Children who can name and express their feelings are more resilient, not less. They learn to solve problems and handle stress better."

Concern: "Seeking help is shameful. It means I have failed."

Response: "Seeking help shows wisdom and strength. It protects your child and helps your family grow stronger. There is no shame in asking for support."

Tips for Community Dialogue

- **Start with a group question:** "How do you know when your child is not okay emotionally?"
- Share local wisdom about healing, rest, and emotional strength from within families.
- Encourage discussion on everyday ways to check in with children like storytelling, chores, or evening chats
- Invite a local teacher or health worker to speak briefly about where to get help if needed.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. What changes in behaviour might show a child is struggling emotionally?
2. How do we talk about emotions in our family or community?
3. What can you do this week to make your child feel emotionally safe and supported?
4. Who could you talk to if your child or another child needed emotional help?

Quick Reference for Parents, Teachers, and Community Members: Recognising Signs of Distress in Children

Children often do not say when something is wrong. These signs help us notice when a child might be struggling emotionally, mentally, or physically.

Behavioural Signs

- Sudden withdrawal or silence
- Aggression or anger outbursts
- Excessive clinginess or fear of being alone
- Loss of interest in play or school
- Refusal to go to school or interact with peers
- Lying or stealing (new or increased behaviour)

Emotional Signs

- Ongoing sadness or tearfulness
- Quick frustration or irritability
- Frequent worry or restlessness
- Expressions of low self-worth (e.g. "I am useless")
- Startling easily or being overly jumpy
- Fear of adults or specific individuals

Physical and Daily Life Changes

- Bedwetting (after already being trained)
- Sleep disturbances (nightmares, insomnia)
- Sudden changes in appetite or eating habits
- Unexplained injuries or bruises
- Complaints of body aches with no clear cause
- Poor hygiene or noticeable neglect

What to Watch For in Communication

- Saying "I do not want to go home/school"
- Drawing violent or scary images
- Saying things like "Nobody cares about me"
- Avoiding eye contact or becoming mute
- Disclosing harm indirectly (e.g. "Someone touched me badly")

What You Can Do

- Gently ask: "How are you feeling today?" or "Is there anything worrying you?"
- Listen without blaming or correcting.
- Avoid saying "You are just being dramatic" or "You will be fine."
- Reassure the child that you are there to help and they are not in trouble.
- Report any serious concern to the school guidance teacher, safeguarding officer, or Childline 116.

REMEMBER: You do not have to be sure that something is wrong. If your instincts tell you a child might be in distress, **observe, listen, and report**. It is better to act early than wait.

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SESSION 7

Talking and Listening – Communication with Children



Session 7:

Talking and Listening – Communication with Children

Session Overview: This session explores the importance of two-way communication between adults and children. It shows how listening with empathy and speaking with respect builds trust, strengthens relationships, and helps children feel safe and supported. The session offers practical ways parents and teachers can talk with children about their feelings, challenges, and daily experiences. It also addresses how silence, blame, or fear-based communication can harm children's development and well-being.



Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)

1. Why Communication Matters

- Children need to feel heard to feel valued. Listening to children helps them build confidence, trust adults, and express themselves better.
- Talking with children about their experiences helps us understand their needs, fears, and strengths.
- Good communication improves behaviour, learning, and emotional well-being.

2. What Does Two-Way Communication Look Like?

- It means not only telling children what to do, but also asking questions, listening carefully, and responding with interest.
- It includes giving children space to explain their feelings, mistakes, or worries without fear.
- It means using words that build children up, not tear them down, avoiding shouting, threats, or insults.

3. Listening Without Blame or Shame

- Many children stay silent because they fear being punished or dismissed.
- When a child speaks, listen first before correcting or reacting. Ask open questions like "What happened?" or "How did that make you feel?"
- Avoid blame or harsh responses. Even when children do wrong, speaking with calm and kindness helps them take responsibility more honestly.

4. Encouraging Children to Speak Up

- Make time to talk to your child every day, at mealtime, bedtime, or on the way to school.
- Show that you are interested in what they say. Nod, make eye contact, and put away distractions.
- Praise them for sharing, even if the topic is difficult. This builds trust for the future.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A boy breaks a school window and lies out of fear. Instead of punishing immediately, the teacher sits with him, listens to what happened, and helps him understand how to make amends. He feels safe to speak honestly next time.

Example 2: A mother notices her daughter is withdrawn. Instead of scolding her for being moody, she sits with her quietly and asks gentle questions. The daughter opens up about being bullied.

Example 3: A father is used to shouting when his children disobey. After learning about respectful communication, he starts giving clear instructions and asking, "What can we do differently next time?" The home becomes more peaceful.



Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses

 **Concern:**

"If I talk too much with my child, they will become too familiar or stop fearing me."



Response:

"Respect built through fear does not last. It creates silence, not understanding. When children are heard and guided with respect, they become more honest and cooperative, not more defiant."



Concern:

"My child never tells me anything. They are secretive and rude."



Response:

"Sometimes children shut down because they expect anger or judgment. Start by creating a safe space: ask about their day, show interest, and be patient. They will begin to open up when they feel safe to do so."



Concern:

"We were never asked to talk when we were young, and we turned out fine."



Response:

"That may be true, but times have changed. Children today face more emotional and social pressures. Talking openly helps us support them through modern challenges without losing our role as parents or elders."

Tips for Community Dialogue

- Begin by asking: "What makes a child feel safe to talk to an adult?"
- Share a local saying about the value of listening or wise speech. For example, "Ukiona vyaelea, jua vimeundwa" (If you see something floating, know it was built carefully).
- Invite participants to share one thing they have learned from a conversation with their child.
- Reinforce that communication is a skill that can be learned at any age. It is never too late to start speaking and listening with care.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. When was the last time your child came to you with a problem? How did you respond?
2. What habits make it hard to listen to children in your home or school?
3. How do you usually express anger or disappointment? Could there be a gentler way?
4. What can you do this week to improve the way you talk and listen with your child?

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SESSION

8

Safe Communities for Safe Children



Session 8:

Safe Communities for Safe Children

Session Overview: This session explores how the broader community contributes to children's safety or exposes them to risks. It highlights common dangers such as peer violence, neglect, exploitation, and unsafe neighbourhoods. It calls on all community members, including parents, neighbours, faith leaders, and local service providers, to work together to create safe spaces and uphold shared responsibility for protecting children at all times, not just in school.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)



1. Children Are at Risk in the Community Too

- Not all harm to children happens in schools or homes. Many risks come from the streets, boda boda stages, markets, or unsupervised areas.
- Children may face peer bullying, exploitation by adults, neglect, or being exposed to violence or substance abuse.
- When children walk long distances home alone or lack safe play areas, their safety is compromised.

2. Everyone Shares Responsibility

- Safety is not the school's job alone. Aunts, uncles, neighbours, faith leaders, and shopkeepers can all help keep children safe.
- When we see a child in danger or distress, we must speak up and offer protection. Not turn away or say "It is not my child."
- African values remind us: a child belongs to the whole community.

3. Creating Safer Community Environments

- Encourage neighbourhood watch groups, safe paths home, adult escorts for young children, and safe play zones.
- Faith groups, women's groups, and local youth can champion child protection and share messages about safety.
- Report suspected abuse or danger to local authorities or child protection services.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A Children report harassment by older youth on their route home. Community leaders organise parent patrols during school dismissal. Incidents reduce, and parents feel more confident.

Example 2: A shopkeeper notices a child regularly begging during school hours. Instead of ignoring, she speaks to the school, which identifies a problem at home. The child is supported through the school committee and local chief.

Example 3: A church introduces a monthly message on child protection and dignity, encouraging families to prioritise care and discourage physical violence.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses



Concern: “We cannot watch every child all the time.”

Response: “That is true but we can each take small actions that make a big difference, like watching out for our neighbours’ children and acting when we see signs of danger.”

Concern: “It is the school’s job to discipline and protect children.”

Response: “Protection must continue after school. Children face risks in the community too, and we all have a role to play.”

Concern: “Reporting problems causes conflict with neighbours.”

Response: “Reporting protects children. We can still approach others respectfully but silence can allow harm to continue.”

Tips for Community Dialogue

- **Ask:** “Where in our community are children most at risk?”
- Use local proverbs about shared parenting, such as ‘Asiyefunzwa na mamaye hufunzwa na ulimwengu’ (A child not taught by their parent will be taught by the world).
- Brainstorm small community-led safety actions, such as clearing paths, starting patrols, or holding monthly child forums.
- Reinforce collective responsibility through examples from local tradition and faith.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. Where do children in your community feel unsafe? What makes those places risky?
2. What small role could you play in protecting children beyond your own household?
3. What would a truly child-friendly community look like here?
4. Who can you join with to begin taking one action for child safety this month?

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SESSION

9

Digital Safety and Respect in a Connected World



Session 9:

Digital Safety and Respect in a Connected World

Session Overview: This session explores how the broader community contributes to children's safety or exposes them to risks. It highlights common dangers such as peer violence, neglect, exploitation, and unsafe neighbourhoods. It calls on all community members, including parents, neighbours, faith leaders, and local service providers, to work together to create safe spaces and uphold shared responsibility for protecting children at all times, not just in school.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)



1. Children Live in a Digital World

- Most children use mobile phones, the internet, or social media, even at a young age.
- Online platforms offer opportunities to learn, connect, and express ideas, but they also expose children to risks.
- Adults must understand this world and become active guides and not just fearful critics.

2. Digital Dangers and Their Impact

- Children may encounter sexual content, strangers, cyberbullying, harmful challenges, or peer pressure online.
- These experiences can cause emotional harm, confusion, or unsafe behaviours offline.
- Many children do not report problems because they fear punishment or losing phone access.

3. Monitoring and Communication Go Together

- Instead of spying or punishing, create trust. Ask what children are watching, who they are messaging, and what they enjoy online.
- Set age-appropriate rules together, such as screen time limits or not sharing personal details online.
- Encourage children to report anything that makes them uncomfortable.

4. Teach Respect Online and Offline

- Remind children that respect and kindness apply online too.
- Help them avoid sharing hurtful messages or participating in digital bullying.
- Encourage respectful conversations about body privacy, peer pressure, and saying no online.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A child receives a disturbing video in a class WhatsApp group. Instead of hiding it, he tells his mother, who thanks him for being honest and talks about what to do when online content feels wrong.

Example 2: A teenage girl is being blackmailed by an online friend who asks for inappropriate photos. She is afraid her parents will blame her. A school awareness session encourages parents to say, "Thank you for telling me. We will fix this together." She speaks up and gets help.

Example 3: A father does not understand social media but sits with his son to explore it together. They agree on rules, and the son feels trusted and safe to talk about challenges.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses



 Concern:	"What if I make a mistake and accuse someone wrongly?"
 Response:	"You are not the investigator. If you notice signs, report them. Let trained professionals assess and take action."
 Concern:	"It is a family matter. I should not interfere."
 Response:	"When a child is in danger, it is no longer just a family issue. It is everyone's concern. Silence protects abusers, not children."
 Concern:	"The child is misbehaving, not in danger."
 Response:	"Behaviour changes are often signs of distress. Instead of punishing, we should try to understand what the child is going through."

Tips for Community Dialogue

- **Ask:** "What signs have you seen in children that made you worry?"
- Use anonymous case examples or role play to explore how to respond.
- Share local reporting pathways such as chiefs, teachers, helplines (e.g. 116, 1190), or guidance staff.
- Encourage a community pledge to listen, report, and support without blame.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. What would you do if a child told you they were being hurt or afraid?
2. How can we break the silence that often protects abuse in communities?
3. Who in our area is trained or trusted to support children in danger?
4. What can you do to be a safe and trusted adult for a child?

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SESSION

10

What to Do When a Child Is at Risk



Session 10:

What to Do When a Child Is at Risk

Session Overview: This session equips parents and community members to recognise when a child is at risk of harm and how to respond appropriately. It explains the importance of taking all signs seriously, avoiding victim-blaming, and using established reporting and referral pathways. The session encourages timely action to protect children from further harm while maintaining confidentiality, care, and follow-up support.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)



1. Recognising When a Child Is at Risk

- Children may not always say they are being harmed. Adults must notice signs such as fear, bruises, sudden silence, skipping school, or changes in mood.
- Risk may come from family members, neighbours, strangers, or even trusted adults.
- Harm includes physical violence, sexual abuse, severe neglect, emotional cruelty, or exploitation.

2. Do Not Ignore or Dismiss Warning Signs

- Take every concern seriously. Even small signs may point to something bigger.
- Avoid blaming or doubting children. Saying “They are lying” or “They just want attention” discourages children from speaking up.
- Children rarely lie about abuse. If they speak, it usually means something is wrong.

3. Responding and Reporting Is a Duty

- If you suspect a child is at risk, act calmly but promptly. Listen without judgment and reassure the child.
- Report to a teacher, guidance counsellor, child protection volunteer, headteacher, or local chief.
- Do not investigate yourself. Your role is to alert the right people and ensure the child gets help.

4. Every Child Deserves a Safe Path to Help

- Children who are abused often feel ashamed, afraid, or confused. They need adults who believe them and take action.
- Sharing concerns can save lives. It is not betrayal, it is protection.
- Communities that speak up are safer for all children.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A girl tells her aunt that a relative has been touching her inappropriately. The aunt reassures her, avoids anger, and reports to the school guidance teacher. The child is referred for counselling and the abuser is reported.

Example 2: A teacher notices a child with unexplained bruises. He gently asks how the child is feeling, then discreetly alerts the school's safeguarding officer.

Example 3: A local shopkeeper notices a child who seems fearful around an adult. She discreetly alerts the chief, who investigates and uncovers ongoing abuse at home.



Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses

 **Concern:** "If I take away the phone, the problem is solved."

 **Response:** "Taking away a phone may stop access but not the desire or curiosity. It is better to teach safe habits and build trust so children come to you when something goes wrong."

 **Concern:** "We never had phones growing up. Why do children need them now?"

 **Response:** "Times have changed. The internet is now part of education, communication, and friendship. Our role is to guide, not just forbid."

Tips for Community Dialogue

- Ask: "What online risks do children in our community face most?"
- Use relatable comparisons. Just as we teach road safety, we must teach online safety.
- Invite tech-savvy youth or teachers to speak briefly about digital habits
- Encourage joint family agreements on phone use, privacy, and reporting harm.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about what your child does online or on their phone?
2. How can you open conversations without judgment or fear?
3. What are some ground rules your family could set together about internet or phone use?
4. Who can you reach out to for help if your child faces digital harm?

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SESSION

11

Strengthening Parent–Teacher Relationships



Session 11:

Strengthening Parent–Teacher Relationships

Session Overview: This session highlights the importance of respectful, ongoing communication between parents and teachers. It helps participants see one another as allies in raising and protecting children. It also introduces practical tools to improve collaboration, reduce blame, and build trust between home and school.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)

1. Why Relationships Matter

- Children do better when parents and teachers work together.
- Strong relationships reduce misunderstandings, prevent conflict, and support children’s learning and behaviour.
- Parents and teachers are not in competition, they are partners.

2. How to Strengthen the Connection

- Communicate regularly, not just when problems arise.
- Attend school meetings and follow up on concerns.
- Teachers can share both positive and negative updates not only complaints.
- Respect each other’s roles and challenges.

3. Avoiding Blame, Building Trust

- Focus on solutions, not just problems.
- Ask: “How can we help this child together?”
- Speak calmly, even when you disagree.
- Avoid saying: “Your child is bad” or “The teacher is unfair.” Use respectful language.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A teacher starts texting parents short updates each week. Parents feel more included and less defensive during meetings.

Example 2: A parent who felt unwelcome at school visits regularly after a teacher praised their child’s progress. Trust builds.

Example 3: A teacher–parent pair agrees on shared consequences for a learner who was skipping homework. The learner improves due to consistent expectations.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses



 **Concern:** “Teachers are too busy to listen to us.”

 **Response:** “Taking away a phone may stop access but not the desire or curiosity. It is better to teach safe habits and build trust so children come to you when something goes wrong.”

 **Concern:** “School leaders judge parents who do not attend meetings.”

 **Response:** “Sometimes it is hard to attend, but open communication, through visits, messages, or community forums, can bridge that gap.”

 **Concern:** “My child complains about a teacher. I do not want conflict.”

 **Response:** “It is okay to raise concerns respectfully. Children benefit when adults communicate calmly and work together.”

Tips for Community Dialogue

- Ask: “What helps you trust a teacher? What breaks trust?”
- Use role plays to practise how to handle disagreements respectfully.
- Encourage schools to invite parents regularly not just when there is trouble.
- Celebrate examples where parent–teacher collaboration helped a child succeed.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. What makes you feel respected and heard by your child’s teacher?
2. What can teachers do to make parents feel welcome?
3. How can you improve communication with your child’s school this term?
4. What are some ways your community can strengthen home–school partnerships?

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SESSION

12

Creating a Whole-School Culture of Respect and Safety



Session 12:

Creating a Whole-School Culture of Respect and Safety

Session Overview: This session explores how schools can become role models of respect, protection, and dignity for all children. It encourages parents and community members to partner with schools in fostering a shared culture where child safety is prioritised in all actions, policies, and relationships. The session also highlights how parents can actively participate in school safety and discipline initiatives through the Board of Management (BOM), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and other collaborative forums.



Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)

1. The School Sets the Tone for Safety and Respect

- Children spend most of their day at school. It must be a place where they feel protected, heard, and valued.
- Safety is not just about avoiding physical harm. It includes emotional safety. Freedom from fear, humiliation, or bullying.
- A respectful school promotes cooperation, fairness, kindness, and positive discipline.

2. Everyone in the School Has a Role

- Headteachers, teachers, BOM members, parents, support staff, and learners all shape the school environment.
- No single person can ensure safety. It requires shared values, clear rules, and collective responsibility.
- Children learn most by watching what adults do not just what they say.

3. Parents Are Partners in Building School Safety

- Schools need support from parents to enforce discipline, respond to bullying, and promote inclusion.
- Parents can participate in BOM subcommittees, help monitor safety issues, and provide feedback.
- Regular dialogue between teachers and parents helps resolve concerns early and respectfully.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: A school adopts a no-caning policy. Teachers and parents work together to teach children about rules, respect, and consequences. Learner behaviour improves, and parent trust in the school grows.

Example 2: Parents raise concerns about bullying. The BOM introduces a peer buddy system and a suggestion box. Children report feeling safer.

Example 3: A school and community agree to escort children who walk long distances, especially after girls report harassment on the way home.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses



 **Concern:** “The school should discipline children. Why are we being involved?”

 **Response:** “Children learn best when home and school work together. Your support helps the school respond to issues early and consistently.”

 **Concern:** “Schools protect bad behaviour; they do not punish enough.”

 **Response:** “Schools are moving from fear-based punishment to guiding discipline. This approach builds self-control, respect, and responsibility in the long term.”

 **Concern:** “I do not know what is happening in school.”

 **Response:** “We encourage regular check-ins with teachers, and we can create more platforms, like parent meetings or feedback forums, for your voice to be heard.”

Tips for Community Dialogue

- Ask: “What makes a school feel safe for both children and parents?”
- Map out the roles different people play in school safety.
- Brainstorm simple ways parents can contribute to a safer school culture.
- Highlight real school–community partnerships from your area or region.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. What values do you want your child to learn from their school?
2. In what ways can you, as a parent or guardian, support safety and discipline at school?
3. How can we build better communication between parents and schools?
4. What does a respectful school environment look and feel like for a child?

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Delivery of the Session - Did I follow the session steps and keep to the key points? - Were my instructions and explanations clear to parents? - Did I manage time and complete the session within 15 minutes? - Was I prepared with all necessary materials or visuals?	
Understanding of Content - Did I feel confident with the topic and talking points? - Were there any parts I struggled to explain or needed to simplify? - Did I notice if parents understood the main ideas?	
Parent Participation and Engagement - Were parents attentive and interested? - Did they respond to questions or join in the discussion? - Did any parent seem disengaged, uncomfortable, or resistant?	
Parent Reactions and Reflections - Did anyone share a meaningful comment or question? - Were there any signs of misunderstanding or confusion? - Did anything parents said stand out as important for the guide?	
Positive Moments or Successes - What went well in this session? - Was there a moment I felt proud of the discussion or my facilitation? - Did parents respond positively to any specific activity or story?	
Challenges or Areas to Improve - What did not go as planned? - What difficulties did I face during the session (e.g., time, language, participation)?	
Suggested Improvements - What will I change or improve next time I deliver this session? - Are there any additional materials or support I would find helpful?	

SESSION

13

Sustaining Change – What Can We Do Together?



Session 13:

Sustaining Change – What Can We Do Together?

Session Overview: This final session reflects on key learnings from the guide and helps participants plan how to put ideas into action. It encourages families, schools, and community groups to continue the conversation beyond the meetings and commit to small, sustainable steps that build a safer, more supportive culture for children. It also introduces models for forming parent groups, child rights clubs, and BOM engagement strategies to maintain momentum and accountability.

Key Talking Points (Ready to Speak Aloud)



1. Real Change Starts with Small, Consistent Actions

- You do not need to change everything overnight. Start with one small thing. Listen more, shout less, join a school meeting, or talk to your child's teacher.
- Lasting change happens when new habits are repeated and supported over time.
- What we do at home, school, and in the community must align for the message to be strong.

2. Working Together Creates Bigger Impact

- When families support each other, and when schools involve parents early, more children are protected.
- Neighbourhood parent groups can meet regularly to share strategies, discuss challenges, and help each other stay committed to positive discipline.

3. Child rights or safety clubs in schools can help learners speak up and stay informed.

- Parents Are Partners in Building School Safety
- Planning for Action and Accountability
- End each community dialogue with a pledge or action plan. What will each person do in the next week, month, or term?
- Schools can form joint parent–teacher teams to follow up on ideas.
- Community leaders can help monitor progress and keep the momentum alive.

Real-Life Examples or Scenarios

Example 1: After a session on emotional safety, three parents begin a weekly circle to discuss challenges in managing children without shouting or hitting. They share tips and hold each other accountable.

Example 2: A BOM member introduces a suggestion box at school for children and parents to anonymously raise concerns. Patterns are reviewed monthly and acted on.

Example 3: Parents and teachers co-design a termly forum to evaluate progress on school discipline, safety, and parental involvement.

Common Parent Concerns and Suggested Facilitator Responses



 **Concern:** “The school should discipline children. Why are we being involved?”

 **Response:** “Children learn best when home and school work together. Your support helps the school respond to issues early and consistently.”

 **Concern:** “Schools protect bad behaviour; they do not punish enough.”

 **Response:** “Schools are moving from fear-based punishment to guiding discipline. This approach builds self-control, respect, and responsibility in the long term.”

 **Concern:** “I do not know what is happening in school.”

 **Response:** “We encourage regular check-ins with teachers, and we can create more platforms, like parent meetings or feedback forums, for your voice to be heard.”

Tips for Community Dialogue

- End with a simple pledge activity e.g. “One thing I will do differently starting today.”
- Create small peer support groups (3–5 members) who check in with each other after the session.
- Plan a date for a follow-up session or review meeting.
- Display a community wall or flipchart where actions and reflections can be recorded.

Reflection or Take-Home Discussion Questions

1. What is one change you will make this week to better support your child?
2. How can you support others, friends, neighbours, teachers, to do the same?
3. What would a safe and nurturing community look like six months from now if we acted together?
4. What support or tools do you need to keep growing and applying what you have learned?

Facilitator Self-Evaluation Table

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Closing Summary: Sustaining the Conversation and Commitment



Closing Summary:

Sustaining the Conversation and Commitment

This guide was created to support honest, hopeful, and transformative conversations between schools, parents, and communities. Across the 13 sessions, you have explored powerful topics: children's rights, positive discipline, mental health, emotional safety, digital wellbeing, and the importance of respectful relationships. These sessions were not just about information. They were about building trust, strengthening partnerships, and creating a shared vision of safe, nurturing learning environments for all children.



What This Guide Has Offered

- A framework for facilitating sensitive discussions with clarity and confidence
- Talking points grounded in Kenyan law, African values, and child development research
- Real-life examples that reflect the everyday realities of children, parents, and teachers
- Thoughtful responses to common concerns and misconceptions
- Simple, practical actions that parents, teachers, and communities can take together.

What Comes Next

- Conversations must continue. Use this guide again. Return to sessions as needed.
- Let each meeting build on the last. Progress is not instant but it grows when nourished.
- Involve new voices. Invite fathers, elders, youth, and faith leaders into the dialogue.
- Monitor changes. Are children speaking up more? Are adults pausing before reacting? Is the school safer, calmer, more respectful?

Final Words and Congratulations for the Facilitator

As a facilitator, you have led your school and community through a powerful and at times deeply emotional journey. You have opened space for honest conversations, challenged harmful norms with care, and encouraged reflection on how we discipline, protect, and relate to children.

This work is not easy, but it is necessary, and your courage to lead it matters. It requires empathy, courage, and consistency. Your voice and your presence have helped shift perspectives and create room for change—one session, one conversation at a time.

Now that the sessions are complete, your role is far from over. The seeds of change have been planted, but they need time, care, and follow-up to grow. Here are some guiding thoughts to take with you:

- **Be proud of what you have done:** Every conversation, every pause, every story shared was part of building trust and connection. You helped shape a safer space for children.
- **Keep listening and learning:** Stay curious. Reflect on what worked, what felt difficult, and what surprised you. Growth happens in the spaces between sessions.
- **Nurture relationships:** Maintain open communication with school staff, BOM members, and community leaders. Keep the door open for continued support and collaboration.
- **Model what you taught:** Whether in your language, your tone, or how you respond to a challenge—your example may be the most powerful lesson participants take away.
- **Care for yourself:** Holding space for others can be emotionally demanding. Make time for your own well-being, connection, and reflection. You deserve support too.
- **Document what you learn:** Use the facilitator reflection tables to note patterns, breakthroughs, or barriers. These insights will strengthen future sessions and help improve this guide over time.

Looking Ahead

You are now a trusted voice in your community on child protection, emotional well-being, and positive discipline. Your leadership creates ripples beyond the sessions. Encourage your school to keep the dialogue alive. Form support groups, revisit these topics regularly, and include new voices—fathers, elders, youth leaders, and caregivers from all walks of life.

When children begin to feel safer, when adults pause before reacting, when families choose empathy instead of fear—know that your facilitation helped make that possible.

Congratulations. You have completed something meaningful.

You are not just delivering a guide. You are helping reshape what childhood looks and feels like in your community.

Thank you for your commitment, your care, and your courage.

Keep showing up with empathy, clarity, and hope. The journey continues—and your leadership matters.

Notes

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Learning Environments that Advance Rights and Nonviolence

LVCT Health

**Sonning Suites, Suna Road, off Ngong Rd,
Nairobi P.O Box 19835-00202, Nairobi, Kenya**

T +254 20 2633 212 M +254 722 203 610

enquiries@lvcthealth.org

www.lvcthealth.org www.one2onekenya.org

