

# Recover with music



A step-by-step guide for the delivery of the psychosocial resilience intervention in schools

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## Resilient School Hubs

On the 28th of September 2018, a magnitude 7.5 earthquake hit Indonesia with an epicentre 78km north of Palu on Sulawesi Island. The earthquake triggered a tsunami and induced liquefaction and landslides, causing significant socio-economic loss to the regions in Central Sulawesi. The Resilient School Hubs project looks to foster the resilient recovery of three adversely affected communities in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia.



This work is an active collaboration between UCL's (University College London) EPICentre (Earthquake and People Interaction Centre), UCL's EFID Centre (Engineering for International Development), Syiah Kuala University's Tsunami and Disaster Mitigation Research Centre (TDMRC), Tadulako University and Sejenak Hening.

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# About the Intervention

This intervention has been designed to be used in a disaster setting. It was originally devised following the 2018 earthquake, tsunami and landslide that occurred in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia.

## **Objective**

The objective of the intervention is to promote positive coping strategies that increase the sense of control and well-being of adolescent students who have been affected by disasters.

## **Methodology**

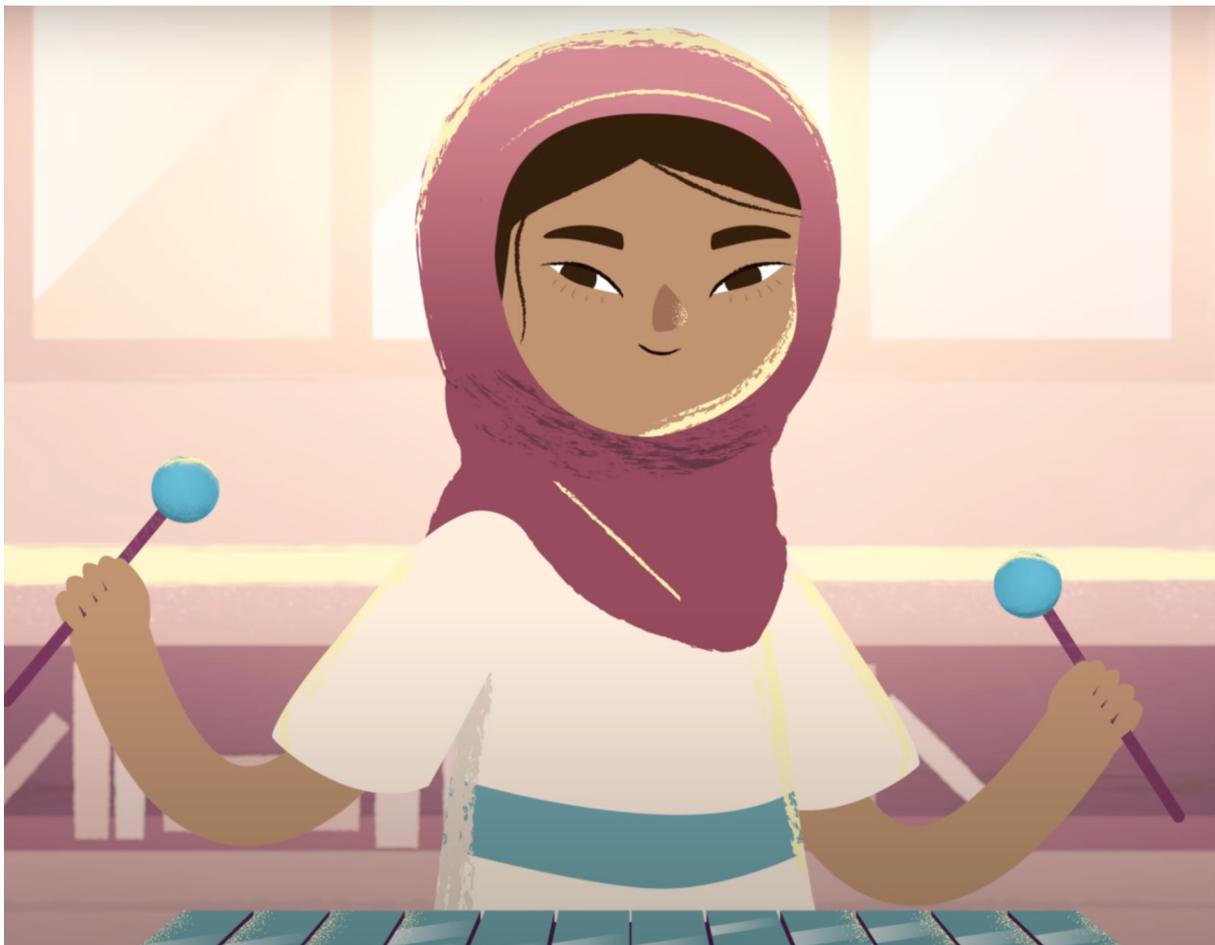
The intervention is comprised of a narrative exercise, a deep breathing session, a grounding activity, and a song-creation workshop. Through these activities, adolescents identify their individual skills and collective resources to cope positively with the psychological effects of the disaster and learn how to regulate and manage their emotions.

## **Who can implement this intervention?**

This intervention has been adapted to be implemented by teachers in schools that have been affected by a disaster. Most activities can be led by any teacher or staff member who has a good rapport with students. The song-creation workshop requires someone with enough musical knowledge to help students create a song. This could be a teacher, other school staff members, or people external to the school, such as youth workers, music facilitators, and members of the wider community.

## About this handbook

This handbook was created to provide step-by-step guidance to teachers or any other school staff member who would like to implement our intervention in their schools. Here, we provide the know-how for each of the activities that were undertaken **before the workshop, during the workshop and after the workshop**. It is important to apply it as we did in order to replicate the positive effects we found. Nonetheless, as sociocultural contexts are varied across the world, there are aspects that will need to be tailored to the specific context in which the intervention is implemented.



## Before the workshop

In this section, we outline actions and steps that need to be taken **before the workshop**. Make sure to have completed all the preparation activities to ensure that the intervention runs smoothly on the day.

### **Step 1: Set your target group: who is this intervention for?**

This intervention was designed to promote positive psychological coping in adolescents after the experience of a disaster. Depending on the student's levels of distress and the availability of facilities, it could be carried out weeks, months, or even years after the disaster.

**Number of participants:** up to 30 students per adult facilitator but 12 students is ideal.

**Age:** the intervention could be implemented in adolescents from the age of 13 upwards.

**Gender:** groups can be mixed; however, evidence shows that females encounter gender-specific challenges post-disaster. Thus, it may be valuable to offer female-only interventions.

**Duration of the intervention:** Our intervention lasted a full school day (approximately 7 hours). However, as post-disaster settings are varied, you might need to implement the intervention over two consecutive days.

### **Step 2: Find your team**

This intervention was created to be facilitated by teachers in schools. If you are interested in implementing it in your school, speak to other members of staff to find the best day and place to have the intervention. Make sure to follow any procedures and safeguarding regulations from your institution. We also recommend that you find other people who can support you during the activities, especially if you are working

with a large group of students. Nonetheless, if this is not possible, a single teacher could facilitate a group of up to 30 students.

The intervention requires someone with enough musical knowledge to help students create a simple song. If you do not have these skills, you can find a staff member, music facilitator, or youth worker to help you facilitate the song-writing session.

We also recommend that a trusted adult be available to support students who become distressed during the intervention. The intervention has been designed to avoid re-traumatising by focusing on individual and collective strengths and hope. However, conversations related to the disaster could trigger negative feelings. If a student gets upset, they can talk to the trusted adult separately from the group. This could be an adult available at the school site who is not teaching at the time of the intervention or another member of staff.

### **Step 3: Prepare the intervention sessions**

Make sure that you and the rest of the team familiarise yourselves with the pedagogical principles for running the intervention (page 17) and the principles for resilient recovery (page 11). These will help you create a fun and creative environment for the intervention and guide you in promoting positive coping mechanisms in students.

As a facilitator, you need to learn each of the activities and prepare any necessary material beforehand. Table 1 lists all the materials you need for each activity.

Table 1: Materials needed for each activity part of the intervention

Activity	Material
Introduction and warm-up	Open space (could be indoors or outdoors) speakers, phone that can play music
Tree of life	An example Tree of Life created by the facilitator, Tree of Life individual worksheets per student, pens for students*, sticky notes, blue tac/tape, large paper for making a group Tree of Life*
Practical breathing session: square breathing	Square breathing diagram or video*
Song-creation workshop based on tree of life and principles of resilience	Guitar**, pen and paper and digital audio recorder (e.g. zoom recorder)**
Practical grounding session: 5-4-3-2-1 method	None
Closing reflection and collection of feedback	Printed evaluation sheets*

\* These resources are not strictly necessary. If you do not have access to a printer, students can draw the tree on a blank A4 piece of paper.

\*\* The materials for the song-writing workshop depend on the preferences of the facilitator and the resources available. During our intervention, we used a guitar to create the melody and a Zoom digital audio recorder to record the final products.

**Tip:** Scheduling an intervention at school can take time, especially if you are planning to do it during school hours. Make sure to discuss this with the relevant staff in your school early on to find a suitable date.

# Principles for Resilient Recovery

There are multiple ways in which people can be resilient. However, evidence on resilience processes shows that some coping mechanisms could do more harm than good, whilst others could foster positive adaptation and recovery. This intervention is based on Hobfoll and colleagues' five essential elements of care (2007), an evidence-based, well-established framework to promote resilience and psychological wellbeing during and after traumatic events.

Hobfoll et al. (2007)<sup>1</sup> essential elements of care are **safety, calm, connectedness, self and collective efficacy** and **hope**:



The following pages provide the definition and importance of each principle, as well as examples of how you can promote them in your students, based on Hobfoll et al. (2007)\*, findings from our research\*\* and EdPsych Insights & Department of Education and Skills (2020).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1521/psyc.2007.70.4.283>

A sense of...	What does this mean?	Why is this important?	What can you do to promote this?
<p><b>Safety</b></p> 	<p>A belief that you and those around you are protected from harm and your needs will be met</p> <p>This includes physical safety and psychological safety</p>	<p>Feeling safe reduces the impacts of stress and anxiety by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduce the biological responses of stress (e.g., fight-flight response)</li> <li>2. Reduce cognitive responses (“the world is completely dangerous”)</li> </ol> <p>It is important to feel safe to be able to connect with others</p> <p>Important for learning to be able to effectively think, engage actively and learn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage students to open up to support when they feel unsafe**</li> <li>• Teach and use grounding techniques to bring students back to the present safe situation</li> <li>• Thank students for following any measures to help keep everyone as safe as possible (e.g., not entering parts of the building)</li> <li>• Ensure students know the measures in place in school to protect them (e.g., what to do if there is an earthquake)</li> <li>• Remind students what has stayed the same as before the disaster</li> <li>• Promote structure and routine – revisit familiar routines and teach new systems. Routines can create a sense of safety as the environment is predictable</li> <li>• Encourage students to limit exposure to media of film or photos of the disaster if they are experiencing increased distress following viewing*</li> <li>• Relink disaster thoughts with safe ones: "That night was unsafe, but not all nights are unsafe", “the old school building was unsafe, but not all school buildings are unsafe</li> </ul>

A sense of...	What does this mean?	Why is this important?	What can you do to promote this?
<p data-bbox="233 309 304 338"><b>Calm</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="400 309 603 600">The ability to stay relaxed and regulate your emotions to avoid feeling panicked or shut down</p>	<p data-bbox="639 309 919 488">Being calm means emotions are regulated so we can focus on what we need to do</p>	<ul data-bbox="975 309 1382 1200" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="975 309 1382 416">• Teach and practice calming strategies such as square breathing</li> <li data-bbox="975 461 1382 640">• Promoting positive emotions – making students smile and laugh by playing games, sharing jokes and funny stories</li> <li data-bbox="975 685 1382 831">• Encourage activities not related to the trauma such as singing, listening to music, playing with friends*</li> <li data-bbox="975 909 1382 1016">• Break down problems into manageable chunks with clear actions*</li> <li data-bbox="975 1061 1382 1200">• Remind students that their reactions and feelings are understandable and expected*</li> </ul>

A sense of...	What does this mean?	Why is this important?	What can you do to promote this?
<p><b>Connectedness</b></p> 	<p>Have relationships with other individuals and groups who you support and they support you</p>	<p>Connectedness can promote belonging, allow for sharing stories, and facilitate co-regulation of emotions. Relationships with colleagues and students can also help student engagement, emotional well-being and being ready to learn.</p> <p>Teacher-student relationships can benefit the wellbeing of both teachers and the student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on fostering positive relationships</li> <li>• Check in with students 1:1 whenever you can</li> <li>• Show you remember student's interests and details about their lives</li> <li>• Look for students who may be isolated and try to buddy them with other kind students*</li> <li>• Encourage and allow time for students to play with one another</li> <li>• Encourage sharing appropriate stories (both student-teacher and among peers)</li> <li>• Promote activities for peers to connect with one another (E.g., ice breaker activities)</li> </ul>

A sense of...	What does this mean?	Why is this important?	What can you do to promote this?
<p data-bbox="188 315 347 421"><b>Self and community efficacy</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="400 315 616 869">The belief that circumstances and within our control and you and your community can cope with challenges and do what you need to do to get through the tough times, achieve goals and meet your needs</p>	<p data-bbox="639 315 949 421">Important to stop you feeling overwhelmed by stressors</p>	<ul data-bbox="975 315 1385 1016" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="975 315 1385 495">• Talk to students about successful strategies that students have used to cope in difficult times (both individually and with others)</li> <li data-bbox="975 539 1385 680">• Remind students of the importance of &amp; find opportunities to practice mutual help</li> <li data-bbox="975 725 1385 1016">• Involve young people in the community recovery and listen to them about how they want to contribute (e.g., through helping to re-decorate/plant trees, to create an adult-guided memorial)*</li> </ul>

A sense of...	What does this mean?	Why is this important?	What can you do to promote this?
<p data-bbox="229 315 304 344"><b>Hope</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="400 315 611 680">The belief that everything will turn out ok. This can include belief that others will be there to help you when you experience challenges.</p>	<p data-bbox="639 315 890 456">Important to have hope to feel motivated and be able to learn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="975 315 1369 495">• Remind students that your community is strong and encourage students to come up with the strengths they have**</li> <li data-bbox="975 539 1337 568">• Share good news stories</li> <li data-bbox="975 613 1369 869">• Encourage students to have positive self-dialogue (e.g., instead of saying “I will never have a house again” accepting it might take a while to rebuild but it won’t be forever)*</li> <li data-bbox="975 913 1369 1055">• Encourage students to set positive goals for themselves and their community to promote optimism*</li> <li data-bbox="975 1099 1369 1274">• When there are bad days remind students that there are good days and bad days but the good days will come again**</li> </ul>

## Pedagogical principles underpinning the intervention<sup>2</sup>

Even though the intervention will be run at school, it is important to create an atmosphere different to that of a classroom. In some classroom settings, students are required to be quiet so they can pay attention to the teacher's lesson. However, in the intervention settings, students should be invited to express themselves freely without fear of being right or wrong.

We have outlined some pedagogical principles that will help you create a safe environment where students can be creative and communicate their feelings. As a teacher, you might already be implementing these actions in your classrooms. Nonetheless, make sure that any adult supporting the intervention becomes familiar with the principles to ensure consistency in the way adults approach students during the sessions.

### Principle 1: Create a Safe Environment

It is crucial to create an environment where students feel free and confident to express themselves. Safety during the intervention could be described as:

- ✓ Providing a space to express one's needs, ideas and feelings.
- ✓ Letting students participate on their own terms – some students will be more reluctant to share, engage and participate. In these cases, teachers can provide positive encouragement without pushing too much or forcing the student to participate.
- ✓ Establishing an environment of mutual respect between teachers and students.
- ✓ Communicate good intentions and concern about students' wellbeing.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the Play it Loud! Handbook on how to promote gender equality and inclusion in youth and music organisations, projects and beyond. Retrieved from [www.playitloud.live](http://www.playitloud.live)

## Actions to establish safety from the beginning of the intervention:

- ✓ Being friendly, approachable and helpful in all interactions with young people at all times.
- ✓ Communicate to students that the intervention environment is not the same as a usual school lesson. During the intervention, they are encouraged to express freely, and engaging in the activities is optional.
- ✓ Given the nature of the intervention, some students could find it difficult to remember or think about the disaster. Thus, it is important to let students know from the beginning that:
  - It is okay to take as many breaks as needed and go somewhere else to have quiet time in a nearby space
  - Encourage them to talk to someone supportive in the school community (if available)
  - Remind them that they can stop taking part in the intervention if they wish to do so

## Principle 2: Be Process Focus

The activities during the intervention might be different from anything students have done before. To ease any insecurities, it is important to divide the process of creating a song into smaller steps. This will facilitate a sense of accomplishment at many points along the way.

- ✓ Do: Give students small tasks and encourage them every little step of the way
- ✓ Do: Provide clear limitations for example:
  - Time limitations and reminders: “We have 10 minutes for this task”, “We have 5 minutes left”

- Limited options: “We are going to choose five words for each chart”.
- Provide concrete tasks: “Write down five things that make you feel calm”

Encouragement and validation during all tasks are essential for students to feel confident in their creative process. Acknowledge the efforts and intentions of everyone in the group, paying special attention to those who are quiet or not engaging as much.

- ✔ Do say: That sounds really interesting! Would you like to add anything else?
- ✔ Do say: I am proud of you for working as a team!
- ✔ Do say: Thank you for helping others do the task!
- ✘ Do not say: “yes, but...” This can discourage students

Instead:

- ✔ Do say: “yes, and...” This can validate and encourage students.

For example:

- ✘ “Yes, but how are you going to put that into the verse?”
- ✔ “Yes, and how can we put that into the verse?”

### **Principle 3: Learning By Doing**

Students will have differing levels of knowledge about music. Therefore, rather than explaining what is ‘right’ or ‘allowed’ in music, it is important to let young people enjoy and express themselves without the pressure of doing it in a ‘correct’ way.

## **Actions to establish learning by doing from the beginning of the intervention:**

- ✔ Use open and easy language and limit the amount of information to the minimum.
- ✔ Talk less, do more! Prioritise time for young people to learn by doing rather than listening to explanations and instructions.
- ✔ Adults helping with the song creation process will be knowledgeable about how music “should be done”. Communicating such expectations should be avoided to give students the opportunity to learn, explore and have fun!

Remember: if a student asks: “Is this right?” Remind them there are no right or wrong answers; it is about being creative!

## **Principle 4: Clear communication**

Making sure everyone has the same information and understands what is going to be happening during the day. It is very important for students’ sense of control and safety.

## **Actions to establish clear communication from the beginning of the intervention:**

- ✔ Have a pre-made written schedule on a flipchart outlining the activities (see Appendix 1 for an example).
- ✔ Talk through the schedule during the introduction.

## During the workshop

This section explains all the activities that comprise the intervention. For each activity, you will find some background, needed materials, and the suggested duration.

Below is an outline of the activities to be undertaken during the intervention:

### Recover with music

**Activity 1**  
Introduction and warm-up

**Activity 2**  
Tree of life

**Activity 3**  
Practical breathing session: square breathing technique

**Activity 4**  
Song-creation workshop based on Tree of life

**Activity 5**  
Practical grounding session 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique

**Activity 6**  
Closing reflection and collection of feedback

### Room Set-up

On the day of the intervention, the team needs to arrive early to set up the room. Make sure that there is enough space to make a circle with the students. Music can be played at a low volume to make the environment more fun and relaxed. If possible, set up a quiet space: find a space in the school where people can do different activities in case they feel like needing a break from the intervention. Remember to consult the appropriate staff on any safeguarding regulations and protocols that need to be followed.

## Activity 1: Introduction and warm-up

**Background:** It is important to create a friendly environment during the intervention so that students do not feel that this is a school lesson. This could be achieved by telling students why they are here and playing games to break the ice and ease any nerves.

**Objectives:** To introduce the intervention and set rapport.

**Materials:** Open space, speakers, phone with music

**Suggested duration:** 30 minutes

### Instructions:

1. Teachers and students make a big circle.
2. Welcome students and thank them for taking part in the workshop.
3. Acknowledge nerves and uncertainty: emphasise that today will be a day of fun and creativity.
4. Talk about the space: emphasise that there is no judgment or expectation in the space (this is not a class or lecture!) and that they can express freely.
5. Introduce the people who are part of the intervention team and invite students to ask them any questions they might have throughout the day.
6. Explain what will happen on the day timetable (see Appendix 1 for an example).  
Note: timetable needs to be written down on a big legible flipchart or blackboard before starting the intervention and pasted somewhere visible for everyone. This way, students will be able to keep track of the activities and consult what is happening next whenever is needed.
7. Ice-breaker activities:
  - Dance circle (make a playlist with danceable songs that participants may like): This activity helps regulate the nervous system.

### Instructions for Dance Circle

Everyone stands in a circle (participants and adults). Put everyone in the circle in pairs (the person next to them – make sure adults are not next to each other). Explain the task before the music starts.

Task: "Your job is to come up with a dance move together with your partner, that everyone else can copy. We'll go round to each pair so they can show their move – everyone else can watch and then copy it. When the pair has shown theirs done, they pass on to the next pair with a clear sign that they are finished. (Agree a clear sign for this in advance). Give every pair a minute of the track for their dance move.  
1.

- Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to say something about themselves (name + say their favourite food (or something similar))
- 'Step Forward if': This game helps people to find common ground with others and builds motivation to start the day's activities. This can be very quick, just 2 or 3 questions.

### Instructions to play "Step forward if"

Leader asks participants to 'step forward if...' (This is a good moment to start building motivation for the next activity):

- You are sleepy
- You had a nice breakfast
- You are excited about today
- You like music
- You like singing
- You are ready to start the activities!

Note: Feel free to implement your own ice-breaker activities. Perhaps there is an activity that you already know students like, or you might want to try something different. Any activity that helps to energise the students and encourages them to talk to others is useful for creating a positive atmosphere.

- Last: mention any other practical things before starting, such as:

1. Who they can go talk to if becoming distressed (if applicable)
2. Where they can find a quiet space (if applicable)
3. Where they can find snacks and drinks throughout the day (if applicable)
4. The time for lunch
5. Let them know when the breaks will be

## Activity 2: Tree of Life

**Background:** The Tree of Life is a tool that aims to help people speak and re-author their stories about difficult life events in a way that is not re-traumatising; it focuses on strengths to promote identity, connectedness and hope.

**Objective:** To bring to the fore the **skills, resources and knowledge** the students have that can help them **cope with** and become **resilient to the challenges** they face post-disaster. Students will then use this Tree of Life to reflect on and guide their song lyrics.

**Materials:** an example Tree of Life created by the facilitator, Tree of Life individual A worksheet (Appendix 2) is given to each student. Students also need pens, post-it notes, blue tac/tape, and large paper for making a Forest of Life.

**Suggested duration:** 60 minutes

**Before starting the session, the teacher should:**

1. Stick a large version of the Tree of Life to the wall (either printed template OR drawn).
2. Familiarise her/himself with the components of the Tree of life (table 2) and complete their own tree to model the activity.

**Step 1: Introduce the activity (10 minutes)**

- Hand out a Tree of Life worksheet to each student. If you struggle to print resources, students could draw their own trees on a piece of plain paper
- Explain that we are going to create a tree that helps us think about all the strengths we have and how we can cope well to overcome the challenges of the disaster

- Teacher introduces their own tree of life and gives examples of what they have written in each part. Explain that the tree represents life since the disaster.
- Read through the sheet together and discuss with students some examples they may add to each

For example: “The roots will represent the past challenges and experiences that we have faced related to the disaster, the trunk will be filled with skills, knowledge and activities that we have or do to overcome these challenges (e.g., empathy and care for each other). Branches will represent hopes, dreams and wishes for the future. Fruit will represent gifts given by others. These are not necessarily material gifts. For example, it could be that someone has given us hope. The leaves represent the important people in our lives who have helped us since the disaster. The storm will represent the challenges we continue to face related to the disaster.”

- **The storm:** The focus should not be on the negative ‘storm’ for a long time
- Acknowledge challenges and what they might find scary, then move on to remind students that even though they face these difficulties, all the people, skills and resources they have in their lives will help them to stay calm, get through difficulties and be resilient!

## **Step 2: Individual Completion (approximately 15 minutes)**

- Students work on their individual tree
- If a student finishes in less time, encourage them to add more to their tree

### Step 3: Forest of life (approximately 10 minutes)

- Students are told that even though we have our own tree with our individual stories, the trees are **even stronger** as a forest as we all **have shared experiences, skills and hope for the future**
- Tell students we are going to look at the trees together and **create one large tree for the group**
- In small groups (e.g., tables/row), students are called up to stick their individual trees on the wall to create a 'forest of life'
- Students are encouraged to look at the forest of life to notice similarities between the trees

### Step 4: Group Tree of life (20 minutes)

- A large Tree of Life (printed or drawn) should be stuck on the wall
- Students are given 10 minutes to discuss and write on post-it notes what they noticed most often and think are the most important features of the tree.
- Students are called up (a group at a time) to add post-it notes to the large tree
- Teacher reviews the tree and reflects and discusses with the group the amazing sources of strength they have in their lives to cope with the disaster (with a focus on any connections on Hobfoll's principles of resilience)

Table 2. Tree of Life elements

Element of the tree	What does the element represent?	Example content	What could students be asked during each element?
<p>Roots</p> 	<p><b>Past disaster experiences</b> (Some may be positive; some may be challenges)</p>	<p>When they were reunited with family, help from friends as well as fear during the event.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What difficulties did you experience after the disaster?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Were there any moments of relief? Did anyone help you?</li> </ul>
<p>Ground</p> 	<p><b>The present</b></p>	<p>Happy, anxious, excited, in school, safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Where are you today?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How are you feeling now?</li> </ul>
<p>Trunk</p> 	<p><b>Skills and activities that help them overcome the challenges since the disaster</b></p>	<p>Staying calm, empathy, kindness, creativity, writing stories, dancing, playing, taking deep breaths and spending time with loved ones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How long have you had those skills?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did you learn those skills from anyone in particular?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How have these skills helped you overcome disaster challenges?</li> </ul>
<p>Branches</p> 	<p><b>Hopes for the future</b></p>	<p>Home to be repaired, attend rebuilt school, make new friends, restart previous hobbies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How long have you had these hopes and dreams?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How are these linked to significant people in your life?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How have you managed to hold onto these dreams in difficult times?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What has kept your hope going since the disaster?</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Tree of Life elements (continuation)**

<p><b>Leaves</b></p> 	<p><b>People in their lives who have supported them since the disaster</b></p>	<p>Friends, parents, other relatives, teachers, religious leaders, members of the community, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How have these people helped you since the disaster?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Why are these people special to you?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explain that just because people are no longer alive, it does not mean they are not still very important to us.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If a student becomes upset about someone who has died the following questions may help: Did you have a lovely time with this person? What was special about this person? Would this person like it that you remember them in these ways?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fruit</b></p> 	<p><b>Gifts and resources they have been given by others that have helped them cope with the disaster</b></p> <p>Note: these are not material resources.</p>	<p>Another student giving them a fun time playing a game with them, receiving love from a family member, a teacher listening to them, receiving and giving mutual help to community members, a volunteer teaching them breathing exercises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Why do you think the person gave you this? How did this help you?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What do you think you might have contributed to their life?</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Tree of Life elements (continuation)**

<p><b>Storm cloud</b></p> 	<p><b>Current disaster challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind students that they will have good days and bad days and that it is ok to feel sad and upset on the bad days.</li> <li>• Remind students that storms always pass and the water will make their tree grow stronger!</li> <li>• Encourage students to focus on all the people and resources in their lives to stay calm, get through difficulties and be resilient.</li> </ul>	<p>Triggers that cause them to remember scary parts of the disaster. For example, noises such as a rumbling truck. Damage to home that hasn't been repaired, stormy weather, feeling anxious when separated from family</p>	<p>□ What challenges do we still face related to the disaster? How can our fruits and leaves help us to overcome these challenges?</p>
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## Activity 3: Practical breathing session – square breathing technique

**Background:** Square breathing, also known as box breathing, is a mindful breathing technique used to ease stress and anxiety. A large volume of scientific evidence shows that deep breathing techniques and mindfulness activities help the regulation of heightened emotions. Survivors of a disaster sometimes deal with triggers or intrusive memories that re-activate all the emotions experienced during the disaster, such as intense fear, worry and anxiety. The square breathing technique facilitates focusing on the present and reconnecting with one's body through a controlled breathing pattern. Notably, the square breathing technique is easy to learn and practice, making it an accessible strategy that adolescents can use to gain a sense of control over their emotions.

**Objective:** Provide students with a technique to help them keep calm when feeling stressed or anxious.

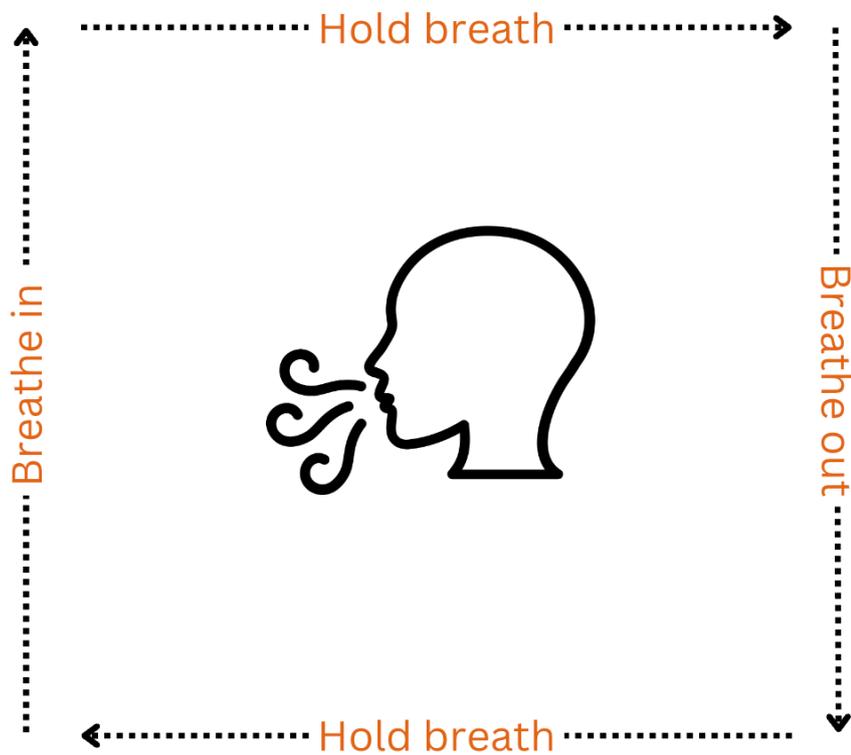
**Materials:** Square breathing video or image.

**Duration:** 10 minutes.

### Instructions:

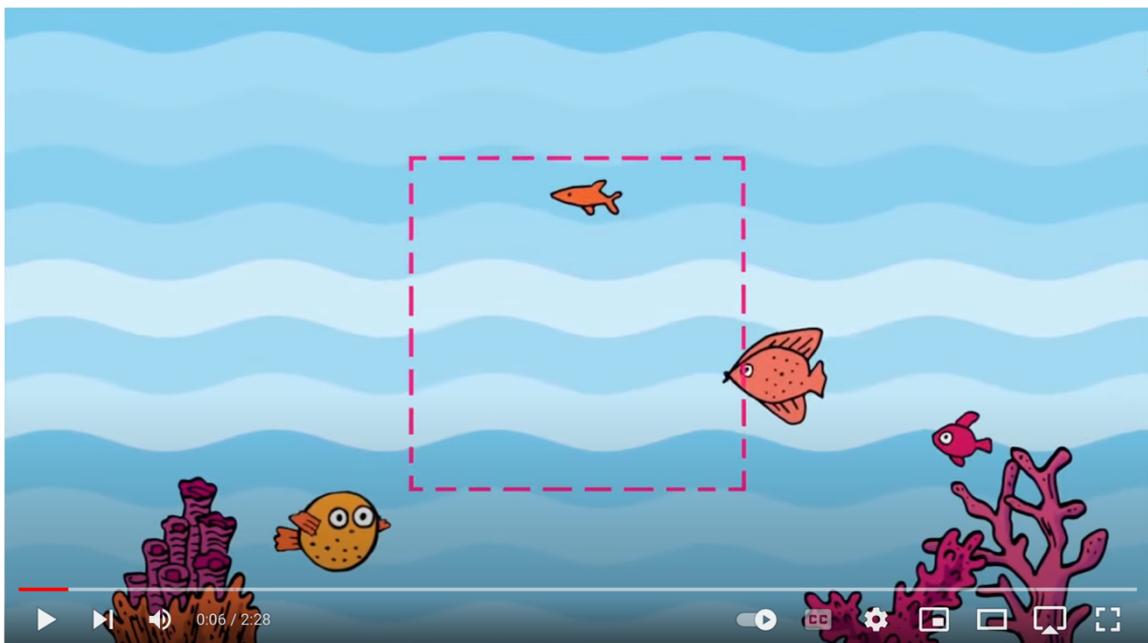
1. Sit comfortably with your back straight and close your eyes.
2. Imagine a square in front of you.
3. Begin by slowly exhaling all of your air out.
4. Then, inhale through your nose to a slow count of 4
5. Hold at the top of the breath for a count of 4.
6. Then, gently exhale through your mouth for a count of 4.
7. At the bottom of the breath, pause and hold for the count of 4.
8. Repeat until the end of the session.

Square breathing image to guide the session:



Or you may wish to use a YouTube video, such as:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJq82z4z\\_To](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJq82z4z_To)



**Guided Square Breathing Exercise in 2 minutes**

## **Activity 4: Song-creation based on the Tree of Life activity and principles of resilience**

**Background:** Expressing emotions and singing in groups has been associated with **social bonding**, experiencing feelings of **belonging, inclusion and connectivity**, as well as increasing positive emotions – all of which yield health and well-being benefits.

**Objective:** To collaboratively create a song that helps foster positive psychological recovery after the experience of a disaster.

**Suggested duration:** approximately 180 minutes (3 hours) in total.

### **Instructions:**

#### **Part 1: Introduction to song creation and finding ‘the hook’**

**Materials:** Poster with Hobfoll’s five principles of resilient recovery, pen and paper for each participant.

**Duration of activity:** 40 minutes

The music facilitators used this time to introduce themselves to the participants and ask them about songs and artists they like. If you are a teacher or any other school staff and already know the group and their music tastes, you can directly explain the session.

**Step 1:** Tell participants that the main objective of the intervention is to create a song that encourages resilience and recovery: a song that they can sing whenever they are experiencing difficult feelings and will make them feel better.

**Step 2:** Introduce Hobfoll’s five principles for resilient recovery.

**Step 3:** Give participants pens and paper. Ask them to write a line that captures the purpose of the song. Explain that it can be a short line and that responses will be anonymous.

**Step 4:** Collect responses, read them out loud and discuss them with participants.

Hobfoll et al., (2007) principles  
for resilient recovery

1. Safety
2. Calmness
3. Connectedness
4. Self and Community efficacy
5. Hope

These are the themes for participants to think about when creating the lyrics of the song. It is possible that some participants will think of less helpful mechanisms such as ‘trying to forget’ or others that will not necessarily apply to all children because of religious and cultural differences, such as ‘praying’.

Therefore, if less positive mechanisms arise, it is important that facilitators and people supporting the groups gently guide participants towards the key beneficial coping mechanisms, in a non-dismissive way. Examples of less positive coping mechanisms include avoidance (i.e., avoiding thinking about the disaster), denial (i.e., pretending the disaster didn’t happen), social withdrawal (i.e., avoiding socialising with friends), concealment (i.e., hiding how they feel from others), self-pity (i.e., feeling very sorry for themselves but not doing anything proactive to help), substance misuse (i.e., alcohol or smoking) and rumination (i.e., excessively thinking about the event).

For each of these, try to encourage the student to think about how they could adopt more positive coping strategies that promote any of the elements of Hobfoll's 5 principles. For example, socialising with friends, talking to a trusted adult about feelings (e.g., caregivers or teacher), breathing exercises, exercise/sports, hobbies (e.g., reading, drawing, singing), regaining a sense of normal routine.

#### Example 1

- If the student says: "Forgetting and not thinking about what happened"
- ✓ Do say: "That can be hard and beyond your control. What actions can you take if you are feeling sad about what happened?"

#### Example 2

- If the student says: "Praying that something like that will not happen again"
- ✓ Do: prompt more elaboration towards more positive strategies. "What is about praying that makes you feel better? Having hope? Feeling calm? Praying together with others?"

#### Example 3

- If the student says: "Avoiding going anywhere that reminds you of the disaster"
- ✓ Do: acknowledge that it is normal that going to places that remind them of the disaster is scary, but although this place was dangerous during the disaster, it is not always dangerous. Prompt the student to think about how they can gradually return to a sense of normalcy and routine now that these places are safe. For example, could they go with others to support them?

#### Example 4

- If the student says: “Thinking about what you could have done differently during the disaster”
- ☑ Do: remind the student that it is beyond their control and that the disaster was a scary and confusing time. Encourage them to instead think about what they can do in the future to feel better and recover with others.

#### **Part 2: Find the Melody**

##### **Duration of activity: 45 minutes**

Once ‘the hook’ has been identified, participants will start working on creating the melody. During this session, facilitators will invite participants and adults to do different bodily activities, such as singing, clapping, etc. It is recommended that everyone gets involved.

#### **Session 3: Structuring the song**

##### **Duration: 40 minutes**

For the first part of this session, participants will be working on writing the lyrics (20 minutes). Participants will be divided in groups of 4 and ask them to write 2 lines that are related to the hook, encouraging them to think of the melody that could go with the lyrics. Participants will give the facilitators the paper with the 2 lines.

For the second part of the sessions, participants will be working on making the melody (20 minutes). Lyrics will be written down on a flipchart and facilitators will invite them to think of fitting melodies, using ‘the hook’ as guidance. All segments will be recorded, chords will be found and listed (facilitators).

## **Session 4: Fitting the puzzle pieces together**

**Duration: 60 minutes**

During this hour session, all the parts that have been created separately during the previous sessions will be put together. Participants and facilitators will work collaboratively to see what fits together, what needs to be changed or tweaked.

This session presents the final product. Everyone will sing it together and be invited to reflect on any final thoughts they have about the song. Once everyone is happy with it, the song will be rehearsed and then recorded!

## Activity 5. Practical grounding session: 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique

**Background:** Thinking of the disaster could trigger overwhelming emotions. Grounding techniques are strategies that help us to be in the present moment, rather than in the traumatic experience of the past or current distress. The '5,4, 3, 2, 1 method', redirects focus to the present moment by using the senses.

**Objective:** Provide students with a tool to help them when experiencing distress.

**Materials:** No materials required

**Suggested duration:** 10 minutes

### Instructions:

When feeling overwhelmed by thoughts and emotions, do the following:

**5 things you can see:** Look around the room or space you are in, notice the colours, the people, the shapes of things.

**4 things you can hear:** Listen to and really notice the sounds around you: the traffic, voices, washing machine, music, etc.

**3 things they can touch (and touch them):** Stand up and put your feet firmly on the ground. You can stretch, stamp your feet, rub your arms and legs, clap your hands, walk, remind yourself where you are right now.'

**2 things they can smell (or like the smell of):** Focus on what you can smell, if its natural or synthetic smells, food or environment or something else. Describe to me what you smell. Or, think of some of your favourite smells and describe them to me (for example, are they sweet, smoky, citrus)'

**Take 1 slow, deep breath:** Breathe mindfully; breathe deeply down to your belly; put your hand there and breathe. Imagine you have a balloon in your tummy, inflating it as you breathe in and deflating as you breathe out.

**To end, bring your attention back to the current general surroundings:**  
Notice where you are - and notice how different it is from the distressing memory.  
You are distant from that upsetting memory.

## Activity 6. Closing reflection and recollection of feedback<sup>3</sup>

**Background:** It is important to provide space for young people to reflect on the day. Having some time to think of the things that happened during the intervention will help them to get in touch with their emotions and recognise any lessons learned.

**Objective:** To set a space where students can reflect on the day as a way of closure.

**Materials:** printed feedback forms (Appendix 3).

**Suggested Duration:** 20-30 minutes, depending the size of the group.

- Everyone goes back to the big circle – all adults included. Make sure that no adults are next to each other.
- Recognise everyone’s hard work and effort – big round of applause for everyone!
- Ask students to reflect on the following:
  1. What I am proud of that I did today?
  2. What challenges I overcame?
  3. What was our biggest accomplishment as a group?
  4. What made me happy today?
  5. How am I going to use the song in the future? In which situations? Is there someone I’d like to teach this song to?
- Give students 1 minute after each of these questions to reflect in silence. (5 minutes in total)
- Then right after individual reflection, give participants 2 minutes to talk about each question with the person next to them (adults included) (10 minutes in total)

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the Play it Loud! Handbook on how to promote gender equality and inclusion in youth and music organisations, projects and beyond. Retrieved from [www.playitloud.live](http://www.playitloud.live)

### How to do a reflection round?

1. Facilitator asks question 1.
2. Participant reflects individually, in silence, for 1 minute.
3. Facilitator asks participants to share their answer in pairs (person next to them – if numbers are not even, there can be in a group of 3), for 2 minutes.
4. Facilitator moves to ask question number 2 and follows the same steps as for the first question, and then the same process for questions 3 and 4.

- Give each student a feedback survey (Appendix 3) and collect them once completed.
- Thank everyone for their participation. Outline any next steps (e.g., are you going to paste the Forest of Life somewhere in school? Are you uploading the final version of the song to YouTube?)

## After the workshop (for teachers)

- Right after the workshop, remember to leave the school clean and arranged the same way it was before the intervention, and make sure to collect all the materials you brought.
- Arrange future sessions to meet with the group to sing the song. This could happen every week, ideally, for approximately six weeks.
- A recording of the students singing the song should be available for them to listen to. This could be uploaded to YouTube, for example, so students could listen to the song themselves and share it with friends and family.
- You could also arrange for the song to be performed to the school!
- We recommend further arts-based activities to add visuals to the song. We followed up our intervention with collage-making workshops, where students created collages based on imagery that they associated with the songs. Ask the group what they would like to do! Maybe they would like to create a music video or a poster for the classroom!
- Check students' feedback form to map how they felt during the intervention and what activities they liked the most. This will help you improve sessions in the future.
- We would also like to hear your feedback! You can send us the questionnaire in Appendix 4 to tell us about your experience of implementing the intervention.

## Appendix 1: Example timetable

8 :00 – 9:00	Arrival
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome & Introduction
9:30 – 10:30	Activity: Tree of life
10:30 – 10:40	Activity: How to stay calm?
10:40 – 10:50	Break
10:50 – 11:30	Introduction to song creation and finding the hook
11:30 – 12:15	Lunch break
12:15 – 13:00	Find melody
1:00 –13:10	Break
13:10 –14:10	Structuring the song
14:10 – 14:20	Activity: How to stay calm? 2
14:20 – 14:30	Break
14:30 – 15:30	Fitting the puzzle
15:30 – 15:50	Prayer time
15:50 – 16:10	Finishing the song
16:10 –16:30	Closing circle

# Appendix 2: Tree of Life Individual Worksheet

## TREE OF LIFE

The Tree represents your life since the disaster

1. Create your tree of life by adding the following.



In the roots you should write the past experiences related to the disaster. These may be good and bad. *What difficulties did you face?*



The ground represents the present day. *Where are you now? How are you feeling?*



In the trunk you should write about the skills you have to overcome challenges and the activities you do that help you to feel better.



On the branches you should write about your hopes for the future.



In the leaves you should write the important people in your life who can support you. *Who has helped you since the disaster?*

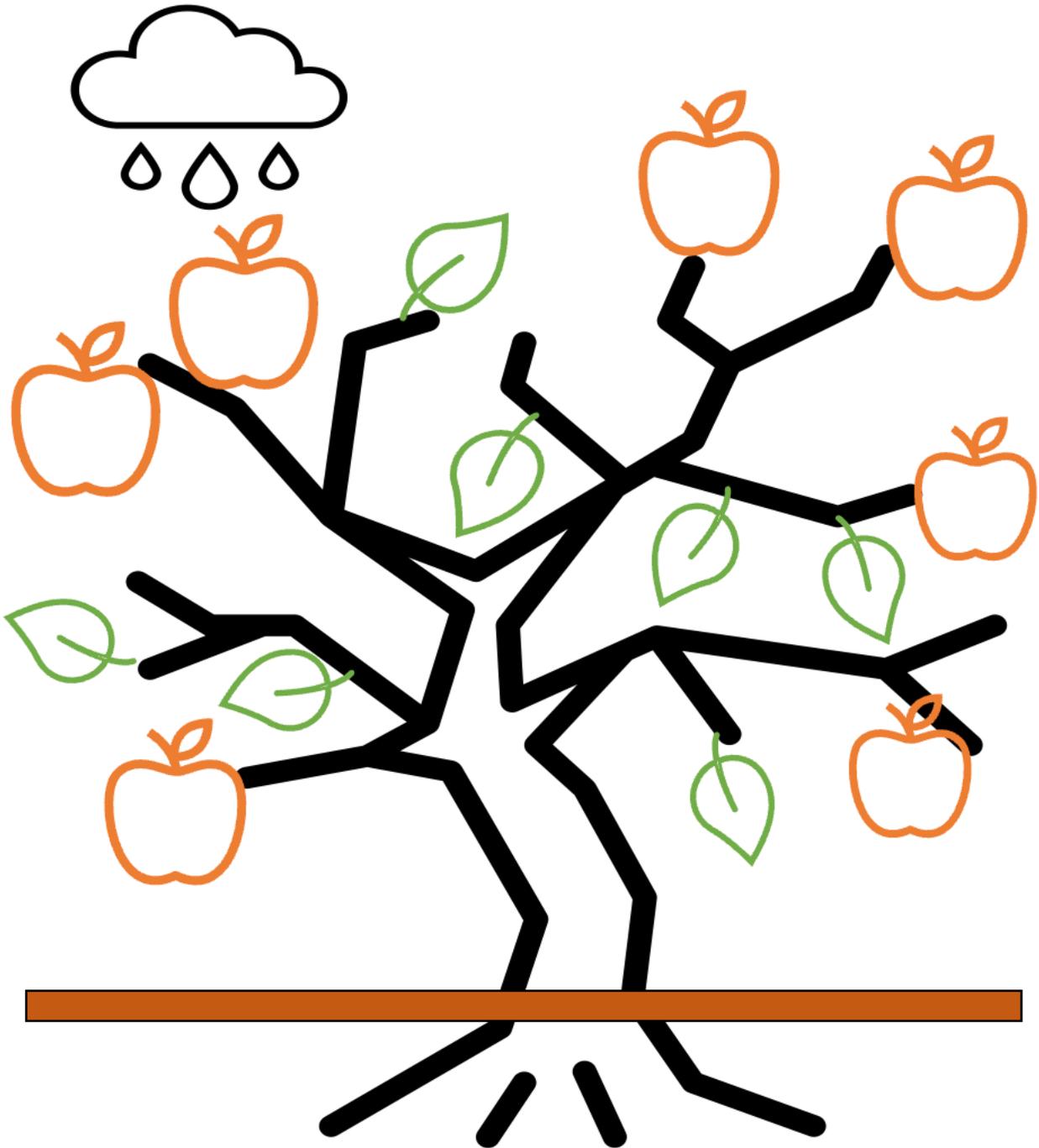


In the fruits you should write what gifts and resources you are given by others. These are not material resources. It might be something you have been taught or something non-material someone has given you (e.g., love, support, hope).

2. Sometimes there might be a storm that shakes your tree. This means you might still experience challenges about the disaster. In the storm cloud write any challenges you face.



Remember: It is normal to have good days and bad days but overall the storm will pass and the water will make your tree grow even stronger! Focus on all the people and resources you have in your life to help you stay calm, get through difficulties and be resilient!



# Appendix 3: Feedback form for students

**Thank you for your time today! We would love to hear about how you have found the day.**

Q1. Colour in the face that best represents how you feel after completing today's workshop



Q2. What did you think the main point of the day was?

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Q3. What was your favourite part of the day? Please give a reason for your answer.

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Q4. What was your least favourite part of the day? Please give a reason for your answer.

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Q5. Did any activities make you feel calm?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Q6. Did any activities make you feel anxious or worried?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Q7. Did any activities give you a sense of wellbeing?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Q8. Did any activities make you feel more able to cope with your own psychological disaster challenges?

- Yes
- No

Please give a short reason for your answer:

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Q9. Did any activities make you feel more able to support your students to cope with their psychological disaster challenges?

- Yes
- No

Please give a short reason for your answer:

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Q10. Do you feel like you the guidelines reflect what you have found to be helpful for recovery?

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Q11. How likely are you to follow the guidelines your school created?

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Not likely
- Not at all likely

Please give a short reason for your answer and any barriers to implementing them:

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Q12. Will todays workshop have an impact on your practice, or not?

- Yes
- No

Please elaborate:

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Q13. How likely would you be to recommend today's workshop to a colleague?

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Not likely
- Not at all likely

Please give a short reason for your answer:

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Q14. Is there anything that you recommend to improve today's workshop?

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# Appendix 4: Feedback form for teachers

**Thank you for your time delivering the music intervention! We would love to hear about how you have found implementing it.**

Q1. Circle the face that best represents how you feel after completing today's workshop



Please give a reason for your answer:

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Q2. In which country and city/town/village are you based?

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Q3. What age group did you do the intervention with?

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Q4. How many were in your intervention group?

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Q5. Did you follow the intervention steps that we laid out or did you modify them?

- Followed intervention steps
- Modified intervention steps

If modified, how did you modify it?

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Q6. What was your least favourite part of the day? Please give a reason for your answer.

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Q7. Do you feel the intervention impacted the students:

Q7.1. Sense of calm

- Yes
- No

If yes, which activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Q7.2. Anxiety or worry

- Yes
- No

If yes, which activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Q7.3. General wellbeing

- Yes
- No

If yes, which activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Q8. Did you feel the intervention impacted students' overall post-disaster recovery?

- Yes
- No

Please give a short reason for your answer:

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Q9. Did you have any concerns over any students distress or wellbeing related to the intervention content? If so, please give details:

Q10. Do you feel like you the song created represents coping in your students' community? Please give details.

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Q11. How likely are you to implement follow up activities related to the intervention (e.g. collage workshops)?

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Not likely
- Not at all likely

Please give a short reason for your answer and any barriers to implementing them:

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Q12. How likely would you be to recommend today's workshop to a colleague?

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Not likely
- Not at all likely

Please give a short reason for your answer:

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---

Q13. Is there anything that you recommend to improve today's workshop?

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Q14. What support for delivering the intervention would you benefit from in future?

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**Thank you very much for your time!**