

Topic C: Suggestions for the first meeting with the children

Time frame: 2-3 hours

Place: Undisturbed so everybody can focus on the meeting

Arranging the room: Put up the two houses and the flower that you have created beforehand. Arrange the children so they can listen to your story and see the houses.

Read or tell "The story of the two houses and the flower"

You are welcome to tell it your way, adding extra descriptions and elements to make it better the children in front of you. While telling about the grey house you can point to the grey house. And while telling about the four leaves on the flower you can point on each of them.

Include the children during the story telling. It is a good idea to pause and involve the children if they get inspired while you're telling the story, if they ask questions etc. Start a dialogue, be open and see what happens.

Start a dialogue after the story. After ending the story you shall involve the children in a discussion about the story. Let them tell what they heard, to be sure that they got the basics of the story right. While doing this, you write words and symbols on the houses. For example: a sad smiley on the grey house and a happy smiley on the green house. Or other words that the children suggest. Let them feel that the group is creating the two houses together.

Do they know the grey/green house from their own life? Ask the children if they know the feeling of the grey and the green house from their own life.

Include your own experiences. Don't hesitate to tell some of your own thoughts and experiences of grey and green houses. Tell about your own childhood. Did you sometimes feel like being in the grey house? Tell them stories about how you managed to change grey to green. Tell them about your realistic optimistic changes.

After these introducing discussions, you can take a break and then continue with the activities. The purpose is to make the children do the same as the children in the story.

Organize the observation-groups. Ask the children if they are interested in doing some grey/green observations in their own life, and maybe get some ideas and make some changes. Divide them into groups of 3-5 children working together to do the observations. Before the groups get started, give them some time alone to answer these 4 questions:

The point of these questions is to create a sense of membership in the group, and to establish group roles.

What is the name of your group?

What will you look at, what is your area and focus?

Who will tell about the observations when you come back?

Who will keep track of the time to be sure to get back in time?

Give the groups this task:

Imagine you are a guest at this place and see it for the first time, just like the woman in the story.

What can make you feel happy and healthy, like living in the green house?

What can make you feel unhappy and unhealthy like living in the grey house?

Find at least two examples of grey and at least two examples of green.

Give the groups 30-45 to answer the questions and prepare a presentation.

Group presentations

Ask the groups what they found during their observation.

Help them to tell about the places/situations in a descriptive way. And help them to find out what specific parts of the place/situation that made them feel grey or green.

If the groups come up with the same thoughts about grey or green, be sure to listen to every group's thoughts on the subject. They might have different explanations of why the place/thing is grey or green. It is not necessary to reach agreement among the groups. It is okay to have different opinions and feelings about the same situation. And if you yourself feel different about the subject, be careful not to correct the groups, or make them feel, that their meanings are wrong.

Explain the flower. Now it is time to explain the four leaves of the flower. Write the words on each leaf (or put up a sign you have made ready beforehand).

A: Point to the first leaf and write the word "**Focus**" on it. Explain that today the focus is happy and sad, the grey and the green house.

B: Point to the second leaf and write the word "**Observation**" on it. That is what you just did: looking around and telling each other what you saw.

C: Point to the third leaf and write the word "**Ideas**" on it. Explain that now we are going to get some ideas of how to change things from grey to green, and just after that, it is time for the last leaf:

D: **“Change”**, to actually change things to the better, right here and now.

Brainstorm for ideas. Tell the group it is time to generate a lot of ideas on how to turn the grey things into green. Tell them about the brainstorm-rules:

Bad ideas, crazy ideas and unrealistic ideas are welcome.

Do not criticize other people’s ideas

Build on other ideas, get inspired, and let it grow

Ideas from the group. Encourage the group to create ideas.

How to create extra ideas.

If you need to create additional ideas, you can try one of these methods:

“If we were very rich”.

Invite the group into a little game. *“What could we do with the grey problem if one day we woke up and had all the money we could spend. How would we turn the grey things into green?”*

The group now generates some ideas that costs a lot of money, and maybe some of these ideas can lead to other solutions that can be done without a lot of money

“Imagine you are another person”

Invite the group into a little game: *“Lets imagine that we are different kind of people: For example*

- Superhero (pick one or two)*
- Schoolteacher*
- Pop star (let the children pick the person)*
- Car-mechanic*
- Carpenter*
- Dentist*
- Find your own*

Let them work together a few minutes in small groups, and come up with ideas. Remember the 3 rules for brainstorm.

Explain the circle (realistic optimism).

Now it is time to change the many ideas into optimistic and realistic plans.

Draw a circle around the flower, and involve the children in a discussion of the circle.

You can ask them about the story: the children who helped the little girl with the blanket and the bookcase and about the boy that didn't like rain.

Hereafter let them generate ideas, optimistic and realistic, inside their own circle, to change the grey things into green.

Some things can be done immediately, others have to be planned, and maybe someone must be asked for permission.

Make optimistic and realistic plans today . Divide the children into change-groups. Maybe the same groups as the observation-groups?

Let the groups choose a leader, whose role is to make sure that the group comes up with realistic and positive suggestions for changes. Visit each group and assist them in any doubts.

Make suggestions for grey-to-green changes in just 20 minutes.

It is okay to help other groups.

If you have any questions, you can ask....

Meeting time is....

Group presentations

Let the groups tell about their suggestions for changes from grey to green, how they came up with their ideas and how they have managed to stay inside the realistic optimism-circle.

While doing this, you can cooperate with the children to make connections to the story, the different leaves of the flower, the circle etc.