

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Dealing with traumatic situations - role play

The following two activities go hand in hand. While one group of learners is performing a role-play activity, the rest of the learners in the class will observe the role-play, noting what they observe on a checklist. A checklist is provided below.

Activity 1: Role-play of traumatic situations

Divide into work groups of 2 learners per group. Develop a role-play showing a traumatised person (the victim) discussing his/her experience with a friend, teacher or counsellor. Try to think of what advice they would offer the victim. Base your role-play on one of the following situations:

1. Lerato and Mbali recently lost their family in a shack fire. Lerato is still recovering in hospital from burn wounds, but thanks to Mbali dragging her from the burning shack, she will survive. Mbali is staying with her aunt and tries to visit Lerato daily. Mbali feels at a loss. She is one of very many people to have suffered and lost due to the fire that swept through their homes. But everybody just seems to be getting on with it – caught in their own survival mode. Mbali wonders if they feel like she does, or if she is going crazy. She cannot sleep – if she closes her eyes all she can see is a fire blazing and her mom screaming. She can hear her mom and her baby sister’s screaming in every sound that passes by. She wants to plug her ears with cotton wool. She feels so alone and so angry with the world.
2. Mary’s twin, Anna, recently died of cancer. She was diagnosed 2 years ago and was put through very aggressive chemotherapy, which made her extremely ill. There was a brief period when the chemotherapy ended that the old Anna seemed to be back for a while. Mary, who had been so afraid of losing her sister and had sat with her through many difficult nights, suddenly felt a wave of hope washing over her. Even though Anna was still weak, that magic spark was back in her eyes. But, just as suddenly, Anna took a turn for the worse. She writhed in pain and woke crying in the night. The cancer had spread and was growing at an alarming rate. Towards the end, before death claimed her, she surrendered to a morphine-induced daze and was already lost to Mary. Mary sat with her for hours, waiting for the rare moments when Anna would recognise her and smile tiredly before dipping back into deep sleep. Mary did not want Anna to suffer anymore, but now wanders around aimlessly, not knowing what to do without her twin. She is plagued by memories of Anna’s face scrunched up in pain and feels guilty that it happened to Anna and not her. At the same time, she is so afraid that it will happen to her. She does not want to go through that torture.
3. Sizwe loved spending Saturday mornings with his five-year-old son, Andile. While

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mom got the house sorted, did shopping and had a quick lunch with the girls, it was boys' day together. Every Saturday, they would find something fun to do. Then one day tragedy struck and nothing was ever the same. Sizwe had planned to take Andile to the Zoo. Andile was so excited, dressed in his cammo pants, strapped in his car seat and babbling on about everything he would see at the Zoo. Sizwe smiled at Andile through the rear-view mirror and saw the expression change on his son's face before he felt the cold of the gun pressed to his head. He was forced out of the vehicle and fought to get to Andile out of his car seat. The highjackers shoved him away and drove off with Andile in the backseat. The last Sizwe saw was his son screaming and holding his arms to his dad. Sizwe ran behind the vehicle until he could not see it anymore. Andile was found a few hours later, shot dead, on the side of the road.

Your teacher will mark your role-play activities using this checklist.

	Criteria: Does the learner:	Yes	No
1	Take part in the role-play?		
2	Interact with the audience?		
3	Appear to understand the role?		
4	Interact with the other role-players?		
5	Use body language and facial expression appropriately to suit the role?		
6	Speak clearly and audibly?		
7	Use language that fits the role?		

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Activity 2: Observation using a checklist

Make copies of this checklist and observe each role-play activity, noting what you see.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST	YES	NO
1. Is there face-to-face communication?		
2. Is the counsellor/friend/teacher showing that he/she is open to communication? (Sitting, leaning in slightly, keeping eye contact, making small appropriate touches occasionally.)		
3. Is the counsellor/friend/teacher asking leading questions? (Questions to try and get the victim to open up.)		
4. Is the counsellor/friend/teacher speaking in a calm, soothing voice?		
5. Is the counsellor/friend/teacher listening attentively?		
8. Is the victim expressing emotions?		
9. Is the counsellor/friend/teacher offering advice?		
10. Is the counsellor/friend/teacher offering solutions?		

Your teacher will mark your checklists.

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Suggested Solutions

Question number	Possible marks	Solution
1	14	See checklist in Appendix of Assessment Tools.
2	10	Observation, no answers given.

Appendix of assessment tools

	Criteria: Does the learner:	Yes	No
1	Take part in the role-play?		
2	Interact with the audience?		
3	Appear to understand the role?		
4	Interact with the other role-players?		
5	Use body language and facial expression appropriately to suit the role?		
6	Speak clearly and audibly?		
7	Use language that fits the role?		