

**Konfident**  
**KIDZ**

# GET KONNECTED



**EVALEEN WHELTON**



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**Please note:** We often use circles for the activities and you will see “everyone sit in a circle” written for some activities. It’s important to note that this is just a guideline and that some kids often prefer to take part while sitting in their own space and that’s fine. It can be difficult to sit in a circle for some kids so they could take part while they’re moving about as well. This course is about meeting kids or teens where they are at, rather than trying to enforce rigid situations on them.



# ALL ABOUT ME

## Self-exploratory Activities

*Every activity mentioned below can be carried out between one child / teen and one adult. The adult takes the place of the facilitator and the child becomes the other facilitator (with a little coaching) or the volunteer.*

*Most circle activities can be played back and forth between 2 people instead.*

## LEVEL 1

1

### FUN ART PROJECT

#### FACILITATOR:

- Next we will draw the outlines of your bodies on these large sheets of paper. Then make a collage in your body shape that is “all about you!”
- Choose from the pictures, words, cut-outs, print-outs, glitter in the box to make a wonderful project that shows all the wonderful things about you.



## Scripts

*Scripts are a very useful tool for children to use. By using some simple scripts, we can start to eliminate some of the anxiety around conversations, particularly with someone the child doesn't know very well. Scripts that we use are meant to be starting points like when learning any new language; we learn useful phrases but as we progress we have the freedom to alter them.*

*Scripts in this context are to be used as a starting point and children have the freedom to use them, alter them or not to use them as they wish.*

### FACILITATOR:

- I have a handout to give you next. These sheets are a way of beginning to get to know someone. There are a list of topics below which can help to start chatting with someone.
- Who wants to talk about their family?  
Who wants talk about school?

*Make sure each student has a topic and is given a chance to speak about it.*



# ALL ABOUT ME

## LEVEL 2

### 1 FIVE THINGS I LIKE ABOUT ME

#### FACILITATOR:

- Next we are going to talk about what we like about ourselves. Can you each think of five things that you like about yourself?
- Let's all try to think of things you like that are **not** about the way you look. Instead try to think of positive things about your personality.
- For example, I like that I am a really good friend. I will now give you a few minutes to try and think of 5 things you like about you.



### 2 WORRY WORDS

#### FACILITATOR:

- How did you feel the first time you tried something new? Did you feel worried and nervous? Or did you feel excited, maybe a little tense? Or perhaps you felt a bit of everything? New things can sometimes make us feel these things.
- Other things can make us worry as well. For example when I go to a birthday party and I don't know a lot of the guests I often feel worried.
- Would any of you like to share an example of something that makes you worry? If anyone decides to share something we can reply as a group, "I am here for you". Let's practice...



**GROUP SAYS: "I am here for you".**

#### FACILITATOR:

- Sometimes it's a good idea to focus on the good things that will happen, like someone being kind to us if we are worried.
- Next, we are going to make a list of things that could make us feel worried. For each worry we come up with we must also come up with a good thing that might happen too.
- For example, if we are worried about the first day of a new school, a good thing that could happen is meeting a new friend.



**3****PASS A COMPLIMENT****FACILITATOR:**

- Everyone please get into a circle. Each of you must give a compliment to the person next to you, so that everyone in the circle gets one.
- Try and give compliments about a person's personality rather than their appearance.

**4****COMPLIMENTS IN THE MIRROR****FACILITATOR:**

- I am looking into the mirror, I am a good friend and I am a good swimmer. Now it's your turn to give yourself a compliment and giving a compliment to themselves into the mirror.
- The compliment should be based on personality rather than appearance.



# ALL ABOUT ME

## LEVEL 3

1

I CAN'T YET...



**FACILITATOR:**

- Is it possible for one person to know how to do everything?

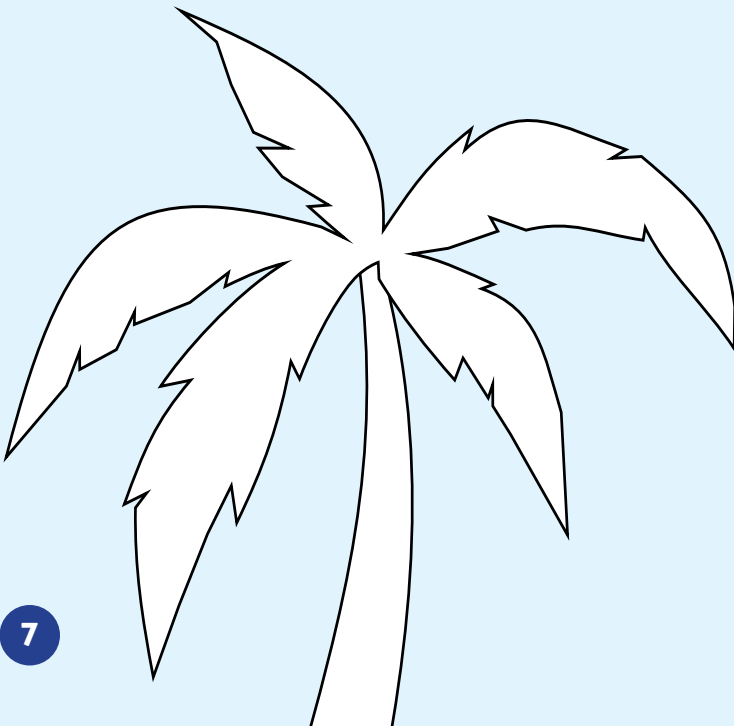
**GROUP SAYS: "NO".**

**FACILITATOR:**

- That's very true. However, it is possible for us to learn how to do the things we cannot do yet. So instead of saying we can't do something, we will say we can't do something **yet**.
- For example, I don't know how to speak Spanish. I say 'I can't speak Spanish YET, but if I start going to Spanish lessons and read books in Spanish, then I will be able to'.
- Can you all think of things you are unable to do yet? I'll give you a few minutes to think about it. Try to put it in a sentence and include the steps you would have to take in order to be able to do it.

I CAN'T \_\_\_\_\_ YET

BUT IF I \_\_\_\_\_ THEN I WILL BE ABLE TO DO IT



2

THE ME TREE

**FACILITATOR:**

- Now let's draw an outline of a tree and draw 5 branches. On each branch then write or stick on pictures that show your talents.

**3****KONFIDENT KARDS****FACILITATOR:**

- Use sheets of this hard card. Write or draw pictures of things that you love about yourself, things you like, things that make you laugh.
- For example, I would draw a picture of juggling balls and me and my friends going to the cinema together.

*Note: Card paper that is shiny on one side is great for this as pupils can see their faces in the front.*

**4****GIVE YOURSELF FIVE COMPLIMENTS****FACILITATOR:**

- Taking turns, pupils, give yourself 5 compliments.

If you can't think of enough, as a group we can brainstorm possible compliments for everyone.





# BODY LANGUAGE

## LEVEL 1

### Why is Body Language Important?

*Autistic people can find it very difficult to read Non-Autistic social situations and vice versa. A lot of this can be due to the fact that Autistic people can use their bodies in different ways to non-autistic people. Therefore, the reading of body language is difficult.*

*We have included games below to encourage children to observe how other people use their bodies. When teaching any of the other activities, always refer back to body language. These exercises are to observe but never to copy or mimic anything that is not natural to us.*

*Every activity mentioned below can be carried out between one child / teen and one adult. The adult takes the place of the facilitator and the child becomes the other facilitator (with a little coaching) or the volunteer.*

*Most circle activities can be played back and forth between 2 people instead.*

1

### MIRRORS - A

#### FACILITATOR:

- Let's all take a look in the mirror.
- Let's move our mouths, and see the different shapes we can make. Now let's try our eyebrows. Can anybody move their ears? Now let's move our entire head, now our shoulders, ears, eyebrows, etc. in turn. Expand this.



## 2

## MIRRORS - B



## FACILITATOR:

- I am now going to divide the class into pairs and the “mirror” copies their partner’s actions.

*Facilitators demonstrate first and show that movements should be slow to make it easy to copy. (For our online version we will all copy one designated person’s facial movements).*

- Once you have a turn being the mirror, swap places with partners so you both have a turn at being the mirror.

*These exercises can be developed into 'Simon Says' and/or Charades games once the class has understood the basic principles.*

## 3

## PICTURE PROMPTS



## FACILITATOR:

- Today I brought in a story book with lots of pictures. What is happening in this picture and why do you think this is happening?
- Do you think the character looks happy or not? Why does she look happy?

## 4

## EVERYDAY ACTIONS

## FACILITATOR:

- What everyday actions do we do without using words?

*You can have some cards prepared for this if you think it suitable.*

*Facilitator starts with pointing at watch, other facilitator asks if they know what it means - what time is it/you're late. Add in subtle actions eg. a small shrug / a raised eyebrow.*

- I will now give you 2 minutes to come up with your own. Then the rest of us will try to guess what they are.



# BODY LANGUAGE

## LEVEL 2

### 1 TABLEAUS (Freeze Frames)

**Tableaus:** A tableau is a frozen picture people create like a video on pause. Described as a group activity but can be carried out solo also by making various poses / statues of someone showing interest, disinterest, boredom etc.

You can use this tableau activity to explore more situations like how to tell if someone is being friendly, if someone is intimidating, or not being truthful, etc.

#### FACILITATOR:

- I am now going to divide the class into small groups of 2 and 3. I want you to come up with 3 tableaus.
- The first one is to show ways we can tell if someone is interested in what we are saying. The second one is to show ways we can tell if someone is disinterested or bored. The third tableau is to show ways we can tell if someone is starting to lose interest. The third tableau shows more subtle body language.

*Have the class look at each other's tableaus and discuss what is happening in each picture...how are the characters/people feeling? (For our online version we are going to individually strike a pose! (or screenshot) We can then discuss together).*

### 2 WHAT AM I COMMUNICATING?

#### FACILITATOR:

- I will give each of you a sentence, for example, "the house is on fire". Now, I want you to act it out. We will all take turns. Anyone who isn't acting it out should guess what the others are acting out.

*Facilitator may choose to have the class work in pairs if they think it may help.*



# BODY LANGUAGE

## LEVEL 3

1

### EMOTION BINGO



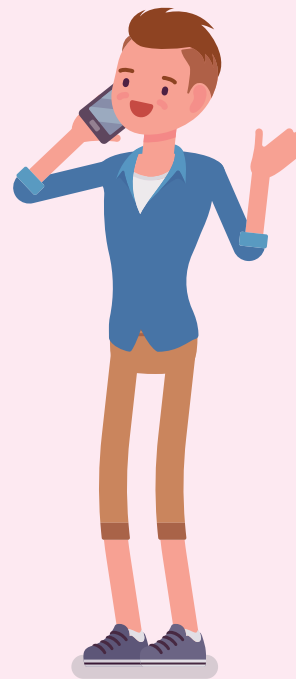
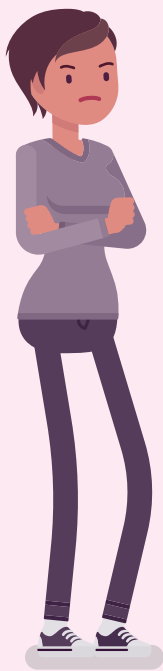
#### FACILITATOR:

- Let's all get into a circle. I am going to put this Emotion Bingo Page (below) in the centre of the circle.
- I will throw the dice, whichever emotion the dice lands on, the person to the right in the circle must act it out. We must create a reason why the person is feeling that way. For example, if the dice lands on happy, I might be happy because someone gave me a lollipop. We will go all around the circle so that everyone gets a turn.

Angry	Sad	Grumpy	Jealous
Happy	Confused	Excited	Shocked
Frightened	Worried	Disappointed	Lonely
Confident	Surprised	Nervous	Joyful
Hopeful	Embarrassed	Frustrated	Impatient

**FACILITATOR:**

- What situations do you find hard sometimes?  
How could we read the body language of the other people to help us?
- For example if someone has their arms folded and are scowling when you're at a party, they mightn't be the best person to start a conversation with.
- Now act out scenarios where body language helps explain how someone is feeling in a situation.



# OBSERVATION GAMES

## LEVEL 1

### 1 SOMETHING HAS CHANGED

#### FACILITATOR:

- Now let's all sit in a circle. I will need one of you to stand outside. Before you leave, look at everyone in the circle up and down and try to memorise the look.
- For example what clothes they are wearing, how they style their hair, if they have any jewellery and what type of shoes they have on.
- Something in the room will change while you stand outside.
- As a group we can now decide what we want to change and when they come back they can guess what we changed.

*NOTE: As the game continues you can include more changes to make the game more challenging.*



# OBSERVATION GAMES

## LEVEL 2

### 1 PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

#### FACILITATOR:

- I will give you a picture. You have one minute to look at the picture and try to remember as much as you can about the picture.
- Now I am going to take the picture away and I want you to close your eyes and visualize the image.
- I will then ask you to describe the image and see how much you can remember.

*Often they will imagine things that weren't there and forget some key parts of the image.*



# OBSERVATION GAMES

## LEVEL 3

### 1 STATING THE OBVIOUS

#### FACILITATOR:

- Everyone is going to sit a circle. One person will sit in the middle. We are all going to take turns to say something about the person in the middle. There are three rounds:

- **First Round** - People make statements starting with: "It's obvious that..."

These must be things that we can see like, "It's obvious that you are wearing gold earrings."

The person in the middle cannot respond (yet).

- **Second Round** begins: "I assume that..."

This observation must be linked to an observable fact such as "I see you are wearing gold earrings and assume you like nice things".

The person in the middle still doesn't respond.

- **Third Round** begins: "I imagine you..."

Now you can make wild guesses about the participant like. "I imagine you went to college" or "I imagine you have 2 sisters".

The person in the middle can answer if it's true or false now.





# NON-VERBAL USE OF THE VOICE

## LEVEL 1

Some people use their voices to show emotion. A lot of autistic people use their bodies to express emotion.

Every activity mentioned below can be carried out between one child / teen and one adult. The adult takes the place of the facilitator and the child becomes the other facilitator (with a little coaching) or the volunteer.

Most circle activities can be played back and forth between 2 people instead.

### 1 VOCAL BINGO

#### FACILITATOR:

- Today we will use the same Emotion Handout we used when we played emotion bingo. This time, when I throw the dice onto one square of the sheet, you must then all say the word “yes” in the **TONE** you think will express this emotion.

We will continue until everyone has had a turn to throw the dice.

**NOTE:** This is an exploratory exercise. The point of this is to tune the pupils’ ears into the many ways that tone is used to portray emotion. This is not a mimicking exercise.

Angry	Sad	Grumpy	Jealous
Happy	Confused	Excited	Shocked
Frightened	Worried	Disappointed	Lonely
Confident	Surprised	Nervous	Joyful
Hopeful	Embarrassed	Frustrated	Impatient



**FACILITATOR:**

- Everyone sit in a circle. What nursery rhymes do you know?

*Say it normally once or twice, and then the facilitator calls out different feelings so they change the way they are saying it every few lines. (2 facilitators may demonstrate if necessary and then ask for volunteers to call out feelings - maybe using emoji faces here would help them to think of feelings).*

- Next, let's say it in an excited voice.

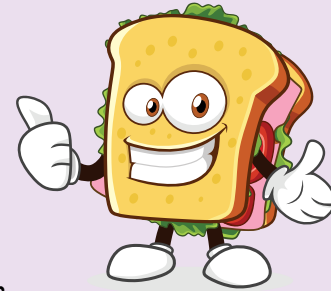
**NOTE:** *If you have a few pupils, you can also ask them to put the chairs in rows of 2, facing the same direction to create a 'bus'. The bus driver can sit at the front, and is the person who calls out the emotions, while the passengers say the nursery rhyme. Each pupil can take a turn to be the bus driver.*



# NON-VERBAL USE OF THE VOICE

## LEVEL 2

### 1 HAM SANDWICH



#### FACILITATOR:

- Let's do this in pairs. A will ask B questions, and B can only answer with the words "Ham Sandwich".

The **tone** they use will show us the meaning. Questions should start with question words for the game to work best. "Do you like peas?", "Are you going to the show?", "Does this look nice?"

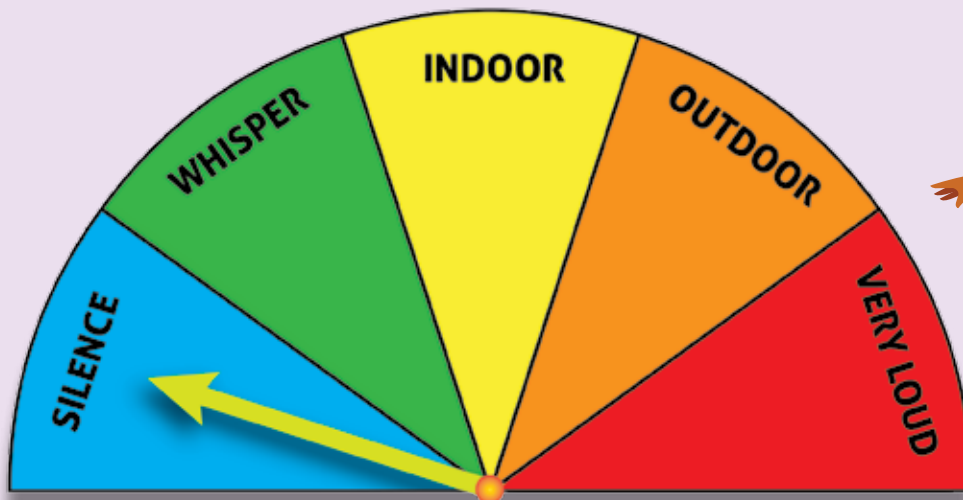
### 2 VOICE-O-METER

#### FACILITATOR:

- We are going to work on **volume**. Can someone give me a nursery rhyme?

*Using the chosen rhyme, go through each section of the Voice-O-Meter below, and see if they respond to what the section says. They should gradually get louder and louder.*

## VOICE-O-METER



# NON-VERBAL USE OF THE VOICE

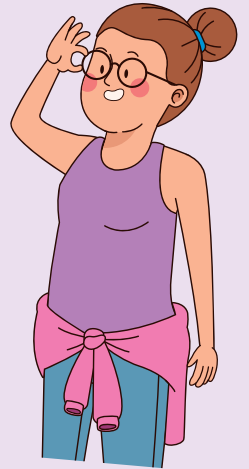
## LEVEL 3



### 1 GUESS HOW I'M FEELING GAME

#### FACILITATOR:

- Let's all sit in a circle. We will all take turns to stand up and say "YES". The rest of us must guess how they are feeling. You need to exaggerate **tone** and **use your face** so that it will be easy for others to guess.



### 2 INTRODUCING PITCH, PACE AND TONE

*Facilitator can use the following to introduce the ideas of pitch, pace and tone, and how these elements of vocal modulation can change the meaning of words.*

#### FACILITATOR:

- How we say things can affect our message when communicating it.
- TONE** of voice is very important. **TONE** means showing how we are feeling in our voices. **TONE** and **PITCH** are related. **PITCH** is how high or low or voice is. **PACE** also shows how we feel. If we are nervous or worried we speak quickly, if we are uncertain or sad we speak slowly.
- Sometimes it doesn't matter what words a person says because if we listen to their voice instead of (as well as) the words we can guess how they are feeling.
- Now we can sit in a circle and each takes a turn saying, "No, no, I am fine", in a different voice (this should illustrate the relationship between how we say something and the words).



Blah!

### 3 BLAH, BLAH, BLAH

#### FACILITATOR:

- Next we are going to play a game called '**Blah, Blah**'. This game will show us about how tone can demonstrate meaning. I will divide you into groups to have nonsense conversation using gibberish and not real words. The only "word" you can use in the scene is "**blah**".

Blah!



# JOINING IN

## LEVEL 1

*As you can imagine, joining in can be particularly difficult if you can't read the way some people use their bodies to communicate. It can also be difficult to feel confident if you are made to feel different. When practising Joining In exercises, it's important to incorporate All About Me exercises and Body Language exercises.*

*Every activity mentioned below can be carried out between one child / teen and one adult. The adult takes the place of the facilitator and the child becomes the other facilitator (with a little coaching) or the volunteer.*

*Most circle activities can be played back and forth between 2 people instead.*

### 1 NAME GAMES

Start with any of these name games. In each game the facilitator goes first to break the ice. It's important to move the game along quickly so children don't bore of it. If a child can't think of an idea then jump in and help them out!

- In a circle each child takes their turn to call out their name and do an action to go with it. Everyone else copies this and the game continues until everyone has had a turn.
- As above but add an animal name and sound: "I'm Mark and I'm a cat meow!"
- As above, but add a silly surname: "I'm Mark Sillypants".
- As above, but say your name in a dramatic voice.
- As above, but dance your name!



**FACILITATOR:**

- I have brought in some scripts to practice joining in with groups of children that the pupils may not already know, and groups of friends they do know.

Of course we can just join in by reading body language too!

- **New Group:**

A: Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Can I join in?

- **Your Friends:**

A: Hi Sarah, can I play?

- Why is it important to include people?  
How do you feel if you are left out?



# JOINING IN

## LEVEL 2

### 1 THAT'S SO SILLY!

#### FACILITATOR:

- Next we are going to play a game called “That’s So Silly”. Two people will have a conversation standing in the middle of the circle. Another child comes to interrupt and, at first, it goes a silly way. The interrupter acts all goofy and runs up and yells.
- Everyone still in the circle will yell, “That’s SO silly!!” Then we will rewind and re-enact the scene in a better way.

*NOTE : This game can also be done when an adult sets up a scene using two teddy bears / dolls (for smallies) and then the adult and child can take turns approaching the two teddies to join in. For older kids, you can leave out the teddies but two chairs facing each other will work just as well. Explain that the teddies and chairs are representing two people in conversation.*



### 2 BEING EXCLUDED

*This is something we need to work on with all children; reminding kids how it feels to be left out can help everyone to be more mindful of leaving people on the outskirts. You can't join in until you're left in!*

#### FACILITATOR:

- I have a magic present. Here it is in my hands. I don't have a magic present for everyone, just for half of you. So I will give it to you, and you and you. *(Facilitator hands the imaginary present to half the kids.)* Now what did I give you? *(They ask the first child. The child can respond with anything at all. Then they ask the second child and so on.)*
- Now, how did it feel to receive a nice present from me? And how did it feel to get nothing?

*(Discuss how we can often leave people out, without meaning to but because we can be forgetful sometimes. How does it feel to leave others out? How does it feel to be left out?)*

*End the session by announcing you have a better idea, that you will give the first child a magic present and then they will give one to the second child and then the second child will pass one to the third child and so on until everyone gets a magic gift. They say thanks and announce what they got as they go around the circle as well. It's much better when everyone is included.*



# JOINING IN

## LEVEL 3

### 1 DISCUSSION: JOINING IN

Facilitator can use the following to discuss the concept of joining in:

#### FACILITATOR:

- Sometimes it can be difficult for us to join in a new group or a group of people playing / chatting in school. Can you think of a time that it was difficult for you to join in? Why was it difficult? What stops you joining in? etc.
- Before making your approach, watch what the other kids are doing. What can you do to fit in? Here are a few tips to discuss:
  1. Observe first to see what topic is being discussed and if the group looks friendly to you. Remember to watch for peoples' body language.
  2. Make a plan in your head.
  3. Get the attention of someone in the group by...  
(Remember the 'That's SO Rude' game)
    - Calling their name.
    - Tapping them (gently) on the shoulder.
    - Walking up to the group.
  4. Try joining the game by doing something relevant. For example, if kids are playing a restaurant game, see if you can become a new customer.
  5. If YES: Join in.
  6. If NO: Just find something else to do and try again another day.



*\*It is difficult for kids who hear “no” all the time or most of the time.*

*This is why finding groups, clubs and after school activities with like-minded people or other Autistic people is important. We all need to feel accepted. (Also see the exercise about the magic present to help kids to navigate inclusion).*



# MAKING FRIENDS

Sometimes people make instant friends. We often hear about people “clicking” with each other immediately. Other times, it can take longer to make a connection. It’s a good idea to explore this with your child /teen.

Every activity mentioned below can be carried out between one child / teen and one adult. The adult takes the place of the facilitator and the child becomes the other facilitator (with a little coaching) or the volunteer.

Most circle activities can be played back and forth between 2 people instead.

## LEVEL 1

### 1 WHAT IS A FRIEND?

#### FACILITATOR:

- Everyone sit in a circle. We are going to talk about Friendship. What is a friend? (Remember that everyone may have a different understanding of what a friend is to them.)
- No matter how you define a friend, it’s important that your friend is nice to you, and makes you feel good about yourself.

### 2 HOW DO WE MAKE FRIENDS?

#### FACILITATOR:

- Do you have any ideas on good ways to make friends? These are some tips that help us to make friends...
  - ◆ We start by saying hello
  - ◆ We can ask their name
  - ◆ We can tell them our names
  - ◆ Remember if they ask us something to “BUILD IT UP”
  - ◆ We can find out what things they like
  - ◆ We can answer their questions and tell them about ourselves.

OR

- ◆ We can look at what they’re doing and join in. (see Observation Games)



# MAKING FRIENDS

## LEVEL 2

### 1 SHOWING INTEREST IN OTHERS

#### FACILITATOR:

- How do we know someone is interested in what we are saying?  
How can we show interest?
- We can show with our bodies. Can you give some examples?
- We can show with words.
- We can also explain to people what we look like when we are listening so that they can learn more about Autistic Body Language.
- How does non-autistic feedback differ from Autistic feedback?

We can say...

#### COMPLIMENTS

- ◆ Cool
- ◆ Awesome
- ◆ Interesting
- ◆ I like how you...
- ◆ You're very good at...
- ◆ You know a lot about...

#### FRIENDLY COMPLIMENTS

- ◆ Tell me something about...
- ◆ I noticed you seem to like...
- ◆ I'm wondering about your...
- ◆ You said something about....

Give pupils time to practice this in scenes.



### 2 COMPLIMENT CIRCLE

#### FACILITATOR:

- Now we can practice saying some compliments to each other in a circle, throwing the ball around, each time saying a new compliment.



# MAKING FRIENDS

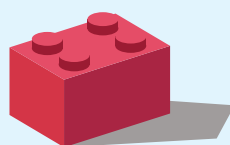
## LEVEL 3

1

### BUILDING A FRIENDSHIP

#### FACILITATOR:

- Some friendships develop over time. We are going to do an exercise to show one way we can build friendships with others.
- A meets B and they introduce themselves. If they have common interests, they put 2 blocks together. **Jump forward a few weeks:**
- A asks B to play with him or to join in an activity. B puts another block on.
- B accepts and then returns the kindness by asking A to join him in doing some-thing else. (A puts another block on).  
**Jump forward a few weeks:**
- B is upset and A asks him what is wrong. B shares what is making him unhappy. A just listens and promises to keep this story to himself. (B puts another block on). **Jump forward a few days:**
- B is upset with A because A told other people his story. He told it in trust and feels betrayed. (B **removes** a block).
- Can 2 volunteers take over this friendship scene? Can A apologise and mend the friendship, or what happens next?
- What actions help us **build blocks up?** (eg. showing kindness, supporting someone, involving them, complimenting someone, making them laugh, etc.) What actions **remove** a block from the tower?
- Improvise more scenes starting at the beginning where two people meet each other.
- As the blocks build up so does the trust and friendship. Without trust it is very hard to have a friendship as we are taking a risk with our feelings when we let someone be our friend.



*NOTE: You can play this with one child but when you get to the point of making a mistake you can call out “freeze, then rewind, and play” so that the child can come up with a different way to respond to the same scenario.*



### FACILITATOR:

- Today we are going to play the Captain Konnect game. Sometimes we can imagine ourselves being this superhero.
- If we get stuck in a situation we need to fix we can think, “What would the Captain Konnect do now?”
- Next, I will ask 2 of you to act out a scene where one person gets upset by a comment the other person makes and we need to fix it.
- Next we will use scripts to help us understand what Captain Konnect can do...
 

**Friend 1: Do you like my new hairstyle?**  
**Friend 2: I think your hair was a lot nicer before you cut it.**  
**Friend 1: That’s not a nice thing to say.**  
**Friend 2: I am sorry if I hurt your feelings. Your hair is very nice.**  
**Friend 1: I’m not talking to you anymore.**
- I wonder what the Captain Konnect would do next?

### NOW TRY THIS SCRIPT:

- Pal 1: Wouldn’t it be great to be a princess?**  
**Pal 2: No way! Princesses are stupid. I would hate to be a princess. I can’t think of anything worse.**  
**Pal 1: There is no need to be hurtful.**
- **FREEZE!** Ask the class what Captain Konnect would do? The response could be something like this:  
**Pal 2: I wasn’t being hurtful. I just wouldn’t like to be a princess. I would rather be an adventurer. If you would like to be a princess then you could be a princess and I can be an adventurer and we can make up a game.**
  - Now I need volunteers to act a scene. Choose a scene that includes an honest opinion on something. When the scene goes wrong, both actors freeze and someone from the audience jumps in to solve it as The Friendship Superhero. Everyone has as a turn.

*\*Using a cloak for Captain Konnect would add some drama and fun to this game.*

- Why do people ask us for our opinion when they do not want to hear something that will upset them, even if it’s just how we feel about something? Why do our opinions matter so much to people?



# TEAMWORK & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

## LEVEL 1

*Working in a team involves an awful lot of reading other people's body language. If this body language is not part of your language then you may miss vital communications between members of the group. When doing these activities with your child /teen, always incorporate Body Language activities and discussion.*

*Every activity mentioned below can be carried out between one child / teen and one adult. The adult takes the place of the facilitator and the child becomes the other facilitator (with a little coaching) or the volunteer.*

*Most circle activities can be played back and forth between 2 people instead.*

### 1 LOOKING AT PERSPECTIVE!



#### FACILITATOR:

- We are all in this room. We are now going to explore it from different “perspectives”. This means from different angles, or views or places.
- Look out from under a table. What can you see?
- Look from standing on a chair. What can you see?
- Look from lying flat on the ground, standing at the back wall, etc., etc.

**Discussion:** Now what did you notice when you looked out from different places? Do you think someone standing in the middle of the room saw the same things as someone under a table? What did we learn from this? How can this learning help us when working in a team?

### 2 LET'S BE...

- Next we will play Let's be. Everyone will takes turn to say, “Let's be...”, and suggests what the rest of us should turn into. Continue until everyone has had a turn.



# TEAMWORK & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

## LEVEL 2

Yes...

### 1 YES, AND LET'S...

and let's...

#### FACILITATOR:

- Before playing the game, explain the importance of accepting the other person's idea.
- Allow the class to work in pairs and then ask them to perform their improvised scene.

*The principle of 'Yes, And Let's' is the basis of all collaborative teamwork and group creativity.*

- Now, I need everyone to sit in a circle and build a story one sentence at a time. Each sentence must begin with "Yes, and let's..." Each sentence must refer to one statement from the previous sentence.
- For example, "Let's go to the beach". The next person could say, "Yes, and let's eat ice cream", or "Yes, and let's go for a swim".
- If someone forgets to start their sentence with "Yes, and..." then the rest of us functions as a friendly human buzzer, saying "Bzzzzz". The person then just tries again, this time beginning his/her sentence with "Yes, and let's..."
- At any time, you have the choice to say "pass" if you get too stuck.
- Did we do a good job as a team to make a great story? How did we do this? Was it difficult to add to the team's ideas?

#### VARIATION: Yes, and Let's... In Pairs

- In pairs, we will repeat the same game. We will watch the pair who are creating the story until they are finished.

**2****LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD - HOTSEAT****FACILITATOR:**

- The next activity is called “hot seating”. It’s a great way to explore character and to explore different perspectives. Let’s do it using the character Little Red Riding Hood.
- I need a volunteer to sit in the “hot seat” and to answer questions as Little Red. Everyone else will fire questions at her, questions that are outside of what we already know from the story so Little Red can make up the answers on the spot. eg “Do you have brothers and sisters?”, “What’s your favourite song?”
- By doing this we learn a whole new side to Little Red that we didn’t know before.

**3****ROLE REVERSAL****FACILITATOR:**

- Now everyone should divide into pairs in the class. I will give you all scenarios.
- For example one pair are acting out a scenario with a child who won’t go to bed and their parent.
- Each pair will be given some time to prepare, and then perform their scene for us. I will then ask you swap roles, and perform the scene again.
- How did it feel to change roles?  
Was it easy to see the other person’s point of view?



# TEAMWORK & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

## LEVEL 3



### 1 IMPROV SCENE

- The Wolf is on trial and both he and his lawyer must defend his actions in the story. The prosecuting lawyer will call his witness to speak against the Wolf. Both lawyers give their closing statements.
- Who was right? What did we learn about perspectives?



### 2 DEBATE

- Divide into two teams. One team will be on the Wolf's side and the other will be on the side of Granny. I will give you time to prepare before you start the debate. It doesn't matter whether you agree with the actions of your character but you have to argue according to the team you are assigned.
- One team will argue for "That the Wolf had no other option but to eat Granny as he had to survive" and the other team will argue against.

### 3 WORDS WE CHOOSE

- Now we will improvise a few scenes where I will give you a scenario where something annoys you. You can be yourself, or you can pretend to be someone else, like me in the classroom, for example.
- So for example, if a teacher said "Stop that, you are so bad at listening" - what would be a better way for a teacher to say that but to get their point across?
- For example, if a friend says, "You're always insulting me" or "You are so annoying". Starting a sentence with "You are always" immediately makes the other person feel bad or useless. A better way might be, "Sometimes I feel... or I sense..."
- Or for example, instead of saying "Give me that", we could say "Would you mind passing me that?"
- Look at how the other person will perceive or interpret what you say, and think about which words will get the best response.





# CONVERSATIONS

## LEVEL 1

### 1 BUILD IT UP

#### FACILITATOR:

- Next we are going to sing the “Build It Up” song to the tune of “Row, Row, Row your Boat”. Lets practice:

**“Build, build, build it up, High as it will go!”**

Facilitator: “This is a brown table.”

Class: *“Built, build, build it up...”*

Facilitator: “It’s a big table.”

Class: *“Build, build, build it up...”*

Facilitator: “It’s a very strong table.”  
*etc.*



- Now it’s your turn to describe something and everyone else will sing along.
- Now we will move on from an object to describing your day.
- What did you do in school today?, and we will use the build it up song to add more detail.

### 2 FINDING COMMON GROUND

#### FACILITATOR:

- Let’s all get into a circle. What do you like talking about? Each will take a turn and mention at least two topics.
- We all have interests, and sometimes others don’t share them, but we all have something in common.
- What would everyone like to talk about? How can we make new friends? What would they talk about when they meet someone new? Looking for common ground or common topics of interest is a way to get started, and to find a friend.



# CONVERSATIONS

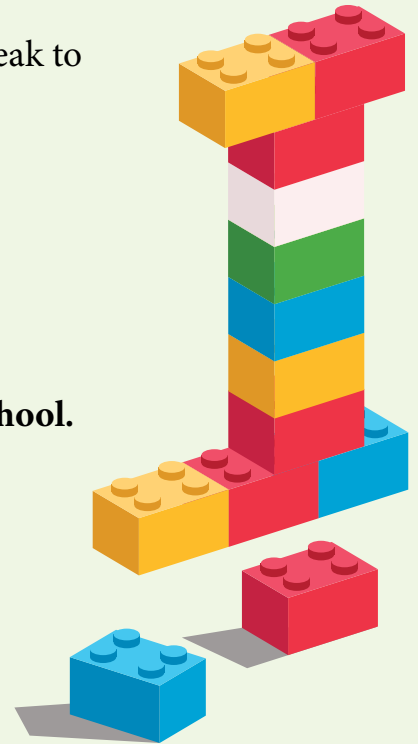
## LEVEL 2

### 1 STAYING ON TOPIC

#### FACILITATOR:

- Today we have some building blocks, when we speak to someone it is like a building.
- Here is a script:

A: **Hi** (*first block*)  
B: **Hello, how are you?** (*second block*)  
A: **I'm well and you?** (*third block*)  
B: **I'm grand. I'm just getting ready to go to school.** (*fourth block*)  
A: **Oh really? Do you like school?** (*fifth block*)  
B: **Yes, I love it. Do you?** (*sixth block*)  
A: **I think it's ok.** (*seventh block*)  
B: **I like bananas.** (*tower falls down*)
- What has happened here?
- Some people believe that it's rude to change the topic of conversation and other people want to talk about things they are interested in. But that's ok because everyone's mind works differently and sometimes we need to be a little bit of a detective to find out what other people are interested in.
- We can also use this as an opportunity to self advocate and explain how the Autistic mind works and is always making connections and, naturally, that will make our communication different to people who have a different way of thinking.



## 2

## TURN TAKING IN CONVERSATION

## FACILITATOR:



- Sometimes it can be hard to judge how to take turns in a conversation. In a chat both people are eager to talk but it only works when we have a **LISTENER** and a **SPEAKER**.
- Will everyone stand in two lines. There will be a Line A and a Line B. Whoever is holding the ball in Line A must ask a question as part of the conversation and throw the ball to someone in Line B to continue the conversation.
- We must try to keep the conversation going and the game going.
- If you are stuck then I will say '**Buzz**', and we will move onto someone else.
- The conversation must flow well and make sense.



*NOTE: Body language links in with judging whether someone is taking too long or too short a turn. If someone is taking too long a turn, the listener's body language changes. Ask the pupils for examples of this.*

*If someone is taking too short a turn, the listener's body language changes. Ask the pupils for examples of this.*

*Also we can self-advocate here by explaining that conversations in Autistic spaces are often quite different to this, because one person can trigger a new thought connection in the listener, and they may just HAVE to share it because they're so excited or because, if they don't, it will disappear and be forgotten.*



### 3

## USING THE QUESTION WORDS

### FACILITATOR:

- Give out the Question Words Handout (*below*) to every child and ask them to think of a full question for each one of the words. Do this in a circle to share ideas.
- In pairs, give them a situation/question word from the handout and ask them to start a conversation. After a minute or so check on them and remind them of the Conversation Building Blocks so they do not stop building.

Remind them they can also use comments and compliments (*See Making Friends*) to keep building.

This will take time to practice so ask them to swap partners (when possible) so they can try it out a few times.

Ask each pair to show the class what they came up with.

- In pairs, give them a selection of question words to use as prompts. Each pair should take turns to choose a question word to create a conversation.

For example:

**A: What's your name?**

**B: My name is Michael. How are you?**

**A: I'm good thanks. Would you like to play?**

**B: Oh thank you. Which game should we play?**

*etc.*



Where?	How?
When?	Why?
Who?	How Many?
What?	Are? Is? Does?



# CONVERSATIONS

## LEVEL 3

### 1 VAGUE LANGUAGE

Use the explanation below to help the group understand the idea of vague language and that it's ok to ask someone to clarify what they mean. Use some of the simple scripts below to give them the tools to ask for help.

#### FACILITATOR:

- Sometimes people use language we do not understand. They may be vague.
- Sometimes people ask us a question where there are too many answers in our head so we cannot answer them correctly.
- Someone might give us instructions and we lose the sequence and forget what they said after the first instruction.
- If someone confuses us by asking a question, such as, “*Do you miss school?*”. A good idea is to ask that person, “*What do you mean?*”

Ask them, “*Could you be more specific, please?*”

- If someone gives us too many instructions at once, a good idea is to say, “*Could you give me one instruction at a time please?*”
- They may use figurative speech (*see next exercise*) or sayings we do not understand.

If someone asks us or tells us something we do not understand then a good idea is to ask them to say it in a different way, or to just say, “*I do not understand what you are asking me*”, or “*I do not understand what you are telling me.*”



A figure of speech is a word or phrase that possesses a separate meaning from its literal definition. It can be a metaphor or simile, designed to make a comparison. It can be the repetition of alliteration or exaggeration to provide a dramatic effect.



### FACILITATOR:

- Sometimes people exaggerate what they are saying. Someone might say, *"I have a million friends."* This means *"I have lots of friends."*
- They may say confusing things like, *"I am blue in the face."* This means *"I am tired of saying the same thing."*
- They may say things like, *"I am as busy as a bee."* This means, *"I am very busy."*
- They may liken people to an objects or creatures, *"You are a little fairy."* This means you are full of fun or tricks. *"He is a wet blanket."* This means he is no fun.
- There are a lot of confusing ways people express themselves. They do this to add meaning or dramatic effect to get their point across.
- There are lists of figurative sayings we can learn that will help us.
- Below is a list of some of the things people say. See if you can figure out what they mean:

1. **You are as bold as brass** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **He was over the moon** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **He is as fast as the wind** \_\_\_\_\_
4. **I could eat a horse** \_\_\_\_\_
5. **He kicked the bucket** \_\_\_\_\_
6. **That woman is a dragon** \_\_\_\_\_



Once this list has been read, use role play to illustrate: Give A a figurative saying to start a conversation eg. "You are dog late" and ask B to respond, "I do not know what that means" or "Do you mean...(the child adds in what he thinks it means here). Illustrate this with every child taking a turn until they know they know to say, "I don't understand" rather than being totally lost in a conversation. Help them to try to figure out the meaning of some sayings by thinking about them.

As a group: Facilitator calls out a saying/metaphor, asks the class to explain it (or explain it if no one knows) and then everyone acts out the literal meaning. eg. I'm so hungry I could eat a horse... everyone acts out eating a horse. Facilitator explains that people say things like this to really get their point across.

## FACILITATOR:

- Knowing how to politely end a conversation can be tricky. Practice these simple phrases to have some options when you need to leave a conversation:
  1. It was nice speaking with you, but I have to head off now.
  2. I'm sorry, I really have to go, but I'll talk to you soon.
  3. This was great, I'd love to talk to you again soon but I have to go now.
  4. I have to go, see you later!
- **Self-Advocating** is a really important part of communicating. This is why it's better for children to know about their identity so that they can explain Autistic ways of communication and how they differ from non-autistic ways. It's a good idea to encourage children to self-advocate with confidence from a young age.



## About the author

**Evaleen Whelton** teaches communication and drama to children. She loves it! She has been doing that for a long time, almost 20 years! She also teaches grown ups about autism.



Evaleen wanted to make a book that would help kids who are just like her. She communicates in a very direct way and sees the world differently to people who are not Autistic.

Evaleen found out that she was Autistic when she was 37 and so she wrote this programme to explain the way she understands the differences between Autistic and non-autistic communication.

She hopes it helps people to understand better how we communicate and also teach Autistic kids and teens how people who are not Autistic communicate.

She loves being Autistic and knows that Autistic people have lots of important qualities and are really good at lots of stuff.

She is very proud that she is part of a wonderful community of people and hopes that you are too!

