

## 'Feeling OK'<sup>139 140</sup>

### Summary

The 'Feeling OK' tool is not a data-gathering tool but a strategy to ensure children's safety during the data collection process.

There may be times when children share something that upsets or worries them. We can tell when a child is sad or distressed by:

- Watching how they get along with others (they may hurt others or they may be afraid to play);
- The child may tell us directly;
- Their body language and expressions (for example, they may start crying or stop the conversation if it is painful);
- Physical changes. For example, the child may have nightmares, feel sick or have trouble sleeping.<sup>141</sup>

It is helpful for children to share their feelings. The following prompts are steps researchers can take to help the child to feel OK and to end the session with positive experiences that help to balance or neutralise the sad feelings, memories or fears.

### Process

1. Take notice of the child's expressions and behaviour. If the child is becoming upset, stop the activity or discussion.
2. Ask the child to share what is upsetting them, be a good listener and take time to provide comfort. Children can feel relieved to share their feelings.
3. Do an activity with the child. The activity may be one that you know the child likes such as singing or a game, or they might make something that they can keep. An example of this comes from the 'protection tool', a tool documented by Save the Children.<sup>142 143</sup> Draw a visual picture (or tell a story). Ask the child to draw (or answer) different questions such as:
  - The person I love the most is ... I am best at ...
  - I feel safe with ... My happiest memory is ...
4. Be positive! Tell the child encouraging statements like:
  - I know you are feeling sad, but it was very brave of you to tell me what made you sad.
  - I can see that you really care about your family.
  - I can see you worked really hard to make that painting.
5. Make a plan with the child. Tell the child when you are going to meet again. Tell the child it is up to them if they wish to discuss what is making them sad in a future visit.
6. Look after yourself. You may feel sad for the child. Talk to your supervisor and share your feelings.<sup>144</sup>