



# Solution By Inclusion

An Educator's Manual to LINK Rituals

## 1. FRIENDSHIP

Developed by RVTS Sør in co-creation with students, parents and educators from GEM16+ (Malta), IAL FVG (Italy), Tradium (Denmark) and project partners under the Erasmus+ co-funded Solution By Inclusion Project, 2020-2023

This is part of Solution By Inclusion developed Education's Manual to be tested at GEM16+, IAL FVG and Tradium as part of Intellectual Output 02, WP. 5

*Authors: RVTS Sør, 2020-2023*

## Foreword

This Educator's Manual contain guidance, skills and competencies for educators based on co-produced project results generated from the Erasmus+ project, Solution By Inclusion (WP. 5); with project partner RVTS Sør as responsible for Work Package 5. in the project.

# LINK - Life mastery in Norwegian classrooms - An Introduction for Teachers

## “ Friendship is a Social Immune System”

An important and interesting research has been done about children and friendship. The following question was asked: When are friendly relations created and what do they mean?

Children establish friendship earlier than we have been used to believe. Valuable relations are established already in Kindergarden. Friendship involves more than apparently feeling well together. Neither should friendship be mistaken for popularity. Many wish to socialize with the popular ones. It does not follow that the most popular one makes friends with everybody he or she socializes with. A true friendship is marked by mutual consent.

Children need various abilities to develop friendship, amongst others the ability to regulate feelings and restrain impulses. Friendship plays an important role in developing social competence. Language skill, and thereby the ability to make yourself understood, has an effect on preventing unwanted behavior. Our research also shows that socially shy children have a somewhat poorer language and fewer friends, and are less popular than other children. In consequence, language is important for shy children to make best friends. Training in talking to others is therefore social ability training.

Children who for different reasons do not get friends, face a bigger risk being dissatisfied also later on in life, says Greve.

“The highlight of the week” is worth its weight in gold to practice communication and friendship. On “klikk.no” you can amongst other read the following: To have a good friend to talk with is good for your health. It might in fact have a greater health effect than an appointment with a doctor or a psychologist. A social network is in many ways an absolute safety net, or a social immunity. Talking to a good friend can help you understand your own feelings, put incidents into a context, and evaluate what has happened, says Pål Johan Karlsen, editor of Journal for Norwegian Psychology society. (Tidsskrift for Norsk Psykologforening).

The Dane Mogens Nygaard Christoffersen has carried out a national study about bullying and social support. His conclusion is that the most destructive for your self-image is to be psychologically, sexually or emotionally abused by parents, or to be bullied by important persons such as class mates. He also claims that for the most vulnerable persons social support will contribute to reduce the risk of bad self-image and suicide ideas.

References: Christoffersen, Mogens Nygaard 2010, Department of children and family. “Children maltreatment, bullying in school and social support.”

## **IMPLEMENTATION IN CLASSROOM**

### **GOAL FOR GROUP**

### **GOALS FOR LINK**

Contribute to strengthened self-image

Contribute to feeling of belonging

Contribute to mastery

### **COMPETENCE AIMS FOR THE GROUP**

**KNOWLEDGE:** the students understand the importance of having friends

**COMPETENCE:** the ability to say something about the characteristics of a good friend

**VALUE:** to reflect over the fact that friendship prevents bullying and exclusion, and as such promotes health.

## **OPENING RITUAL**

Start every group activity in the same way. Listen gladly to music, light candles, decorate with flowers, shake hands with all participants, or do other positive things. The point is to signal that this is a link-class, and that link-classes differ from other classes.

### **TODAY'S PRIME HAPPENING**

Everybody tells about a nice thing they have experienced since last session. Remember we are looking for small and simple everyday joys, not boundless happenings.

### **THEME**

#### **PRESENTATION OF THEME**

The teacher presents the theme of the day, shortly. Say a few words about the topic of the session. You can choose from the introduction for the teacher. The introduction is simply meant to engage the students in the themes, and should not take more than a few minutes.

## WE TALK ABOUT THEMES

### Alternative 1.

You may well use prepared Power Point (PP) as a starting point for dialog about the theme.

Below the PP-pictures there are support questions you can use in your dialog with the pupils. You can also make your own questions, but it is important that the questions are open. You are to facilitate for reflection and common wondering and exploration. We are not looking for a fixed answer, but wish that children /young people are able to put words to their thoughts, feelings and opinions. It is not a point to get through all the pictures. If the pupils are eager to comment on the first pictures, it is more important to spend time on these than interrupt and rush on to get through everything.

The pictures should be accompanied by a text of laughter and joy as a health offering factor.

## WE WORK WITH THEME. CHOOSE, REJECT AND ADJUST

Now there are many different tasks you as a teacher can choose among. It is not the intention to do everything that has been proposed. Choose the exercises that suit the most for your group and you as a leader. Still we recommend that you choose tasks which make it possible to work with the theme in various ways, both through activity and interaction, play and laughter and not only through talking.

## TASKS - GROUP WORK

Pupils are divided into groups of 3-4. Each group gets a flip-over-sheet. The groups get different tasks. For example:

1. Write down qualities with a good friend

Heading: A good friend

2. Make a recipe of a good friend

Examples: two shares of sense of humor, three shares of fidelity, one share of interest in football, and so on.

Heading: Summary of a good friend.

3. Tip poster. Heading: How to make good friends.

4. The group makes a suggestion for a bullying manifest.

Heading: Bullying manifest

5. Tip poster. Heading: Tip against bullying.

Each group presents to the class what they have come up with. What they have put down on the flip-over can be made into posters which are put up in the classroom.

## GO AHEAD CARD

PURPOSE: Support each other

EQUIPMENT: Cardboards

The students make cards of encouragement. On these you might find: Get on with it, you are courageous, I support you, and the like. The cards to be handed out at suitable occasions.

## SECRET FRIEND

PURPOSE: Rehearse to show you wish to be a friend

EQUIPMENT: Notes with participants' names.

The teacher has written the names of the pupils on pieces of paper. Each pupil draws one. The person they have chosen is supposed to be a special friend the coming week. You are not supposed to say who you have drawn. After some days the teacher asks who he/she believes has been their secret friend. How could they notice? Afterwards the person mentioned is asked if it is correct, and this person is asked what he/she has done to show that he/she wants to be a good friend. The exercise might be a good starting point to speak about what we can actively do to show friendship, and what you can look for as signs of friendship from others.

## PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS

For those who really like to philosophize.

- There are various types of friends. What kind of friends come to your mind? (best friends, team-friends, grown-up friends and the like)
- What is your dream friend like?
- What qualities are the most important in friendship?
- Why do some bully others?
- What does it feel like to be bullied?
- What kind of problems do you think the ones who bully face?
- Why do you think those who bully do not master grown-up life so well?
- What would a school free of bullying be like?
- Do grown-ups bully?

## JUST FOR FUN

It is understood that everybody is supposed to laugh during a link-session, also when we deal with difficult issues, yes, may be especially then.

## THE SUN SHINES ON

PURPOSE: offer a good experience

EQUIPMENT: one chair less than participants

Everybody except one sits on a chair in a circle. One stands in the middle. This person says: The sun shines on..... The remain of the sentence he makes up on his own. F.exa. The sun shines on everybody who has been to Denmark. Everybody concerned must stand up and sit down on a different chair. The one in the middle should also try to sit down. The one who has not found a chair, is now standing in the middle and trying to figure out a new sentence.

At first It can be useful to let the sun shine on harmless things. In a confident group one can gradually agree to let the sun shine on emotions or personal qualities.

## ONES AND TWOS

PURPOSE: To have fun and practice working together, and not try to throw a spanner in the works for someone.

EQUIPMENT: Two bags of peas or balls of different colors. The student stand in a circle. Every second pupil is a one or a two. A one and a two next to each other have both a ball/bag of peas. The idea is to pass on what you have in your hands around the circle and back as quickly as possible. The ones pass on to ones and twos to twos. The teams pass on in opposite direction. You are not allowed to hinder the other team.

## TWO PLACES TO THE RIGHT

PURPOSE: Good experience

EQUIPMENT: One chair less than participants

The pupils sit in a circle. There is one person more than there are chairs. One stands in the middle. He says: “everybody who has....” and he has to make up something, such as “Everybody wearing a T-shirt should move.....and then he makes up something again, like: three places to the left. Those concerned move according to instruction. If the chair they move to is taken, he or she must sit down on the lap. Gradually there might be piles of pupils. The game is recommended only to classes where the pupils are confident, and where this will be good fun for everybody.

## THE KING’S CHAIR

PURPOSE: Enjoy being in focus

EQUIPMENT: A nice or different chair, or a chair decorated with a nice pillow, rug or something.

The participants take turns sitting in the King’s chair, shortly presenting themselves. Tell their names, hobbies and similar. The other participants have the possibility to ask the king about various things. The king decides what he wants to reply to.



Finally all subjects should write a sentence about the king's good qualities or an encouraging regard on a paper board. The board has already an attached picture of the king and his name.

### **TOE AGAINST TOE**

**PURPOSE:** Interaction and training in tolerating physical contact

**EQUIPMENT:** Nothing.

The pupils are divided into two groups. There should be odd numbers. When the leader calls out f.exa.: toe against toe, or knee against knee, forehead against forehead, the idea is to find a partner in the other group. The one who does not find someone is the next caller. The caller finds a new part of the body, calls it out, and tries himself to find a partner. You must find a new partner every time. Discuss ahead what parts of the body are acceptable to call out, and which ones we want to keep for ourselves in this game.

### **BALLOON GAME**

**PURPOSE:** Cooperation. Important element of friendship.

**EQUIPMENT:** Each group one balloon, music

Recommended size of group is approx. 5. Each group gets a balloon to fill with air. Before starting the music, the group gets instruction how to dance with the balloon, f.exa. the hand on the balloon. The music plays a couple of minutes. When the music is stopped a new instruction is given, f.exa. a finger on the balloon, a shoulder, forehead, etc. The group keeps on dancing. After a few rounds the leader says: "first group to crack the balloon with your right foot". Call a winning group. And finally: "first group to throw all pieces of the balloons in the garbage".

### **BALLOON GAME 2**

**PURPOSE:** Cooperation. Important element of friendship.

**EQUIPMENT:** A balloon to each group

Recommended size of group is approx. 5. Each group gets a balloon they are supposed to fill with air. They all make a circle and hold hands. The balloons are not supposed to touch the ground, and no one must let go hands. If the balloon touches the ground, the group loses its right to use the hands. They pick another part of the body to control the balloon. Every time it touches the ground, they lose the part of the body they used. At last it is the first group to carry the balloon to the garbage. Feel free to look for other activities in the activity booklet. Small humour presentations from DVD or youtube.com. Look for alternatives suitable for the age group.



## SONGS:

- You have something no one else has, no one is like you.
- Ties of friendship
- Stop, do not bully!
- Friends (p.308 in “Songs in Norway” (Sanger i Norge)

## MY BOOK

We recommend that every pupil has a book of their own to be used in link-classes. This book ought to look somewhat different from the normal workbooks. The idea is that the pupils should have one memory from each session. They can draw and/or write, put in pictures or texts. They can also exchange greetings. One can, for example, ask everybody to pass the book three places to the left, and ask the pupils to write a nice message to the person you got the book from. Imagination is the only limit, but remember that work in the book should be pleasurable and not give an impression of control. No one should have the feeling of falling short.

We recommend that the teacher collects the books after class and keeps them at school. This to avoid anyone to forget the book at home or losing it. In this way one makes sure that all the pupils can receive the book as a nice memory at the end of school. If you use link over many years, the book can be a treasure full of good memories.

- Write down characteristics of a good friend
- Make a bully-manifest
- Write messages of friendship to each other
- Take pictures of your classmates

## SUMMARY

As a summary we recommend a curl-and-throw task, or choose 3 things

### CURL-AND-THROW

The curl-and-throw tasks you will find in the scheme of the session. The pupils are to answer the questions anonymously and curl the paper together. Then ask who wants to be today's target. This person places himself with the back to the group. The others throw their paper balls at the target. The privilege of the target is that he/she gets the chance to read some of the answers, may be three is ok. If the role of the target is popular, it is important that it is done in turns. Some might like their answers to be read and want to express this, while others prefer to remain anonymous. Both are o.k. You may comment positively to what is read aloud.

### THREE THINGS

Everybody writes down three things they remember from the day's session, and three things they have learned. The teacher asks some to read aloud what they have written. The pupils can choose what they will share.

### NEXT TIME

Explain what will be the theme for the next time. Tell the pupils that if they find something problematic about the theme, they can tell the teacher and together they can find solutions.

### FINAL RITUAL

End all sessions in the same manner. The ritual should be enjoyable and contribute to the feeling of being appreciated. A final ritual could be all the pupils in a circle together, passing the class tie around while playing a piece of music.

The class tie is made by all the pupils cutting a piece of cloth of approx. 50 cm. Each pupil can choose his piece. They could possibly have some time to decorate it. All ties are added up in a circle. We suggest that all the pieces of cloth are piled up, and then one by one, the pupils blindfolded draw the piece of cloth that should be the next. In this way the order and composition will be at random. The advantage of tying the bonds instead of sewing is that it gives room for new ties of cloth in case of new members.

The class bond symbolizes the inclusion of everybody, that everybody belongs in the group. We are tied to each other. We consequently depend on each other, and we decide to look after one another. Everybody in the group should claim a place and also offer a place. The bond circulates and ties us together.

The teacher may also stand in the doorway and hand out go ahead cards or "seigmenn" (sweet candy figure) to the pupils while leaving the session. Go ahead cards are registered as extra material. They can be printed or possibly laminated.







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## 2. FEELINGS

Developed by RVTS Sør in co-creation with students, parents and educators from GEM16+ (Malta), IAL FVG (Italy), Tradium (Denmark) and project partners under the Erasmus+ co-funded Solution By Inclusion Project, 2020-2023

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# LINK - Life mastery in Norwegian classrooms - An Introduction for Teachers

## “MASTERING OF FEELINGS IS ESSENTIAL TO LIVE GOOD LIVES”

“Everybody needs to know, understand and accept his/her feelings to feel well with himself/herself and other people. Feelings warn about needs that must be met, and give motivation and experience of a meaning of life. In many ways feelings are the engine that keeps us going. There is a growing understanding to claim that a lack of regulation and integration of feelings are the source of many psychological sufferings. Mastering of feelings is central in living good lives. In psychology one operates with certain basic feelings. All the rest are nuances of basic feelings”. (Health promoting work, growing up, Gyldendal 2016)

The most important in a child's life is the feeling of safety and good relations with important adults. One of the main jobs of a raising children is to help children regulate feelings. It is about finding a balance between regulating anger, and asserting yourself. It is about understanding and accepting yourself and thereby also be able to understand and accept others.

In the following you will find an overview of basic feelings (the middle one) and three different degrees of each feeling:

- Astonishment - surprise-shock
- Attention - interest - eagerness
- Well-being - enjoyment - happiness
- Tenderness - love - devotion
- Self confidence - pride - triumph
- Anxiety - fear - angst
- Melancholy - sadness - despair
- Irritation - anger - rage
- Unwillingness - aversion - disgust
- Superiority - contempt - hostility
- Shyness - shame - humiliation
- Bad conscience - feeling of guilt - self-hatred
- Privation - envy - jealousy

(Specialist of psychology, Andreas Aamodt, RVTS 2011)

Feelings tell us when something is good, and when something is unfortunate or dangerous. In this way feelings tell us what is smart in order to look after yourself. They protect us against danger and contribute to survival. When we are scared, we are told to be alert and look after ourselves. If we do not get scared when a car approaches at top speed, we risk being run over and killed. Fear protect our lives, and without fear life becomes very dangerous. This goes with all feelings, they exist and have a function. Without disgust we risk eating something poisonous, without joy we risk being mentally sick, without curiosity we cannot learn, without shame we risk behaving in a way that excludes us from the people around us.

Feelings are the engine of the body. They motivate to action, decisions and choices. Research shows that people without contact with their feelings, are not capable of making decisions. They are simply paralyzed, unable to act (Damassio. The feeling of what happens, 1999). The most important decisions in our lives are motivated by our feelings, such as finding a spouse, choosing education, profession, residence, friends and hobbies. Even though we like to believe that we are rational beings who act according to cognitive observations, the truth is that our actions are motivated by our feelings and corrected by our common sense.

How we understand, regulate and integrate our feelings will influence how we react and act. It will influence who we will be. We develop perceptions and patterns which influence our understanding and how we deal with incidents in our lives. Many of these patterns are established in early childhood, but our brain is plastic and patterns created in childhood can change through a lifetime.

Take a look at the link for description of the theme by special psychologist and PhD Gry Stålsett: <http://www.modum-bad.no/foelelsenes-abc/>

## IMPLEMENTATION IN CLASS

Aim for the session

Aim for the link

Contribute to strengthening self-image

Contribute to feeling of belonging

Contribute to mastering

## COMPETENCE GOAL FOR THE SESSION

Knowledge: Understand that feelings have an important function and can give important

information in daily life.

Skill: Ability to recognize and talk about different feelings

Values: Recognize that feelings are individual

## OPENING RITUAL

Start every session in the same way. You may well play music, light a candle, decorate with flowers, shake hands with everybody, or do other pleasant things. The point is to signal that this is a link-class, and that link-classes differ from other classes.



## **TODAY'S PRIME SAYING**

Everybody tells about a nice thing they have experienced since last session. Remember we are looking for small, simple everyday joys, not boundless happenings.

## **THEME**

### **Presentation of theme**

The teacher presents the theme of the day, briefly. Say a few sentences about the content of the session. One can pick out something from the introduction for the teacher. The opening is just supposed to get the pupils on track about the theme, and should therefore not take more than a few minutes.

## **WE TALK ABOUT THE THEME**

### **Alternative 1**

Feel free to use prepared Power Point (PP) as a starting point for discussion about the theme. Below the PP-pictures there are open support questions you can use in your conversation with the pupils. You can also make your own questions, but it is of importance that the questions are open. They should inspire reflection and common wonder and exploration. We are not looking for fixed answers, but hope that children/adolescents can put words to their own thoughts, feelings and ideas.

It is not a point to get through all the pictures. If the pupils have a lot to discuss in the first pictures, it is more important to spend time on these instead of disrupting and rushing along to get through everything.

Show PP with various expressions of feelings. Let the pupils suggest what they call the various feelings. Do not correct, let the pupils use their own words to describe what they see. Try to talk about the feelings. Have you felt that way, when and where did you feel that way, what did your face look like, what about your body, did the others notice your situation, what did they say, was it a good feeling, what can you do to maintain good feelings, if it is a bad feeling, what do you do then?

### **Alternative 2**

The page with pictures of various feelings are used as a starting point to speak about various feelings we know. Try to talk about the feelings. Have you felt that way, when and where did you feel that way, what did your face look like, what about your body, did the others notice your situation, what did they say, was it a good feeling, what can you do to maintain good feelings, if it is a bad feeling, what do you do then?

## **WE WORK WITH THEMES. CHOOSE, REJECT AND ADJUST**

Here are various tasks you as a teacher can choose among. The idea is not to do everything that has been suggested. Pick the tasks you believe suit your class and you as a group leader the most. Still we recommend tasks which make it possible to work with the theme in various ways, both through activity and interaction, play and laughter, and not only through talking.

## TASKS

SEIGMANNEN ( "Sweet jelly figure")

Purpose: Get to know your own feelings, put words to them and describe them.

**Equipment: Template of a “seigmann”**

The pupils are handed out a sheet with the outline of a “seigmann”. The pupils put names to feelings. They point at their own sheet where they sometimes recognize the feeling mentioned. Those who want can tell the others where the feeling is. Additional tasks:

- What color does the feeling have?
- What shape does the feeling have?
- How big is the feeling?

The pupils can choose one or more feelings which they draw on the “seigmann”. If they like they can explain the symbol code next to the drawing. F.exa.: anger is red, square and sometimes it fills my entire head. The pleasure sits in your stomach, is orange and round and big as a sun.

## THE ASSHOLE

**Purpose: release negative feelings**

Equipment: small pieces of paper and a bigger bag which is not transparent.

Everyone gets a feeling of something they do not like or are displeased with. Write a “shit-thing” on every piece of paper. Fold and put them in a big bag marked “asshole” by the teacher. When everybody has put down what they want, we tie together the bag and shred it. No one is supposed to open and look. Now the pupils can even write down bad secrets.

## RELAY OF FEELINGS

Purpose: To know the names of feelings, combined with play and humor.

**Equipment: a board or two flip- over sheets**

The participants are divided into two teams. One from each team comes forward and writes the name of a feeling on the group's sheet. Then he should run back and touch the shoulder of the next person, who then runs forward and writes down a new feeling. The team which manages the most feelings within a time limit, has won.

## ALPHABET OF FEELINGS

### Purpose: Get to know many kinds of feelings

Equipment: A sheet with the alphabet. After each letter there should be a line where the pupils can write down feelings.

A big sheet with the alphabet is handed out to the class. After each letter there should be a line where the pupil can write down a feeling which starts with that letter. A: Aggressive. E: Enthusiastic etc. Some letters will offer challenges! It can also be done as a competition between several teams.

### DRAW FEELINGS

Present a sheet with empty circles and put down names of feelings below every circle. Draw expressions of anger, shame, joy, and so on. Enclosure.

### TELL ABOUT

In groups which like to talk, it can be useful to share stories from your own life with the others.

- Once I was angry
- Once I was happy
- Once I felt guilt/shame

## HOW YOU FEEL

Purpose: To express your own feelings and to interpret expressions of feeling of others.

### Equipment: Nothing

Let the body tell how you are feeling. One participant mimes a feeling, the rest of the group guesses what is mimed. In this way you practice the ability to read other people's body language, and become conscious of your own.

### WHAT DO YOU FEEL

Purpose: To express your own feelings and interpret expressions of feeling of others.

Equipment: Nothing.

The group agrees on a feeling that should be conveyed. It must not be communicated to the one who is supposed to guess. When that person comes in, he says what he wants the group to do. F.exa.: The group has agreed to be sad. The "guesser" says they should play football. Then the group should play football being sad. The "guesser" will then try to find what the group is feeling. In this way you practice the ability to read the body language of others, and be conscious of your own.

## PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS

For those who really like to philosophize.

- What do we need feelings for?
- Do we need the bad feelings?
- Which feeling is the best?
- Which feeling is the most important?
- What is the implication of being callous?
- What is best, to show feelings or to hide them? Why?
- Can feelings be contagious?

## JUST FOR FUN

It is a point that everybody should laugh during a link-session, also when we discuss difficult subjects, yes, may be especially then. Feel free to find activities in the activity booklet.

## MY BOOK

We recommend all pupils to have their personal book to be used only in link-classes. This book ought to look somewhat different from the ordinary work books. The idea is that the pupils should have one memory from each session. They can draw and/or write, glue in pictures or texts, they can also write greetings to one another. One might for example ask everybody to pass the book three places to

the left, and ask the pupils to write a nice greeting to the person the book belongs to. Only imagination is the limit, but remember that the work with the book should be filled with joy and not be marked by control. No one should have the feeling of coming short.

We recommend the teacher to collect the books after class and keep them at school. This to avoid pupils to forget them at home or losing them. In this way you make sure that all the pupils can keep the book as a nice memory when they end school. If one uses link over many years, the book can be a treasure full of good memories.

Write greetings to friends which make them happy.

Complete the sentences:

- · I get angry when...
- · I am happy when....
- · I get embarrassed when....
- · I become envious/jealous when...
- · Etc.

Make a drawing about a situation when you were really frightened.

Good pieces of advice how to handle bad feelings. Share freely with others. Complete the sentences:

- · When I get scared I can....
- · When I am angry I can....
- · When I am envious I can....
- · When I am annoyed I can....
- · Etc.

Make a “seigmann” and fill it with feelings according to your own wishes. Make your own smiley, or find some nice ones on the net. Print and glue.

### **SUMMARY**

To sum up we recommend the curl-and-throw task, or chose three things.

### **CURL-AND-THROW**

The curl-and-throw tasks you find in the plan for the session. The pupils are to answer the questions anonymously and curl the sheets together. Then ask who wants to be today's target. This person places himself with his back to the group. The others throw their paper ball against the target. The target has the privilege to read some of the answers, may be three sheets would be just right? If it is popular to be the target, it is important to do it in turns. Some think it's fun to have their answer read and would like to express it, others prefer not to make themselves known. Both ways are just fine. You may comment positively to what is read aloud.

### **THREE THINGS**

Everybody makes a note of three things they remember from today's session, and three things they have learned. The teacher asks some pupils to read what they have written. The pupils can chose themselves what they want to share.

### **NEXT TIME**

Explain the theme for the next session. Tell the pupils that if they find something problematic about the theme, they can tell the teacher and you find solutions together.

### **END RITUAL**

End all sessions the same way. The ritual should be pleasant and contribute to feeling of being appreciated. A final ritual could be to let the pupils make a circle and pass the class band while playing music.

The class band is made by all the pupils cutting a piece of cloth of about 50 cm. Each pupil may chose his piece of cloth. They can possibly also have some time to decorate it. All the bands are tied together in a circle. We suggest that all the bands are piled up, and one pupil after the other, blindfolded, chose which piece of cloth should be the next. In this way the order and composition will be at random. The advantage of tying the bands instead of sewing, is that you may give room for new pieces of cloth in case of new members in the group.

The class band symbolizes the inclusion of everybody, that everybody has a place in the group. We are tied to each other. We therefore depend on one another, and we chose to look after one another. Everybody should take their place, and everybody should give place. The band circulates and binds us together.

The teacher may also stand in the doorway and hand out get on cards or “seigmenn” to the pupils leaving the session. Go ahead cards belongs to extra material. They can be printed out or possibly laminated.

## THE CURL- AND- THROW TASK

### FEELINGS

#### Answer one or several questions

1. What do you feel after this session?

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2. Who and what makes you happy?

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3. Tell about an incident when you were scared?

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4. Tell about a situation when you were embarrassed or felt guilt?

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## 3. LONELINESS

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# LINK - Life mastery in Norwegian classrooms - An Introduction for Teachers

## “LONELINESS”

Prior to birth our lives are woven together with others. All through life we make new bonds to people, while others are torn apart. Everybody needs good relations, we want love and strong bonds to those who are important to us. Stable and strong relations offer protection also against challenges to come. They create trust and confidence in other people.

The bad feeling of loneliness is part of our system of belonging, which contributes to seeking community with others. We need the group to survive. We can feel it physically when we are in danger of being isolated. To be lonely influences both our mind, our physical health and lifetime. To feel lonely can be compared to being hungry because you have not eaten. It signals the need for social contact. It reminds us that we cannot manage alone.

The feeling of loneliness can be short, like a signal telling you to make contact. It can be situation dependant, such as moving houses, a break or quitting an athletic club. It can also be chronic, that over some time you lack belonging. One can divide our relations into intimate relations, friendships and collective belonging. Even though you have several relations (f.exa. friendships) you can still feel a void in life, a different loneliness. (f.exa. an intimate relation).

***“Loneliness is a bad feeling caused by a breach between the social contact you have with others and the contact you want”***

Why is loneliness so painful? Feeling of loneliness tells you how little value you have in the bigger picture. Loneliness is a social pain, and this pain becomes especially hard and shameful when it is socially visible. To be lonely is to fail creating needed relation to one or several others. The lonely one is in no position to confirm his/her value as a person. The lonely person is someone who wants but lacks a relation to other people.

According to various research programs the ones who feel often or very often lonely, do not express that they spend more time alone. In consequence, it is not a question of how many people you mingle with, but whether the relations are felt to be meaningful and satisfy the need for contact.

Some people can therefore feel lonely in spite of having many friends. Also, some do not feel lonely, even though they merely stay inside reading books or playing computer games.

## TO FEEL LONELY AND TO BE ALONE ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS

Some like to have time on their own. As long as they have the possibility to be with others and have friends, time on your own can be preferable, and not a problem. We, the grown-ups, do sometimes worry about children and youngsters when they spend much time on their own. Sometimes with reason, other times unnecessary. Much development takes place growing up, and time on your own can be important and healthful in this process.

We all need the ability to self sufficiency, to be present in ourselves. We need to love ourselves. To be alone can also protect against loneliness, since we have the possibility to be ourselves, look into ourselves and represent ourselves. But self sufficiency will never be total, and for the good loneliness to be good. there also has to be a way back to the others. It is important to be able to be yourself when you spend time with others.

***“You do not need to change who you are; belonging is to be yourself”***

Brené Brown

***“You are only free when you realize you belong no place - you belong every place-no place at all. The price is high. The reward is great”***

Maya Angelou

There are many myths about loneliness. A Norwegian study of living conditions shows that there is no increase in the widespread of loneliness. Besides, Norway is among the countries with the lowest spread of loneliness. Some groups are overrepresented in the statistics: immigrants, disabled, young and elderly. The difference between various groups in Norway is smaller than in most other countries, and Norwegian elderly are probably the less lonely on the planet. There is little difference between big and small towns in Norway, but the numbers of lonely people is somewhat lower in the bigger towns. Lower secondary pupils have been asked about loneliness. In 2018, 22% answered that they were much or very much troubled (2011, 16% the same result). Most children can feel lonely from time to time. Something else is to feel lonely the whole time. Still, there is reason to worry about those who really feel that they are lonely, due to the major consequences of life quality and health.

Children who learn and think differently are more vulnerable to feeling lonely and might have problems getting friends. They have a bigger risk feeling socially outside and having negative thoughts about themselves. They might pull out and have problems handling situations that require self control, conversation, social skill, focus and self confidence.

Chronic lonely children have normally higher expectations to human relations than others. They are socially perfectionists who ask more of themselves than others, both to themselves and others in social interaction. Lonely children and youngsters also regard, to a greater extent, social environment as threatening. They regard others as less reliable and supportive. So what can we do when we feel lonely?

***“The more confident, the less lonely”***

Lars Fr. H. Svendsen

Trust in the world surrounding us is an important factor, according to professor of philosophy Lars Svendsen. The less confident, the more lonely. The ability to trust others is closely connected to the ability to attach to them. Lack of trust leads to reticence and makes attachment more difficult. To have confidence in the world you need courage, make contact and risk that others will accept you. Courage and vulnerability are the effort. Trust and relation are the reward.

***“Vulnerability is the birth place of love, attachment, joy, courage, empathy and creativity.”***

Brené Brown

Loneliness challenges us to take positive risks. We need to try new things and build self confidence, which in its turn leads to new interests and skills. Children who already feel rejected and vulnerable do not gladly take that risk. They might be afraid of attention and risk to fail. It is a misunderstanding to think that confidence comes without risk. We must dare being vulnerable to get experience which build trust. You have to accept that social interaction is not perfect. You might have to give up both perfectionism, self criticism and being self-centered. No one can make their way into your loneliness and force it away. But you can let someone in. This takes courage.

The essence of LINK is mirrored in the main goals of self image, belonging and mastering. Deep down this is work no one can do for you. The LINK sessions challenge the pupils to risk confidence and take risks, and in this way prevent loneliness and build belonging.

Loneliness has a tendency to appear indirectly, as response, but also as anger. Some examples of sayings that could express loneliness:

- I feel tired all the time.
- If I disappeared tomorrow nobody would care.
- I feel invisible.
- I have plenty of friends around me, but still I feel something is wrong with me.
- I am bad at everything.

School focuses a lot on preparing for everyone to feel belonging and safety. To be different and feel different is something we all can experience. Due to that we are all dependent on differences being approved and appreciated. To include every one, also those who cannot come to school, will also prevent loneliness. One example is the communication robot AV1, which makes it possible for pupils with long periods of illness to take part socially and in classes. In addition to work for inclusion, friendship and prevention of bullying, the staff in schools can motivate the pupils to risk showing vulnerability and take positive risk. This is to master life.

## REFERENCES:

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Lars Fr. H. Svendsen, 3.10.19. <https://www.civita.no/politisk-ordbok/hva-er-ensomhet>

Lars Fr. Svendsen, 2.oktober 2015. Min, din eller vår ensomhet? Morgenbladet

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Vivek H. Murthy; Together. Loneliness, Health and what Happens when we Find Connection

## IMPLEMENTATION IN CLASSROOM

AIM FOR THE SESSION

AIM FOR LINK

Contribute to a stronger self image.

Contribute to experience of belonging.

Contribute to mastering.

## COMPETENCE GOAL FOR THE SESSION

Knowledge: Loneliness tells us that we need increased contact with others.

Skill: Practice strategies to get rid of the bad feeling of loneliness, and contribute to the inclusion of others.

Values: To live we all depend entirely on the community with others. People also need a private room to be themselves.



## OPENING RITUAL

Start every session activity in the same way. You may well listen to music, light candles, decorate with flowers, shake hands with all participants, or do other positive things. The point is to signal that this is a link-class, and that link-classes differ from other classes.

## TODAY'S PRIME SAYING

Everybody tells about a nice thing they have experienced since last session. Remember we are looking for small and simple everyday joys, not boundless happenings.

## THEME

### PRESENTATION OF THEME

The teacher presents the theme of the day, shortly. Say a few words about the topic of the session. You can choose from the introduction for the teacher. The introduction is simply meant to engage the students in the themes, and should not take more than a few minutes.

Here you find a music video about being alone and missing daddy: *Daddy-Coldplay*

You may well show youngsters this short film by Red Cross: *The invisible loneliness*. (1 min.) - [En film om ensomhet](#)

You may well use prepared Power Point (PP) as a starting point for dialog about the theme.

Below the PP-pictures there are support questions you can use in your dialog with the pupils. You can also make your own questions, but it is important that the questions are open. You are to facilitate for reflection and common wondering and exploration. We are not looking for a fixed answer, but wish that children /young people are able to put words to their thoughts, feelings and opinions. It is not a point to get through all the pictures. If the pupils are eager to comment on the first pictures, it is more important to spend time on these than interrupt an rush on to get through everything.

## WE WORK WITH THEME. CHOOSE, REJECT AND ADJUST

Now there are many different tasks you as a teacher can choose among. It is not the intention to do everything that has been proposed. Choose the exercises that suit your group and you as a leader the most. Still we recommend that you choose tasks which make it possible to work with the theme in various ways, both through activity and interaction, play and laughter, and not only through talking.



## TASKS

Group tasks where all groups get different questions.

### 1. LONELINESS AND FEELINGS

Loneliness do not belong to the nine basic feelings, even though we often think about loneliness as a feeling. Show the group an illustration and give them this task: Think about a feeling of loneliness you once had, and talk together about which of the basic feelings you have when you are feeling lonely. Put down key words to share with the others. One can also combine this with the “seigmann”, and tell the group to mark where in your body you feel the loneliness.

### 2 WHAT CAN WE DO WHEN WE FEEL LONELY AT HOME?

Put down on a board as many suggestions as possible. Could be things you have tried yourself.

### 3.WHAT CAN WE DO WHEN WE FEEL LONELY AT SCHOOL?

Put down on a board as many suggestions as possible. Could be things you have tried yourself

### 4. WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN YOU NOTICE THAT A CLASSMATE FEELS LONELY?

Put down a few things you think one should not do, and focus on at least two things one can do instead.

## TALK ABOUT THE FILM

“ODD IS AN EGG” <https://tv.nrk.no/se?v=MSUI31009516&t=667s>

1. Talk about Odd, how he felt at the beginning of the film, and at the end of the film.
2. Talk about what happened to ODD. (he fell in love, got a friend, found someone who was different too, found someone who made Odd show up, wait for someone who did not come at first - but who came at last.)
3. Talk about how we identify. Do we have days when we feel we cannot take anything and easily feel sad? There are other days when we can take anything. That we need a friend. When we have one or some good friends, we would also like to play with more? That friends can be different, etc.

### FOR THE OLDEST IN THE GROUP - “INNAFOR” (INSIDE)

The NRK documentary “Innafor”, from 2018, deals with loneliness among young people, in an honest and open way that could be the basis for dialog and reflection among pupils in upper secondary and the oldest ones in lower secondary. You need plenty of time since the documentary lasts for 52 minutes (can be shortened). To start with, after the film, the class can be divided into small groups, and each one deals with a theme before discussion in full class.

Themes to discuss after the film could be:

- Are we all afraid of being lonely, and in that case why?
- Different personalities, do we have the same need for social contacts?
- Can we feel more lonely by comparing ourselves with others?
- Can we feel lonely being together with many?
- What can we do when we feel lonely?
- How can we behave when we are together with many people we do not know?

[https://www.nrk.no/video/innafor-ensomhet\\_310830](https://www.nrk.no/video/innafor-ensomhet_310830)

### **FOR THE OLDEST IN THE GROUP- DIARY FROM -TEN PIECES OF ADVICE AGAINST LONELINESS.**

Imagine youngsters who have felt considerable loneliness, but who have decided to do something about it. Hen has started realizing “Psychology’s ten good pieces of advice against loneliness”. Hen has to gamble and do things slightly in a new way.

Join together in groups of two or three. Write a short diary note of how it works to try out the new, good pieces of advice in everyday life. You may play a little with what goes well and what does not function, but still try to think realistically. Choose all or just some of the good pieces of advice.

1. Dare to make yourself visible
2. Dare to say how you really feel.
3. Look for mistaken thoughts and expose them.
4. Put perfectionism away.
5. Lower your expectations.
6. Stop comparing yourself with other people.
7. Accept the fact that we have no guaranties.
8. Practice gratitude.
9. Self sympathy.
10. You are valuable.

Source:

Psychology’s ten good pieces of advice against loneliness. By Carina Poulsen and Rebekka T. Egeland.

<http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/i/iwli/psykologenes-ti-raad-mot-ensomhet>

## THE SOUND OF NORWEGIAN YOUTH IN 2019

In connection with the national newspaper VG's ranking list show at Oslo's town hall (Rådhusplassen) in 2019, young people were encouraged to send in their words and thoughts around the theme loneliness. Every contribution has ended up with the artist Lauren. VG's list wanted the youngsters to express their feelings themselves, and what they were thinking. Research shows that quite a few young people feel lonely, in spite of the fact that the majority inform that they have at least one close friend.

I think it is very cool that so many have participated, but also quite sad that so many live their lives feeling bad and lonely, says Lauren. More than 23.000 have contributed. Recurring words are "lonely", "body pressure", "bullying", "alone", "nobody is me". "I am bad at everything was written 157 times. Much of what is revealed is that things look far better on the outside, and it might look like you are doing well, but still you feel alone and displeased with yourself. ([Over 23.000 ungdommer har sendt inn sine tanker om ensomhet – det har blitt låt](#))

Take a look at the conversation between Helsesista and Lauren. Q&A about loneliness (10 min.) [HELSESISTA OG LAUREN: Q&A OM ENSOMHET](#)

After the conversation you may ask the pupils to make notes of their first thoughts on a post-it piece of paper lasting 3 minutes. Make a conversation about these questions:

- What thoughts did you have when you watched the conversation?
- What was revealed about loneliness that you recognizes in yourself?
- Tell about an incident when you worried about going somewhere alone, but went all the same.
- How did it feel, what was the worst moment and how long did it last?
- What can you do when you are somewhere and someone arrives alone?

## MORE OR LESS LONELY WITHOUT THE MOBILE?

Watch the music video Lonely by Joel Corry. The video is about people who try to get rid of the dependence of the mobile, and what happens when they have to live without the phone. Discuss whether the mobile makes us more or less lonely?

[Joel Corry - Lonely \[Official Video\]](#)

Philosophical questions. For those who are especially happy philosophizing.

- What do you think these quotations are about?
- To be alone can protect against loneliness.
- What is humanity, apart from a family of families?
- Most of us meet with lonely people all the time without realizing it.
- The strength of being alone can be related to the very smallest moments.
- To be connected to others gives us a part in something bigger than ourselves.

- To be at home means that someone knows you, and to be loved for the one you are.
- To be yourself is to be vulnerable.
- To be alone gives us the possibility to feel self-confident, which again makes it easier to be ourselves in the company of others.
- To be yourself together with others helps building strong relations.

Source: Vivek H. Murthy, freely translated.

## JUST FOR FUN

The idea is that everybody should laugh during a Link-session, also when we talk about difficult things, yes, my be especially then.

## TASKS

### Focus exercises 1-2-3-1

As a starting point you can let the whole class make up one team, while the teacher is the other part. You say ONE, the class responds TWO, you say THREE and the class says ONE. Then you continue with teacher-TWO, the class THREE, the teacher-ONE, the class TWO etc. After a while you replace TWO with a clap and continue with that for a short while.

Divide the class in two, and let them try with one-clap-three-one-clap etc. If it is working quite well, you can replace three with a shout, Hoi!, and in the end you can try replacing One with a tramp. The exercise is over when you have kept the rhythm for a little while.

Even better if you can introduce a “hurrah, I made a mistake”, every time we make a mistake. In this way we show each other that everybody makes mistakes and it is OK.

Afterwards one can talk together about the exercise which creates laughter, make us focus, and that we need to keep eye-contact and work together to succeed.

## MY BOOK

Finish one or all of these sentences:

I want to be brave when I feel lonely at school. Then I will dare....

I will be brave when I feel lonely at home. Then I will dare.....

I will be kind and brave when someone I know is lonely. Then I will dare.....

## SUMMARY

To sum up we recommend the curl-and-throw task, or chose three things.

### CURL-AND-THROW

The curl-and-throw tasks you find in the plan for the session. The pupils are to answer the questions anonymously and curl the sheets together. Then ask who wants to be today's target. This person places himself with his back to the group. The others throw their paper ball against the target. The target has the privilege to read some of the answers, may be three sheets would be just right? If it is popular to be the target, it is important to do it in turns. Some think it's fun to have their answer read and would like to express it, others prefer not to make themselves known. Both ways are just fine. You may comment positively to what is read aloud.

Use the curl-and-throw at the bottom of this sheet. Explain why we do this task.

### THREE THINGS

Everybody makes a note of three things they remember from today's session, and three things they have learned. The teacher asks some pupils to read what they have written. The pupils can chose themselves what they want to share.

## NEXT TIME

Explain the theme for the next session. Tell the pupils that if they find something problematic about the theme, they can tell the teacher and you find solutions together.

## END RITUAL

End all sessions the same way. The ritual should be pleasant and contribute to feeling of being appreciated. A final ritual could be to let the pupils make a circle and pass the class band while playing music.

The class band is made by all the pupils cutting a piece of cloth of about 50 cm. Each pupil may chose his piece of cloth. They can possibly also have some time to decorate it. All the bands are tied together in a circle. We suggest that all the bands are piled up, and one pupil after the other, blindfolded, chose which piece of cloth should be the next. In this way the order and composition will be at random. The advantage of tying the bands instead of sewing, is that you may give room for new pieces of cloth in case of new members in the group.

The class band symbolizes the inclusion of everybody, that everybody has a place in the group. We are tied to each other. We therefore depend on one another, and we chose to look after one another. Everybody should take their place, and everybody should give place. The band circulates and binds us together.



