

BECOMING EMPOWERED THROUGH EMPATHY

IN THE CARE OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TRAINING PROGRAM

TEACHER'S HANDBOOK



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ENTRANCE

This training program, prepared within the scope of the "Empowering Through Empathy" project, aims to improve the emotional intelligence skills of staff caring for disadvantaged children and foster families, enable them to communicate empathetically with children, and increase their professional resilience.

The primary goal of this project is to develop, implement, maintain, and disseminate a training program that supports caregivers in developing emotional intelligence skills in caregiving, with a focus on children in institutional care, but also encompassing all children, in order to promote their healthy emotional development. The lack of parental support creates a significant gap in children's emotional and social development. This gap makes the role of caregivers who interact directly with children vital. Adopting approaches that are sensitive to children's emotional needs, based on empathy, and rooted in emotional intelligence will significantly contribute to the healthy growth and social integration of these children.

1. SESSION: START "HELLO"

My name	Target Achievement (Step Title)	Activity	Method	Duration
1	Establishing a secure group bond	Share your name and your feeling.	Getting to Know Each Other Game	20 min
2	Internalizing the project vision	Introduction to "Empowering Through Empathy"	Brief Information	15 min
3	Clarifying educational objectives.	Expectation Tree	Interactive Sharing	20 min
4	Creating safe spaces and boundaries.	Our Rules	Group Agreement	20 min
5	Exploring collaborative field practices	"A Day on My Shift"	Sharing Ideas	10 min
6	Ensuring emotional focus.	Breath and Body Awareness	Warm-up Exercise	10 min
7	Consolidating achievements	Key Quotes of the Day	Summarizing	15 min
8	Gathering participant feedback	"What did we put in our pockets today?"	Oral Assessment	15 min
9	Intrigue and a closing	Bridge to the Next Session	Termination	10 min

STEP 1: Building a Safe Group Connection – "Share Your Name and Feeling"

- **Note to the Trainer :** This step establishes the emotional foundation for the entire training. Participants may be together for the first time, and many may be strangers. Your goal isn't to impart knowledge, but to create a safe space. By taking the first step, you model emotional intimacy; this is what breaks down the fear of judgment.
- **Method :** Getting to Know Each Other Game (Ball Throwing).
- **Material to be used :** A soft ball (stress ball or plush toy).

Application Steps:

- **Preparation:** Participants sit in a circle. The instructor takes the ball and explains the rules of the game:

"Hello, and welcome everyone. We all felt something as we stepped into this room — excitement, curiosity, tiredness, maybe a little shyness. That's all well and good. Now, we'll start with a simple game: I have two questions for the person holding this ball: What is your name? And how do you feel right now, in one word? I'll start: I am [name], and right now I feel curious." (She throws the ball to a participant.)

- **Procedure:** The ball spins in the hoop. The instructor gives a brief, non-judgmental affirmation:

"Thanks, that was nice to hear."

No one needs to give a long explanation — one word is enough.

- **Observation Note:** When the circle is complete, the instructor writes the emotion words heard in the circle on the board and says:

"I look at the board — there's excitement, there's weariness , there's curiosity. Emotional intelligence begins right here: with being able to recognize what we're feeling. We'll explore this much more deeply together in the coming weeks."

STEP 2: Internalizing the Project Vision – Introducing "Empowerment Through Empathy"

- **Note to the trainer :** When explaining to participants why the project was prepared, avoid creating a bureaucratic presentation atmosphere. Make them feel that 'You are at the heart of this project because you are doing the most challenging work in the world.' The international dimension should be presented as a source of pride and belonging.
- **Method :** Brief Information and Question-and-Answer Session.
- **Materials to be used :** Project summary slide or A4 brochure (optional).

Application Steps:

- **Key Message:** The educator begins with this framework:

"The reason we are here today is this: You are caring for disadvantaged, vulnerable, or children from difficult living conditions. This is one of the most valuable jobs in the world. And research tells us that what leaves a lasting mark on a child's life is the quality of the emotional bond formed with them. This program is designed to strengthen precisely that bond."

- **Project Introduction:** It is stated that the 'Empowered by Empathy — Emotional Intelligence in the Care of Disadvantaged Children ' project, carried out under the Erasmus+ KA210-ADU program, is implemented with three partners: Turkey (project owner institution), Portugal, and Poland. Educator additions:

"What you learn in this room is knowledge that is simultaneously shared with your colleagues in Portugal and Poland. You are sitting here today both for the children of Türkiye and for an international professional community."

- **Program Structure:** The program, consisting of 7 sessions, briefly introduces the following topics: Emotional awareness, crisis management, empathy, social skills, assertiveness, and international child protection systems. Participants are given the opportunity to speak:

"Which of these topics are you most curious about?"

STEP 3: Clarifying Educational Objectives – Expectation Tree

- **Note to the Educator :** This step allows you to both understand the needs of the participants and convey the message that 'your voice matters'. Approach the notes with genuine interest; observations from the field are both powerful and profound. Leave the tree on the board throughout the program.
- **Method :** Interactive Sharing.
- **Materials to be used :** Different colored sticky notes (two colors: for expectations and challenges), pencils, a large tree template drawn on the board.

Application Steps:

- **Instructions:** The educator distributes and explains the post-it notes:

"Now I'm giving you two colored papers . On the yellow one, write: 'The most important thing I want to learn from this training...' On the green one, write: 'The most challenging moment I faced while working with children at the institution...' You don't have to write your names. After writing, stick the yellow pieces to the branches of the tree and the green pieces to the roots."

- **Reading and Reflection:** The educator reads the post-it notes aloud, groups similar themes, and says:

"When I look at this tree, I see very powerful things. In the roots, there are very honest observations like 'I don't know what to do during tantrums,' 'I lose control when my child starts screaming.' In the branches, there are 'learning to stay calm,' 'building a

genuine connection with the child.' This tree is a roadmap for the coming weeks. And I promise: We will address every question in the roots in this program."

STEP 4: Creating a Safe Space and Boundaries – Group Agreement

- **Note to the instructor :** Don't dictate the rules — let the participants create their own. People are much more committed to rules they've made themselves. Emphasize the rule of 'confidentiality', as personal experiences will be shared in later sessions.
- **Method :** Creating a Group Agreement.
- **Materials to be used :** Large sheet of paper or whiteboard, colored pencils.

Application Steps:

- **Opening:** The educator begins as follows:

"This group will grow together in the coming weeks. From time to time you will share very personal experiences — difficult moments, mistakes, emotional vulnerabilities. For this room to truly be safe, we need to establish some rules together. Now tell me: what would you want in the room to make you feel comfortable in this type of training?"

- **Rule Formation:** The teacher writes participants' suggestions on the board. For any rules that haven't emerged yet, the teacher gently asks: 'What are your thoughts on privacy? Should something personal that someone has shared leave the room?' Typically, the following rules are formed:
 - Privacy — 'What's shared here stays here.'
 - Active listening — You don't interrupt before the speaker has finished.
 - Non-judgmental — No feeling or experience is belittled.
 - Freedom of participation — If there's a question that makes you feel obligated to answer, you're free to say 'Pass'.
 - Mobile phones should be on silent — during the meeting unless there is an emergency.
- **Contract Approval:** Once the rules are finalized, the instructor says:

"We all promise to abide by these rules. Raise your hand if you pledge." (A brief silence and applause.) "Great. This is now our Group Agreement. It will be posted on the board."

STEP 5: Exploring Common Field Practices – "A Day on My Shift"

- **Note to the Trainer :** This step has two purposes: to enable participants to learn from each other's experiences and to convey the message, "You already know a lot; this program will organize it." Don't underestimate field wisdom; integrate it with the theoretical framework.
- **Method :** Sharing ideas.
- **Materials to be used :** Whiteboard.

Application Steps:

- **Question:** The educator divides the group into small groups (3-4 people) and asks: *"A child at the institution suddenly has a tantrum — shouting, throwing things. What do you instinctively do in that moment? Talk in your group for 3 minutes. If you have a method that works in the field, share it."*
- **Large Group Sharing:** A representative from each group presents their findings. The educator writes the good examples on the board and notes the principles they are based on (e.g., 'maintaining physical distance' → personal space; 'speaking softly' → co-regulation). They continue as follows:

"As you can see, you already do many things correctly intuitively. The purpose of this program is to frame that intuition — to understand why it works — so that you can apply it consistently and consciously."

STEP 6: Achieving Emotional Focus – Rhythmic Breathing Exercises

- **Note to the trainer :** This short but powerful step serves two functions: It mentally brings participants 'here' from the morning rush and provides a first experience of the 'calming techniques' that will be taught in the next session. Lower the volume, slow the pace.
- **Method :** Guided Breathing Exercises.
- **Materials to be used :** None.

Application Steps:

- **Introduction:** The instructor begins in a slow and calm voice:
- *"Now I'm going to teach you a very simple but very powerful tool. It's called: Rhythmic Breathing. This technique is here both for you and so you can teach it to children in the future. Are you ready? You can keep your eyes open, just look inside for a second."*
- **Exercise (3 rounds):** Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds... hold for 4 seconds... exhale slowly through your mouth for 4 seconds... wait for 4 seconds. Repeat this cycle 3 times.
- **Reflection:** At the end of the exercise, the instructor asks:

"How was it? Did anyone notice anything? (Brief comments.) That's it — in 12 seconds, the brain starts shifting from alarm mode to calm mode. We'll delve much deeper into this technique in the next session. But keep that in mind for now."

STEP 7: Consolidating Learning Outcomes – Pre-Test and Key Sentences of the Day

- **Note to the educator :** The pre-test shouldn't make participants feel like they're going to be tested; it should highlight the question, 'What do we know now, and what will we know by the end of this program?' The same test will be administered in the final session, and growth will be evident — tell participants this.
- **Method :** Individual Written Assessment and Summarization.
- **Materials to be used :** Pre-test form (one for each participant).

Application Steps:

- **Pre-Test Procedure:** The instructor distributes and explains the form:

"This isn't an exam, it's a starting point. There's no right or wrong. Write down what you think today; at the end of the program, you'll fill out the same form again and see your own progress." (5-7 minutes given.)

- **Key Sentences of the Day:** After the pre-test, the educator writes today's 3 key messages on the board and reads them aloud:

"Emotional intelligence (EQ) is a far more significant predictor of life success than academic intelligence (IQ)."

"You are the most powerful role model a child observes — when you manage your own emotions, you are silently teaching them."

"We cannot eliminate the risks; but we can strengthen the protective factors for children."

STEP 8: Gathering Participant Feedback – "What Did We Gain Today?"

- **Note to the trainer :** Listen carefully to what participants say in this step — it's valuable data for both shaping the next session and reading the group's emotional barometer. Encourage short and heartfelt responses.
- **Method :** Oral assessment in a circle format.
- **Materials to be used :** None.

Application Steps:

- **Question:** The instructor asks the participants to form a circle and then asks each participant:

"What's the most important thing you're putting in your pocket as you leave here today? A word, a sentence — whatever comes to mind."

- Respond to answers without judgment, with a simple "yes, thank you" or a brief nod. Do not offer corrections or comments.

STEP 9: Sparking Curiosity and Closing – A Bridge to the Next Session

- **Note to the trainer :** This step doesn't close a door; it opens the next one. Participants should go to the next session 'curious about what they will learn.' Make your closing statement energetic and hopeful.
- **Method :** Brief Information and Closing.

- **Materials to be used :** None.

Application Steps:

- **Bridge Sentence:** The educator creates a connection by sparking curiosity for the next session:

“Next week you will be introduced to a very powerful tool: the RULER Method, developed by Yale University and implemented in over 100 countries worldwide. This method teaches a child to say ‘I’m disappointed’ instead of ‘I feel good’—that is, to name their emotion precisely. And research shows that children who can correctly name their emotions experience fewer behavioral problems. Think about the importance of that.”

- **Closing remarks:** The educator looks at everyone and concludes by saying:

"You did something very important today: You were here. Both for yourselves and for the children you look after. That takes courage. Thank you all so much, see you next week."

The participants' interest is piqued by announcing that the next session will involve working with two of the most powerful tools in child psychology, the Yale University-approved "RULER Method" and the "Emotion Meter." The session is concluded with thanks for the participants.

2. SESSION: EMOTIONAL AWARENESS (SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS) – RECOGNIZING AND NAMING EMOTIONS

Steps	Target Outcomes	Activity	Method	Duration
1	Recognizing and naming emotions	Introduction to the Emotion Meter	Interactive Presentation	20 min
2	Distinguishing basic emotions	RULER Method application	Direct Information Transfer	15 min
3	Reading emotions through body language.	"What Does My Body Language Say?"	Role play	20 min
4	Emotion tracking in daily life.	"The Emotion Meter in the Refrigerator"	Group Work	20 min
5	Understanding the power of naming an emotion.	"Emotional Vocabulary" study	Question and Answer	15 min
6	Integration into daily life	"Becoming a Potato" (Emotional expression)	Physical Activity	20 min
7	End-of-session reinforcement	Review of key concepts	Metaphor/Anecdote	10 min
8	Evaluation and closing	Participant opinions	Verbal Feedback	10 min

STEP 1: Recognizing and Naming Emotions

- **Note to the trainer :** Help participants break the "I feel good/I feel bad" pattern. Emphasize that emotions are all biological data, not morally "right or wrong."
- **Method :** Interactive Presentation and Individual Mapping.
- **Materials to be used :** Large Emotion Meter poster, colored sticky notes.

Application Steps:

1. **Emotion Meter Presentation:** The educator projects the Emotion Meter image onto the board. They explain the flowchart with these words:

"Dear friends, emotions aren't simply divided into 'good' or 'bad'. To better understand them, we'll look at two axes: The horizontal axis shows 'Contentment' (feeling positive/negative), and the vertical axis shows our 'Energy' (high/low) level. These two axes lead us to four colored zones:

- **Red Zone:** High energy, negative feelings (anger, anxiety, fear).
 - **Blue Zone:** Low energy, negative feelings of contentment (sadness, fatigue, disappointment).
 - **Yellow Zone:** High energy, positive contentment (Happiness, excitement, enthusiasm).
 - **Green Zone:** Low energy, positive contentment (calmness, peace, relaxation).
2. **Create Your Own Emotion Map:** Participants are asked to consider their current energy and contentment levels, choose the color that best suits them on the Emotion Meter poster, and mark it with a post-it note.

STEP 2: Identifying basic emotions

- **Note to the educator:** Focus on the initial steps of the RULER method developed by Yale University. Deepen the 'Understanding' step to prevent staff from simply labeling children as 'misbehaving' while observing them.
- **Method:** Direct Information Transfer and Question-Answer.
- **Materials to be used:** Whiteboard.

Application Steps:

1. **RULER Introduction:** The educator explains the fundamentals of the method as follows:

"To be able to manage children's emotions, we need the first two stages of the RULER method:

- **Recognizing:** This involves reading cues in the child's facial expressions, tone of voice, and shoulder movements. We should quickly recognize that a child with furrowed brows is in the red zone; if their shoulders are slumped and they are looking at the ground, they are in the blue zone.

- **Understanding:** This involves finding the reason for the emotion. Why is the child angry? Is it because a friend took their toy, or because they are sleep-deprived? Understanding the cause allows us to intervene appropriately.
2. **Educator Question:** Ask participants: *"When you see a child frowning (Recognition) in the institution, what observations have you made in the past to find the real reason behind it (Understanding)?"* Collect 2-3 examples from participants.

STEP 3: Reading emotions through body language

- **Note to the educator :** Help participants realize how clearly emotions can be conveyed without words, and also how significant an impact their own demeanor can have on children.
- **Method :** Role-playing / Improvisation.
- **Materials to be used :** Small pieces of paper with the names of emotions written on them.

Application Steps:

1. **"What Does My Body Language Say?" Game:** Participants are divided into pairs. One person from each group secretly draws an emotion card from the bag (e.g., disappointment, anxiety, guilt, excitement).
2. **Role-Playing Rules:** The participant who draws the card acts out the situation without speaking, using only body language, eye contact, posture, and facial expressions. Their partner then tries to guess the other person's emotion, using the RULER's "Recognition" skill.
3. **Discussion:** At the end of the game, the following question is posed to the class: "Children don't always communicate with us using words. How does reading nonverbal communication affect a disadvantaged child's need to be 'seen and understood'?"

STEP 4: Tracking emotions in daily life.

- **Content:** Emphasize the importance of noting your child's changes throughout the day during the caregiving process with the "Emotion Meter in the Refrigerator."
- **Note to the educator :** Emphasize that this activity is not a scoring or disciplinary tool, but rather a safe space exercise that helps the child visualize their inner world through colors. Highlight the importance of using the "Emotion Meter on the Refrigerator" to note the child's changes throughout the day during the care process.
- **Method :** Group work and brainstorming.
- **Materials to be used :** Sample refrigerator/common area sentiment meter design.

Application Steps:

1. **Routine Design Explanation:** The instructor explains the practice as outlined in the guide:

"To prevent children from simply saying 'I feel bad,' we will hang Emotion Meters in common areas (for example, on refrigerators in living areas or in 休息 rooms). Every day, we will do routine checks with the children, asking 'What color are you on the Emotion Meter right now?' The aim is to help them visualize their inner world through colors."

2. **Corporate Integration Exercise:** Participants are asked to form small groups and create a practical plan for when (e.g., after school, before dinner) and how they can implement this routine during their own shifts.

STEP 5: Understanding the power of naming an emotion

- **Note to the Educator :** Discuss how expanding one's "emotional vocabulary" beyond general words like "angry" or "sad" can be key to resolving a child's difficulties. Demonstrate, through a case study, how participants' rich emotional vocabulary helps them resolve cognitive confusion more quickly.

- **Method :** Question-and-answer and interactive discussion.

- **Materials to be used :** Whiteboard.

Application Steps:

1. **The Importance of Labeling:** Educator RULER bases the "Labeling" step on the following principles:

"When we find a precise and clear name for an emotion, the brain automatically shifts from emotional mode to problem-solving mode. There's a huge difference between a child simply saying 'I'm angry' and them saying 'I feel excluded/frustrated right now.' That's why the richer our vocabulary related to emotions, the easier it is to name the emotion we're feeling."

2. **Vocabulary Enrichment Exercise:** The words "ANGRY" and "BAD" are written on the board in capital letters. Participants are asked to create more specific intermediate words that children can use in place of these words (e.g., jealous, disappointed, offended, wronged).

STEP 6: Integration into daily life

- **Note to the Educator :** This step involves all physical movement. While keeping caregivers entertained, demonstrate practical ways to release physical tension (muscle tension, rapid breathing) caused by intense emotions.

- **Method :** Creative Drama Performance / Physical Activity.

- **Materials to be used :** A wide range of applications.

Application Steps:

1. **"Becoming a Potato" Game:** The instructor has participants stand up and form a large circle. They are asked to imagine themselves as potatoes.
2. **Giving Instructions:** Using exaggerated facial expressions and tone of voice, the instructor gives the following instructions in sequence and asks the staff to act them out with their bodies/faces:

"Now you're at the market, stuffed into a bag (Surprise/fear expressions). Now you're in the kitchen, your skins are being peeled off (Tension/excitement). And now... you've been thrown into hot oil! (Shaking the whole body to release stress and energy)."

3. **Emphasis on Regulation:** At the end of the game, it is explained that this activity is a wonderful regulation tool for children to increase their inner awareness and release stress in their bodies in a fun way.

STEP 7: End-of-session reinforcement

- **Note to the educator :** Combine all the concepts of the day into a single memorable image.
- **Method :** Metaphor and Anecdotal Storytelling.

Application Steps:

1. **The Sky Metaphor:** The educator summarizes the session with this powerful metaphor:

"Dear friends, today we have seen that our emotions are our compass. Our inner world is like a vast sky. Anger, sadness, disappointment are the gray, stormy clouds passing through that sky. Clouds come, change shape, and pass; but the sky is always there. Our aim is not to teach children to eliminate clouds, but to teach them to recognize and name those clouds in the safety of the sky."

STEP 8: Evaluation and closing

- **Note to the Educator:** To ensure the training is memorable, close the session by having participants say what they took away from today's training (the most important information they learned).
- **Method:** Verbal Feedback and Closing Circle.

Application Steps:

1. **"What Did We Put in Our Pockets?" Circle:** All participants form a circle side by side. The instructor asks each person in turn: *"As we finish today's module, what is the most important piece of information or tool that will stay in your mind when approaching a child in your shift tomorrow? Please share that one sentence that you put in your pocket with us."*
2. **Closing:** After receiving feedback from all participants, the session concludes with a statement that the next module will cover how to control these emotions and remain calm during crises (Crisis Management).

3. SESSION: CONTROLLING EMOTIONS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

My name	Target Achievement (Step Title)	Activity	Method	Duration
1	Managing emotional impulses	Turtle Technique (4 Steps)	Role play	25 min
2	Delayed gratification and rule compliance.	Theraplay Games (Cotton Blowing)	Applied Game	25 min
3	Safe emotional expression	Scriptwriting Workshop with Emotion Puppets	Group Work	20 min
4	Calm down during a crisis	The Practice of "Talk to Yourself"	Case Analysis	15 min
5	Defining and protecting borders	Role, Responsibility and Boundaries	Question and Answer	15 min
6	End of session reinforcement and closing.	Review of key concepts	Metaphor/Verbal Feedback	10 min

STEP 1: Managing emotional impulses

- **Note to the trainer :** Emphasize that participants should teach the technique to children like a game, during a calm time, not during a crisis.
- **Method :** Role-playing.
- **Materials to be used :** Images or infographics of turtles.

Application Steps:

1. **Explaining the Technique:** The instructor explains the 4-step Turtle Technique from the guide :

" Dear friends, the Turtle Technique is much more than simply telling children to 'calm down.' This technique is a concrete neuro-psychological tool that teaches children how to use their own biological braking mechanism during a crisis. This tactic consists of 4 steps: 1) Recognize your emotion and say 'Stop.' 2) Imagine retreating into your turtle shell and wrapping your arms around your body. 3) Take deep breaths and say to

yourself, 'I can calm down.' 4) Once you calm down, come out of your shell and try to solve the problem."

2. **Role-Playing Practice:** Participants are paired up. One takes on the role of the child experiencing intense anger, while the other plays the role of the caregiver guiding them, dramatizing these four steps.

STEP 2: Delayed gratification and rule compliance.

- **Note to the educator :** Demonstrate the role of this Theraplay-based game in developing internal self-control mechanisms in impulsive children by having the children experience it firsthand.
- **Method :** Applied Play.
- **Materials to be used :** Small cotton balls

Application Steps:

1. **Game Rules and Explanation:** The instructor addresses the participants:

"Now we're going to play the Cotton Blowing Game from our guide. We'll lie down opposite each other on the floor or table. You'll take turns blowing into the cotton ball we've placed, and only when I give the command 'Blow'. Blowing before the command is forbidden. This simple activity teaches children to wait for instructions and to control their impulses in a fun way."

2. **Procedure:** The entire class experiences this game in pairs at tables. A brief assessment is made of the "waiting" instinct that occurs in the body while waiting for a command.

Brief Post-Application Assessment

*" Dear friends, did you notice this while playing the game? You lie opposite each other, the cotton ball is right in the middle, you fill your lungs with air, and just as you're about to exhale, when I say 'Stop' or delay the command, you feel a momentary tension, an impatience in your body. That feeling you experience **is an impulse** ."*

*The weakest muscle in the brains of impulsive children is this 'waiting time between desire and action'. The child doesn't reason the moment they see the cotton; the primitive brain immediately says 'blow into it and win'. When we activate the command mechanism, we force the child's prefrontal cortex (the center of logic and self-control) to work. Every second the child waits for the command to blow, they strengthen the '**waiting and restraining**' muscle, which they will use before acting in a crisis situation in life."*

"After playing this game with the children, don't end it immediately. Sit down next to them and have this short conversation using the 'Understanding and Naming' steps of the RULER method:

'Did you notice? You were about to blow into the canister even before I told you to, but you stopped yourself. What kind of feeling did you have at that moment? Impatience? Excitement? That ability to stop yourself right then is a wonderful strength. You can use that powerful inner brake even when you're about to get angry and throw something at your friend during the day.'

This conversation will transform the physical experience in the game into an **awareness of emotional control that they can use in moments of crisis in daily life ."**

STEP 3: Safe emotional expression

- **Note to the educator :** Remind participants that children may find it daunting to have intense emotions discussed directly with them. Emphasize the "safe distance" provided by the puppets.
- **Method :** Group work.
- **Materials to be used :** Two hand puppets or plush toys.

Application Steps:

1. **The Safe Distance Metaphor:** The educator explains the method as follows:

"Children may not be able to directly express intense feelings of anger, jealousy, or injustice. Because directly owning the emotion can create feelings of guilt, shame, or fear of punishment. That's where puppets come in, acting as a magical bridge , allowing the child to process those intense emotions from a safe distance." When a child picks up a puppet, they release the immense anger they feel inside and project it onto the inanimate object. In psychology, this is called 'projection' and 'safe distancing'. The child is no longer speaking for themselves, but for 'Angry Dragon' or 'Sad Bear' . A child can't directly say to an adult , "I'm very jealous of my friend and I want to hit him/her ." But through the puppet, they can express their pent-up feelings uncensored, saying, "This bear is very angry because his/her friend didn't share the TV remote . "

2. **Scenario Work:** Groups are asked to choose a common crisis in the organization (e.g., a toy that can't be shared or a TV remote). Using two puppets, they work together to create a scenario where they resolve this crisis through dialogue without it escalating into aggression.

STEP 4: Calm down during a crisis

- **Note to the Trainer :** Analyze the 90-Second Rule and brain states during a crisis (Survival/Emotional Mode) to prevent staff from creating catastrophic scenarios. To prevent participants from getting lost in abstract neurological terms, explain the brain using a two-story house metaphor: a lower floor (primitive/emotional brain) and an upper floor (logical brain).
- **Method :** Case Analysis.
- **Materials to be used :** Brain States Model diagram.

Application Steps:

1. **Theoretical Explanation:** The educator grounds the crisis situation in the following principle:

"Dear friends, as caregivers, what are the most challenging moments we face in the field? Those moments when the child has a tantrum, throws things, screams, or engages in a power struggle with you and completely rejects the rules, right?"

*We often think things like, "He's deliberately not listening," "He's being disrespectful," or "He's sabotaging my speech" at these moments. But this is where psychology and neuroscience open a tremendous door and say: **"The child isn't doing it intentionally ; it's because their brain isn't in logic mode!"***

Let's examine step-by-step which three basic brain modes (and actually ours too) operate in during times of crisis, and how we should approach those modes:

A. Survival Mode (Lower Brain - Brainstem)

- **Equivalent in the Brain:** This is the most primitive, lowest layer of our brain. It is solely responsible for security. Like a radar, it constantly scans its surroundings. It activates the moment it detects a threat.
- **What Does a Child Do When They're in a Crisis?:** When a child is in this state , **they may hit, break things, throw objects, slam doors, bite, or completely withdraw and run out of the room** . Logic is completely disabled. At that moment, the child sees you not as a caregiver, but as a 'threat' due to the alarm in their brain.
- **The Caregiver's Golden Strategy:** Giving advice, reminding them of rules, or punishing a child in this state is like adding fuel to the fire; their brain can't physically hear you. They have only one need: **Physical Security** . Lower your voice considerably, maintain a safe distance, approach with open palms, and convey the message *"I'm here, you're safe"* with your body language .



B. Emotional Mode (Midbrain - Limbic System)

- **Its equivalent in the brain:** This is the center of emotions, memories, and relationships. It is where the colors we discuss in the RULER method are experienced most intensely.
- **What Does a Child Do When in This Mode ?:** While not physically aggressive, children in this mode **may scream, cry excessively, whine, or yell**. Their statements are illogical: they create catastrophic scenarios such as , *"Everyone hates me!"* or *"I'm the worst child in this institution!"*
- **The Caregiver's Golden Strategy:** The child's only need in this mode **is to be seen and heard**. Don't get into a right/wrong argument. Use RULER's mirroring technique: *'You feel very hurt and wronged right now, I hear you.'* The moment you acknowledge the emotion, the brain moves towards a calming bridge.

C. Logic Mode (Upper Brain - Prefrontal Cortex)

- **Equivalent in the Brain:** It is the most developed, uppermost layer of our brain. Logical thinking, problem-solving, delayed gratification, empathy, and compromise all take place here.
- **What does the child do in this mode ?:** The child is calm (in the green zone), follows the rules, can use the turtle technique, admits their mistakes, and cooperates with you.
- **The Caregiver's Golden Strategy:** This is precisely when **emotional coaching** is done. Solving problems, discussing rules, and asking the child, *"What can you do next time?"* only works when done in this mode.

Instructor's Question and Case Analysis (15 Minutes)

After making this statement, the educator poses the following crucial question to the participants:

"Friends, the biggest trap we fall into in the field is this: When a child is in 'Survival' or 'Emotional' mode (i.e., downstairs), we try to respond to them from 'Logic' mode (upstairs). When a child is kicking a coffee table in the living room and we say, 'According to the rules of the institution, damaging property is forbidden, you will be punished,' what are we doing? We are shouting at a child downstairs from upstairs! Can the child hear us? No."

Now, consider a crisis you experienced during your shift yesterday. What state was the child's mind in during that crisis? And what state were you in when you approached them? Let's analyze this through a case study."

2. **Self-Talk Exercise:** A real-life organizational crisis (case study) is written on the board. Participants are asked to analyze how they would have put their brains into problem-solving mode during the crisis by saying to themselves or aloud, *"I'm very disappointed right now, I can calm down, this will pass in 90 seconds."*

Summary Note for Educators:

"When anger is triggered in the brain, its effect on the body only lasts 90 seconds. If we don't feed the anger with negative thoughts like 'They never listen to me,' it will pass."

When a child is in survival mode (hitting/breaking), they can't hear us; they first need to feel safe through our calmness."

*As caregivers, our rule is clear: **First Regulate (Calm down), then Connect (Understand), and finally Evaluate/Teach (Logic)** . Trying to teach rules before the child calms down and moves to the next level (Logic mode) is like trying to teach someone to swim in a stormy sea. We must first get them to shore."*

STEP 5: Defining and protecting borders

- **Content:** Discuss how to clarify boundaries (security vs. flexibility) during a crisis, within the caregiver's roles and responsibilities.
- **Note to the educator:** Ensure participants do not confuse "compassion" with "unboundedness." Emphasize that boundaries are a safe space for children.
- **Method:** Question-Answer.
- **Materials to be used:** Whiteboard.

Application Steps:

1. **Explaining the Golden Rule:** The educator conveys the philosophy of setting boundaries:

"As caregivers, we must remember two rules during times of crisis: the Power of Pause and the principle of 'Allow Emotion, Limit Behavior.' Our basic rule is this: All emotions are normal, but not every behavior is permissible."

2. **Question-Answer Exercise:** Have participants practice the following pattern:

angry right now , but I can't allow that [Behavior]." Ask participants to construct sentences that fit this pattern (e.g., "I understand you're very angry right now, but I can't allow you to hit your friend . ")

STEP 6: End-of-session reinforcement and closing.

- **Note to the Educator :** Emphasize how the boundary and play techniques learned today will enhance the child's capacity for "secure attachment." Define the difference between being a thermometer that reacts impulsively to events and being a thermostat that maintains its internal balance.
- **Method :** Metaphor/Anecdote Storytelling.

Application Steps:

1. **Thermostat Metaphor:** The educator reinforces the session with these words:

"Dear caregivers, throughout this module we've seen that young children can't calm down on their own; they need our calmness. We need to stop being thermometers that instantly heat up and cool down according to the environment, and instead become 'thermostats' that regulate their own internal temperature despite all the turmoil in the room. If we remain calm, the child will learn to retreat into their shell and surf."

What Does It Mean to Be a Thermometer? (Reactive Approach)

- **Device Feature:** The thermometer is passive. It measures the ambient temperature and rises accordingly. If there is a fire outside, the thermometer will shoot up into the red zone.
- **The On-Site Implication:** During a crisis, a child's brain is in either *Survival* or *Emotional* mode; that is, they are screaming, throwing things, or slamming doors. If, as a caregiver, you become impatient, raise your voice, and snap, "Who do you think you are!" when you witness this high-energy anger, you are responding to the storm in the child's brain with your own storm. This is **like being a thermometer**. By looking into the child's red zone, you also reach the red zone. The result? The crisis in the room doubles, the atmosphere becomes tense, and both sides engage in a power struggle in survival mode.

What Does It Mean to Be a Thermostat? (Co-Regulation / Joint Regulation)

- **Device Feature:** The thermostat is active and has a specific target. Regardless of how hot or cold the room gets, it works to bring that room to the preset ideal temperature (e.g., 22 degrees). It is unaffected by surrounding chaos; it directs the environment.
- **The On-Site Equivalent:** No matter how big a tantrum the child throws in the room, you remember that you're the one setting the 'atmosphere'. You mentally apply the 90-second rule; you tune your body language to an open and calm state (the Green Zone). While the child is in the red zone, you remain an unshakeable green zone. While the child is screaming, you consciously lower your voice. That's what it **means to be a thermostat**. By maintaining your own internal temperature, your calmness, you slowly bring the stormy atmosphere in the room down to your own level, your own tranquility.

"Young Children Cannot Calm Down on Their Own" - The Truth

- **Neurological Background:** As we saw in the diagram above, children's reasoning brains and self-control mechanisms are not yet as developed as those of adults. Expecting a child to tell themselves, "Let me stop, let me breathe, let me calm down," during a crisis is like asking a baby who doesn't yet know how to walk to run.
- **The Caregiver's Role:** Children learn to calm down not on their own, but **by clinging to our calmness**. This is called *co-regulation in psychology*. When a child hears that unchanging rhythm in your voice, when they see that compassionate and firm expression in your eyes, their lower brain (amygdala) slowly calms down: they receive the message, 'Okay, the adult in front of you isn't falling apart, you're safe, you can turn off the alarm.'

Closing sentence:

"Dear colleagues, when you start your shift tomorrow and hear a scream or a fight coming from the hall or rooms, as you quicken your steps, ask yourselves this magic question: 'Am I entering this room as a thermometer or as a thermostat?'"

If you enter the room like a thermostat, surfing the stormy waves of your children with your own calmness, the child will eventually copy that calmness from you, learn to retreat into their shell, and develop their own internal thermostat. Remember, what will quell the storms of children is the unshakeable harbor we offer them."

Ask the question, "Which of these techniques could change your approach to communicating with the most challenging child in the institution?" and encourage everyone to share their own practices.

4. SESSION: UNDERSTANDING OTHERS – “EMPATHY ”

My name	Target Achievement (Step Title)	Activity	Method	Duration
1	Defining and recognizing empathy.	"Don't look through someone else's glasses"	Interactive Presentation	20 min
2	The ability to perceive perspective.	"A Daily Empathy Diary"	Group Work	20 min
3	The practice of empathetic listening	"I'm just listening."	Role play	25 min
4	The difference between empathy and compassion.	The Empathy vs. Compassion Debate	Question and Answer	15 min
5	Building a bridge of empathy with the child.	"Why does he/she feel this way?"	Case Analysis	20 min
6	Empathetic use of language	Using "I" instead of "You" Language	APPLICATION	15 min
8	Evaluation and closing	Participant opinions	Verbal Feedback	10 min

STEP 1: Looking through someone else's glasses

- **Note to the educator :** Explain that empathy is not just about feeling someone else's pain, but about being able to understand their world from their perspective.
- **Method :** Interactive Presentation.
- **Materials to be used :** Whiteboard, colored eyeglass frames (optional).

Application Steps:

1. **Defining Empathy:** The educator grounds the concept of empathy with the following words:

"Empathy isn't just about being polite. It's about being able to see how someone else is feeling from their perspective and being on the same wavelength without losing sight of ourselves. An empathetic person observes the situation clearly from an outside perspective, creating a supportive space by saying, 'I can see you're struggling right now.' Empathy is like a muscle; it gets stronger with use and practice."

2. **"Looking Through Someone Else's Glasses" Discussion:** Participants are asked to imagine setting aside their personal judgments and "adult glasses" and putting on "empathy glasses" that allow them to see the world of the children they are caring for in the institution, including the child's past traumas and current situation.

"Dear friends, when we talk about empathy, we all say, 'Yes, I already empathize.' However, when working with children in the field, we unknowingly fall into a huge trap: looking at the child through our own parental or adult glasses, completely missing the child's perspective."

Let's now examine the difference between these two perspectives and the invisible traps we fall into in corporate care:

What are "Adult Glasses" and Why Can They Be Misleading?

- As adults, we possess a highly developed logical mind, years of life experience, and a well-established worldview. When an event occurs, we filter it through our own logical framework.
- **The Real-Life Interpretation:** When a 9-year-old child throws a tantrum and cries because a friend took their crayon without permission, if we're wearing "adult glasses," we might think: "It's just a crayon, we can just give them a new one and be done with it. Why cry so much over that? What a disruptive child." That's the adult perspective. It views the situation solely through the lens of the crayon's "material value" and "logic."

What Changes When "Child's Glasses (Empathy Glasses)" Are Put on?

- We momentarily silence our own judgments, the adult voice that says, "What's the big deal?" We focus on the child's developmental stage, their disadvantaged background, and their struggle to exist within the institution.
- **The Real-World Implication:** Let's now look at that huge reaction to the same pencil through the lens of 'Empathy Glasses': This child is under protection, their sense of belonging has been damaged, and they have very little safe space left in their life. That coloring pencil is not just a stationery item for them; it's a huge symbol **representing 'mine, my control, and my boundaries'**. When their friend takes the pencil without permission, the child doesn't just lose the pencil; they feel like they're losing their security, their boundaries, and their rights. This is the profound truth that the child's perspective shows us.

STEP 2: An empathy journal

- **Note to the trainer :** Strengthen participants' ability to develop perspective by looking at events not through the lens of institutional rules, but from the inner world of a disadvantaged child.
- **Method :** Group work.

- **Materials to be used :** Worksheets and pencils.

Application Steps:

1. **Initiating the Study:** The trainer divides the group into sub-teams of 4-5 people.
2. **"A Day of Empathy Journal" Activity:** Each group is given a profile of a hypothetical child residing in the institution (e.g., "An 8-year-old child who has just arrived at the institution, cries constantly in the evenings, and doesn't talk to anyone"). Groups are asked to write a short journal entry titled *"My First Day at the Institution"* from the perspective of this child .
3. **Sharing:** A spokesperson from each group reads the journal entry. The educator emphasizes how putting oneself in someone else's shoes (taking perspective) nourishes the child's need to be "seen and understood."

STEP 3: The "I'm just listening" practice

- **Note to the trainer :** Ensure participants experience the skill of "listening to understand" the other person, not to respond, give advice, or judge.
- **Method :** Role-playing.
- **Materials to be used :** List of "Obstacles to being a good listener" (Judging, comparing, giving immediate advice, being easily distracted).

Application Steps:

1. **"I'm Just Listening" Game:** Participants are paired up. The first participant begins by describing a real and challenging workday they experienced in the field.
2. **Role Rules:** The second participant will not interrupt, offer advice, say "there's nothing to this," or compare their own experiences for 3 minutes. They will simply listen by making eye contact, nodding their head, and being fully attentive. Then the roles are switched.
3. **Assessment:** The educator asks: *"When you were listened to without interruption or advice, what did you feel physically and emotionally?"*

STEP 4: The discussion on "Empathy versus Sympathy/Compassion"

- **Note to the trainer :** Ensure that staff clearly see the critical line between "Pity (Sympathy/Compassion) and Understanding (Empathy)."
- **Method :** Question-and-answer and interactive discussion.
- **Materials to be used :** Whiteboard.

Application Steps:

1. **Explaining the Critical Difference:** The educator writes the two concepts on the board and explains them as follows:

"Friends, the most important difference we need to teach our children and practice ourselves is this: Pity says, 'I'm sorry for you,' and looks on from a distance. It can create a feeling of inferiority in the child. Empathy, on the other hand, says, 'I understand you, I feel this pain/feeling along with you,' and sits down next to them and builds a connection. We will not pity children; we will sit down next to them and build a bridge of empathy to understand them."

2. **Question-Answer:** Participants are asked: *"What differences have you observed in terms of a child's self-confidence between approaching a child with pity and approaching them with empathetic understanding?"*

STEP 5: "Why does he/she feel this way?" (Case study)

- **Note to the educator :** Practice the "3-Step Formula for Understanding Children" through a case study.
- **Method :** Case Analysis.
- **Materials to be used :** Case cards.

Application Steps:

1. **Formula Presentation:** The educator explains the three-step formula:

"When building a bridge of empathy with a child, we follow these 3 steps:

1) Listen to understand, not to answer.

2) Reflect back on what you've noticed ('This situation seems to be overwhelming you').

3) Acknowledge and validate their feelings ('It's perfectly normal to feel that way; anyone would feel the same').
2. **Case Analysis:** The case of *"a child who lost his place in line in the cafeteria and therefore yelled at his friend"* is examined. Participants are asked to analyze, step by step, how to approach the child using these 3 steps.

"Dear colleagues, we are now going to discuss a case that you might encounter at any moment in the field, a very familiar one, but one that holds profound meaning. Please bring it to mind:

Case: Ali, a 10-year-old boy, was admitted to the institution six months ago. His past history includes significant neglect and anxiety about access to resources (hunger, uncertainty). That day, his favorite meal was served in the cafeteria. Ali happily joined the queue and waited patiently. Just as it was his turn, an older child (a 13-year-old hallway boy) pushed Ali slightly with his shoulder, cutting in front of him.

Ali froze in that moment. A few seconds later, his face turned bright red, he clenched his fists, and shouted in a voice loud enough for the whole cafeteria to hear: *"What are*

you doing! Everyone's ganging up on me, taking everything away from me! I hate you and this institution!" He then slammed the food tray he was holding onto the table. Everyone in the cafeteria turned to look at Ali.

Reading the Case Through "Empathy Glasses" (Explanation by the Educator)

*"Friends, if we first look at Ali's huge reaction **through adult glasses**, what do we see? 'It was just a queue, he was going to get his food in 30 seconds, what a fussy and disruptive child.'"*

*Now let's take off those glasses and put on **the Empathy Glasses**. Ali is a child who was neglected in his past; that is, his rights, space, and safety were constantly violated. That food line is not just a food line for Ali; it represents **'rights, visibility, labor, and justice.'** **When he is cut off, Ali's primitive brain (amygdala) instantly switches to Survival/Threat mode and sends him this signal: 'Your rights are being violated again, you are being ignored again, attack to protect yourself!'** Ali's reaction is not to that moment, but to the great sense of injustice created by his past."*

Intervention Analysis with the "3-Step Formula for Understanding the Child"

The educator divides the group into sub-teams of 3-4 people and has them practice how a caregiver going to Ali's side would manage this crisis according to the formula:

Step 1: Listen to understand, not to answer.

- When Ali screams and bangs the tray, we won't yell at him from afar, *"Calm down, don't scream, wait your turn"* (we won't be a thermometer). We'll immediately go to Ali's side and get down to his eye level. We won't interrupt him while he's crying out, we won't defend him by saying, *"But raising your voice isn't right."* We'll simply look into his eyes and allow him to release his intense emotion with our full attention.

Step 2: State What You Noticed (Mirroring)

- Ali's brain is in the red zone, so he can't see his emotions. Using RULER's manipulation power, we will reflect his emotions back to him.

*"Ali, you're furious right now, and your face is bright red. You feel **wronged** and **ignored because your place in the queue, which you patiently waited for, was taken away from you**. I understand."*

Step 3: Acknowledge (Validate) Their Feelings

- Please note, we do not condone Ali's act of banging the tray on the table or shouting; we condone the deep feeling of injustice he experienced.

"I know you've been waiting here for minutes, Ali. It's very hurtful that you were cut in front of me just when it was your turn. Anyone in your place would feel very wronged and angry, it's perfectly normal to feel that way."

"Dear caregivers, do you know what will change in Ali's brain when we apply these 3 steps? Ali will think, 'The adult in front of me isn't punishing me, they understand me, I'm here and I'm valuable,' and the danger alarm in his brain will slowly shut down."

Only when Ali calms down and switches to his upper brain (Logic mode) can we move on to the 'Boundary and Problem Solving' step."

'Ali, it's perfectly normal to get angry when you're wronged, but I can't let you bang the tray on the table. Now that you've calmed down, let's go to your friend's place and fight for our rights using the "Fox" or "Owl" strategy, using "I" statements, what do you say?'

Now I ask you; do you have children in the institution who, like Ali, have entered the red zone by engaging in a 'resource or rights' battle? What do you imagine will change on the scene if you approach them with these three steps from today onwards?"

STEP 6: Using "I" instead of "you"

- **Note to the educator :** Explain the difference between "you language" and "I language" as a tool for assertiveness that is non-blameworthy and takes responsibility for the emotion.
- **Method :** Application and Sentence Transformation Exercise.
- **Materials to be used :** Whiteboard.

Application Steps:

1. **Theoretical Foundation:** The educator explains the logic behind empathetic language:

"Accusatory statements we frequently resort to during conflicts, such as 'You never listen to me!' or 'You're so selfish!' (using 'you' language), immediately put the other person on the defensive and break down communication. Instead, using 'I' language allows the individual to take responsibility for their own feelings and thoughts without blaming the other person."

2. **"You to I" Conversion Game:** Accusatory sentences are written on the board, and participants are asked to translate them into "I language":
 - *You (informal language):* "You always make such a mess in your room, I'm fed up with it!"
 - *"I" Language:* "I feel very tired when the room is messy, and I need us to cooperate on tidying up."

STEP 7: Reinforcement and Closing

- **Note to the trainer :** Obtain clear commitments from participants on how they will use the empathetic listening and reflection tools they have acquired in the field tomorrow. Conclude the session by emphasizing that empathy is the strongest "invisible bond" established between caregiver and child.
- **Method :** Verbal Feedback.

"Today we discussed the striking difference between pity (sympathy) and understanding (empathy); we saw that pity creates distance, while empathy sits beside you and builds a connection. How do you think this awareness will make a difference in your daily life and work life?"

5. SESSION: SOCIAL SKILLS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

My name	Target Achievement (Step Title)	Activity	Method	Duration
1	Setting boundaries in social relationships.	"Friendship Circle" Analysis	Interactive Presentation	20 min
2	Turning the conflict situation into an opportunity.	"Win-Win" Model	Role play	25 min
3	Problem-solving skills	The "Think-Speak-Listen" Chain	Group Work	20 min
4	Strengthening cooperation in communication	"Teamwork" Simulation	Applied Game	20 min
5	Reading social cues	"What do you think he/she is thinking?"	Case Analysis	15 min
6	Supporting social skills	Social Practice in Daily Life	Question and Answer	10 min
7	End-of-session reinforcement	Review of key concepts	Metaphor/Anecdote	10 min
8	Evaluation and closing	Participant opinions	Verbal Feedback	5 min

STEP 1: Setting boundaries in social relationships

- **Note to the Educator :** Help participants understand that children's social skills are a way of projecting their inner emotional world onto the outside world. Emphasize the role of being a good listener in maintaining social boundaries.
- **Method :** Interactive Presentation.
- **Materials to be used :** Whiteboard

Application Steps:

1. **The Foundation of Social Skills:** The educator explains the concept with these words:

"Dear friends, we call the ability of an individual to understand their own feelings and empathize with others, and to project these qualities to the outside world, social skills. Thanks to these skills, individuals get along well with others, work collaboratively, and resolve disagreements without turning them into fights. The most fundamental rule of this is being a good listener. Individuals who can listen without interrupting, constantly talking themselves, and without judging, understand what others are feeling and establish much healthier communication."

2. **"Friendship Circle" Analysis:** Three concentric circles are drawn on the board (Innermost: Me and my immediate circle, Middle: My friends, Outermost: Strangers/Social Circle). Participants are asked to discuss the confusion experienced by the children in the institution when transitioning between these circles (*how close to whom to get, how to protect their physical and emotional boundaries*).

"Dear friends, these three circles we've drawn on the board are actually an 'Emotional and Physical Boundary Map' that helps a child feel safe in social situations."

Children raised within their families learn, through the natural flow of life, by observing their parents, which emotions and behaviors to show to whom within which social circle. For example, they hug their mother, who is in the innermost circle; they share their toys with a friend in the middle circle; and they maintain distance from strangers in the outermost circle.

However, in the world of children in institutional care, those who are disadvantaged, or those with a history of early neglect/abuse, the boundaries of these circles are completely blurred.

A new visitor, a stranger, a staff member, or a teacher arrives at the institution or children's home. You may notice that some children, who should be in the outermost circle, react to this 'stranger' within seconds as if they were their mother or father in the innermost circle, jumping into their arms and showing excessive affection.

*Someone observing from the outside might say, "What a warm-hearted child." However, this stems from the child's **lack of secure attachment** and their ignorance of social boundaries. This analysis reveals that if a child treats someone in the outermost circle as if they were in the innermost circle, that child is extremely vulnerable to abuse and manipulation in social life. We need to recognize this border confusion and guide those children on 'who to trust, how much, and how.' When you are in the field, in which incidents do you see this border confusion most often?"*

STEP 2: Turning the conflict into an opportunity

- **Note to the Educator :** Highlight the 5 key strategies used in interpersonal conflict (the 5 Animal Metaphors). Encourage participants to act as guides, directing children towards the fox and owl strategies, rather than acting as "referees." Emphasize that conflict is not a "destruction" but an "opportunity for learning".

- **Method :** Role-playing

- **Materials to be used** : 5 animal illustrations (Turtle, Teddy Bear, Shark, Fox, Owl).

Application Steps:

1. **5. Explaining the Animal Strategy:** The educator explains the strategies using metaphors:

"Friends, there are five different conflict resolution methods that children (and adults) can follow, and we can easily teach them using animal symbols:

- **Turtle (Retreating):** To avoid tension, it remains silent and refrains from asserting its rights.
 - **Teddy Bear (Submissive):** Completely ignores its own needs so as not to hurt the feelings of others.
 - **Shark (Coercion):** Focuses solely on its own goals and attempts to win through coercion.
 - **The Fox (Compromise):** Inclined to make mutual concessions. They find common ground ('Let me play for a while, then you play').
 - **Owl (Cooperation):** Gets to the root of the problem and finds a constructive solution that fully meets the needs of both sides.*
2. **Role-Playing Practice:** Participants are paired up. Using a common organizational crisis scenario (e.g., a fight over a computer queue), they take turns acting out the "Shark" (authoritarian) and then the "Fox/Owl" (conciliatory/cooperative) styles, experiencing the difference between them.

Step 3: Problem-solving skills

- **Note to the Educator** : Instead of acting as judges who resolve problems on behalf of the child, encourage participants to internalize the "Think-Speak-Listen" steps, enabling children to generate their own solutions.

- **Method** : Small Group Study.

- **Materials to be used** : Worksheets, "Create a Solution, Use It!" scenario cards.

Application Steps:

1. **Parent/Caregiver Role:** The educator conveys the basic principle in the guide:

"Instead of solving a problem for our child or acting as a judge to decide who is right when they encounter a problem, we should ask them which animal strategy they are using and guide them towards a solution. Our goal is to get children to use fox or owl strategies, depending on the situation, instead of being a turtle or a shark."

2. **"Think-Speak-Listen" Chain Application:** Groups are given a problem scenario. Participants structure intervention steps that will enable children, in a crisis situation, to first stop and **think about a strategy according to the situation** , then to have **constructive conversation with the other party** , and finally **to listen to the other party's needs** .

Scenario Distribution: Participants are divided into groups of 3-4 people. Each group is given one of the following scenarios:

- *Scenario 1: Two children want to use the same computer, both saying "I was here first," and an argument escalates.*
- *Scenario 2: One child takes a friend's belongings without permission, and the other angrily shouts, "Thief!"*
- *Scenario 3: In a group game, one child broke the rules, and the others want to exclude him from the game.*

➤ **THINK (Pause and Evaluate):** The caregiver does not immediately offer a solution for fighting children. First, they invite both children to calm down and ask the following questions in turn:

- *"What are you feeling right now? Say it in one word." (Name the emotion)*
- *"What exactly happened? Tell us." (Tell the story from your own perspective)*
- *"So what did you want?" (Clarifying the need)*

These questions shift the child's brain from "reaction mode" to "thinking mode." At this stage, the caregiver doesn't judge, they simply listen and guide.

➤ **SPEAK (Constructive Expression):** The child is asked to explain the problem they are experiencing to the other person using the "I Language" they have learned. If necessary, the caregiver can initiate with the following phrase:

- *"Can you explain this using 'I statements'? Instead of saying 'You always...', start with 'I felt... because...'"*

The caregiver does not interrupt while the child is expressing themselves. When the conversation is over, they ask which animal strategy the child used.

- *"Which animal did you just act like? A shark, a turtle, or something else?"*

➤ **LISTEN (Understanding the Other Side):** Now it's the other child's turn. The caregiver uses the same "I-Languages" format with this child and asks the first child to simply listen — without interrupting or objecting. When the process is complete, both children are asked the following question:

- *"How was the other person feeling? What did they need?"*

This question forces the child to take perspective — that is, to empathize. The caregiver writes down the needs of both parties on a board/ paper and asks:

- *"Can both of your needs be met? Which solution will work for both of you? The fox or the owl?"*

Large Group Sharing: Each group briefly shares their scenario and the solution they found. The educator deepens the discussion with the following question:

- *"In real life, which is the most difficult link in this chain: Think, Speak, or Listen? Why?"*

Step 4: Strengthening collaboration in communication

- **Note to the Educator :** This step is entirely a hands-on game. Demonstrate firsthand how one-way listening, without feedback or interaction, breaks down communication.
- **Method :** Applied Play.
- **Materials to be used :** One blank A4 sheet of paper for each participant.

Application Steps:

1. **" Paper Tearing" Game:** The instructor distributes an A4 sheet of paper to each participant. They ask everyone to close their eyes. They set the rule: *"Asking questions, talking, and opening your eyes are strictly forbidden."*
2. **Giving Instructions:** The instructor gives the following commands in sequence:

" Fold the paper in half... Tear off the top left corner... Fold the paper in half again... Tear off the bottom left corner..."

3. **Assessment:** When the participants opened their eyes, they saw that the papers were torn in completely different ways. The educator emphasized: *"As you can see, one-way listening without feedback such as interaction, questioning, and eye contact completely disrupts communication. When communicating with our children, we also need interaction to ensure they are hearing us correctly."*

Step 5: Reading social cues

- **Note to the Educator :** Help participants recognize that disadvantaged children and those with a history of trauma have neurologically very low "Threat Perception" thresholds. Guide them to interpret the child's aggression not as "rudeness," but as a false alarm from the brain.
- **Method :** Case Analysis and Interactive Discussion.
- **Materials to be used :** Whiteboard, Brain States Model diagram.

Application Steps:

1. Social Cue Analysis

"Dear friends, social skills are not limited to simply waiting our turn, using 'I' statements, or standing up for our rights. A very large part of social skills is the ability to correctly interpret the invisible social signals and cues in a situation."

As adults, when we enter a room, we can roughly understand the situation from people's gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, or whispers. However, in the world of disadvantaged children who are under protection or who have experienced early neglect or violence, this mechanism for reading social cues is insufficient. Due to a neurological filter, they interpret even neutral or ambiguous signals directly as an 'attack' or 'exclusion'."

2. Case Presentation and In-Depth Analysis

The educator presents the case scenario from the handbook to the class and then initiates a two-stage analysis:

Case: 11-year-old Can is sitting in the television room. His two friends (Mert and Efe), sitting on a sofa in the other corner of the room, suddenly burst into laughter while whispering amongst themselves. Can isn't looking at them at the time, but as soon as he hears the laughter, he jumps up and lunges at Mert and Efe. Clenching his fists, he shouts, "What are you saying behind my back? What right do you have to make fun of me!" and throws the magazines on the coffee table at them (Shark Strategy). However, Mert and Efe are completely unrelated to Can's conversation; they are discussing a funny video they watched the previous evening.

Progressive Question: What are the neurological reasons why a child might misinterpret this social cue?

The instructor draws the participants' attention to the Brain States Model discussed in the previous module:

Chronic Alarm State (Hypervigilance): In children who have experienced trauma, neglect, or come from unsafe environments, the amygdala (alarm center) in their brains operates at a constantly high level. They are like a house with an overly sensitive alarm system because they fear a burglary at any moment; the alarm will go off even if there's a breeze .

Perceiving Uncertainty as a Threat: The whispering and laughter in the room are an "unclear social cue" for Can. While a healthy brain would reason, 'What are they laughing at?' (Logic Mode), Can's alarm system instantly codes this uncertainty as a vital threat, an attack of exclusion or humiliation. Within seconds, the child falls into Survival Mode (Lower Brain). His aggression (Shark strategy) doesn't actually stem from disrespect, but from his brain giving him the command, 'You are under attack, strike immediately to defend yourself!'

3. How do we teach children to "correctly interpret social cues" in the field?

The educator gathers suggestions from participants through brainstorming and structures the following 3-Step Guidance Model on the board for caregivers to teach these tips to children like Can:

Step 1: First, turn off the alarm (co-regulation)

When a child is in the midst of a crisis and attacking their friends, telling them, "They weren't making fun of you, you misunderstood," won't work. First, you need to go to Can, get down to their eye level from a safe distance, and say in a calm tone, "Can, I'm here, I'm with you. Let's take a deep breath, you can calm down a little first," thus getting the child out of Survival Mode.

Stage 2: Analyzing the Social Cue (Detective Game)

Once the child calms down and enters the Upper Brain (Logic Mode), clues are analyzed with them, much like a crime scene investigator:

"Can, I understand you got really angry when you heard your two friends whispering and giggling in the room, thinking they were talking about you. But did you have any concrete evidence that they were talking about you? You just heard their voices, right? What percentage chance do you think they were laughing about something completely different than you? Let's investigate this like detectives."

Stage 3: Teach them to ask "owl questions" instead of "shark questions".

Teach the child, as a behavioral rehearsal, to ask questions like an Owl/Fox to check the situation instead of attacking (becoming a Shark) or sulking (becoming a Turtle) when they see a similar ambiguous cue again.

"Can, next time you hear people whispering and giggling and you get that bad feeling inside, instead of going and hitting them, why don't you try asking them directly: 'Hey kids, are you laughing at something funny? Can I join in?' That's Owl behavior. If you go and ask, you'll cancel out that false alarm your brain is giving you with your own eyes."

Closing Points for the Educator

"Dear caregivers; for a child like Can, taking every whisper personally is not a personality disorder. Past traumas have caused these children to see the world as a dangerous place. Our patient detective guidance will teach them that they don't need to be constantly on edge, that they can examine signals in their environment with an owl's eye instead of immediately biting with shark teeth."

Step 6: Applying Social Skills to Daily Life

- **Note to the Trainer :** This step is entirely field-oriented. Help participants realize that daily routines within the organization serve as social skills laboratories. Emphasize that social skills develop not through reading books, but through experience, repetition, and making mistakes in a safe environment.
- **Method :** Question-Answer and Brainstorming.
- **Materials to be used :** Whiteboard, "Daily Social Practice Checklist" worksheet.

Application Steps:

- **Establishing the Concept :** The educator first conveys the basic principle:

"Dear colleagues, so far we've talked about listening to children properly, practicing empathy, turning conflict into opportunity, and reading social cues. But how do all these skills become ingrained in children's minds? The answer is simple: repetition, repetition, and repetition. Social skills are like muscles; they weaken if not used, and they strengthen with small exercises every day. Every communal meal, every task sharing, every group game in your institution is actually an opportunity for social skills training."
- **Daily Practice Opportunities:** The educator writes the following title on the board: "Social Skills Lab in the Institution" and asks participants to contribute through brainstorming. Then they share the following patterns: Shared meal preparation — children share tasks, wait in line, ask for help, and say thank you. Room cleaning task — they negotiate and practice conflict resolution. Group games — rule-setting, dissenting, and compromise skills develop naturally. Listening circle — each evening everyone shares the best and most difficult moment of the day; the caregiver only listens, not comments.
- **"Social Compass" Card:** Suggests the following practical exercise for participants : Once a week, sit down with each child individually at the institution and ask these three questions: 'Do you remember who helped you this week?' 'Did you upset anyone this

week, did you realize?' 'Is there anything you want to do differently next time?' These three questions quietly but powerfully develop the child's social awareness and self-assessment skills.

- **Closing Question:** The educator concludes the session with this question: "Which of your organization's daily routines can you transform into a conscious social skills practice using what we learned today? Two people in each group share this."

Step 7: End-of-Session Reinforcement

- **Note to the Trainer :** This step is a cognitive reinforcement step. Help participants visualize the day's key concepts. Use metaphors and anecdotes to reinforce them in their emotional memory; abstract concepts are much more permanently learned through concrete imagery.
- **Method :** Metaphor and Anecdote.
- **Materials to be used :** Whiteboard.

Application Steps:

- **of Key Concepts :** The educator writes today's 5 key concepts on the board and explains each with a single sentence: Social Skills — a bridge to healthily convey our emotions to the outside world. Friendship Circle — a child who knows who to trust and to what extent is immune to abuse. 5 Animal Strategies — knowing which animal we are in conflict is a power in itself. Paper Tearing — communication without interaction is like describing a map without knowing where the other person is . Social Cues — a child's aggression is often a false alarm.
- **The "Shield" Metaphor:** The educator uses the following image:

"Friends, think of social skills like this: A child has an invisible shield. This shield doesn't protect them from punches or words—it protects them from loneliness. Being able to build safe friendships, not letting conflict escalate into fights, being able to say 'no,' and being able to ask for help—each of these strengthens that shield a little more. When you teach children these skills, you are giving them a solid shield."

- **Connecting Question:** The educator bridges the gap with the previous session: "Last week we discussed empathy. Empathy was a child opening a window into someone else's world. This week we discussed social skills—which is stepping outside that window. By empathizing, we understand the inner world of others; by using our social skills, we can reconcile with them like an owl in times of crisis, rather than becoming a shark. When these two tools come together, we build a safe and collaborative relationship."

Step 8: Evaluation and Closing

- **Note to the Trainer :** This step closes the door on both the session and Chapter 4. Receiving verbal feedback from participants is both valuable data for you and a powerful learning experience for them — because sharing what you've learned with others is the most powerful way to internalize that knowledge.
- **Method :** Verbal Feedback and Closing Circle.
- **Materials to be used :** None (circle seating only).

Application Steps:

- **Closing Circle:** Participants form a circle. The educator starts the round and asks each participant to take turns answering these two questions: 'Which concept stuck with me the most today?' and 'What is something I would do differently with a child tomorrow regarding social skills when I return to the organization?'
- **Closing Remarks:** The educator concludes the session with the following words:

"Dear friends, today we discovered something very important together: teaching social skills is even more valuable than teaching a child to fish. Because a child who learns to fish feeds themselves; a child who learns social skills grows up feeling a sense of belonging, not alone. And we know that the deepest wound of children in institutional care is precisely this: the feeling of 'I don't belong.' When you bring these tools to the field, you add a layer of healing to that feeling. In next week's session, we will address assertiveness—the most powerful component of these skills—that is, the child finding their own voice. Thank you all so much for today."

6. SESSION: ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS – SELF-EXPRESSION AND DEFENDING YOUR RIGHTS

My name	Target Achievement (Step Title)	Activity	Method	Duration
1	Distinguishing between passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior.	Behavioral Triangle Analysis	Interactive Presentation	20 min
2	Expressing emotions using "I" statements.	"I" Sentences Instead of "You"	Role play	25 min
3	The ability to set boundaries and say "No".	The Practice of Saying "Gently No"	Practical Study	20 min
4	Defense against human rights violations	Maintaining a Safe Distance	Case Analysis	20 min
5	Use of body language and tone of voice	"Stand Tall, Speak Firmly"	Physical Activity	15 min
6	Supporting social skills	Assertiveness Practice in Daily Life	Question and Answer	10 min
7	End-of-session reinforcement	Review of key concepts	Metaphor/Anecdote	10 min
8	Evaluation and closing	Participant opinions	Verbal Feedback	5 min

Step 1: Differentiating between passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior.

- Note to the educator:** Explain the differences between passive (remaining silent), aggressive (shouting/attacking), and assertive (expressing oneself clearly and respectfully) behavior. Prevent participants from confusing assertiveness with aggression. Clearly state that assertiveness involves both protecting one's own rights and respecting the boundaries of others.

- **Method:** Interactive Presentation and Animation.
- **Materials to be used:** Whiteboard, cards representing 4 different communication styles.

Application Steps:

"Dear colleagues, in the final module of our training, we are exploring the strongest shield of emotional intelligence against the outside world: Assertiveness. In daily life, especially in intense internal organizational relationships, we react to events with fundamentally four different communication styles:

Passive Style (I am unimportant, you are important): Cannot express their needs or rights. Cannot say no. Suppresses their feelings and tolerates being exploited.

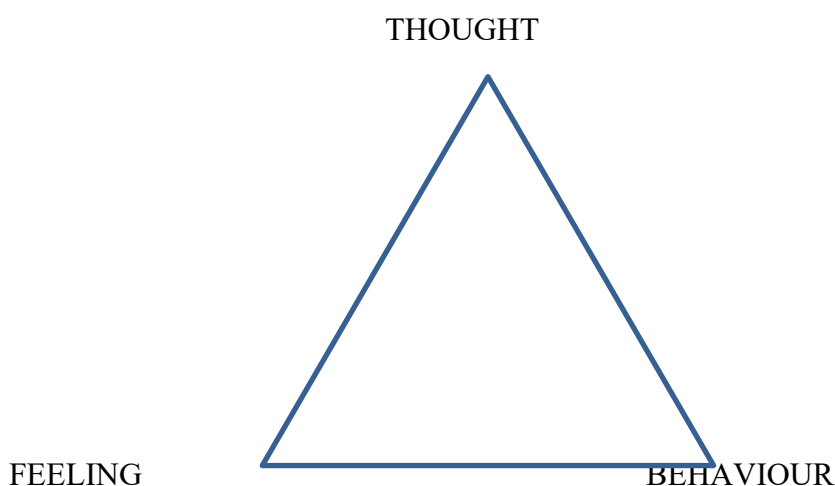
Aggressive Style (Only I matter, you are unimportant): When asserting their rights, they yell, accuse, threaten, and disregard the other party's boundaries (Shark strategy).

Passive-Aggressive Style (I won't say it directly, but I'll get my revenge): They smile to your face but plot behind your back, make insinuations, slam the door, and sulk.

Assertive Style (I am important, and so are you): Expresses one's rights, feelings, and needs clearly and decisively, without hurting or blaming the other party. This is the ideal balance we want to develop in ourselves and instill in children."

The communication style we display in a crisis situation in daily life (shouting, sulking, or drawing clear boundaries) is only the tip of the iceberg, that is, 'behavior'. However, in psychology, we know that no behavior is without a cause. Behind every behavior is an emotion, and behind that emotion is a thought produced by our mind. These three form a triangle inextricably linked:

[BEHAVIORAL TRIANGLE]



Now, let's analyze the Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive communication styles—our target—that we frequently see in the organization, by placing them within this behavioral triangle. You will see that it is impossible to change the style without changing the thought in the mind:

1. Aggressive/Offensive Style Triangle (Shark)

Thought in mind: "If I don't raise my voice, they will crush me, no one will listen to me. To be right, I must attack."

Emotions in the body: Feeling threatened, intense anger, resentment.

Outwardly displayed behavior: Interrupting the other person, making accusations, wagging a finger, shouting, or throwing objects.

2. Passive Style Triangle (Turtle)

The thought in my mind: "If I say no, they won't like me, I'll be ostracized. To avoid problems, I must give up on what I want."

Emotions manifested in the body: Fear of rejection, intense anxiety, feelings of worthlessness.

Outwardly displayed behavior: silence, inability to stand up for one's rights, submissiveness, inability to say no, and constantly giving in.

3. The Assertive Style Triangle (Owl/Fox)

The thought in mind: "Just as my rights and needs are valuable, so are the rights of the other person. I can express myself clearly without blaming the other person."

Feelings in the body: Inner confidence, calmness, self-respect, and respect for the other person.

Outward Behavior: An upright posture, a clear tone of voice, setting boundaries using "I statements," protecting both oneself and the other party.

Exercise: Classroom Behavior Triangle Practice (10 Minutes)

The educator draws a large triangle on the board. At each of its three corners, they write "Thought - Feeling - Behavior." Then, they give the participants a case study from the field:

Scenario: "You're on the evening shift at the company. You're very tired and just as you're about to take a break, a colleague approaches you and says in an authoritative tone, 'Check that kid's room right away, I have an urgent matter to attend to outside,' and leaves without waiting for a reply."

The educator group invites the participants to an interactive discussion:

"Dear friends, in response to this event;

If we blindly activate the Aggressive Triangle, what thought will cross our minds? What emotion will erupt within us, and what kind of 'behavior' will we exhibit towards our friend? (Participants should respond with the thought 'He/She thinks I'm a laborer,' the emotion 'Anger,' and the behavior 'Go do it yourself!')

So, what happens if we activate the Passive Triangle? (Ask participants for responses such as 'I don't want to be rude,' 'I'm hurt,' and 'I'm controlling the room' by complaining).

Our goal is to avoid both of these traps. How can we establish the "Attitude Triangle" in this situation? What healthy thinking should we instill in our minds so that our bodies calm down and we can draw clear boundaries without hurting or harming our friend, but also without letting ourselves be intimidated?"

After receiving the answers, the process continues as follows:

*"Great ideas have come in. Let's now work together to build that **Bold Triangle**, where we neither let ourselves be intimidated nor compromise our professional relationship on this challenging stage, and write them down on the board:*

1. Corner: Healthy THINKING (Mental Tuning)

To avoid falling into the traps of passivity ("it would be rude") or aggression ("they're trying to crush me"), the assertive mindset we need to instill in our minds is precisely this:

- **"My colleague might have an emergency, that's normal; however, as someone who's just finished a very tiring shift, I also have the right to rest and finish my shift as planned. Defending my own boundaries doesn't mean I'm attacking my colleague or being uncooperative."**

2. Corner: EMOTION (Inner State) in the Body

The moment we implant this healthy thought in our minds, our amygdala (our primitive brain) stops screaming, "You are under threat!" Our higher brain takes over. The emotion that shines in our bodies is not anger or fear, but **an inner calmness, determination, and self-respect**. Our pulse doesn't quicken, our voice doesn't tremble.

3. Corner: Outwardly Reflected BEHAVIOR (Assertive Boundary Clause)

We've calmed down and we know we're in the right. Now it's time to stop our friend, the Shark, who's turned and walked away, without biting him with its teeth or muttering behind his back like the Turtle, by using decisive body language (making eye contact and standing tall) and saying this **Bold Sentence** :

Bold Statement: "Ayşe, one moment, please stop? I hear and understand you have an urgent matter. However, I've just finished a very busy and tiring shift, my shift is over, and I need to leave immediately. Therefore, I can't check the room. If you'd like, we can inform the other colleague on duty or our supervisor together, what do you say?"

Closing Points for the Educator

" Therefore , we didn't say 'Yes' to our friend's request and let ourselves be pushed around; but we also didn't yell at him and put ourselves in the wrong when we were right. We simply stood firmly and clearly behind our own boundaries."

*is the **Assertiveness Triangle** . The more we use this assertiveness skill among ourselves and with children, the more our children in the institution will copy this clear and decisive stance from us when asserting their rights, instead of shouting (aggressive) or sulking (passive). Thanks to this triangle, we stop seeing children's tantrums (aggressive behavior)*

or withdrawal (passive behavior) as just 'naughtiness'. Remember, if you want to change that child's aggressive behavior, you must first touch the other corners of the triangle; that is, the feeling in their heart and that traumatic thought in their mind, with 'Empathy Glasses'."

Step 2: Expressing emotions using "I" statements.

- **Note to the educator:** The cornerstone of assertiveness is "I" language. Instead of saying "You're making me angry," emphasize the transformative power of saying "It hurts and I'm upset when you hit me. " Have the student experience expressing their feelings and asserting their rights through a concrete formula.
- **Method:** Role-Playing.
- **Materials to be used:** "You" and "I" language conversion flashcards.

Application Steps:

Formula Presentation: The educator writes the assertive self-expression pattern on the board:

When [the event] happens, I feel [my feeling/ emotion] because I [need] it, and therefore [my expectation/limit].

Role-Playing Exercise: Participants are divided into pairs. One person plays the role of the rule violator, while the other acts out the role using the correct "I" statement instead of the accusatory "You" statement .

"I feel frustrated when I see the room hasn't been cleaned at the shift handover. Because I need a fair division of labor. That's why I expect you to stick to the cleaning schedule in the next shift."

Step 3: Setting boundaries and learning to say "No"

- **Note to the trainer:** To prevent participants from becoming overly permissive (passive) towards children due to their "caring caregiver" role, make them realize that boundaries are also protective for the child.
- **Method:** Applied Study.
- **Materials to be used:** Boundary demarcation scenarios.

Application Steps:

The Principle of Politely Saying No: The educator explains that saying no isn't about attacking the other person, but about asserting one's own boundaries.

Application: Participants practice, both verbally and in writing, how to say no with unwavering clarity, without causing a scene, when children insist on bending the rules (e.g., "wanting to play with their phone after bedtime").

"I hear you and I understand you want to play, but it's bedtime right now, so I can't allow the phone. You can play again tomorrow during your free time."

Step 4: Defending against human rights violations

- **Note to the Trainer:** Help participants understand that saying "No" to demanding and unreasonable requests from friends, neighbors, or acquaintances in daily life is not an act of aggression, but rather an assertiveness (ability) that protects their own mental health.
- **Method:** Metaphorical Expression and Case Analysis.
- **Materials to be used:** Whiteboard, Case Studies from Everyday Life .

Application Steps:

Maintaining Safe Distance Thermostat Metaphor: The educator opens the session with the words "Thermometer" and "Thermostat" and writes them on the board:

"Dear friends, in the course of daily life, sometimes our neighbors, relatives, or people in our social circle may confront us with unfair demands that overstep our boundaries and disregard our plans. Moreover, they may sometimes do this through emotional manipulation, using phrases like 'being kind, being a good neighbor, you're being rude,' or with a coercive approach (the Shark strategy). At that very moment, what we do becomes vitally important:

- **If you become a 'Thermometer':** You react according to the temperature of the environment. When the other party gives you orders, you flare up angrily, shouting and fighting; or, conversely, you cower and accept the unwanted task out of politeness, and then harbor resentment towards that person for days. In both cases, you cannot maintain your boundaries.
- **If you act like a 'thermostat':** You won't be affected by the pressure coming from the other side. You'll maintain your own '**safe distance**'. Without taking the other side's impulsive or persistent outburst personally, you'll respond with a calm but unwavering stance, balancing the temperature of the environment with your own composure. You won't need to shout while protecting your boundaries; you'll clarify your words."

Everyday Life Case Study: The educator reads the case to the group or projects it onto the board:

Case: You've just had a very busy and tiring week. You're eagerly anticipating the weekend at home, relaxing and clearing your head. On Saturday morning, your doorbell rings. You open it; your upstairs neighbor is standing there with his keys in hand. In a frantic, insistent, and completely bossy tone, he says (Shark):

"Ayşe/Ahmet, I need to leave town urgently, I'm leaving the key with you this weekend. Come to our house twice a day to feed the cat and water the flowers. I don't want any objections, we're neighbors after all, why are we living if we don't help each other? Goodbye, I entrust it to you!" she says, and before you can even reply, she leaves the keys on the table and starts to leave.

Step-by-Step Case Study in "Thermostat Mode"

The trainer asks the participants: *"How can we establish a professional 'I language' in this scene without turning the relationship into hostility, but also without sacrificing that much-needed weekend rest?"*

The proactive intervention plan is structured on the board in 3 steps:

1. Establish a Safe Emotional Distance (Internal Thermostat)

When your neighbor leaves that key on the table and puts pressure on you with guilt, silence the primal reactions your brain gives you for 3 seconds: either *"Oh, it'll be rude, just accept it"* (Passive) or *"How disrespectful, take your key and leave"* (Aggressive). Take a deep breath. Recognize that the haste and demanding attitude belong to them, not you, and create emotional distance. Straighten your body and make clear eye contact.

2. Mirror the Other Side's Situation (Start with Accusations)

If you start by directly saying, "You're so thoughtless," you'll become a thermometer. Instead, begin with a sentence that shows you understand their discomfort:

"Ms. Esra, I understand that you have a very urgent situation and that you are in a tight spot trying to find a solution for your home while you are out of town."

3. Be assertive, use "I" statements, and set your personal boundaries.

After indicating that you understand the other side, immediately and with unwavering clarity, state your own boundaries and needs:

need to spend this weekend at home completely resting and taking time for myself. Therefore, I cannot take on this responsibility this weekend, I cannot accept the key. If you'd like, let's quickly think of an alternative for you to ask the other neighbors in the neighborhood, what do you say?"

Educator's Question

After completing the analysis, the educator returns to the room and asks the following question:

"Dear friends; how many times in our daily lives have we given up our own rights and fallen into the passive triangle because we couldn't say 'No' to our neighbor, friend, or relative?"

The more we utilize this 'thermostat' ability and the 'I' language in our daily lives, the more we protect ourselves from unnecessary stress. What do you think will change when we master this daily living skill, whether working with children in an institution or in our daily lives?"

Step 5: Using body language and tone of voice

- **Note to the educator:** No matter how assertive the words, demonstrate through body language that the message loses its power if the body language is passive or aggressive.
- **Method:** Physical Activity. Have participants act out how to approach children with a "firm but loving" attitude.
- **Materials to be used:** A wide range of applications.

Application Steps:

Physical Tuning Exercise: The instructor has participants stand up and pair up in the room. They write the following assertive statement on the board: **"I'm busy right now, I'll be back in 10 minutes."** The instructor gives commands one by one, and the partners look at each other and say the same sentence in three different modes in turn:

Passive Stance: Shoulders slumped, head bowed, no eye contact, voice in a whisper.

Aggressive Posture: Chest excessively puffed out, finger-wagging hand, intense eye contact, loud and threatening voice.

Assertive Posture ("Stand Tall, Speak Firmly"): Feet are level with the ground, shoulders are straight, direct and calm eye contact is maintained, and a clear and firm tone of voice is used.

"As you can see, the words that came out of our mouths were exactly the same in all three rounds. But in the first one, because we looked like a turtle, our boundaries weren't taken seriously; in the second one, because we looked like a shark, even though we only used a polite sentence, we were attacked."

Our children pay attention not only to the words we say but also to the energy our bodies radiate when we speak. Assertiveness begins in the body. When we incorporate the rule 'Stand Tall, Speak Firmly' into our lives, we show our children that we can protect our boundaries without raising our voices."

Step 6: Supporting Social Skills

- **Note to educator:** Remind children that for their assertiveness to develop, their boundaries (e.g., knocking on their door, asking for their opinion) must be respected within the institution. Discuss "Preference Time" apps that encourage children to openly state their preferences throughout the day (for example, which game they want to play).
- **Method:** Question-Answer.
- **Materials to be used:** Whiteboard.

Application Steps:

Integration into Daily Life : The educator addresses the group: "Within the daily practices and routines of the institution, how can we support children's 'assertive self-expression' skills to prevent them from becoming passive and suppressed or aggressive and violent?"

Gathering Field Ideas: Practical suggestions from participants (e.g., "Instead of getting angry when children say no, give them space to make their decisions," "Encourage them to defend themselves using 'I' statements in group meetings") are itemized on the board.

The educator summarizes and connects the ideas on the board:

*"Dear friends, these wonderful field ideas we've written on the board show us a very clear truth: **A child's assertiveness develops not in a laboratory, but in their daily routines.**"*

*If we don't want children in our institution to remain passive and be oppressed, or to become aggressive and lash out, we have to create safe spaces where they can be assertive. The first rule of this is very simple: **A child whose boundaries are not respected cannot learn to set boundaries.***

If we barge into a child's room without knocking, we are subtly sending that child the message: 'Your boundaries are unimportant; anyone with the power can violate them.' The child sees this and either becomes submissive (passive) or does the same to another peer (become aggressive).

That's why those little practical actions throughout the day are vital. Simple but important actions like knocking on a child's door before entering their room or asking for their opinion before doing something for them instill in the child the idea that 'I am valuable and I have boundaries, I am respected. This is how respect is shown.'

7 : End-of-Session Reinforcement

- **Note to the trainer:** Reinforce assertiveness with a memorable image as a synthesis of all 5 modules of training (RULER, Brain Modes, Empathy, Conflict Resolution). Conclude the session by asking participants to respond to the question, "What would be the first thing I would say tomorrow when helping a child defend themselves?"
- **Method:** Metaphor/Anecdotal Storytelling.

Application Steps:

The Border Compass Metaphor: The instructor reinforces the module with these words:

"Dear caregivers, assertiveness is neither an aggressive fortress that builds impenetrable walls around itself and attacks those who come and go, nor a passive piece of land without borders that everyone can trample over."

Assertiveness is a safe bridge with clearly defined doors and boundaries, but one that extends to connect with others when needed. We will neither passively allow our boundaries to be violated nor aggressively suppress others to protect them. Just as we recognize our own worth, we will also affirm the value of the child and colleague in front of us, building a bridge of "I am valuable, and so are you."

Step 8 : Evaluation and Closing

- **Note to the Trainer:** This step marks the closing of both Session 6 and the entire training program. Give participants the opportunity to concretize the knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout the 6 sessions. Conclude by strengthening a sense of international solidarity and professional pride.
- **Method:** Verbal Feedback.

Application Steps:

The Grand Closing Circle: The instructor has all participants form a circle shoulder to shoulder and then asks the following final question:

"Dear colleagues; we have completed this 5-part journey into Emotional Intelligence, which we began with a 'Hello' in the first session. We have added RULER, Brain Modes, the Turtle Tactic, Theraplay games, the Empathy Glasses, the 5 Animal Strategies, and Assertiveness to our repertoire. As you return to your institutions today, what is the biggest promise you have made to yourselves to become 'Emotion Coaches' and 'Unshakeable Thermostats' in the lives of our disadvantaged children?"

After receiving feedback from each participant individually, the trainer congratulates everyone for their great contributions to the institution and the lives of the children, and successfully concludes the training.

Program Summary: The instructor quickly lists the key concepts of all sessions on the board: Session 1 – Secure Group Connection and the Importance of EQ. Session 2 – The RULER Method and Emotion Meter. Session 3 – Crisis Management and the Turtle Technique. Session 4 – Empathy Glasses and the 3-Step Formula. Session 5 – Social Skills and the 5 Animal Strategies. Session 6 – Assertiveness and the Boundary Compass.

Closing Remarks: The educator concludes the session with these words: *"Dear colleagues; our goal is the same – to ensure that disadvantaged children grow up in a safe, loving and supportive environment. The emotional intelligence we learned in this training..." "With the information and applications you receive regarding these skills, you will not only gain awareness about your own life and make a difference in your emotional intelligence skills, but you will also contribute to equipping disadvantaged children with these skills by bringing this awareness to the field."*

Final Question: As the educator closes the circle, they ask each participant: *"In this six-session journey, what is the first concrete step you will take to make a difference in a child's life when you return to your organization tomorrow?"* The responses are met with applause, and the program officially concludes.

7. REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

BECOMING EMPOWERED THROUGH EMPATHY

Emotional Intelligence Training Program for Caring for Disadvantaged Children

PRE-TEST / POST-TEST FORM

Participant:	_____	History:	_____
Application Type:	☐ Pre- Test (Beginning of Session 1) ☐ Post-Test (End of Session 7)		

This form is not an exam. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each question honestly.

1. When a child suddenly starts crying, what's the first thought that comes to your mind?

- ☐ I'll ask, " Stop , don't cry, why are you crying?"
- ☐ Don't cry , it'll pass. There's nothing to be sad about, I'd say.
- ☐ I go to her and at first, without saying anything, I just stand there; I say, "Let's talk when you're ready."
- ☐ I often don't know what to do.

2. How would you define the concept of "Emotional Intelligence (EQ)"? (Write briefly in your own words.)

3. Which of the following emotions do you think play a functional—that is, protective or developmental—role in children? (You can select more than one.)

- ☐ Anger ☐ Sadness ☐ Fear ☐ Pleasure/Joy ☐ Love ☐ Surprise ☐ Disgust ☐ Shame
- ☐ They all have a function. ☐ Negative emotions have no function.

5. When a child is having a tantrum (shouting, throwing things), which of the following would you do? (Indicate what you do most often.)

- ☐ I raise my voice and say, "Stop!"
- ☐ I would intervene immediately and physically restrain them.
- ☐ I stay calm, go over to them, and whisper, "I'm here, I'm with you."
- ☐ I'm at a loss for what to do.

6. "Anger is a natural emotion, but aggression is unacceptable behavior." Do you agree with this statement?

- ☐ I completely agree.
- ☐ I partially agree.
- ☐ I disagree .
- ☐ I'm not sure .

7. What do you do when you have to continue working with children while feeling stressed or angry?

8. Which of the following two statements best describes empathy?

- ☐ " I'm so sorry for you."
- ☐ " This must have put you in a very difficult place, I understand."

9. What would you say when a child tells you, "Nobody loves me"? (Write in your own words.)

10. "Approving a child's feelings means approving their behavior." Is this statement true?

- ☐ Yes , that's correct.
- ☐ No , that's wrong.
- ☐ I'm not sure .

11. How do you usually intervene when two children fight at the institution?

- ☐ I decide who is right.
- ☐ I'll separate them and talk to them individually.
- ☐ I guide them to find their own solutions.
- ☐ I'm often unsure how to intervene.

12. Which of the following would you do during a conflict?

- ☐ I insist on winning even if the other person is right.
- ☐ I'll compromise by saying, "You take one step, I'll take one step."
- ☐ I try to understand the real needs of both parties and look for a new solution that satisfies both.
- ☐ I would give up my own needs to make the other person happy.

13. Are there situations where you find it difficult to say "no"?

- ☐ Too often.
- ☐ From time to time.
- ☐ Rarely .
- ☐ Never .

14. Can you explain the difference between "you language" and "I language"?

15. Label the following statements as 'Passive', 'Aggressive', or 'Presented':

Expression	Ticket
"You always do that!"	
"Okay, whatever you say."	
"This situation is bothering me, can we talk about it?"	

16. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 in the following areas:

(1 = I am not competent at all → 5 = I am very competent)

Area	Point
Recognizing children's emotions	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
Being able to remain calm during a crisis.	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
Ability to empathize with a child	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
Resolving conflicts constructively	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
Managing my own emotions	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
The ability to set boundaries / The ability to say "No"	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

17.

- ☐ **Pre -test:** What do you most want to learn from this training?
- ☐ **Final Test:** What changed the most for you in this training?

Thank you for your participation and honesty. • Empowered by Empathy – Erasmus+ KA210-ADU