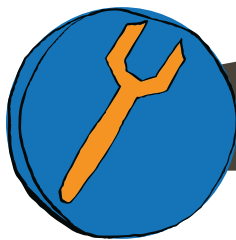


My FAMILY IS SPECIAL



TOOL 3B: ALL TIED UP

This activity is based on work completed by the Telethon Institute for Child Health WA as part of the *Aboriginal Child Health Survey 2005*

LINKED TO:

- Sections 3.2 & 3.5



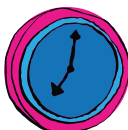
WHY?

- Helping families identify their strengths and how they rely on each other
- Helping children realise that they have positive people around them who can keep them safe
- Helping children realise that they are not the only support available to their parents/family members and to identify additional supports/resources
- Helping families affirm their relationships and connections in a relaxed and fun way
- Exploring new possible supports



WHO WITH?

- Families or, if appropriate, other groups of supportive people



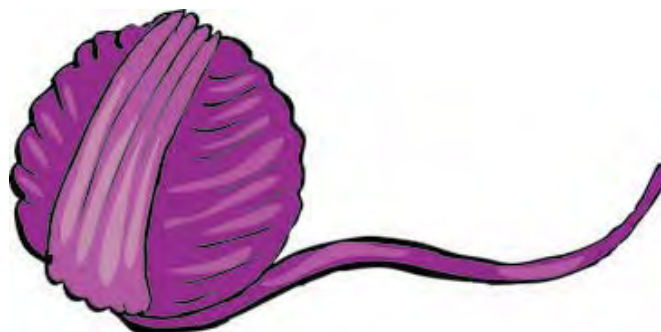
TIME?

- 10 minutes to ½ hour

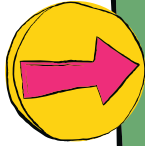


YOU'LL NEED?

- A long ball of coloured string (or a few balls of different coloured string if you'd like to make it more colourful!)



MY FAMILY IS SPECIAL



WHAT TO DO:

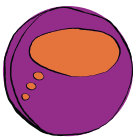
- Have everyone sit in a circle. Explain to them that we are all connected to each other and help each other out in lots of different ways.
- Talk about some of the ways that people support each other (ie by hugging them when they're down, holding their hand when they walk across the street, sticking up for them when they're in a fight).
- Hold the ball of string and share a reason why you need someone else in the circle. While still holding on to the first section of the string roll the ball across to the person identified.
- Continue until everyone is holding at least one part of the string. If you've got time, maybe go again – this time identifying someone else in the family that offers support.
- Discuss the importance of the web: why it's important to support each other and how even during tough times there are people around who can help.



SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

This activity can actually be completed regardless of whether the family is present or not.

- Option 1. Draw a wheel on a piece of A3 paper and ask the child to either draw or stick down string leading from one person to another by asking them a series of questions: 'who do you think Marcus would go to to get help?; *Marcus might feel a bit overwhelmed – who do you think could help him?*' Have a discussion about the supports that are available and how everyone can help each other out.
- Option 2. Draw a wheel and ask the child to list around the wheel all the people who are special or important to them. Have them draw themselves in the middle of the wheel and ask them to draw lines to those people who support them. You might want to colour code them (for example, draw a blue line to people who you might talk to if you're feeling worried about your Mum; draw a green line to people who you think could tell you what's going on with your Dad if you needed to know).
- Option 3. Draw a wheel and asked the child to list around the wheel all the people who are special or important to them. If they have raised a concern about another family member, get them to draw that person in the middle of the wheel. Go through a similar process as in option 2 but identify people (including but not limited to the child) who might support them. For example, '*It sounds like you're worried about who's going to look after your Mum while you're at school. Is there anyone from the list who could check in? who your Mum might call? who helps her out?*' If they are unable to identify people who can support their parent, for example, make some suggestions: '*Caroline from the refuge said that she could drop in sometimes – could that help? Your aunty Margaret seems to call a lot – do you think she could suss out how your Mum is going?*'



TO THINK ABOUT:

- It is important to set up a dynamic where people feel safe. It may be that a particular individual is not identified as a person who provides support and they may feel excluded. If this is the case, start another ball – get them to begin this time by identifying who is a support for them. This will often lead to them being part of the discussion.



HAZARD ZONES:

- Families need to be in an OK place to be able to complete this exercise. If you get a sense that there is some discord or that people aren't feeling hopeful enough gently let the activity rest. Families need to be given permission to sit with their feelings.