

## Module 2

### Children and young people's help seeking behaviour



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)

#### Introduction to Module 2

This module uses data gathered in a survey conducted with 1,274 children and young people, aged 8-18 years, in schools in the 6 partner countries (Romania, Belgium, Austria, Germany, UK and Republic of Ireland). We asked them, what they would do if they experienced violence. Just under half said they would tell someone and just over a quarter said they would defend themselves physically. About one in twenty said they would tell no-one. We explored this further in our working groups with children and young people who have experienced violence. They revealed who they would go to for help, barriers and enablers to seeking help, and also the type of person they found helpful.

#### Aims and purpose of Module 2

Using the information provided to us by children and young people, the purpose of this module is to increase professionals' awareness about children and young people's help seeking behaviour. In particular, the module will consider child-centred practice from the perspective of the children and young people in the study, that is, who they say they go to for help, what characteristics they attribute to a helpful person and what some of the barriers and enablers to seeking help are.

Participants will have the opportunity to discuss child protection procedures and reporting mechanisms particular to their organisation. The ultimate aim is to improve professionals' self-awareness about any barriers associated with their own attitude, role and organisation that might hinder children and young people from seeking help and the importance of consulting with children and young people on service responses and delivery.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRAINER - MODULE 2, TASK 1**

### **Module 2, Task 1**

The purpose of this task is to give participants the opportunity to reflect on the different types of people that children and young people might go to, to seek help. Participants are invited to consider the process a child or young person might go through to seek help and some of barriers they might face. The aim is for participants to gain a deeper appreciation of help seeking behaviour from the perspective of children and young people; to consider what, in their organisation, might help or hinder and what could be done differently. Trainers, please note that there is specific data available that relates to different groups of children and young people that can be used to compare with the overall findings and / or across different groups of children/young people.

### **Required resources for Module 2, Task 1**

Blutak, markers, pens, post-it notes, images of violence and the list of professionals (Appendix 2a), the reporting mechanism (Appendix 1f), key findings from the project consultations with children and young people (Appendix 2e).

### **First step for Module 2, Task 1**

Display the images of the different types of violence (shown in the images in Appendix 2a) on the wall. Inform participants that the project team carried out this exercise with children and young people who had experienced violence. Give each of the participants a list of professionals (e.g. social worker, police officer, youth worker, judge, coach, clergy, parent etc). PLEASE NOTE: blank boxes are available for Trainers and/or participants to add in any professional they deem relevant/suitable to their context and/or the group of children/young people they are considering.

Ask the participants to stick the name of a professional on each picture to represent who would help, if a child or young person was experiencing the particular harm displayed in the picture (e.g. a social worker, a police officer, a teacher - would all help a child experiencing neglect). You might then encourage them to identify who children would go to in this scenario or who would be their first point of contact.

Participants will have repeat name labels (e.g. 9 labels with police officer written on them, 9 labels for social worker and so on) as they may choose the same professional to help with the 9 different types of abuse shown in the images of

children and young people. Blank labels should also be provided as participants might identify additional individuals.

### **Next steps for Module 2, Task 1**

Discuss some of the following with the group. Write some of their suggestions on flipchart paper (ensure you get a selection of people across the 4 types of violence – physical, emotional, sexual, neglect):

- How could this person help children and young people? What could they do? What would a child or young person need this person to do?
- What would that person have to do or be like for a child or young person to tell them/ ask for help? (i.e. what would help them disclose?)
- What might stop a child or young person telling them/ asking for help?
- Ask, for example, why might a child or young person tell a teacher/social worker/youth worker? (if they stuck this on the image), why might they not tell a police officer or a parent? (if they did not stick this on an image).
- You could also ask, out of all the people they put on the image, who they think would be the best for a child or young person to tell and why.

Trainers should also encourage participants to engage with the children and young people's material that came from the working groups. The materials provide examples of some advice from the children and young people for adults, based on their experiences of how a professional has responded well/ helped them when they have experienced harm.

PLEASE NOTE: Factsheets are available on the website with further data outlining specific issues and quotes from the different population groups of children and young people.

Then ask the group their thoughts on the children and young people's views and perspectives.

- Play audios of children and young people's voices (reading out advice to adults) or give participants access to their speech bubbles/factsheets (see above).
- Did the children and young people's advice match what the adults in the room thought would be helpful?

Summarise the themes and thoughts emerging from this task and refer to the key findings from the project consultations with children and young people (Appendix 2e) on what they thought aided disclosures and what acted as barriers.

### **Key messages at the end of Task 1**

Children and young people seek help from a range of people and this varies from child to child and from situation to situation.

Depending on the context of the child and young person, some sources of help might not be accessed.

Violence experienced by children and young people needs to be reported to the authorities in line with your own country's reporting mechanisms.

**BREAK FOR 10 MINUTES.**

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRAINER - MODULE 2, TASK 2**

### **Module 2, Task 2**

The purpose of this task is to give participants the opportunity to reflect on what children and young people, in the project consultations, said about the qualities and characteristics of the best type of person to help them. The aim of the exercise is to encourage professionals to think beyond their professional role and to think more about their own qualities, characteristics and skills that might make it easier for children and young people to seek help.

**Required resources for Module 2, Task 2:** Blotak, flipchart paper, markers, pens, stick figures or post-it notes, blank stick figures (Appendix 2b), pictures of children's stick figures from the project (Appendix 2c).

### **First steps for Module 2, Task 2**

Hand out to each participant 2 blank stick figures (Appendix 2b). Invite participants to take one stick figure (or similar) and list on it, all the positive personal qualities and characteristics of someone they have sought help from. Then on the second stick figure (or similar) invite participants to think of a time when they sought help from someone and list on this figure all the negative personal qualities and characteristics of the person they sought help from.

### **Next steps for Module 2, Task 2**

Next share with the participants, the images of the stick figures that were completed by children in the advisory group and during the consultations that demonstrate the positive and negative characteristics they described when completing a similar exercise. In the larger group, open a discussion regarding the identified positive and negative characteristics and the similarities and differences between the adults' views and the children and young people's views.

### **Key messages at the end of Task 2**

Remind participants that children and adults look for similar positive qualities and characteristics in people that they can go to for help.

**BREAK FOR 10 MINUTES.**

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRAINER - MODULE 2, TASK 3**

### **Module 2, Task 3**

The purpose of this task is to give participants the main messages from the children and young people involved in the project about barriers to help seeking behaviours and to introduce participants to enablers as identified by children and young people themselves under the themes of: creating an enabling environment; communication and taking action. The aim is to transform practice, at the level of the individual, to ensure that professionals from a range of backgrounds are perceived by children and young people to be people they could go to for help if experiencing violence.

### **Required resources for Module 2, Task 3**

A copy of Figure 2 from the survey report (Appendix 2d), key findings from the project consultations with children and young people (Appendix 2e) and the children's quotes (Appendix 2f) with the personal reflections sheet (Appendix 2g). Trainers, please note that there is country specific survey data available that can be used to compare with the overall survey findings. Please see <http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/cfrc/projects/completedprojects/participationforprotectionp4p/>

### **First step for Module 2, Task 3**

On flipchart paper ask the group to think of reasons identified by children and young people as to why they wouldn't seek help. Using the table below, read out the children's reasons for not seeking help (and the percentage response rate) and reflect with the group on the answers given. PLEASE NOTE: this can be country specific. The findings below are from the overview summary of all country data.

Why respondents think that children and young people might not ask for help

Reason	Top 5 selected %
They might be scared it would only make things worse or they would be harmed even more	66
They might think the person would find out	55
They might be embarrassed or self-conscious	40
They might not know where to go to get help	38
They might think no-one would believe them	33

Then, hand out to each participant, a copy of Figure 2 from the survey report (Appendix 2d), a copy of the key findings from the project consultations with children and young people (Appendix 2e)

and a selection of the children's quotes with the personal reflections sheet (Appendix 2f). The Trainer will summarise key emergent themes with participants rather than expecting participants to read through all the information there and then. Participants can take the information away with them for further reading.

Ask the group to work alone or in pairs to read the qualities, identified by children and young people in the survey, that make the best type of person to seek help from, and to reflect on the meaning behind the quotes and their own practice. This exercise was used with the advisory group and was a useful way to access their personal understandings. While reading the quotes use the following questions to prompt their thoughts:

- What are the children saying in this quote?
- What makes support good/not good?
- What impact does the nature of the support have on the child?
- What might I learn from this?

### **Next steps for Module 2, Task 3**

Using their learning and reflections from the survey findings, the key findings and the quotes, invite participants to complete the reflections form (Appendix 2f) alone for 10-15 minutes. Invite participants to come back together and share any thoughts from that exercise particularly on their own qualities and characteristics that could encourage or hinder children and young people's help seeking behaviour.

### **Key messages at the end of Task 3**

Children and young people are clear about the best type of person they can go to for help.

Professionals should seek opportunities to strengthen their own personal positive assets.

Violence experienced by children and young people requires action and the relevant reporting mechanisms should be followed.

### **Overall Key Messages from Module 2**

Children and young people seek help from a range of people and this varies from child to child and from situation to situation.

Depending on the context of the child and young person, some sources of help might not be accessed.

Children and adults look for similar positive qualities and characteristics in people that they can go to for help.

Children and young people are clear about the best type of person they can go to for help.

Professionals should seek opportunities to strengthen their own personal positive assets.

Violence experienced by children and young people requires action and the relevant reporting mechanisms should be followed.



## **Appendix 2**

### **Instructions for the Trainer**

#### **PRINT UP PACK**

**Appendix 2 Contains 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 2g**

**These resources are for use with Module 2, Tasks 1, 2 and 3**

**Appendix 2a**

**For Module 2, Task 1**

**Images of violence, and labels of professional**



**Hearing parents argue a lot**



**Forced to leave their home country**



## **Physical Bullying**



**Sexual abuse**  
**(being touched somewhere that makes them feel uncomfortable)**



**Being smacked**



**Forced to fight for their country**





**Being made to work**



## **Cyber-Bullying**

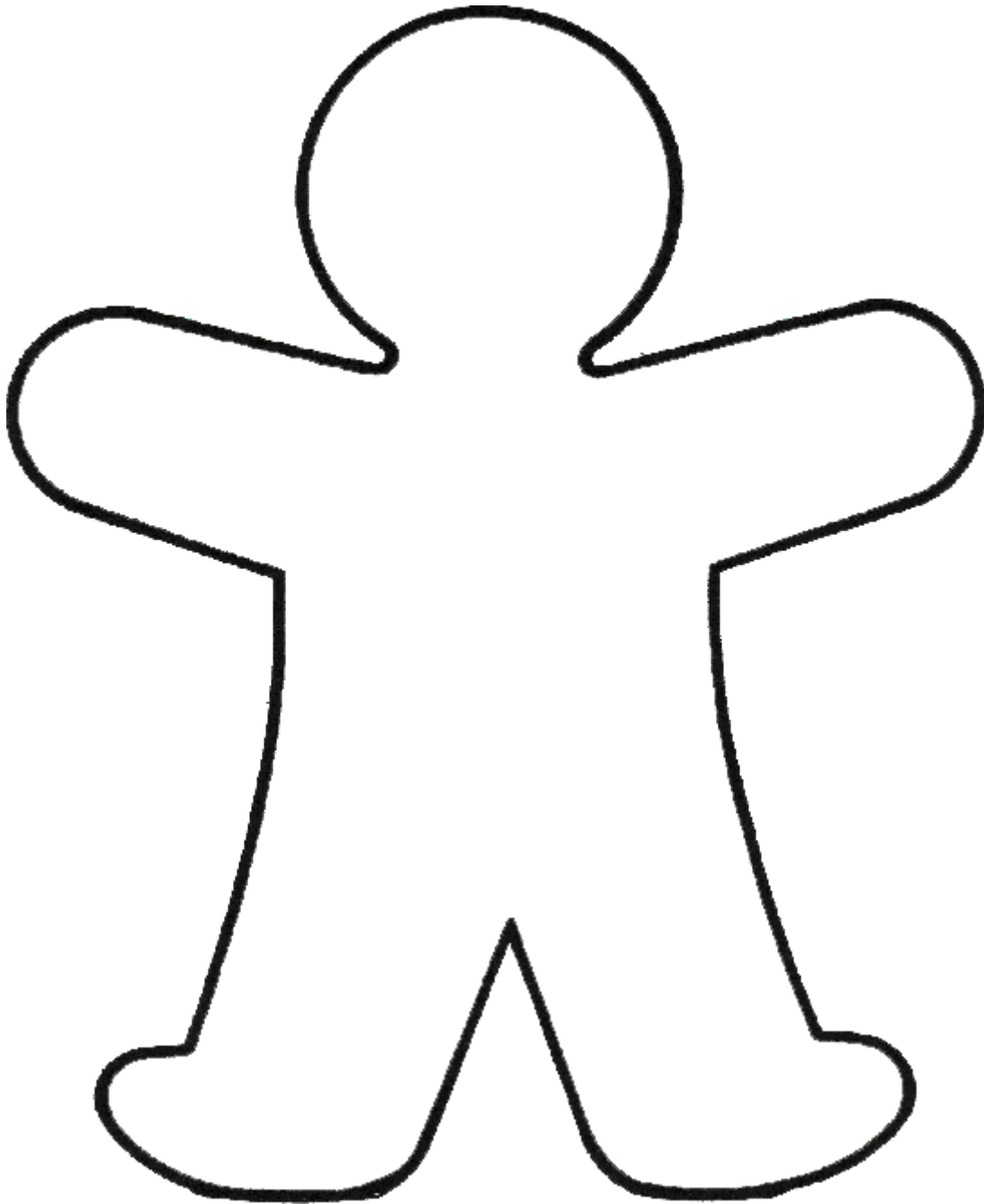
## Labels of Professionals

<b>Police Officer</b>	<b>Nurse</b>
<b>Social Worker</b>	<b>Sports Coach</b>
<b>Youth Worker</b>	<b>Judge</b>
<b>Parent</b>	<b>Friend's parent</b>
<b>Doctor</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Neighbour</b>	<b>Cleric</b>
<b>Counsellor</b>	<b>Psychiatrist</b>

Appendix 2b

For Module 2, Task 2

Blank stick figure

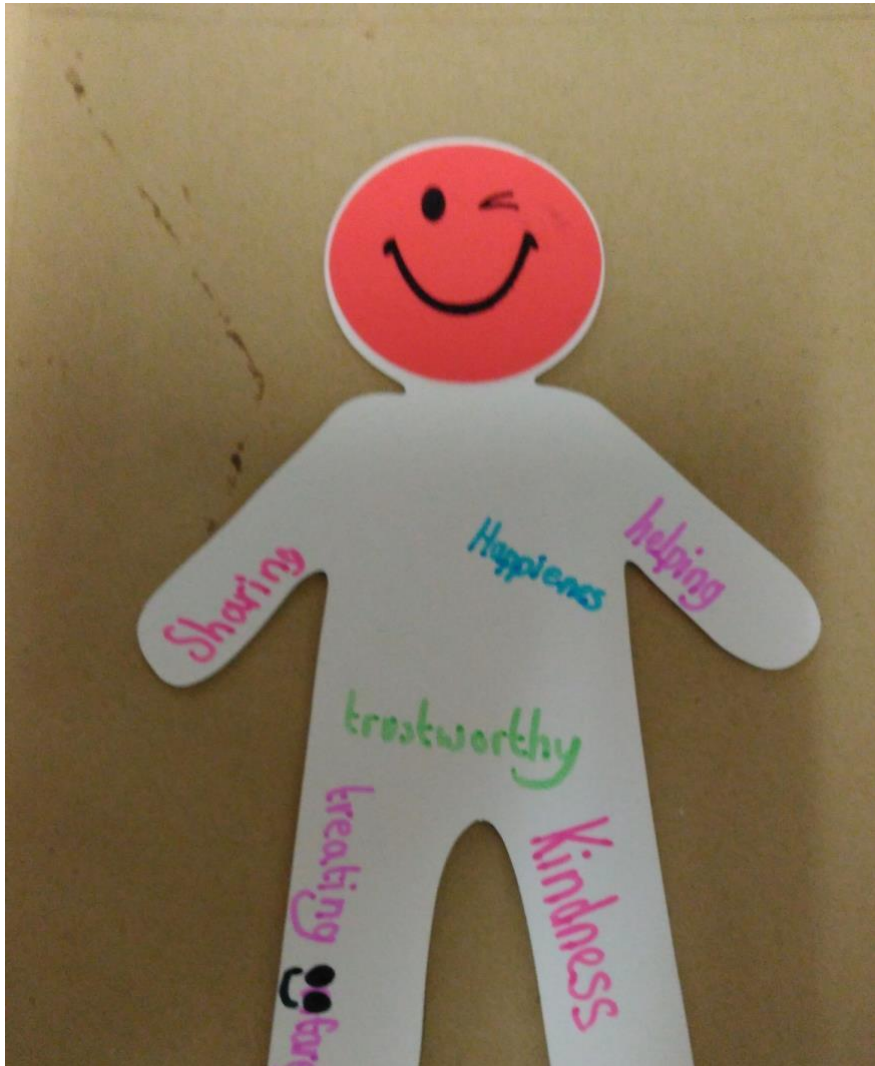


Appendix 2c

For Module 2, Task 2

Stick images made by children and young people in the project

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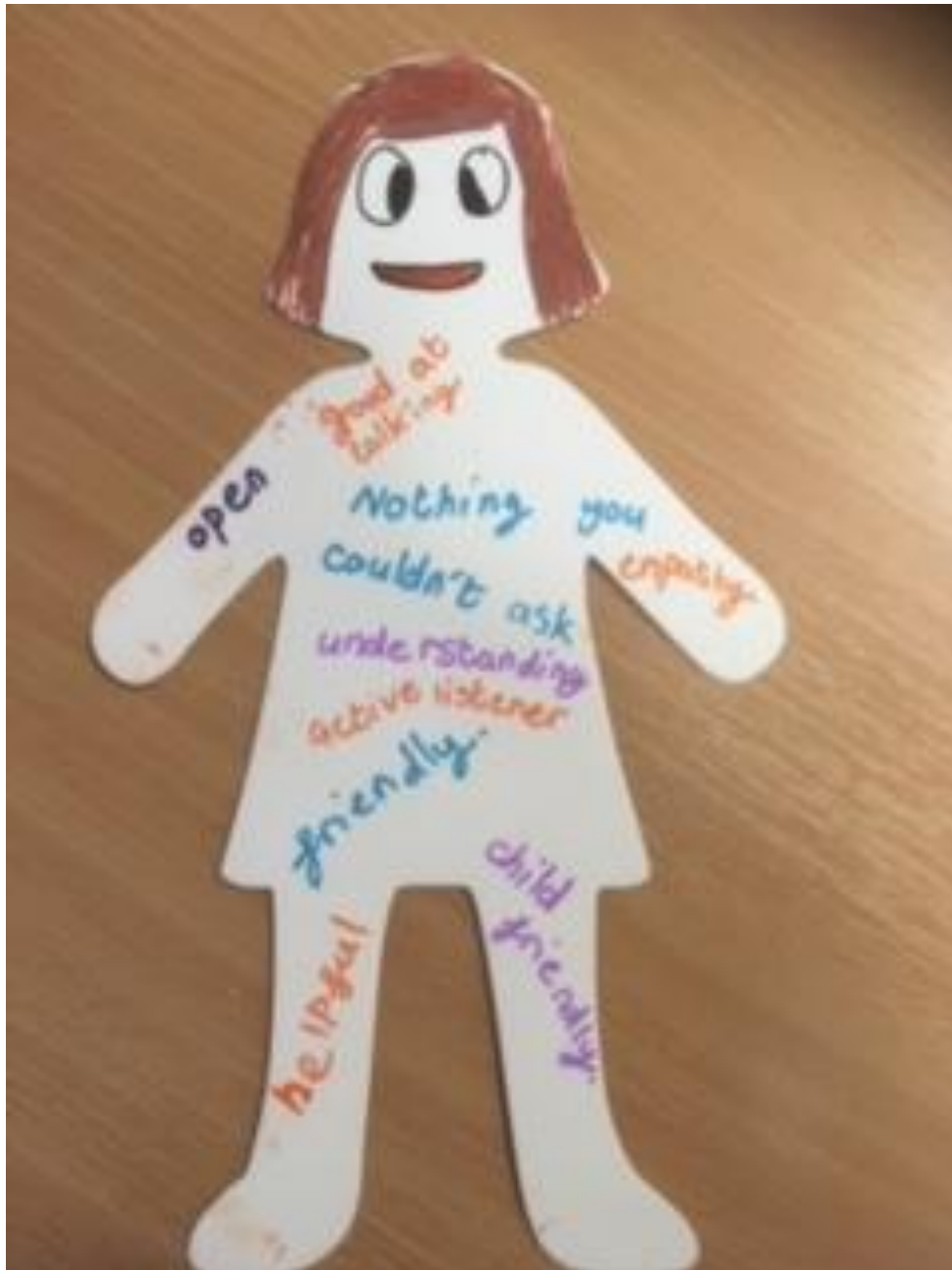
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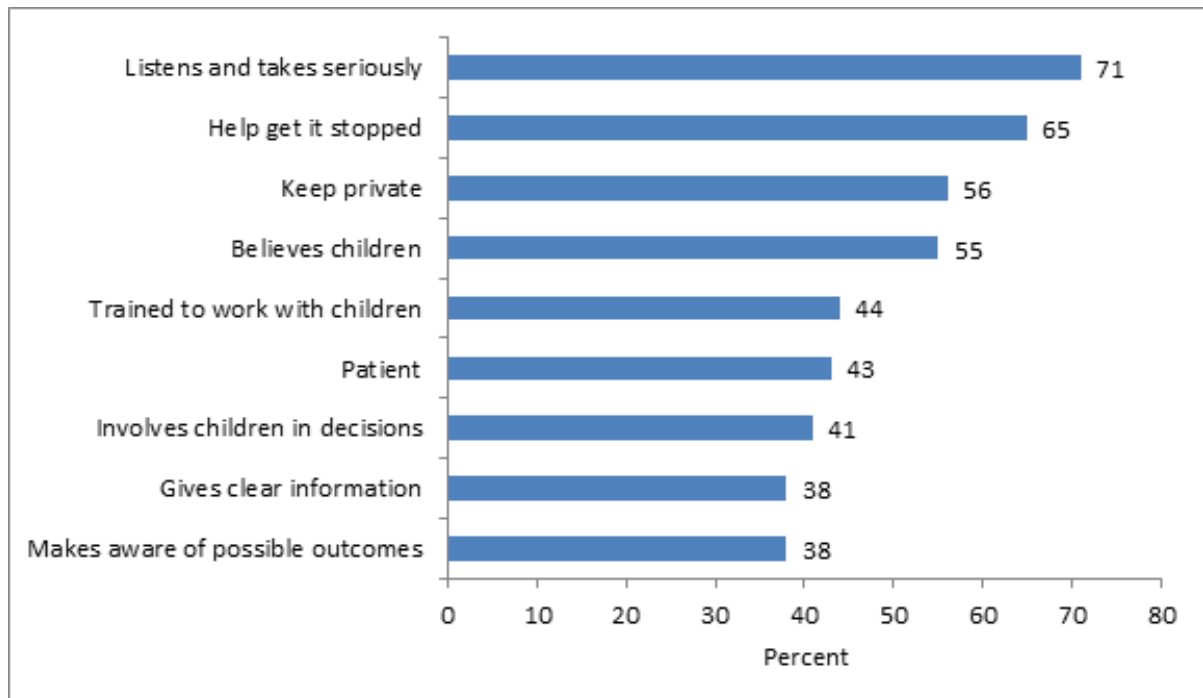


**Appendix 2d**

**For Module 2, Task 3**

**Figure 2 from the combined survey report (Trainers, please note that there is country specific survey data available that can be used to compare with the overall survey findings)**

Figure 2: The best type of person to help children and young people (Qualities that are very important)





## Appendix 2e

### For Module 2, Task 3

#### What is child-centered practice?: Key Messages from the P4P consultations with children and young people across Europe on barriers and enablers to disclosure.

Many of the children and young people described numerous negative experiences they had had with many professionals who they thought were in place to protect and support them. All children and young people across countries and groups had similar advice for adults in relation to what they were doing wrong and what they could do better to engage with children and young people who have experienced violence. They said that from their perspective it was not always a good thing to dwell on the past, particularly if it was a chaotic past, and they much preferred to focus on their immediate situation and solutions, 'leave the past in the past', what has happened has happened and they needed help to move on.

When discussing what respect means and how it can be shown, approximately half referred to things such as adults' tone of voice, choice of words, politeness, and not interrupting when they are speaking or answering questions. A significant number of children and young people across groups also associated expressing respect through empathy and the provision of appropriate help and care. The key learning points below are derived from the children and young people themselves.

#### **1. Creating an enabling environment**

- Involving and listening to children by allowing them to take part in decisions that affect their lives was consistently emphasised by the children across all countries and all subgroups as an important part of realising their rights.
- The ability to listen to and talk to children and young people was a feature of an adult who understood what was happening in their lives. This was a fundamental enabler for children to disclose as it demonstrated the principles of respect, non-discrimination and being non-judgemental.
- Developing a long term relationship with them, spending quality time and showing an interest in their lives was identified as a protective factor to steer them away from violence, and a way of providing support if they do experience harm.
- Some children suggested that those 'responsible' for protecting them, such as police, lacked understanding about their situation and were thus not able to empathise and help them at all when problems arose.

## 2. Communication

- The need for adults to uphold the children's right to information and more importantly to provide this in a way that was accessible.
- Adults should not be afraid to speak about consequences and the realities of the situation, as children needed someone to step in, act on their behalf, and keep them informed about the pros and cons and what exactly would happen.
- It would help if the child can talk to someone they know and who understands them, someone that they already have a connection with, who they feel they can trust.
- Do not insult the child or talk behind their back but take the child seriously, motivate and encourage them with your support.
- Try to understand the child from their perspective as they are disclosing something serious, which is a big deal to them.
- Professionals to speak to their parents and family and others involved in the violent incident.

## 3. Taking action

- While the children's predominant understandings of violence related to physical manifestations, their understandings of protection and support were discussed in relation to emotional and mental wellbeing, caring and providing much needed resources.
- The children understood their right to protection from harm as something they had to seek out for themselves, whether the risk of harm was from other children or adults.
- When not taking actions to stop or prevent this behaviour, adults were more focused on protecting themselves and not children from harm.
- The children from UK with experience of political conflict expressed a particular risk of harm at the hand of paramilitaries, and were concerned at the police forces inability to protect them.

**More advice from the children and young people for professionals is available in the 'Speech Bubbles' on the website and audios**

**[\[click here for Children's Audios\]](#)**

## Appendix 2f For Module 2, Task 3

### Children's quotes and the personal reflections sheet

## Quotes from Consultations with Children and Young People

*'Forget the past, focus on the person himself/herself and the present'. (Children in detention: Belgium)*

*'That they (adults) listen to us. That I have the feeling that they are listening. And that they try to understand'. (Children in Care: Belgium)*

*'Yes! She talks a lot with the children'. (Migrant & Refugee Children: Austria)*

*'Let us talk about everything we care about'. (Children in care: Romania)*

*'You are not discriminating, because you are listening to each of us, you are not commenting on us'. (Children in care: Belgium)*

*'Listening, Heard. ... treating someone equally. Not being racist. Not being sexist. Religion. Sexuality'. (Children living in areas of political conflict: UK)*

*'Don't judge them. Don't be just about enforcing rules – if that is the only way you communicate with child then why would child ever confide in you'. (Children in residential care: Belgium)*

*'How would you feel if it was your child?' (Children from travelling community: Ireland)*

*'Exactly, like walk in our shoes' (Children from travelling community: Ireland)*

*'Speak gently, have patience and be more nurturing...calm us...talk to us...be more like a child....and more reasonable'. (Children in care: Romania).*

*'Tell the child they can do it'. (Children in residential care: Belgium)*

*'Offer her support'. (Children in detention: Belgium)*

*'Do not beat us, understanding and don't threaten'. (Germany)*

*'To not slabber (be nasty, lecture)....be polite. Not being rude. Doesn't do something to harm you or assault you. No harm, Body language'. (Children living in areas of political conflict: UK)*

*'Get both sides of the story'. (Children in residential care: Belgium)*

*'Listen. Collect every single bit of information as possible and put it together...Make sure they've got everything the right way'. (Children living in areas of political conflict: UK)*

*'If I'm respecting him too. Mutually'. (Children receiving social services: Romania)*

*'Mr. X is really hard, that's really not normal. If you were wearing something that didn't look like it, he said, "You don't look like it. Where are you going, to a whorehouse?" Yes, but he had that really fiercely! And when you said something to him, he would look at you like "Yes, why do you care?" (Children in care: Belgium) [in relation to discriminating, criticising and judging the clothes girl wear to make them feel ashamed]*

*'Respect is provided with beautiful words, with help, much understanding'. (Children in care: Romania)*

*'We said a lot of things, but nothing changed'. (Migrant & refugee children: Austria)*

*'I have experienced that myself, I have also remained stuck in the drugs and alcohol and so on to forget my pain. Now I have come back to my thoughts I know that is not ok'. (Children in residential care: Belgium)*

*'You have to ask the care giver for that' (protection from harm) (Migrant & refugee children: Austria)*

*'Go and look for protection. Yes, go to your neighbours, for example. Or go to your family. Or friends'. (Children in detention: Belgium)*

*'She should separate two young adults who start fighting, they are not doing that (adults not intervening and protecting youth from harm) ...but then they get hit themselves'. (Migrant & Refugee children: Austria)*

*'Professionals should do what they promise'. (Children in detention: Belgium)*

## **Appendix 2g: Personal Reflection Sheet**

Think about the material you have been presented with and spend some time reflecting on it in the ways indicated below.

<p><b>What are my strengths?</b></p>	
<p><b>What have I learnt from the children and young people in the study?</b></p>	
<p><b>How do I feel now about my work?</b></p>	
<p><b>How will this influence my future practice?</b></p>	
<p><b>What has this taught me about my values and/or my belief system?</b></p>	