



Helping teachers work with children when they first return to education following major traumatic or life-changing events

## Scared Stuffy

<b>Designed for Ages</b>	3 - 5 years old
<b>Adaptable for Ages</b>	2 - 7 years old
<b>Learning Experience Summary:</b>	This learning experience is designed to support children to understand what being scared is and how to help someone who is scared.
<b>Te Whāriki (Aotearoa New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum) Link:</b>	<a href="#">Mana aotūroa – exploration.</a>
<b>Te Whare Tapa Whā (Māori model for well-being):</b>	<a href="#">Taha hinengaro - emotional and mental well-being.</a>
<b><a href="#">Te Whare o Oro (Māori framework for understanding the brain):</a></b>	Limbic system: emotional regulation, empathy, affiliation and tolerance.
<b><a href="#">Tapasā (Cultural competency resource for teachers working with Pacific learners):</a></b>	Turu 1: Identities, languages and cultures
<b>Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A snuggly toy/ stuffy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A small cuddly blanket</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small box or bag that toy will fit in</li> </ul>	
<b>Things to consider:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This can be facilitated with a small group or adapted for working one-on-one with a child.</li> <li>● This activity explores how being afraid feels, the role fear can play, and gives examples of how to listen to our fears in a healthy manner. It can be helpful to model emotional regulation with students, meaning we need to understand our own relationships with each of the different emotions. It may be helpful for you to reflect on your own relationship with fear – how it feels for you, what purpose it serves, and how you cope when afraid in a healthy manner - prior to beginning this work with children.</li> </ul>	
<b>Prepare ahead:</b> Prepare a box/bag with a stuffed toy hiding inside it.	
<b>Instructions:</b>	



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1. Invite a small group of children/child to gather around you in a comfortable area. Have the blanket covering the stuffed toy in the box so the children cannot see what is under the blanket.
2. Tell the children you need to talk with them about something. That you believe they are experts and know everything there is to know about being scared. Tell them that you have someone who is very afraid and you need their help.
3. The children will have questions and you should take your time in answering them.

Questions may include: Who needs help? Can we help? What are they afraid of? Can we meet who is afraid?

4. Explain to the children that you have them with you right now, tell them the toy's name, and explain that they are very afraid and might not want to meet with everyone. Ask the children if they know how to make the toy feel comfortable enough to come and say hello.

Answers may include: sing to them, use our quiet voices, use kind words, give them a cuddle.

5. Try each of these different ways each time an option is suggested, and have the toy appear a little more out of hiding at each turn.
6. Once the toy is 'feeling confident enough' to be fully in view, you can develop this further by pretending the toy can whisper things in your ear. Pretend the toy whispered in your ear: "Thank you for making me feel comfortable coming out of the box. I was feeling too scared to come and talk to you."
7. Ask the children: "What questions do we have for (toys name)?" and 'do we have questions about what they are feeling?'  
Ask the toy the children's questions and pretend the toy whispers the answers to you.
8. You may want to encourage questions that inquire about how it feels in the body to be scared (i.e. is there a particular taste in your mouth, how does your body feel when it is scared). Answers may include: their heart starts beating fast, they feel like hiding away, they want to scream or cry. You can pretend the toy whispers the answers to the questions in your ear and you will need to make up the answers to repeat outloud for the children.



9. When the children run out of questions for the toy, pretend the toy whispers in your ear to ask questions of the children:
  - When might kids feel scared?
  - How do you know when you are scared?
  - What do you do when you are scared? Answers may include: crying, screaming, finding an adult, turning the light switch on, cleaning up their toys etc.
10. You can also use this as an opportunity to build the children's emotional literacy vocabulary. You can pretend the toy asked the children:
  - If I was just a little scared what would that be called? How might that look like?
  - If I was really scared what would that be called? How would that look?
11. Lastly, pretend the toy asks you: "When might it be good to be scared?" Answers may include i.e. going into the ocean, scared of someone you don't know who asks you to get into the car, etc. As the teacher, you can let the children know that sometimes being scared is okay because it can keep us safe. For example, being scared of big waves in the ocean helps remind us to not swim alone and stay close to the shore.
12. Once the experience starts to come to a natural end, wrap up the lesson by asking the children if they can each give the toy a hug and if they might like to help put the toy safely in the box with the snuggly blanket, so it can feel comfortable and safe.