



War Toys[®]

Workshops, Lesson Plans, & Activities

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Teacher's Guide

Dear Educator,

Thank you for participating in our educational program. Our hope is that these lessons will help your students better understand armed conflict and how it affects everyone involved. We are optimistic that by taking part in these lessons, your students will become better equipped to express their ideas, opinions, and emotions about conflicts through art and play.

Inside this packet you will find a manual to help you prepare your lessons. You can decide if you would like to have a 1-day workshop, a 3-day workshop or a 5-day workshop. The 5-day workshops can be done once a week which might be more beneficial for children, due to the amount of content and activities involved.

You will also find recommendations on how to approach these lessons, starting by creating a safe space for your students. Ultimately, you know your students best, and we ask you to take a moment and consider any special needs, especially for pupils who may have experienced conflict themselves. The lessons are likely to generate many questions and emotions from your pupils, and we provide recommendations (page 3) to make it easier on you as a teacher to deal with those situations.

We hope that during these workshops you and your pupils will not only gain a new perspective on war – changing the "us versus them" narrative – but that you also gain new ways of expressing emotions through art.

Good luck on your journey!

Sincerely,

War Toys®

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HOW TO BEGIN?

Recommendations before starting

1. Make sure you have read all the content and are familiarized and comfortable with the topic before proceeding with the lessons. Pay attention to your own feelings.
2. During the workshop, talk in a calm manner and don't rush. Remember to be patient and kind to everyone, including to yourself. Children can pick up your emotional state, and it may affect the program and its goals.
3. Prepare your students beforehand for the topic and talk about what you will see and do during these lessons.
4. Be mindful of your student's reality in their home and community as this can affect their responses. Carefully monitor their reactions as you give the lesson.
5. If possible, work with another staff member to better monitor the student's emotional state and deal with any distress or unexpected reactions.
6. Some children might need a time out and some support before they can continue. Monitoring reactions and paying attention is key. Prepare a plan in conjunction with supporting staff for any students that may need an aside to process their emotions.
7. Make sure to allow for small breaks as needed.
8. War and armed conflict can be very abstract concepts for children. Their own reality can feel as intense to them as experiencing war. Avoid diminishing or downplaying anything that they might share, even if it seems trivial by comparison to war.
9. When students share their drawings:
 - a. Focus on the meaning and not the aesthetics. Avoid comments like, "This is so beautiful," and instead use, "This is so expressive / meaningful," or, "I appreciate the effort you put into creating and sharing this."
 - b. Avoid assumptions and only ask open-ended questions. Never use comments like, "The person looks sad;" instead use, "How is the person feeling?"

NOTE: When talking about armed conflict and the people directly affected by it some children may be resentful that others get all the support and help that they wish they had. This is usually a sign that they are going through something in their lives that is not being addressed, so **be mindful and don't dismiss their emotions**, let them express them, as this might be their only way to do so. After they've expressed themselves, take the child aside and care for their needs.

War Toys®

1-Day Workshop

Teacher's Guide

1-DAY WORKSHOP

Duration: 2-4 hrs.

Overview

In this one-day workshop, you will familiarize everyone with armed conflict and introduce the people involved: photojournalists, aids workers, frontline rescuers, and civilians, along with their roles. There are two possible activities after the small presentation with instructions and expected goals.

Activities

Option 1: Drawing their impressions and sharing them with the group. This one is recommended if your group is mostly 8–9-year-olds.

Option 2: Playing our game *War Toys: Evac Ops™* and having a small discussion after. This one is recommended for 10–12-year-old children, as it takes a longer time.

Goals

- To know that in an armed conflict everyone is affected.
- To express emotions through art.

Before you Begin

Make sure everyone is prepared by doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

Introduction

Present yourself to the children (if they don't already know you) and introduce the supporting staff member by saying that they are there to help if needed. We recommend not saying that the support staff is there to help if the children feel unwell, since this may predispose them to react a certain way.

Explain what the workshop is about in general terms and talk about the different things you will be doing, all in easy English and appropriate for the age groups. You can say that they will talk about how war and armed conflicts affect everyone, but also that students will learn how to express emotions through art or by playing games, depending on the activity you chose.

Presentation (slides)

A presentation is provided for you to show to the children. This document will allow you to follow along with each slide.

Part 1

Before we start

We will: explore what a conflict is; talk about armed conflict; introduce the people involved; have some activities after; and talk about we see.

What is a conflict?

It is a serious disagreement or argument, that can slowly build and last a long time. Sometimes conflicts also occur very suddenly.

What is an armed conflict?

An armed conflict is when countries, governments, or organized groups stop trying to resolve their differences by talking and resort to violence to "win" an argument and force the other side to accept their point of view. Armed conflicts can be very big and involve armies or small with just a few people fighting.

What is a Photojournalist?

A photojournalist is a type of reporter who documents what is happening by going places and taking pictures of what they see. They share images with the outside world that show what is really happening.

What do they do?

A Photojournalist's job is to accurately capture and communicate what is happening. In a war, the photojournalist's goal is to document the realities of war and share them with people around the world. Their coverage helps aid workers and frontline rescuers gain attention for their work and earn more support for people affected by war.

How do they work?

Photojournalists must work closely with people to understand and document what is happening. They risk their lives, sometimes working on the frontlines, to capture the stories of those affected in very powerful ways.

Why are they important?

Photojournalists promote peace by showing the harsh realities of war and inviting people to understand and empathize with those affected. Without photojournalists, we would not know what is happening in many places and who needs our help.

What is an Aid Worker?

Aid Workers are professionals who have special training in a variety of fields from medicine to engineering. They respond to emergencies, from wars to natural disasters, and help civilians. They have good organizational skills and work in teams.

What do they do?

Aid workers take care of civilians and provide them with food, water, shelter, medical care, and psychological support. They can develop camp sites to safely house civilians who have been displaced by war, natural disasters, disease, and more.

Why are they important?

Aid Workers provide essential care when people need it most. They risk their lives and travel to dangerous places to help everyone, no matter what side they are on. Without them, many more people would die from war and natural disasters.

What is a Frontline Rescuer?

A Frontline Rescuer is a special type of first responder that saves civilians from collapsed buildings and other areas that have impacted by war. They risk their lives to save people even while the fighting continues. *The White Helmets* are an example of frontline rescuers.

Who are the White Helmets?

The White Helmets is a humanitarian organization, made up of rescuers and other volunteers. They work on the frontlines to help civilians who have been affected by war. The White Helmets were first known as the Syrian Civil Defence because they were originally formed to help civilians affected by the war in Syria.

What do they do and how?

The White Helmets go into action immediately after explosions caused by airstrikes, missiles, or car bombs. They use special training and gear to rescue people from the rubble. The White Helmets also provide aid when there are natural disasters such as fires, earthquakes, and floods.

Why are they important?

Frontline Rescuers like the White Helmets have special skills to quickly reach people in need and save their lives. They often operate in places where there are no other public services, like firefighters or police, due to conflict.

What are civilians?

Civilians are people like you and me who aren't fighting in the armed conflict. They are average folks – mothers, fathers, children, teachers, doctors, mechanics, etc. – just trying to live their lives in peace. Often, civilians will have to flee their homes and become "refugees" to survive a war.

BREAK RECOMMENDED HERE

(if not yet taken)

Address any questions and comments; tend to any child that needs support; and then continue to the second part of the presentation. We recommend re-doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

Presentation continues...

Part 2

What is War Toys?

War Toys® is a nonprofit organization that includes many collaborators from different fields. War Toys works to develop programs and games that promote peace and make a lasting impact on future generations.

What do they do?

War Toys is devoted to gathering and sharing children's experiences of war through art-therapy-based collaborations in the field. They travel to war zones and refugee camps and work with special therapists to safely interview war-affected children and collect their stories.

How do they work?

War Toys turns the children's stories into narrative photographs. They use toys that they find locally to recreate what the children share, often posing them at the actual war locations where the stories happened. The resulting photos and drawings are shown in public spaces, galleries, and museums around the world.

Why is War Toys important?

War Toys gives children who have been affected by war a voice, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or political affiliation. Their work reaches people who can inspire change, like you!

Activity Option #1

War Toys stories

Instructions

Present the three images provided by War Toys. Review them one at a time, and if the children feel the need to speak up or comment, allow them to do so in an orderly manner. Also tend to any child that might need some support.

After the Images

Once you have shown all the images ask the children to select the photo that they liked the most. Ask them to make a drawing that shows how they feel about what they saw or to create a drawing with a story inspired by the photo they selected. You may decide how much time they have to work. When the time is up, give the children a small break; re-use the focusing exercise; and continue.

Discussion after the drawings

If possible, sit in a circle (floor or chairs) with each child holding their own drawing. Give each an opportunity to say a few words about what they drew. Encourage them by asking which photo they chose and why they picked it, while stressing the idea that different students can choose the same photo for all kinds of different and unique reasons, so you would like to hear them out. It is ok if a child does not want to share anything about their drawing.

Wrapping it Up

After the activity is done, thank all the participants and make conclusions about what was learned.

You can ask:

1. What did you like most about this workshop?
2. What do you wish was different?
3. What lesson or thoughts will you take away with you?

Activity Option #2

War Toys: Evac Ops™

Instructions

Evac Ops challenges children to play war in a very different way – cooperatively, as non-combatants. The goal of the game is to save all the civilians before:

- The players run out of resources (the resource marker reaches zero)
- Time runs out (the resource deck runs out of cards)
- A player dies (from an explosion in a high-risk area)

The game is driven by players drawing random cards and taking actions on their turns. Players **MUST** communicate and work together if they want to win.

Before Playing

Spend some time getting familiar with the game, especially its setup. We recommend that you play through at least once while reading the rules. The game is designed to be played via a supporting mobile app or with game cards that you will need to print. Visit **EvacOps.app** for more information and to download the supporting app and/or files to print-and-play.

Explain the rules and goals of the game to the participants.

Divide children into groups of three and explain that they will need to first decide who plays each role – Photojournalist, Aid Worker, or Frontline Rescuer. Each character has special abilities that will be essential to the group's success.

Observe and listen to their reactions while playing. Like all new games, it may be confusing at first. If any child becomes overwhelmed, make sure that you or your support staff tends to their needs.

After Playing

When playtime is over, give the children a small break to rest and put away the games. Employ the focusing exercise again before continuing.

Once everyone is ready, gather the children together and invite them to share what they felt and thought as they played the game. Sample questions can be found on the following page.

Questions for Conversation

- What did you think about the game?
- What was fun?
- What was difficult?
- What happened in your game?
- How did you feel about that?
- After playing this game, what role would you want to take on in armed conflict?
- What do you think about people affected by war after playing this game?

If there is enough time in this 1-day workshop you can allow them to make drawings that illustrate their experiences in the game or what they liked about the game.

Example prompts:

- Draw something that you would like to remember from this experience.
- Draw how it was for you when you were able to save someone or take a picture or build a campsite.
- Draw the character/role you would like to play during armed conflicts.

After, if there is still time, let children talk about their drawings. You can encourage the dialogue by saying that you would like to hear them out and would like to know why they drew what they drew.

Wrapping it Up

After the activity is done, thank all the participants and make conclusions about what was learned.

You can ask:

1. What did you like the most of this workshop?
2. What do you wish was different?
3. What lesson or thoughts will you take away with you?

Close by reminding everyone that:

In an armed conflict we can play different roles: we can shoot people; we can do nothing; we can save people.

In war there is not just 'us versus them' which we generally find in other war games, that everyone gets affected by war.

War Toys[®]

3-Day Workshop

Teacher's Guide

3-DAY WORKSHOP

Duration: 2-4 hrs.

Overview

In this three-day workshop, you will begin by sharing a story about a typical conflict and reflecting on what happens when someone finds themselves in these situations. You will then familiarize everyone with armed conflict and introduce the people involved: photojournalists, aids workers, frontline rescuers, and civilians, along with their roles.

Activities

Day 1: Colour Your Emotions: Students draw their impressions and share with the group.

Day 2: Colour Your Emotions: Students draw their impressions and share with the group.

Day 3: Play the collaborative game **War Toys: Evac Ops™** and have a small discussion after.

Goals

- To know that in an armed conflict everyone is affected.
To express emotions through art.

Before you Begin

Make sure everyone is prepared by doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

DAY 1

Introduction

Present yourself to the children (if they don't already know you) and introduce the supporting staff member by saying that they are there to help if needed. We recommend not saying that the support staff is there to help if the children feel unwell, since this may predispose them to react a certain way.

Explain what the workshop is about in general terms and talk about the different things you will be doing, all in easy English and appropriate for the age groups. You can say that they will talk about how war and armed conflicts affect everyone, but also that students will learn how to express emotions through art and by playing games.

What Is Conflict? Let's imagine it in our own terms.

After the introduction, read your students the story supplied below about a conflict that started on a playground. Pay close attention to the expressions and reactions of the children while reading the story. There are a series of questions for the participants to consider and answer out loud at the conclusion of the story, followed by explanation that helps to frame what children takeaway from the lesson.

If there is time, instruct the children to make drawings based on what you read to them and the discussion done afterwards.

One Day at the Playground

Pay attention and imagine this...

One day Shaun was at the playground, lost in thought just enjoying the day. And it was a very beautiful day. When all the sudden a ball hit the back of his head. He heard some children laughing while others gasped.

When he turned around, he noticed Olive standing frozen with an upset look on her face. She was having a bad day and decided to play with the ball alone. Shaun really didn't know Olive that well, but he didn't like her that much.

Shaun immediately marched over to her, shoved her, and started yelling angrily at her. Why did she do that? What is her problem? To which Olive responded angrily too. It wasn't her fault he was distracted just not noticing what he's doing, and she didn't mean to intentionally hit anyone, but now she's angry at Shaun's reaction and feels that she has the right to counterattack him.

Shaun was sure Olive did that on purpose and kept yelling at her. Olive was quite upset and equally angry; she always thought Shaun was a bit funny. The louder they were the more children gathered around them and joined in. Almost everyone started taking sides.

There were classmates who insisted that Olive did it on purpose and that Shaun was right to push her and be angry. The others defended Olive and said she didn't do anything wrong, and she was right to be upset and to yell at Shaun.

Soon after that, it became a big shouting match that turned into an all-out playground fight. Some argued that it was because of this-or-that reason, that Olive had aimed the ball at Shaun. Others claimed that Shaun was only looking to pick a fight with Olive. Things started being thrown and hitting children, even those not involved who were just playing nearby.

In the middle of all, there were also some children on the sides of the playground who saw how it all started and could tell the teachers what was going on. There were also children who tried to help and calm people down, or they helped those who were hit by the flying objects.

The reality was that Shaun was distracted and trying to enjoy the day. Olive was also distracted and didn't notice Shaun walking right through the middle of the play area. She didn't want to upset anyone. But, because they both had pre-formed and wrong ideas about each other and the situation, it all got out of hand.

Questions After the Story

- Who are the main participants in the conflict?
- Who are the other participants and what did they do?
- How do you think they chose which side to be on?
- What do you think they were feeling when it all happened?
- Why do you think they were feeling that?
- What could have they done differently to avoid all this fight?
- So, what happened? Have you experienced a similar situation?
- Who is right in a conflict like the one in the story we just listened to?

Takeaways & Lessons

The following is provided to help explain what the children can learn from this story and the discussions afterwards. We recommend that you use the text to frame your own thoughts and express this in your own words.

Explanation

Sometimes our emotions can be so big that we do not see things correctly and get the wrong ideas about a situation. This is especially true if we already have some feelings beforehand about a person or place.

Just like how Shaun was so full of emotions and didn't really know Olive. He did not stop to ask what happened or consider that it might have been an accident. He was sure it was on purpose.

Olive also did not stop to consider that she might have hurt Shaun and that she should apologize for hitting him with the ball. She already had feelings about Shaun and made assumptions.

*Both Shaun and Olive had **big emotions**. They didn't take the time to understand/name/identify their emotions, and they **behaved** in an inappropriate way that hurt others and themselves.*

Many children who took sides reacted because of what they thought was fair or unfair, but they didn't really see what happened.

Others joined in the fight because they were friends with Olive or Shaun, and they felt they needed to defend them, even though they also didn't really know what happened. They still felt that they had to take sides. That can also happen to us, sometimes; we might take sides without stopping a moment to think and notice what we are feeling or what is right and fair.

The children that went to get the teachers saw what happened and could explain that it was all a misunderstanding that got out of hand.

But after all this, you might ask... So, who is right?

In a conflict we cannot say who is right since everyone is reacting from their own point of view and from the emotions they are experiencing. This playground conflict affected everyone in different ways, and it was packed full of big emotions.

Is it wrong to react in this way? Is it bad to have big emotions?

*No, it's not bad. **It's ok to have big emotions**. It is not ok to act them out in this way. We all have the right to have big difficult emotions, like being angry or sad. However, **it's not ok to react in inappropriate ways that hurt others and/or ourselves (verbally and physically)**.*

We can learn to stop, notice how we're feeling (in our bodies and in our minds), and think about how to react in a way that does not hurt ourselves or others. With practice and patience we can learn

how to respond more peacefully to conflicts. Knowing how to deal with big emotions is an important skills that everyone needs for all of their lives.

*One excellent way of dealing with our emotions is through **art**, in whatever form. People love expressing their emotions and experiences by creating artwork or performing. Many artists and performers become famous because of how **emotional** their work is. Whether it's storytelling or poetry, sculpture or painting, photography or filmmaking, dancing or acting, comic books or animation, creating art is a way for people to share big and deep emotions that they can't express in any other way. Would you like to try?*

Activity

Invite students to make drawings about the story they heard or their feelings about it.

Sample prompts:

- *draw something that you would like to remember from this story*
- *draw an alternate scenario that shows how someone acting differently could have changed the outcome*

After, if there is time, let the children talk about their drawings. You can encourage them by asking to know why they made the choices they did in their drawings.

Wrapping it Up

After the activity is done, thank all the participants and make conclusions about what was learned.

You can ask:

1. What did you like most about this workshop?
2. What do you wish was different?
3. What lesson or thoughts will you take away with you?

DAY 2

Introduction

Today you will familiarize everyone with armed conflict, introduce the people involved, and explain why each are important. After the presentation you will have some time to play our game **War Toys: Evac Ops™** and have a guided Q&A session after to review and reflect on the experiences of the children had playing the game. If time allows, you may invite the children to make a drawing.

Before you Begin

Make sure everyone is prepared by doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

Presentation (slides)

A presentation is provided for you to show to the children. This document will allow you to follow along with each slide.

What is a conflict?

It is a serious disagreement or argument, that can slowly build and last a long time. Sometimes conflicts also occur very suddenly.

What is an armed conflict?

An armed conflict is when countries, governments, or organized groups stop trying to resolve their differences by talking and resort to violence to “win” an argument and force the other side to accept their point of view. Armed conflicts can be very big and involve armies or small with just a few people fighting.

What is a Photojournalist?

A photojournalist is a type of reporter who documents what is happening by going places and taking pictures of what they see. They share images with the outside world that show what is really happening.

What do they do?

A Photojournalist's job is to accurately capture and communicate what is happening. In a war, the photojournalist's goal is to document the realities of war and share them with people around the world. Their coverage helps aid workers and frontline rescuers gain attention for their work and earn more support for people affected by war.

How do they work?

Photojournalists must work closely with people to understand and document what is happening. They risk their lives, sometimes working on the frontlines, to capture the stories of those affected in very powerful ways.

Why are they important?

Photojournalists promote peace by showing the harsh realities of war and inviting people to understand and empathize with those affected. Without photojournalists, we would not know what is happening in many places and who needs our help.

What is an Aid Worker?

Aid Workers are professionals who have special training in a variety of fields from medicine to engineering. They respond to emergencies, from wars to natural disasters, and help civilians. They have good organizational skills and work in teams.

What do they do?

Aid workers take care of civilians and provide them with food, water, shelter, medical care, and psychological support. They can develop camp sites to safely house civilians who have been displaced by war, natural disasters, disease, and more.

Why are they important?

Aid Workers provide essential care when people need it most. They risk their lives and travel to dangerous places to help everyone, no matter what side they are on. Without them, many more people would die from war and natural disasters.

What is a Frontline Rescuer?

A Frontline Rescuer is a special type of first responder that saves civilians from collapsed buildings and other areas that have impacted by war. They risk their lives to save people even while the fighting continues. *The White Helmets* are an example of frontline rescuers.

Who are the White Helmets?

The White Helmets is a humanitarian organization, made up of rescuers and other volunteers. They work on the frontlines to help civilians who have been affected by war. The White Helmets were first known as the Syrian Civil Defence because they were originally formed to help civilians affected by the war in Syria.

What do they do and how?

The White Helmets go into action immediately after explosions caused by airstrikes, missiles, or car bombs. They use special training and gear to rescue people from the rubble. The White Helmets also provide aid when there are natural disasters such as fires, earthquakes, and floods.

Why are they important?

Frontline Rescuers like the White Helmets have special skills to quickly reach people in need and save their lives. They often operate in places where there are no other public services, like firefighters or police, due to conflict.

What are civilians?

Civilians are people like you and me who aren't fighting in an armed conflict. They are average folks – mothers, fathers, children, teachers, doctors, mechanics, etc. – just trying to live their lives in peace. Often, civilians will have to flee their homes and become "refugees" to survive a war.

BREAK RECOMMENDED HERE

(if not yet taken)

Address any questions and comments; tend to any child that needs support; and then continue to the second part of the presentation. We recommend re-doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

Activity

War Toys: Evac Ops™

Instructions

Evac Ops challenges children to play war in a very different way – cooperatively, as non-combatants. The goal of the game is to save all the civilians before:

- The players run out of resources (the resource marker reaches zero)
- Time runs out (the resource deck runs out of cards)
- A player dies (from an explosion in a high-risk area)

The game is driven by players drawing random cards and taking actions on their turns. Players **MUST** communicate and work together if they want to win.

Before Playing

Spend some time getting familiar with the game, especially its setup. We recommend that you play through at least once while reading the rules. The game is designed to be played via a supporting mobile app or with game cards that you will need to print. Visit **EvacOps.app** for more information and to download the supporting app and/or files to print-and-play.

Explain the rules and goals of the game to the participants.

Divide children into groups of three and explain that they will need to first decide who plays each role – Photojournalist, Aid Worker, or Frontline Rescuer. Each character has special abilities that will be essential to the group's success.

Observe and listen to their reactions while playing. Like all new games, it may be confusing at first. If any child becomes overwhelmed, make sure that you or your support staff tends to their needs.

After Playing

When playtime is over, give the children a small break to rest and put away the games. Employ the focusing exercise again before continuing.

Once everyone is ready, gather the children together and invite them to share what they felt and thought as they played the game. Sample questions can be found on the following page.

Questions for Conversation

- What did you think about the game?
- What was fun?
- What was difficult?
- What happened in your game?
- How did you feel about that?
- After playing this game, what role would you want to take on in armed conflict?
- What do you think about people affected by war after playing this game?

Complementary Drawing Activity

After the Q&A, ask the children to make drawings that illustrate their experiences in the game or what they liked about the game.

Example prompts:

- Draw something that you would like to remember from this experience.
- Draw how it was for you when you were able to save someone or take a picture or build a campsite.
- Draw the character/role you would like to play during an armed conflict.

After, if there is time, let children talk about their drawings. You can encourage the dialogue by saying that you would like to hear them out and would like to know why they drew what they did.

Wrapping it Up

After the activity is done, thank all the participants and make conclusions about what was learned.

You may ask:

- What did you like the most of this workshop?
- What do you wish was different?
- What lesson or thoughts will you take away with you?

Close by reminding everyone that:

1. In an armed conflict we can play different roles: we can shoot people; we can do nothing; we can save people.
2. War isn't just two sides fighting each other. There are a lot of people who are affected and also people who risk their lives to help in important ways.

Day 3

War Toys® Non-Profit Organization.

Today you will introduce the participants to the War Toys non-profit organization and their storytelling work with children affected by war. After the presentation students will have time to reflect, and create a drawing that is inspired by the images produced by War Toys. You will be provided with sample images and guided through the final activity. At the end, students are invited to present their work, followed by a Q&A session to conclude the three days with a final reflection.

Before you Begin

Make sure everyone is prepared by doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

Presentation (slides)

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What is War Toys?

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What do they do?

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How do they work?

War Toys turns the children's stories into narrative photographs. They use toys that they find locally to recreate what the children share, often posing them at the actual war locations where the stories happened. The resulting photos and drawings are shown in public spaces, galleries, and museums around the world.

Why is War Toys important?

War Toys gives children who have been affected by war a voice, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or political affiliation. Their work reaches people who can inspire change, like you!

Activity

War Toys stories

Instructions

Present the three images provided by War Toys. Review them one at a time, and if the children feel the need to speak up or comment, allow them to do so in an orderly manner. Also tend to any child that might need some support.

After the Images

Once you have shown all the images ask the children to select the photo that they liked the most. Ask them to make a drawing that shows how they feel about what they saw or to create a drawing with a story inspired by the photo they selected. You may decide how much time they have to work. When the time is up, give the children a small break; re-use the focusing exercise; and continue.

Discussion after the drawings

If possible, sit in a circle (floor or chairs) with each child holding their own drawing. Give each an opportunity to say a few words about what they drew. Encourage them by asking which photo they chose and why they picked it, while stressing the idea that different students can choose the same photo for all kinds of different and unique reasons, so you would like to hear them out. It is ok if a child does not want to share anything about their drawing.

Wrapping it Up

After the activity is done, thank all the participants and make conclusions about what was learned.

You can ask:

1. What did you like most about this workshop?
2. What do you wish was different?
3. What lesson or thoughts will you take away with you?

War Toys®

5-Day Workshop

Teacher's Guide

5-DAY WORKSHOP

Duration: 2-4 hrs.

Overview

In this five-day workshop, you will familiarize students with armed conflict and introduce the people involved – photojournalists, aids workers, frontline rescuers, and civilians – and explain their roles. There are four activities in each session with instructions and expected goals. The last day is reserved for the participants to present their images and discuss what conflict and war mean to them after these sessions. It is recommended that, in this format, each session occurs once per week.

Activities

Day 1: Introduction to conflict: students create drawings and share them with the group.

Day 2: War Toys: Evac Ops: students play the game and have a small discussion after.

Day 3: War Toys Stories: students create drawings inspired by a child's account of war.

Day 4: Aftermath of war: students create drawings to illustrate their thoughts and feelings.

Day 5: Small exhibition of final works in the classroom.

Goals

- To know that in an armed conflict everyone is affected.
- To express emotions through art.

Before you Begin

Make sure everyone is prepared by doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

DAY 1

Introduction

Present yourself to the children (if they don't already know you) and introduce the supporting staff member by saying that they are there to help if needed. We recommend not saying that the support staff is there to help if the children feel unwell, since this may predispose them to react a certain way.

Explain what the workshop is about in general terms and talk about the different things you will be doing, all in easy English and appropriate for the age groups. You can say that they will talk about how war and armed conflicts affect everyone, but also that students will learn how to express emotions through art and by playing games.

What Is Conflict? Let's imagine it in our own terms.

After the introduction, read your students the story supplied on the following page about a conflict that started on a playground. Pay close attention to the expressions and reactions of the children while reading the story. There are a series of questions for the participants to consider and answer out loud at the conclusion of the story, followed by explanation that helps to frame what children takeaway from the lesson.

If there is time, instruct the children to make drawings based on what you read to them and the discussion done afterwards.

One Day at the Playground

Pay attention and imagine this...

One day Shaun was at the playground, lost in thought just enjoying the day. And it was a very beautiful day. When all the sudden a ball hit the back of his head. He heard some children laughing while others gasped.

When he turned around, he noticed Olive standing frozen with an upset look on her face. She was having a bad day and decided to play with the ball alone. Shaun really didn't know Olive that well, but he didn't like her that much.

Shaun immediately marched over to her, shoved her, and started yelling angrily at her. Why did she do that? What is her problem? To which Olive responded angrily too. It wasn't her fault he was distracted just not noticing what he's doing, and she didn't mean to intentionally hit anyone, but now she's angry at Shaun's reaction and feels that she has the right to counterattack him.

Shaun was sure Olive did that on purpose and kept yelling at her. Olive was quite upset and equally angry; she always thought Shaun was a bit funny. The louder they were the more children gathered around them and joined in. Almost everyone started taking sides.

There were classmates who insisted that Olive did it on purpose and that Shaun was right to push her and be angry. The others defended Olive and said she didn't do anything wrong, and she was right to be upset and to yell at Shaun.

Soon after that, it became a big shouting match that turned into an all-out playground fight. Some argued that it was because of this-or-that reason, that Olive had aimed the ball at Shaun. Others claimed that Shaun was only looking to pick a fight with Olive. Things started being thrown and hitting children, even those not involved who were just playing nearby.

In the middle of all, there were also some children on the sides of the playground who saw how it all started and could tell the teachers what was going on. There were also children who tried to help and calm people down, or they helped those who were hit by the flying objects.

The reality was that Shaun was distracted and trying to enjoy the day. Olive was also distracted and didn't notice Shaun walking right through the middle of the play area. She didn't want to upset anyone. But, because they both had pre-formed and wrong ideas about each other and the situation, it all got out of hand.

Questions After the Story

- Who are the main participants in the conflict?
- Who are the other participants and what did they do?
- How do you think they chose which side to be on?
- What do you think they were feeling when it all happened?
- Why do you think they were feeling that?
- What could have they done differently to avoid all this fight?
- So, what happened? Have you experienced a similar situation?
- Who is right in a conflict like the one in the story we just listened to?

Takeaways & Lessons

The following is provided to help explain what the children can learn from this story and the discussions afterwards. We recommend that you use the text to frame your own thoughts and express this in your own words.

Explanation

Sometimes our emotions can be so big that we do not see things correctly and get the wrong ideas about a situation. This is especially true if we already have some feelings beforehand about a person or place.

Just like how Shaun was so full of emotions and didn't really know Olive. He did not stop to ask what happened or consider that it might have been an accident. He was sure it was on purpose.

Olive also did not stop to consider that she might have hurt Shaun and that she should apologize for hitting him with the ball. She already had feelings about Shaun and made assumptions.

Both Shaun and Olive had **big emotions**. They didn't take the time to understand/name/identify their emotions, and they **behaved** in an inappropriate way that hurt others and themselves. Many children who took sides reacted because of what they thought was fair or unfair, but they didn't really see what happened.

Others joined in the fight because they were friends with Olive or Shaun, and they felt they needed to defend them, even though they also didn't really know what happened. They still felt that they had to take sides. That can also happen to us, sometimes; we might take sides without stopping a moment to think and notice what we are feeling or what is right and fair.

The children that went to get the teachers saw what happened and could explain that it was all a misunderstanding that got out of hand.

But after all this, you might ask... So, who is right?

In a conflict we cannot say who is right since everyone is reacting from their own point of view and from the emotions they are experiencing. This playground conflict affected everyone in different ways, and it was packed full of big emotions.

Is it wrong to react in this way? Is it bad to have big emotions?

No, it's not bad. **It's ok to have big emotions.** It is not ok to act them out in this way. We all have the right to have big difficult emotions, like being angry or sad. However, **it's not ok to react in inappropriate ways that hurt others and/or ourselves (verbally and physically).**

We can learn to stop, notice how we're feeling (in our bodies and in our minds), and think about how to react in a way that does not hurt ourselves or others. With practice and patience we can learn how to respond more peacefully to conflicts. Knowing how to deal with big emotions is an important skill that everyone needs for all of their lives.

One excellent way of dealing with our emotions is through **art**, in whatever form. People love expressing their emotions and experiences by creating artwork or performing. Many artists and performers become famous because of how **emotional** their work is. Whether it's storytelling or poetry, sculpture or painting, photography or filmmaking, dancing or acting, comic books or animation, creating art is a way for people to share big and deep emotions that they can't express in any other way.

Would you like to try?

Activity

Invite students to make drawings about the story they heard or their feelings about it.

Sample prompts:

- *draw something that you would like to remember from this story*
- *draw an alternate scenario that shows how someone acting differently could have changed the outcome*

After, if there is time, let the children talk about their drawings. You can encourage them by asking to know why they made the choices they did in their drawings.

Wrapping it Up

After the activity is done, thank all the participants and make conclusions about what was learned.

You may ask:

1. What did you like most about this workshop?
2. What do you wish was different?
3. What lesson or thoughts will you take away with you?

DAY 2

Evac Ops

Today you will familiarize everyone with armed conflict, introduce the people involved, and explain why each are important. After the presentation you will have some time to play our game **War Toys: Evac Ops™** and have a guided Q&A session after to review and reflect on the experiences of the children had playing the game. If time allows, you may invite the children to make a drawing.

Before you Begin

Make sure everyone is prepared by doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

Presentation (slides)

A presentation is provided for you to show to the children. This document will allow you to follow along with each slide.

What is a conflict?

It is a serious disagreement or argument, that can slowly build and last a long time. Sometimes conflicts also occur very suddenly.

What is an armed conflict?

An armed conflict is when countries, governments, or organized groups stop trying to resolve their differences by talking and resort to violence to “win” an argument and force the other side to accept their point of view. Armed conflicts can be very big and involve armies or small with just a few people fighting.

What is a Photojournalist?

A photojournalist is a type of reporter who documents what is happening by going places and taking pictures of what they see. They share images with the outside world that show what is really happening.

What do they do?

A Photojournalist's job is to accurately capture and communicate what is happening. In a war, the photojournalist's goal is to document the realities of war and share them with people around the world. Their coverage helps aid workers and frontline rescuers gain attention for their work and earn more support for people affected by war.

How do they work?

Photojournalists must work closely with people to understand and document what is happening. They risk their lives, sometimes working on the frontlines, to capture the stories of those affected in very powerful ways.

Why are they important?

Photojournalists promote peace by showing the harsh realities of war and inviting people to understand and empathize with those affected. Without photojournalists, we would not know what is happening in many places and who needs our help.

What is an Aid Worker?

Aid Workers are professionals who have special training in a variety of fields from medicine to engineering. They respond to emergencies, from wars to natural disasters, and help civilians. They have good organizational skills and work in teams.

What do they do?

Aid workers take care of civilians and provide them with food, water, shelter, medical care, and psychological support. They can develop camp sites to safely house civilians who have been displaced by war, natural disasters, disease, and more.

Why are they important?

Aid Workers provide essential care when people need it most. They risk their lives and travel to dangerous places to help everyone, no matter what side they are on. Without them, many more people would die from war and natural disasters.

What is a Frontline Rescuer?

A Frontline Rescuer is a special type of first responder that saves civilians from collapsed buildings and other areas that have impacted by war. They risk their lives to save people even while the fighting continues. *The White Helmets* are an example of frontline rescuers.

Who are the White Helmets?

The White Helmets is a humanitarian organization, made up of rescuers and other volunteers. They work on the frontlines to help civilians who have been affected by war. The White Helmets were first known as the Syrian Civil Defence because they were originally formed to help civilians affected by the war in Syria.

What do they do and how?

The White Helmets go into action immediately after explosions caused by airstrikes, missiles, or car bombs. They use special training and gear to rescue people from the rubble. The White Helmets also provide aid when there are natural disasters such as fires, earthquakes, and floods.

Why are they important?

Frontline Rescuers like the White Helmets have special skills to quickly reach people in need and save their lives. They often operate in places where there are no other public services, like firefighters or police, due to conflict.

What are civilians?

Civilians are people like you and me who aren't fighting in an armed conflict. They are average folks – mothers, fathers, children, teachers, doctors, mechanics, etc. – just trying to live their lives in peace. Often, civilians will have to flee their homes and become "refugees" to survive a war.

BREAK RECOMMENDED HERE

(if not yet taken)

Address any questions and comments; tend to any child that needs support; and then continue to the second part of the presentation. We recommend re-doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

Activity

War Toys: Evac Ops™

Instructions

Evac Ops challenges children to play war in a very different way – cooperatively, as non-combatants. The goal of the game is to save all the civilians before:

- The players run out of resources (the resource marker reaches zero)
- Time runs out (the resource deck runs out of cards)
- A player dies (from an explosion in a high-risk area)

The game is driven by players drawing random cards and taking actions on their turns. Players **MUST** communicate and work together if they want to win.

Before Playing

Spend some time getting familiar with the game, especially its setup. We recommend that you play through at least once while reading the rules. The game is designed to be played via a supporting mobile app or with game cards that you will need to print. Visit **EvacOps.app** for more information and to download the supporting app and/or files to print-and-play.

Explain the rules and goals of the game to the participants.

Divide children into groups of three and explain that they will need to first decide who plays each role – Photojournalist, Aid Worker, or Frontline Rescuer. Each character has special abilities that will be essential to the group's success.

Observe and listen to their reactions while playing. Like all new games, it may be confusing at first. If any child becomes overwhelmed, make sure that you or your support staff tends to their needs.

After Playing

When playtime is over, give the children a small break to rest and put away the games. Employ the focusing exercise again before continuing.

Once everyone is ready, gather the children together and invite them to share what they felt and thought as they played the game. Sample questions can be found on the following page.

Questions for Conversation

- What did you think about the game?
- What was fun?
- What was difficult?
- What happened in your game?
- How did you feel about that?
- After playing this game, what role would you want to take on in armed conflict?
- What do you think about people affected by war after playing this game?

Complementary Drawing Activity

After the Q&A, ask the children to make drawings that illustrate their experiences in the game or what they liked about the game.

Example prompts:

- Draw something that you would like to remember from this experience.
- Draw how it was for you when you were able to save someone or take a picture or build a campsite.
- Draw the character/role you would like to play during armed conflicts.

After, if there is time, let children talk about their drawings. You can encourage the dialogue by saying that you would like to hear them out and would like to know why they drew what they did.

Wrapping it Up

After the activity is done, thank all the participants and make conclusions about what was learned.

You may ask:

- What did you like the most of this workshop?
- What do you wish was different?
- What lesson or thoughts will you take away with you?

Close by reminding everyone that:

1. In an armed conflict we can play different roles: we can shoot people; we can do nothing; we can save people.
2. War isn't just two sides fighting each other. There are a lot of people who are affected and also people who risk their lives to help in important ways.

Day 3

War Toys® Non-Profit Organization.

Today you will introduce the participants to the War Toys non-profit organization and their storytelling work with children affected by war. After the presentation students will have time to reflect, and create a drawing that is inspired by the images produced by War Toys. You will be provided with sample images and guided through the final activity. At the end, students are invited to present their work, followed by a Q&A session to conclude the three days with a final reflection.

Before you Begin

Make sure everyone is prepared by doing some small, focusing exercises, such as stretching, breathing in-and-out (three-to-five times deeply), or any other common method you use to calm and focus your classroom. Remind them that there will be an activity based on what they will see, so paying attention is important.

Presentation (slides)

A presentation is provided for you to show to the children. This document will allow you to follow along with each slide.

What is War Toys?

War Toys® is a nonprofit organization that includes many collaborators from different fields. War Toys works to develop programs and games that promote peace and make a lasting impact on future generations.

What do they do?

War Toys is devoted to gathering and sharing children's experiences of war through art-therapy-based collaborations in the field. They travel to war zones and refugee camps and work with special therapists to safely interview war-affected children and collect their stories.

How do they work?

War Toys turns the children's stories into narrative photographs. They use toys that they find locally to recreate what the children share, often posing them at the actual war locations where the stories happened. The resulting photos and drawings are shown in public spaces, galleries, and museums around the world.

Why is War Toys important?

War Toys gives children who have been affected by war a voice, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or political affiliation. Their work reaches people who can inspire change, like you!

Activity

War Toys Stories

Instructions

Present the three images provided by War Toys. Review them one at a time, and if the children feel the need to speak up or comment, allow them to do so in an orderly manner. Also tend to any child that might need some support.

After the Images

Once you have shown all the images ask the children to select the photo that they liked the most. Ask them to make a drawing that shows how they feel about what they saw or to create a drawing with a story inspired by the photo they selected. You may decide how much time they have to work. When the time is up, give the children a small break, re-use the focusing exercise, and continue.

Discussion after the drawings

If possible, sit in a circle (floor or chairs) with each child holding their own drawing. Give each child an opportunity to say a few words about what they drew. Encourage them by asking which photo they chose and why they picked it. Stress the idea that different students can choose the same photo for all kinds of different and unique reasons, so you would like to hear theirs. It is ok if a child does not want to share anything about their drawing.

Wrapping it Up

After the activity is done, thank all the participants and make conclusions about what was learned.

You may ask:

1. What did you like most about this workshop?
2. What do you wish was different?
3. What lesson or thoughts will you take away with you?

DAY 4

Aftermath of War

In this fourth day, you will discuss what happens after a conflict has ended, through a small lecture and reflection. Using examples from the story about Shaun and Olive, ask students to imagine what the two might remember from that playground fight now that time has passed. Next ask students what they think happens to people affected by armed conflict in its aftermath.

There will be an in-class activity and **homework that students must bring to the last session.**

Activity: children are invited to create a drawing about a time that they were involved in a conflict. Be sure to reinforce the differences between a regular conflict, like an argument, and an armed conflict, such as war.

Homework: each student is asked to take a photograph of their toys (and other found objects) that illustrates what they drew today. Children can pose the toys as characters and imagine themselves as photojournalists capturing the scene. (Parental support for this assignment is encouraged)

We recommend that you use the lecture below to frame your own thoughts and express them in your own words. If you choose to read the text verbatim, we recommend that it be used exclusively with older children (12+) as some of the concepts may be too advanced for younger audiences.

Lecture

Big Emotions

Have you ever wondered what happens after a conflict?

It is normal for everyone to have big emotions after any kind of a conflict. People that experience armed conflict often have even bigger emotions afterwards, no matter if they are soldiers, civilians, journalists, frontline rescuers, aid workers, children, or parents.

We all need ways to express those emotions, so they don't get so big that they change into something else. Sadness and fear, if left untreated, can grow into anger, helping to perpetuate conflicts across generations. All of our emotions are important. All of our emotions are needed. All of our emotions have a function and play an important role in our development. All of these emotions are connected to each other.

Some emotions can feel very big and difficult – **overwhelming** . When that happens, it helps to express these emotions, so they don't feel so big anymore inside of us. There are many things we can do to express these emotions without hurting ourselves or others.

Remember that artists express themselves through their work, and many times they represent emotions that are too big to share with words. Similarly, the children that War Toys helps use art to express those big and difficult emotions linked to their experiences.

Today we will try to do that: express our emotions about conflict through a drawing.

Activity

Illustrating our Emotions

Instructions

Begin by sharing with the students that each one of us has experienced some kind of conflict or dispute at some point in our lives. It can be a dispute with friends over a game, a fight with a sibling, or any other scenario.

Ask the students to think about a conflict that they have experienced, one that they are comfortable thinking about today and sharing with the class (so hopefully nothing too heavy). Examples are a fight or misunderstanding with classmate, friend, or sibling. Next, guide the students through the following mental exercise before releasing them to create their drawings.

Ask the students to take a deep breath, close their eyes, and remain silent for a couple of minutes while sitting comfortably. Next, let them know that you're going to be asking them some questions, and you'd like each of them to keep their eyes closed and reflect silently on what you ask. If a child has uncomfortable feelings about keeping their eyes closed, you may encourage them to take a deep breath and try again. However, do not exert any added pressure for them to conform.

Start by asking your students to think back to the conflict they chose:

- Where they were? Who they were with? What were they doing?
- How did the conflict happen, and did it evolve or get bigger?
- What annoyed them the most? It could be a word someone said, or an attitude, or a gesture, etc.
- How did the conflict make them feel in their bodies? What emotions were they aware of, and what thoughts were going through their head?

With students still seated and eyes closed, next ask them to imagine the following:

- If these emotions and thoughts had a color (or more than one color), what would it be?
- If these emotions and thoughts had a shape (or more than one shape), what would it be?
- If these emotions and thoughts had a movement (or more than one movement), what would it be? How would these emotions move?
- If these emotions and thoughts had a sound (or more than one sound), what would they sound like?

Make sure students remember to *just imagine* instead of actually making the movements or the sounds. Finally, invite them to keep all what they have imagined in their minds, take one last deep breath, and open their eyes when they're ready to be present back in the room.

Create a drawing

Invite your students to create a drawing that depicts a moment of conflict from their life or represents a feeling they had about it. Participants are encouraged to express themselves however they want. They may draw a scene (similar to a comic book panel or storyboard) and include things like people, cars, and houses. Or they may use lines, colors, and shapes, and make an abstract drawing. There is no right or wrong approach. Students will share their stories at the end of the session. There are a few options for you to consider:

- If there is time, invite each participant to show their drawing and share either a sentence about it or a title for the piece. You can quickly go around the room, but **it's important that every student is *heard*.**
- If there's not enough time for everyone to share, children may instead sit in pairs and share their stories with each other. After, you may ask for a few volunteers who want to share their drawings with the whole class.

Wrapping it Up

After the activity is done, have a brief discussion, summarizing what has been shared. Thank everyone for being so open and brave about sharing their conflict through a drawing with everyone in the room.

You may ask:

- What did you like the most from today?
- What do you wish was different?
- What will you take away with you?

Homework

Take a Photo

Ask students to use any available camera (ideally, from home) to take a picture that recreates or is inspired by their drawing of conflict. They may use their toys as characters in a scene (and pretend to be a photojournalist) or create something that expresses their feelings in a more abstract way. Encourage them to ask for help and permission from their parent(s) or guardian(s) to create the photographs.

Children should either bring a printed copy of their photo to class or send it to you electronically for printing or display via a screen in the classroom on **Day 5**.

DAY 5

Classroom Exhibition & Discussion

Introduction

Today, students will exhibit their photographs in the classroom, share what they've learned from the workshop, and ask any remaining questions they might have.

Begin by once again thanking the students for participating in this 5-day workshop. Next, recap what was seen, learned, and discussed during the previous sessions and introduce your children to their in-class exhibition.

If you have the available resources, it is ideal to display printed copies of the photos on the wall, like an exhibition in a museum. However, you may instead present the photos as a slideshow via whatever equipment is available to you.

Regardless of the presentation method, give each participant an opportunity to say anything they want about their photo and share some thoughts about the workshop.

Questions

Final Reflection

- What was your favourite part of this workshop and why?
- What do you wish was different?
- What will you take away with you?

Final Words

Dear Educator,

Thank you for including our workshop in your classroom activities. We hope that your students come away from the experience with a better understanding of armed conflict; knowledge of inspiring, non-combatant role models; and some new tools for expressing themselves and exploring more challenging topics.

Everyone at War Toys has a personal connection to war. Many of us survived it as children or have experienced it as adults. Most have lost loved ones. And all of us have seen the devastating, generational effects of war, extending far from the actual battlefields. We are passionately committed to promoting more peaceful ideals but, thanks to experience, grounded in real-world, practical approaches. We believe in what we do.

It is because of this that we are working so hard to shift cultural perceptions of war and how we encourage our children to play. By disrupting the "us vs. them" or "good guy vs. bad guy" narratives, we are finding groundbreaking ways to explore the true nature of war through safe and disarming filters of play.

As part of our core values, War Toys strives to promote peace that is equitable and just for all children regardless of race, religion, gender, or political affiliation.

Without you, this would not be possible, and we are so grateful for your hard work and dedication to your students.

Thank you again from everyone at

War Toys®