



Protective Wraps for children

When it is cold, when the wind blows or it rains, you put on a coat. It makes you feel the warmth, feel dry and protected. You can take it again, whatever the weather brings.

Sometimes things happen in your life that feel like cold, wind or rain. For instance, when you are harassed, when you do not feel up to something, when your parents are angry with each other, when you argue with a friend, when you are afraid in the dark, when there is unrest in the classroom, when you feel homesick, when you feel you do not belong.

In those difficult situations, you can put on a coat, a protective coat/wrap, just like in unfriendly weather. Did you know that everyone has been given protective coats by his/her family?

What do you do in your family when you are sad?

Or if something bad happens?

Does your father give you good advice?

Does your mother hold you tight?

Do you go and see grandma with your family?

Do you talk it over together with a cup of tea and something sweet?

Do you bake a cake together?

These methods to calm down are stored in your brain and they are your very own protective wraps. Once conscious, you can always use them when you feel down. For instance, by thinking of a particular person of your family. Or by touching something, smelling it or looking at something. That way, you feel more secure and you can cope again. This means you have put on your protective coat.

Mia

Mia was 5 when her cat died. After they had buried her, Mia's mom and dad said to the children: "Come, let's go to the wood. Just walk among the trees for a bit of fresh air." Some other time, she had quarrelled with a friend. She was angry and sad. Her father listened to her and said: "Let's go for a stroll in the wood, to get some fresh air." Now Mia is 15. Whenever she feels stressed, she goes to the wood for a little while to calm down. Or she thinks of it. She sees the beautiful trees and the path through the wood. It is as if she walks there, on her father's hand, and she feels calm come over her.

Niels

Niels was 8 when his mother needed an operation. When they were still shocked by the news, they went to grandma with all the family. They always did that when something difficult occurred. Grandma was calm, she said wise things, and always had a bowl of delicious biscuits. Now Niels is 18. He is in love with a girl who does not love him back. He is sad. Grandma is not around anymore. And yet he thinks of her. What would she say to him in this situation? He feels her calm – it is as if she looks at him with her wise gentle eyes and says: "There will be another girl. This is not the right one for you."

Sanjana

Sanjana is 13. Her parents are divorced. One week she lives with her father and the other with her mother. They quarrel all the time. On the phone or when they see each other. When she was younger, she often listened with her parents to the song Happy by Pharrell Williams. It made them cheerful. Sometimes they even danced. Now, when there are arguments, Sanjana puts on the song. She sees the smiling faces of her parents again. Just like then, It makes her calm and joyful.

Your own protective wrap

Imagine: a difficult situation. Who of your family helps you and how? To whom in the family do you go and why?

Who knows that you are sad, and do you go there then?

What would they say or do to comfort you?

What do you think of?

What do you listen to?

What do you look at?

What do you do?

More questions to embed you in your group, language and culture

Who in your family knows that you are here?

Imagine your mother would be sitting next to you here, what would she advise you?

Imagine your grandpa would be sitting next to you here, what would he advise you?

What has changed after migration in how you deal with problems as a family?

Who in your family gives you support?

How do you solve problems in your family?

Who in your family are important advisers?

Who in your family is proud of you? Why?

What is the strength of your family? What is your family good at?

What rules and agreements are important in your family?

Imagine you would be in your country of origin, what would you do then if this problem arises? Who would take decisions?

Which family members are helpful?

Who in your family disrupts things? Who unsettles situations?

Who in your family makes funny jokes?

What are important events in your family?

What is an important family feature?

Which family members resemble each other?

Whom in your family do you admire? For what?

What I appreciate in our family is . . .

What do you wish for your family?

What rituals does your family have?

What do you consider an advantage of your country of origin and what do you see as an advantage of Belgium?

What do you consider a disadvantage of your country of origin and what do you see as a disadvantage of Belgium?

Credits

This text is a translation of Beschermjassen, booklet for children, developed by the municipality of Heerhugowaard (Netherlands) in October 2017.

The text was translated from Dutch by Cora Schieffer.

The concept of Protective Wraps is based on the power of families and is developed by Kitlyn Tjin A Djie.

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