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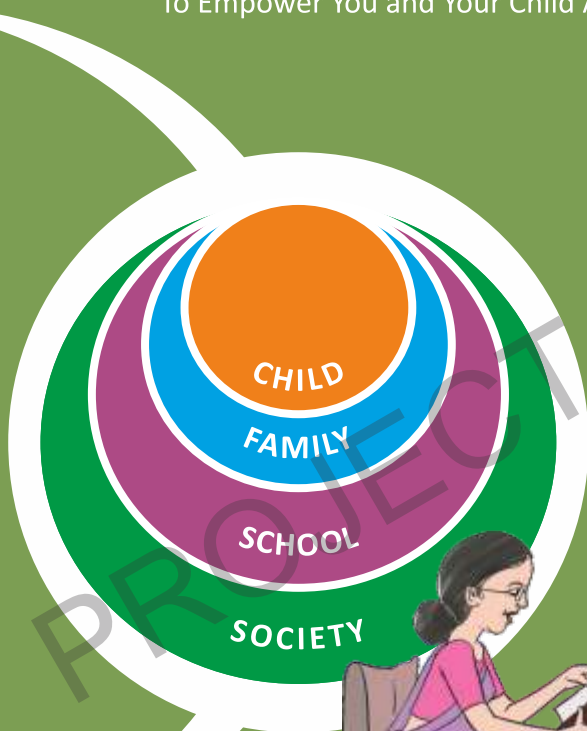


Children Against Child Abuse

Project CACA

Parent - Teacher Booklet

To Empower You and Your Child Against Child Abuse



This booklet is complimentary for Parent / Teacher. It can be downloaded from www.projectcaca.org

ENG



Partners



edusynergies

With Support From Various:

State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA)

State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR)

www.projectcaca.org

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INDEX

1. Who should read this companion booklet?	01
2. Komal, a short cartoon film on CSA for children	01
3. Who is a child?	02
4. What is child abuse?	02
5. Safety policy of a school	03
6. About CACA Safety Workbooks	04
7. Life Skills	04
8. Core Principles of Project CACA	07
9. Gender Equality	07
10. Self-Esteem	08
11. Body Ownership	08
12. Feelings/Emotions	08
13. Privacy	09
a. Toddlers	
b. School going kids	
c. Preteens (Pubertal Changes)	
d. Teens (Transgenders)	
e. Privacy and internet	
14. Peer Pressure	11
a. Friends and special friends	
b. Say no to peer pressure	
c. Substance Abuse	
15. Exam Pressure	13
16. Bullying	15
17. Nature has made our body	15
18. It is okay to be afraid	15
19. Secrets, surprises and gifts	16
20. Safe and unsafe touches and looks	16

INDEX

21. It is not your fault	17
22. Telling and getting help (Trusted Adults)	17
23. Being assertive	17
24. The 4-step safety rule	18
25. Mental Health	19
26. Sibling rivalry	19
27. Goal Setting	21
28. Moral development stages	23
29. Challenges	29

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Disclaimer - This booklet is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified expert. The contents and the provisions of various laws have been simplified for the benefit of the reader by using reader-friendly language. This booklet does not substitute any law or its provisions.

1. Who should read this companion booklet?

Project CACA, i.e., Children Against Child Abuse, is a safety programme for children. It is implemented under the school's safety policy. The project's core instrument is 'Children's Safety Workbooks' for classes UKG to 9. Various companion booklets are resource material for teachers, parents and non-teaching/support-staff of a school. There are three companion booklets, **Blue**, **Green** and **Red**. The **blue** and **green** booklets are for teachers and parents, whereas the **red** booklet is for the school's non-teaching staff/support-staff. However, anyone who cares about children will be interested in reading these booklets; after all, we all want children to be happy, healthy and safe. The companion booklets are available in English, Hindi and various regional languages. The project also comprises webinar-based workshops for teachers, parents, and non-teaching staff/support-staff.

The safety workbooks teach our children about their rights (child rights), gender equality and child abuse, child sexual abuse in particular so that the abuse can be prevented. Children, teachers, parents and support-staff regularly appear as characters in various stories, poems, plays and activities of the workbooks. Teachers have to interact with children regularly, so it becomes essential for them to understand their roles and responsibilities and various laws related to child safety. Moreover, some teachers are also parents/ grandparents. Thus it makes sense to have common companion booklets for parents and teachers that would help them to collaborate and tune themselves according to the school's safety policy.

2. Komal, a short cartoon film on CSA for children



'Komal' is a short cartoon film for children on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). NGO - CHILDLINE India Foundation produced the film with support from the Government of India. Komal is like any other 9-year-old girl who, unfortunately, is abused by her neighbour. The

CHILDLINE Didi explains to the children the concept of safe and unsafe touch to protect themselves and take help from trusted adults if ever caught in a similar situation. The film is being shown to children in the school. The CACA safety workbooks are based on the film. They cover various safety principles mentioned in the film in an age-appropriate and progressive way. Principles like safe - unsafe touch, secrets, trusted grown ups, telling, it is not your fault, being assertive, child helpline number 1098, etc. Parents, grandparents, teachers and support-staff should also view the film to tune themselves accordingly.



3. Who is a child?

The life cycle is a spectrum and varies from individual to individual. How do we then, differentiate in a clear-cut way between a child and an adult? Cognition levels and understanding of ethics or morals (reference - Kohlberg's Theory Of Cognitive Moral Development Stages) are two critical parameters for academic, clinical and legal purposes for defining the age of a child. The age of a child, as defined by the **UNCRC - United Nations Conventions on Rights of the Child (1989)**, is any person who is below the age of 18 years. Children are innocent, but we all know that, at times, they do commit heinous crimes like murder. However, who do we have to blame for their crimes? The children themselves, or their social-economic profile, or the adults whom they imitate, infatuate and follow, irrespective of the fact, whether they are right or wrong. Besides, children do not fully understand the consequences of their actions, especially long-term consequences. That is why, when children commit crimes (*children in conflict with the law*), the jurisprudence is reform and rehabilitation. The academic, clinical and legal conclusion goes with the age-old saying that "children are innocent."

Suggested reading: *Lord of the flies* by William Golding; *King Matt the First* by Janusz Korczak (Some passages of this book may, by today's standards, be considered by some to be racist.)

4. What is child abuse?

Child abuse constitutes all forms of physical and/ or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent, treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Child abuse is a violation of child rights.

Source: WHO - World Health Organisation

3a. Child Sexual Abuse - CSA, an epidemic (Verbatim Green)

As per the survey of 2007 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MW&CD), Govt. of India every second child, boy or a girl, faces one or more forms of sexual abuse. The majority of the abusers are men, but women are not immune to committing child sexual abuse. Such a person is called a ***Paedophile**. But, can we conclude that most people are paedophiles? No, because the evolutionary success of humans as a species lies in the fact that they have always protected their children (**Most grown-ups, but not all, want children to be happy, healthy and safe**). The situation is alarming because paedophiles though small in numbers, are repeat offenders. They do not limit themselves to only one child. We ignore or bear with

them due to the social stigma attached to the problem of child sexual abuse and cultural conditioning. In most cases, the abuser is known to the child and is not a stranger. Boys are equally vulnerable to abuse. Contrary to conventional belief, statistics show that boys are more likely to be sexually abused.

The abuser can be anyone, irrespective of their gender, social, economic, professional, or religious background; child abuse can occur anywhere - at school or home, family function, in a bus or a park. Child sexual abuse is a tough subject to talk about, even for professionally trained teachers. However, they have to - it is the need of the hour. They have to get past their discomfort and put aside their differences as mothers, parents, and caregivers and talk more about this terrible topic in a way that is academically, psychologically and legally correct. Some of them have personal experience with childhood sexual abuse which makes it harder to talk about, but makes it even more important to be open to sharing and learning from one another.

Census Survey of India (2011): *Around 40% of our population is below the age of 18 years (children).*

Suggested reading:- *The Bitter Chocolate by Pinki Virani.*

*All child sexual abusers need not necessarily be Paedophiles.

5. Safety policy of a school

Project CACA blends with various safety guidelines, advisories, rules and regulations, laws and verdicts issued by organisations like by NCPCR/ SCPCR, Govt. Ministries and Departments, Directorates of Education and School Boards that every school has to follow. Broadly speaking every school has to prepare for the following categories of safety for its students.

Categories for Child Safety for Schools

1. Infrastructure | 2. Health | 3. Transportation | *4. Student Protection Mechanisms | 5. *Personal, Social, Emotional and Sexual Safety | * 6. Reporting And Response Mechanism | 7. Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Management | *8. Cyber Safety

Project CACA, keeping children at the centre, academically empowers, educates and sensitises all the stake holders, i.e., children, their parents and teachers and non-teaching staff on various aspects of safety as per the above categories.

Safety Circulars Compilation: Here are few examples of circulars/ guidelines/ notifications to be followed by schools pertaining to Child Abuse Prevention:

*CCTV (Monitoring-Surveillance) / Corporal Punishment Ban / Pledge for abuse free world by children/ Exhibition of *Komal Film to children / Advocacy of POCSO E BOX*



Children Against Child Abuse

to children/ Police Verification of Staff/ POCSO Committee Formation/ Sensitisation of children for Good (safe)-Bad (unsafe) Touch/ Teaching Self- Defence to children, especially girls, etc.

Safety policy propounded by Project CACA: Weblink File

6. About CACA Safety Workbooks

It is rare in the school system when parents, teachers and support-staff get involved in the children books' content. The CACA Safety Workbooks cover sensitive issues of child rights, gender equality and child abuse, so we all have to collaborate, build trust, and be responsible and participate actively in the workbooks' content. The Safety Workbooks are based on life skills and value education (moral/ ethics) and developed to keep our children happy, healthy and safe. The workbooks follow morality that is based on the Constitution of India.

The CACA Safety Workbooks evolve around three lead characters: A girl named Sana, a boy named Arpit (similar to the characters Boojho and Paheli of NCERT books), and a tiger Pokso. The tiger is named after the POCSO law itself to familiarise children, from an early age, about the POCSO Act as a safety net and a friend. These and other characters break age-old gender roles and stereotypes prevalent in Indian society. Sana loves football and wants to become a professional footballer. Arpit's first love is dance, and his chosen profession is dancing and choreographing. In the stories, it is not just boys who protect girls; sometimes it works the other way around. The stories also feature policewomen, working mothers, fathers doing household chores, and so on.



POKSO



SANA



ARPIT



7. Life Skills

One of the outcomes of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC-1989) was introduction of 10 life skills in the school education system. The 10 life skills as propounded by the WHO - World Health Organisation in 1998 are:.

LS-01. Self-awareness | LS-02. Empathy | LS-03. Critical thinking | LS-04. Creative thinking | LS-05. Decision making | LS-06. Problem solving | LS-07. Effective communication | LS-08. Interpersonal relationship | LS-09. Coping with stress | LS-10. Coping with emotions

These 10 life skills are not stand alone compartments but often merge or are interlinked. They form a core set of skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of health and well-being of children and adolescents. Every parent, caregiver and teacher should be aware of these life skills. The 10 life skills can be taught in generic terms or by applying them in any particular domain like safety, personality development etc. Project CACA applies them for teaching child rights, gender equality and safety (abuse prevention, sexual abuse to be specific) to children.

Here are few examples of countries that have used life skills teaching for the safety and wellbeing of children:

- ✓ Zimbabwe, Thailand: for HIV/AIDS prevention
- ✓ India: (AEP–UNFPA/NCERT– MWCD): for HIV/AIDS; Substance Abuse & CSA prevention
- ✓ Mexico: for Adolescent Pregnancy prevention
- ✓ UK: for Child Abuse prevention
- ✓ USA: for prevention of Substance Abuse & Violence

LS-01 - Self-Awareness includes body ownership, self-esteem and recognition of 'self, character, strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognise when we are stressed or feeling under pressure.

LS-02 - Empathy To have a successful relationship with our loved ones and society, we need to understand and care about other peoples' needs, desires and feelings. Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. Without empathy, our communication with others will amount to one-way traffic. Worse,



we will act and behave in a self-centric way and be bound to run into problems. No human is an island. We grow up in relationships with many people – parents, siblings, cousins, uncles and aunts, classmates, friends and neighbours. When we understand ourselves and others, we are better prepared to communicate our needs and feelings. We will be more equipped to say what we want people to know, present our thoughts and ideas and tackle sensitive issues without offending other people. At the same time, we will be able to elicit support from others and win their understanding. Empathy can help us to accept others who may be very different from us. This can improve social interactions, especially in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity. Empathy can be a strong deterrent for bullying. It can also encourage nurturing behaviour towards people in need of care and assistance, or tolerance, as is the case with people living with HIV/ AIDS or differently-abled people, who may be stigmatised and ostracised by the very people they depend upon for support.

LS-03 - Critical Thinking is the ability to analyse information and experiences objectively. It can contribute to health by recognising and assessing the factors that influence attitudes and behaviour, such as values, peer pressure, and the media.

LS-04 - Creative Thinking is a novel way of seeing or doing things that are constituted of four components – fluency (generating new ideas), flexibility (shifting perspective easily), originality (conceiving of something new), and elaboration (building on other ideas).

LS-05 - Decision Making helps us to deal constructively with decisions/ choices about our safety, health and relationships.

LS-06 - Problem Solving helps us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significant issues that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain.

LS-07 - Interpersonal Relationship Skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact. This may mean being able to make and maintain friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. It may mean keeping good relations with family members, which are an essential source of social support. It may also mean being able to end relationships constructively.

LS-08 - Effective Communication includes being assertive, body language and the capability to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions and feelings, and also needs and fears. And it may mean being able to ask for advice and help in a time of need.

LS-09 - Coping With Stress means recognising the sources of stress in our lives,

recognising how it affects us, and acting in ways that help us control our levels of stress by changing our environment or lifestyle and learning how to relax.

LS-10 - Coping with Emotions means recognising emotions within us and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour and responding to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions like anger or sadness can negatively affect our health if we do not respond appropriately.

The CACA Safety Workbooks are based on certain core principles, their derivatives and key messages. These core principles and their derivatives are not mutually exclusive but often overlap or are interlinked. They are mapped with the 10 WHO Life Skills.

8. Core Principles of Project CACA

The core principles and their derivatives, just like the 10 life skills, are not mutually exclusive but often overlap or are interlinked. They are mapped with the 10 Life Skills. Some of the core principles and their derivatives are covered in this booklet to help the parents, teachers and caregivers to tune them accordingly.

9. Gender Equality

Gender refers to various norms, roles and relationships, socially (not biologically or naturally) constructed for women and men or boys and girls. For example, women giving birth to children is a biological construct, whereas women are meant to do household chores only is a social construct. These social constructs result in stereotypes like boys play with cars, whereas girls play with dolls, men can drive, women cannot, etc. This inequality between boys and girls start right from an early age. Gender inequality put women in an inferior position. Gender equality refers to the right of women and men to have the same opportunities to achieve important goals in society such as education, employment, and income and contribute to political, social, and cultural development at all levels. According to UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), gender equality means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same or treated exactly alike. Gender equality is strongly related to women rights. Since women have been at a disadvantage for a long time, gender equality initiatives have been to make sure that women and girls receive the same opportunities as men and boys do. Teaching children about gender equality and breaking gender stereotypes will lead to a more equitable society.





10. Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is an inherent feeling of self-worth, which generates dignity and self-confidence. High self-esteem leads to happiness. It helps us speak up and negotiate for our privacy, safety and dignity, in other words - Rights. Children with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to abuses. Children should be taught and helped develop their self-esteem and cultivate a positive attitude about themselves and their bodies. Concepts like –“*I am special, and I am unique*” help children feel genuinely good about themselves.

11. Body Ownership

Young children can comprehend the concept of ownership of things like their toys from an early age, but they are not clear about it when it comes to their bodies. Body ownership slowly and steadily with age evolves into personal and physical boundaries and privacy. Young children are dependent on others for their daily chores that often involve touches from others. This dependence leads to confusion among them about who owns their bodies. Even as they grow and become more and more independent, their early childhood memories of their dependability on others create confusion in them about the concept of body ownership. The abuser is well aware of this vulnerability of our children. Children must be taught from an early age that they are the boss of their bodies.

12. Feelings/Emotions

Our feelings and emotions largely determine our reactions to situations and people. Our gut feeling also tells us what is right and what is wrong for us. So we must listen to our feelings. Children often do not possess a range of vocabulary to express how they feel. It is, therefore, essential to provide them with a vocabulary for different feelings/emotions and help them develop skills to articulate them, especially in uncomfortable situations. Our feelings and emotions also have a profound effect on our mental health and wellbeing. While expressing happy emotions is not a problem for most children, expressing sadness, anger, disappointment, rejection, and embarrassment is quite tricky to communicate.



13. Privacy

Privacy, just like body ownership, is a building block for the self-esteem development of a child. Every person has a basic need for privacy, and it has to be respected. Privacy is a matter of right. Privacy Development Stages in children are:

a. Toddlers

When children cross the age of 2, they begin to understand that they have their own needs, wants, and choices. Privacy at this stage is often marked by them being embarrassed if they know someone is watching them playing *“pretend games”*, proclamations like *“I do it myself”*, wanting to play apart from the parents, etc. Potty training also brings a new awareness of privacy in them. It is quite common for toddlers to hide when they soil their diapers. It is their way of registering that they need privacy. This self-awareness leads young children to seek independence and assert their personality. Children at this age also adore secrets- the notion that they know something someone else does not.

b. School going kids

Around five years of age, children start understanding gender identity and developing friendships and relationships. It is also the time for them to explore social situations on their own. Playing secret games, shutting the bathroom door or asking parents to knock before entering their rooms are some common behaviours around this age. Playing games like *'Hide and Seek'*, *'Doctor-Patient and Nurse'* and *'House - Husband - Wife'*, helps them explore relationships, behaviours and each other's body parts. While it is essential to start respecting the private bonds created between children and their peers, it is also time to lay the groundwork for personal safety, health and hygiene rules. Parents should position themselves as loved and trusted ones, and children can come to them about any situation that bothers them. They can talk about anything to their loved and trusted ones. At this age, parents/teachers should also introduce the concept of private parts to their children. Puppets, dolls or swimsuit images can be used to educate them about private parts.

c. Preteens

In this age group, children become more centred on friendships and assert for their own spaces. They now have a fair understanding of permission and respect. They try to make sense of their body's transformation and growing independence. This stage is often marked with closed bedroom doors, intense friendships and embarrassment about sexual references. As children enter the adolescent phase of



their lives, their bodies become bombarded with hormones, feelings/ emotions, and awkward changes. They do not have a fully functioning brain as adults do; this makes adolescence a challenging and confusing period.

Pubertal changes begin around 9 -10 years in girls and about 11 years for boys. Acknowledging the mental, emotional and physical changes that adolescents go through helps put them at ease with themselves, satisfy their curiosity, and allay any fears regarding bodily functions.

d. Teens

At this age, children are struggling with self-identity. They are under much stress as they push through this final transition to adulthood. Teens want to push the boundaries of what they can and cannot get away with, move about independently from parents, and create spaces that they feel they have complete ownership of, from their social circles to their smartphones. In this age group, breaking the rules and challenging the authorities is quite common. Teens need time to wonder and analyse who they are and what they stand for in life. Many profound questions need to be answered, and seeking privacy is one-way teens process this self-awareness. Their brains are also undergoing a radical period of development in the prefrontal cortex (*part of the brain located at the front*) that regulates judgment and the ability to read emotions, requiring teens to spend more time processing crucial decisions.

Transgender people: Traditionally, people are assigned to either male or female (binary) roles and norms in society. However, some people do not identify themselves with this tradition. For example, some people are born as females but do not feel comfortable with a woman's identity and vice-versa. Some people are born as females or males identify themselves with both male and female roles. **Intersex people:** Some children are born not as an exact biological binary of male and female. In a society that does not allow variation in gender roles, people who do not fit into the "norm" face multiple issues. Children who grow up with different gender expressions are susceptible to child sexual abuse, bullying and isolation. It is essential to educate everyone about "*gender as a spectrum and not a binary*". Society has been conditioned to understand gender in a certain way. Still, it is important to challenge that and treat everyone in the same way regardless of how they choose to express themselves.

e. Privacy and internet

Internet-computers-smartphones are the engines of information, knowledge and connectivity. One cannot imagine a life without the internet. However, there is a flip side to it. Access to the internet by children makes them vulnerable as they may interact with total strangers or access content that is not suitable for them or is age-inappropriate. Internet is a virtual world that can easily deceive anyone. At times, it becomes difficult to differentiate between the real and the unreal. Just as we keep ourselves aware of the books our children read, the games they play, the friends they make, the places they visit, we should monitor the content/websites they access, the online games they play, and the people they contact in the virtual world.

It is essential to understand that strangers, abusers, and bullies exist in the real and virtual world. Abusers hide behind their computer screens and are, therefore, difficult to trace. They lure children posing as their peers or well-wishers. Once they have gained the child's confidence, they extract their personal information, lure, trap or blackmail them for their immoral gratification. That is why it is vital to monitor children's smartphones or internet activities in a balanced way. Parents need to set clear boundaries about what they monitor and stick to those boundaries to show that they respect their children's privacy and are not invading their spaces.

14. Peer Pressure

Children in teens and preteens are eager to belong to a peer group. It is part and parcel of growing up. However, in their eagerness, they may give in to, or agree to do things which they actually may not want to do. Children, just like adults, are influenced by their peers, i.e. friends and special friends. At times peers may include a much bigger set of friends. Special friends are friends that are best friends or friends towards whom they are attracted physically. Peers, at times, create pressure directly or indirectly on a child to do things that the child would not do otherwise. Direct pressure involves peers explicitly asking a child to do something. Indirect pressure happens when a child witnesses others engage in an activity and is motivated to do the same.

a. Friends and special friends

Teens know about *Romeo-Juliet*, *Radha-Krishna*, *Heer-Ranjha*, *Laila Majnu* and many other iconic love stories through their cultures, mythologies, festivals, and religions or school syllabus. Movies and advertisements are also big influencers on this matter. Physical attraction or sexual curiosity at this age is a Biological Fact and



cannot be denied. That is why all the schools, by and large from class 8 onwards, start teaching human sexual reproduction so that children can rationalise this fact. Children are to be explained that they are not mentally, physically, and socially ready for a physical relationship. That is why there is a law against child marriage.

b . Say No to peer pressure

The answer to handling peer pressure is to empower our children to identify such situations and say, “NO”. Saying NO may make them feel that they are not part of the group or lose a friend/special friend, but we have to teach them that following the group, which is often a crowd or a friend/special friend, is not always the right thing to do. Children are to be talked about and even warned about the consequences of peer pressures which can take many forms of abuses, unhealthy physical relationships, substance abuse and heinous crimes.

c . Substance Abuse

Majority of parents do not teach their children about the dangers of drug abuse. Overwhelming evidence shows that parents’ lessons and involvement reduce the risk of substance abuse habits, particularly when started at an early age. Parents must talk to their children early and often about the drugs they may encounter. Let them know the dangers of getting involved with drugs and that



parents find it unacceptable. Warn about peer pressure, and guide them on how to handle it. Whether from new friends or strangers, teens will encounter peer pressure during their middle or high school years. Warn children that peer pressure can take many forms, and sometimes the friends they trust the most end up being the ones who encourage them to experiment with drugs. Teach children how to identify these situations and how to rise above the influence of their peers. They may tend to think that saying “NO” makes them look uncool. It is essential to let them know that resisting peer pressure and not following the crowd is often a matter of health and safety. Establish clear rules on the unacceptable use of alcohol and other drugs early in a child’s life. If they violate the rules of the house, make sure there are consequences. A lack of repercussions can lead to repeated experimentation and drug abuse. Parents can foster good behaviour by suspending

a teen's privileges or enforcing some other consequences for abusing drugs. Parents should try their best to keep tabs on their child's schedule and whereabouts without looking intrusive. If they mention any parties or sleepovers, parents should make sure that they know and trust the parents or chaperones supervising their children. Children should not have any inhibition or problem sharing this information with parents. If they hide or are reluctant to tell, that might indicate a problem. Do not let children stay out too late or attend any gatherings that seem suspicious.

15. Exam Pressure

Exam time can be a stressful phase for the people involved in the equation: students, parents, and teachers. While students are anxious due to the pressure of performance, parents and teachers, too, find this time as an evaluation of themselves in their respective roles. It can be extremely stressful for parents and teachers to manage their anxiety around exams and extend support to their child/student in dealing with theirs. Multiple factors can hinder a child's performance. For instance: the undue amount of stress/anxiety, feeling overwhelmed by the constant comparison or expectations of the adults, physical and/or mental health issues, family environment, etc.

One of the prominent aspects that leads to exam pressure is the burden of expectations. Most of the time, exam pressure is a misplaced fear. It has less to do with the actual exam-taking process than the resulting grade/score. Parents relay their expectations to children. Most often, these expectations are not realistic. Children feel that they would be valued and loved by their parents only if they can live up to these set expectations. This feeling can send them down a spiral of anxiety which may further deteriorate their performance in exams. Parents need to ensure that the goals and expectations that they set for children are realistic and achievable. The goal-setting should be done objectively and not emotionally. Goal setting should be based on SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. One should refrain from using statements, such as 'Your entire career depends upon these exams'.

Each child has their own unique set of skills, abilities, and interest areas. It is wrong to pit one child against another or continually remind a child of her/his failures. Setting a routine is useful but consider the child's input while creating one. A routine might include having a fixed bedtime, a flexible study schedule, including breaks, etc. Relaxation and recreational activities should not be put to a stop. It is beneficial for a child to engage in physical play and stress-busting breaks, leading to the release of endorphins, the happy hormone. It not only combats stress but also enhances concentration. If possible, engage yourself in these activities; it will help



you manage your stress as well.

Ensure that the nutritional requirements of the child are taken care of. Healthy meals help boost mood and performance. Skipping meals should be avoided. Reduce or eliminate intake of caffeinated, aerated drinks and junk food. Healthy snacking in between study schedules should be allowed. Long stretches of study often lead to compromise on sleep. 7 to 8 hours of continuous sleep at night is necessary for the child to function at their best capacity, retain what has been imbibed, recall it efficiently, and recoup from the stress as well.

The home environment plays a critical role, too. As much as possible, keep the home environment cohesive, supportive and understanding. Avoid topics that can trigger stress, avoid excessive monitoring, keep the volume low while watching TV or listening to music.

Ensure that the child has had a light, healthy, but filling breakfast on the day of the exam. Address their anxiety, reinforce support by asking if they would like you to drop them at school, and ensure no scrambling for last-minute study. The last-minute study is neither practical nor a useful thing to do.

Just after the exam, avoid discussing the question paper. The child is returning home after having gone through a long and grilling exam session. What the child is looking forward to is a bit of relaxation. When the child comes back from an exam, let her/him take a short nap to unwind. Let the child play outdoors, listen to music or engage in an activity of her/his choice for a while before resuming studies for the next exam.

Keep an eye out for signs that spell trouble, such as difficulty in sleep, sudden loss or gain in appetite, irritability, mood swings, increased instances of pains and aches, lack of interest in activities they used to enjoy earlier, feelings of hopelessness and/or worthlessness and constant fatigue. Try to soothe the child's anxiety by openly discussing how she/he feels, validating her/his emotions and offering positive affirmations. Do not hesitate to get professional help if required.

As a facilitator, it is essential to help children explore and identify their strengths, interests, likes and dislikes, boosting their self-confidence and self-esteem. Do not focus and talk only about success but also share stories of failures. Focus more on the efforts that the child is putting in than just the result. Any amount of progress, no matter how small, is still progress. It is important to remember that people make a living and lead a good and meaningful life without getting high marks in exams.

16. Bullying

Children are often taunted, body shamed and teased by their peers, older children and at times by adults. The common ground for taunting being gender, looks, skin colour and disabilities. This taunting and teasing erodes their self-esteem and makes them vulnerable to various abuses like bullying and sexual abuse. Bullying among children is an acute problem. It starts at an early age (primary school). It evolves into ragging when they graduate from school and enter college. They have a few ways of handling such incidents, ranging from retaliation, complaining to someone in authority, ignoring the taunts and, at times, internalising the negative messages. We need to help children understand that: We do not choose our bodies - Nature has made our bodies - what we do is more important than how we look. Besides, learning how to be assertive helps the child respond positively to taunting and bullying.

17. Nature has made our body

Respect for our body as a whole and its parts is crucial for positive self-esteem. We should always work on our body to stay healthy and work on our attributes like abilities, talents and skills, which can be improved with practice and hard work. These attributes, our ideas and not our body, are to be reflected in our attitude and behaviour. Our attitude, behaviour, ideas, and actions bring us to pride or shame and not how our body looks. We can always take pride in taking care of our body and helping it grow. Each one of us is unique and special. Children need to realise that physical differences alone do not make us special or unique. "What makes us truly unique and special are our mental attributes, actions, personalities and ideas."

18. It is okay to be afraid

Being fearless is not being completely unafraid. When fear grips us, we are terrified and may shout and/ or run away. Fear tells us we are in danger. It is a survival instinct in a given situation. Fear is a call for action. Those of our ancestors, who did not run away in fear when they saw a lion charging towards them, did not survive to reproduce. Our children do not face serious physical threats like hungry predators in today's world, but they do face abusers. We teach our children to be brave, and thus, they tend to refuse to admit their fear. There is no good reason to lie to oneself about their emotions, especially fear. It is okay to be afraid, even for just a moment. We do not have to impress anyone, and being afraid of something may mean that we need help. Asking for help can be terrifying by itself but not asking for it can be even worse. It is normal to feel lost and unsure of how to handle something. One cannot live a hundred per cent unafraid of everything. There



should be parts of our life, present, past and future, that scare us - Being afraid of that big examination; being afraid of our future, etc. Fear can be our friend in just the right doses, but too much of it is harmful. We have to teach our children that they are fiery, strong and beautiful, and validated in their fears. We have to make children understand that acting on our instinct of fear need not necessarily be always related to bravery and cowardice. Fear is a fundamental part of making the right decisions, like fighting back or running away. We need our instincts to let us know when something is just wrong, an immediate emotional evaluation that is even more powerful than complex reasoning and logic. The goal is not to remove fear, as fear helps children know that something is wrong, but to build the courage to act despite the fear.

19. Secrets, surprises and gifts

We all love secrets. Having secrets gives us a feeling of fun or superiority. However, it is essential for children never to keep secrets - but telling them also can confuse them, especially younger children. If they went with Daddy last week to buy Mummy a birthday present, Daddy told them not to tell Mummy a secret. One can explain that this kind of secret is a surprise. A surprise is the kind of secret we want people to find out eventually - like Mummy's birthday gift. Secrets about an uncomfortable touch or look, on the other hand, are secrets that abusers want children to keep forever. They will put pressure on children or lure, confuse or threaten them to keep the abuse a secret. Children need to know they should never keep secrets that break personal safety rules. They need to know to tell a trusted adult as soon as they can. Reassure children that it is okay to break a promise if it is about - not to tell a secret about touching. Remind children frequently not to keep unsafe secrets. Tell them that we will believe them, even if the secret is about someone we know. Instruct children always to tell a trusted adult about a problem involving touching or other kinds of sexual abuse, even if it has gone on for a long time. Reassure children that it is never too late to tell someone about this kind of problem. This encourages children to feel safe in disclosing abuse, even if it has been going on for a while. Tell children to keep telling trusted adults until someone believes them. Help children understand that if the first person they tell does not believe them, they should tell someone else and keep telling until someone helps them.

20. Safe and unsafe touches and looks

We cannot imagine a world without touches, looks and feelings. Touches, looks and feelings go hand in hand and are quite a complex human behaviour to understand even for grown ups. Touches and looks are also related to our body safety. Most,

but not all, touches and looks are safe. Children from an early age are to be educated about various types of touches, looks and feelings. Rules are to be made for safe and unsafe touches and looks. For young children, touches can be broadly classified into three main categories - Safe, Unsafe and Confusing touch (It is always better to use words safe and unsafe rather than good and bad while teaching touches to young children). These three categories, as children grow, can be further expanded to loving, caring, accidental, hurtful, fix-it etc. touches.

21. It is not your fault

Sexual abusers may blame the child or put the onus of the abuse on the child and make them feel guilty. The child may feel that it was their fault that the abuse took place and may not report abuse instances, thereby keeping the cycle of abuse going. To prevent this from happening, it is vital that children firmly believe that it was not their fault. Otherwise, when they grow older, they may experience unease or experience guilt, shame, and self-blame. Children also begin blaming themselves for keeping quiet about the matter. They may also think that since the abuse took place a long time ago, they need not reveal it as it will not help them. Due to these factors, children find it difficult to report matters of ongoing or previous abuse. It, therefore, becomes essential to let them know that no matter what the reasons are (or were), it is still not their fault.

22. Telling and getting help (Trusted Adults)

In most abuse cases, the target of abuse does not report the abuse due to fear or general confusion as to who could be trusted with the information. The abuser takes advantage of the child's innocence, trust or affection and ignorance. In many cases, the abuser threatens, lures or bribes the child to keep silent. Because of the threats, fear, guilt, shame and embarrassment, most children do not tell anyone about the abuse. Teaching children about identifying their trusted adults, who can be relied upon for believing them, helping them and stopping the abuse is, therefore, crucial.

23. Being assertive

Children are often not taught personal safety rules clearly and are somehow expected to derive them from what people around them say and do. Adults may have attached shame to certain parts of the body in their attempt to teach children social etiquettes about clothing and touching. Children may have been told that they "should not allow anyone to touch them in certain parts of the body". However, this is not easy to do. Young children cannot prevent people from



touching them. They have no control over their actions. Moreover, children have been taught through generations to listen to their elders and to obey them.

Respect is thinking and acting positively about oneself and others. Two-sided, but often if a child says “NO” or “Keep your hands to yourself” to an elder, it is considered disrespect. We teach our children good manners, which include respecting elders. It also means that children need permission to say NO to authority figures. What about a situation where an elder asks them to do something unsafe that could endanger them or break a personal safety rule? Which comes first, safety or manners? We have to debunk saying “NO” in the context of good manners. Children expressing their emotions assertively in the form of “NO” should not be considered a bad manner or disrespectful. On the contrary, learning to express emotions assertively can help children to be safe. We can follow the rules and still respect ourselves and others. We can resist and report when someone breaks personal safety rules.

Perpetrators, in most cases, abuse more than one child. If even one of the targets of abuse develops the confidence to report the matter, it could help stop the abuser from abusing other children. People who violate Personal Safety Rules, in most cases, target those children whom they believe will not resist or report them. In such a scenario, children must be taught to express their feelings assertively, even in the face of fear.

Sometimes, the children fear repercussions from the abuser or their parents. Sensitive caregivers would encourage children to be assertive and say they do not like certain things for their safety. They would not punish or blame the child or call the child rude or misbehaved! However, this can only be accomplished by building a sensitive and knowledgeable support system. When children are encouraged to develop a feeling of self-confidence, they will be less likely to be abused and, possibly, more likely to stop any violation of their safety rules by saying ‘No’ and going away from the scene.

24. The 4-step safety rule

For the ultimate situation encountered by a child who faces an abuser, who is emotionally and physically much superior, it boils down to execution of the following safety drill:

Step 1. Scream / Say NO

Step 2. Run

Step 3. Tell

Step 4. Keep telling till someone believes you.

25. Mental Health

As per WHO, “mental health of a child or an adult is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

There was a time when going to a psychiatrist/psychologist was considered taboo. However, slowly, things have changed. More and more schools have now started hiring psychologists. Some schools even teach psychology as a subject to class 11 and 12 students.

Psychiatrist: a trained medical doctor who prescribes medication.

Psychologist: not a medical doctor and cannot prescribe medication.

There are many types of psychologists, but in the context of children, clinical and counselling psychologists are mainly relevant.

Clinical psychologists have a Master’s Degree in Psychology and an M. Phil in Clinical Psychology. They specialise in treating mental disorders. They need a licence for practising, from RCI – Rehabilitation Council of India. Nowadays, we find clinical psychologists in most hospitals.

Counselling psychologists have a Master’s Degree in Psychology and a Diploma in Counselling. They do not require any licence to practice. They specialise in different counselling and handle marital problems, adjustment issues, children’s problems like examination stress, bullying, etc. Schools usually hire counselling psychologists, commonly called School Counsellors.

8376804102 is a toll-free, 24 x7 and 365 days stress helpline for children and others for psychological problems, including stress and abuse problems. The helpline is handled by a team of psychiatrists and psychologists from across India. It is run by the Department of Mental Health and Behavioural Sciences, Fortis Healthcare.

26. Sibling rivalry

Siblings are two or more children who are related to each other through the same set of parents. A child’s relationship with their sibling is different from the ones they have with their parents or peers. These sibling relationships play a vital role in



socialisation as conflicts between siblings usually become a learning ground for understanding how other social relationships work. The skills and lessons that a child learns from the sibling relationship often get carried over to their relationships outside their homes. The more securely a child is attached to their parents, the lesser the chances of competition brewing up among siblings. However, as children grow and learn to assert themselves, they inevitably conflict with their siblings.

Sibling rivalry can be defined as intense competition among siblings for attention from and recognition by their parents. It often begins when a child feels that their sibling is replacing them. It can be more apparent when one of the siblings requires extra care because of physical and/or mental health concerns. When a child feels replaced, to re-establish their role with their parent, the discontented child often shows jealousy, non-compliance, and aggressive behaviour. Other reasons that might lead to siblings' conflicts are age gap, temperament differences, distribution of responsibilities, parents/primary caregivers' attitude, birth order, etc.

Dealing with sibling rivalry can be a very frustrating and exhausting experience for a parent. One can establish specific family rules to minimise the damage that sibling rivalry can lead to. Rules like no hitting, no name-calling, seeking permission before using something that belongs to the other person, accepting mistakes, saying sorry, accepting kindness, and saying thank you. Ensure that siblings are involved in the discussion while making these rules. Their involvement helps develop a healthier relationship among siblings, and in case of a conflict, it leads to a better resolution.

Do not compare siblings as each child is different with their unique set of skills, abilities, interests, likes and dislikes. You may be doing your best, but a child may still feel that you favour the other sibling. Sit with your child and talk to them about the resentment and angry feelings that they might be experiencing. Healthy expression of emotions should be encouraged. Avoid using statements that might insinuate guilt in the child. Wherever possible, let the siblings learn to settle their differences on their own. Be a mediator, only when required, and try not to take sides. Teaching essential life skills, such as respecting boundaries and assertiveness, also promotes healthy management of situations that may turn into conflicts.

Distribute chores according to age and skill. Allow rotation of responsibilities and decision making from time to time. Create opportunities where the siblings have to work in co-operation to achieve a goal or help each other out. It will promote unity. Give them opportunities to explore togetherness but do not force it, or else it might just lead to resentment and feelings of being stuck with the other person. Do not expect them to play together all the time. Allow them to have their time with their individual friends as well. Similarly, take out time to spend with your children together as well as separately.

Sensitise the child to their sibling's different needs and demands in case of physical and/or mental health concerns. Try and engage them in providing this extra care along with you, to whatever capacity they wish to or can do in an age-appropriate manner. This will ensure that they do not feel excluded or forcefully included in the process. Engage in talking to them about what is going on in their lives to reiterate that just because you have to give more time to one sibling does not mean that you are less interested or involved in their life.

Similarly, when one child is more gifted than their siblings, help other siblings learn how to set realistic expectations. Help the other siblings recognise their key interests and strengths and how they can develop them further. On different occasions, praising for what has been done well by different family members can help a child appreciate that they have different strengths. Each of these strengths is equally appreciable. Model empathy and kindness, celebrating successes of all siblings, no matter how varied these successes may be, is vital to make them feel acknowledged.

As a child grows and their cognitive and social understanding develops further, the conflicts that they have with their siblings become more constructive, and the rivalry tends to go down. As the conflicts turn constructive, children learn to acknowledge the needs, wishes, and point of views of other people around them. This, in turn, helps them learn how to engage in conflict, assert themselves properly, disagree, and engage in conflict resolution.

27. Goal Setting

Goal setting can be defined as a process of setting an objective or target for oneself that a person wishes to accomplish. It is a valuable skill to have, as setting milestones and working towards them brings a sense of autonomy and independence and promotes self-confidence. However, goal setting is much more than simply setting a target in life. Clarity about what you want to achieve is a bit easier than mustering the constant motivation required to bringing about that change and the willingness to move beyond your comfort zone by altering your lifestyle. Therefore, there are a few things to take care of if you wish to engage in effective goal setting.

It is always advised to write down goals. It makes them more real and reduces the chances of procrastination, excuse-giving or forgetting. Always frame goal statements positively. Ensure that you put up this list of goals at a visible place as a reminder of what you intended to achieve. A goal will be vital for you if it contributes constructively to your personal or professional life. It carries a sense of



value that keeps you pushing to accomplish it. Write “why” along with your goal. Avoid setting too many goals over a single time period. This might leave you with a lot on your plate with not enough time to devote. The more scattered your goals are, the more confusion will ensue.

Remember, making a step-by-step action plan is a vital part of the goal-setting process. It is important to strike out each step that you complete. It brings a sense of accomplishment, clarifies progress, and keeps your motivation going. Set small reminders for yourself to keep yourself on track. Celebrate the milestones of progress. Self-evaluation while accomplishing a goal can help you maintain a steady pace, pick up things that are not working out for you and replace them with other effective strategies.

One simple way to ensure that you are engaging in a practical goal-setting is by creating SMART goals. SMART stands for:

Specific: Making a goal that is well defined. This helps define precisely what you want to achieve at the end.

Measurable: It is essential to set measurable goals in specific terms, such as quantity or time. This can help you map your progress and determine your development in quantifiable terms.

Achievable: Achievable goals are the ones that are realistic and attainable. If you set a goal that is too high to achieve, you might feel demoralized if you cannot accomplish it. On the other hand, setting an easy goal will not bring any real sense of accomplishment. While setting goals there has to be a delicate balance between not making a goal too easy to achieve or too difficult to reach. It should be sufficiently challenging to push you beyond your comfort zone and raise your bar but not to induce excessive stress. A goal should be low pressure and high engagement in nature to bring out the optimum performance. A larger goal can always be broken down into smaller, achievable sub-goals.

Relevant: Another critical aspect to remember while setting goals is that they should be relevant to the direction in which you want to push your personal/professional life. Goals that are relevant to you will also evoke a desire and motivation to work toward them. Accomplishing such goals will bring a sense of personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement. They help you envision your future and bring it to reality.

Time-bound: Each goal should have a well-defined deadline, or else you may lose focus. A time-bound goal keeps you on track by evoking a sense of discipline and routine. Children often learn goal-setting skills via modelling when they see their parents and teachers, utilizing them in their day-to-day lives. To help children or

students learn goal setting, start with facilitating a conversation to help them learn why goals are important, what goals are realistic and relevant to them, and how can they practice SMART goal setting. Ask them simple questions and engage in dialogue that helps them deduce what they are good at, their weaknesses, what they would like to improve and why, and how they plan to improve. Start with a small, immediate goal and gradually hone the skill by moving towards more essential life goals.



28. Moral development stages

The CACA Safety Workbooks teach children about decision making, choosing and the moral *dilemmas one may face while choosing. Apart from many intelligence (cognitive) development stages of a child related to reading, writing, comprehension, etc., the child also goes through various cognitive moral development stages which parents, caregivers and teachers should be aware of. In psychology, *Kohlberg's Theory* explains how moral reasoning, the basis for ethical behaviour, goes through 6 stages of development. Though the theory has its short comings and biases, it is widely accepted. The theory says that we progress through 3 moral development levels of moral thinking. These levels are Pre-Conventional, Conventional, and Post-Conventional. Each level, further, has two distinct stages. The stages are progressive in terms of complexity(dilemmas) related to individual morals and ethics.

Suggested reading: *Heinz dilemma; Trolley problem*

Pre-Conventional level: During this period, a child's sense of morality is externally controlled. Children accept and believe the rules of authority figures, such as parents and teachers, and they judge an action-based on its consequences rather than right or wrong.

Stage 1: Obedience-and-Punishment Orientation:

This stage focuses on the child's desire to obey rules and avoid being punished, i.e. a morality of reward and punishment. For Example, an action is perceived as morally wrong because the perpetrator is punished; the worse the act's punishment, the more 'bad' the act is perceived.

Stage 2: Instrumental Orientation:

It expresses the 'what's in it for me?' position in which the correct behaviour is defined by whatever the individual believes to be in their best interest. This stage reasoning shows a limited interest in others' needs, only to the point where it might further the individual's interests. As a result, others' concern is not based on loyalty or intrinsic respect. Instead, it is based on a 'you scratch my back, and I will scratch yours' mentality. An example would be when parents ask a child to do a chore. The child asks, 'what is in it for me?' The parents offer the child an incentive by giving an allowance.

Conventional level: During this period, an individual's sense of morality is tied to personal and societal relationships. Children continue to accept authority figures' rules, but this is now because they believe that this is necessary to ensure positive relationships and societal order. Adherence to rules and conventions is somewhat rigid during these stages, and a rule's appropriateness or fairness is seldom questioned.

Stage 3: Good Boy, Nice Girl Orientation:

In stage 3, children want the approval of others and act in ways to avoid disapproval. Emphasis is placed on good behaviour and people being 'nice' to others.

Stage 4: Law-and-Order Orientation:

In this stage, the child blindly accepts rules and conventions because of their importance in maintaining a functioning society. Rules are seen as being the same for everyone, and obeying rules by doing what one is supposed to do is valuable and essential. Moral reasoning in stage 4 is beyond the need for individual approval exhibited in stage 3. If one person violates a law, perhaps everyone would - thus, there is an obligation and a duty to uphold laws and rules. Most active members of society remain at stage four, where morality is still predominantly dictated by an outside force.

Post-Conventional level: Throughout the post-conventional level, a person's sense of morality is defined in more abstract principles and values. People now believe that some laws are unjust and should be changed or eliminated. A growing realisation marks this level: individuals are separate entities from society and may

disobey rules inconsistent with their principles. Post-conventional moralists live by their ethical principles, which typically include fundamental human rights like life, liberty, and individual justice. They view rules as practical but changeable mechanisms rather than absolute dictates that must be obeyed without question. They elevate their moral evaluation of a situation over social conventions. Their behaviour at this stage can sometimes be confused with that of those at the pre-conventional level. Some theorists have speculated that many people may never reach this level of abstract moral reasoning.

Stage 5: Social-Contract Orientation:

In stage 5, the world is viewed as holding different opinions, rights, and values. Such perspectives should be mutually respected as unique to each person or community. Laws are regarded as social contracts rather than rigid edicts. Those that do not promote the general welfare should be changed when necessary to meet the greatest good for the greatest number of people. This is achieved through a majority decision and inevitable compromise. Democratic government is theoretically based on stage five reasoning.

Stage 6: Universal-Ethical-Principal Orientation:

In stage 6, moral reasoning is based on abstract reasoning using universal ethical principles. Generally, the chosen principles are abstract rather than concrete and focus on ideas such as equality, equity, dignity, or respect. Laws are valid only insofar as they are grounded in justice, and a commitment to justice carries with it an obligation to disobey unjust laws. People choose the ethical principles they want to follow, and if they violate those principles, they feel guilty. Individual acts in this way because it is morally right to do so (and not because she/he wants to avoid punishment).

29. Challenges

There are many challenges that parents, teachers and caregivers face while establishing a child-centric dialogue through the safety workbooks on sensitive issues of child rights, gender equality and child abuse. We have to meet these challenges and join hands because child abuse in India has become an epidemic. Project CACA assessment team continuously assesses the workbooks for their challenges by conducting annual assessments with teachers. The workbook challenges are, at times, interlinked with each other. They have been classified as follows:

- a. Vocabulary
- b. Age Appropriateness
- c. Image Explicitness



- d. Conceptual
- e. Evaluation
- f. Learning Outcome
- g. Teacher's Sentiment
- h. *Unintentional Outcome
- i. Other

**The unintentional outcome:* The workbooks are open for discussions/debate under the law of 'Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action' and the 'Doctrine of Double Effect'.

Examples of challenges:

Example 1: The word 'underwear' used in some chapters of the workbooks for classes UKG and 1 may seem obscene to some even when the chapters' key message is 'We must change our clothes daily so that we do not smell bad and we stay healthy'. Sexual reproduction is taught in class 8 science. However, talking about transgender, intersex, and gender stereotypes in class 8 safety workbooks may seem inappropriate to some. The workbooks teach the concept of private parts through swimsuit images. Besides, some images in the workbooks reflect bullying/ragging/abuse. These images may be considered explicit by some.

Example 2: Some concepts/definitions taught in the workbooks are subjective and based on situations. Example: A stranger is a person whom you do not meet, interact or talk with often. Under this definition, an ice-cream vendor will be a stranger, but then a grandma or first cousin living far away in a different city may also be called a stranger.

Example 3: The workbooks ask young children to express their feelings for various situations that they go through. Some of these situations are related to touches, hugs and kisses. The children are asked to answer questions like writing the names of the people from whom they like or do not like hugs and kisses. Or whom they like or do not like to hug or kiss. A girl may not like hugs and kisses from her mummy when she is sweating in the kitchen and cutting vegetables. Perhaps, at that time, her mummy smells terrible. A boy may not like to hug and kiss his grandpa. Perhaps, his grandpa's beard is irritating for the child. Since there are no clear-cut answers to such open-ended questions, one must be careful while analysing them.

The workbooks teach children to listen to their feelings and have key messages based on feelings/ emotions like 'Listen to your feelings' and 'Feelings tell us what is safe or unsafe'. Feelings like fear, guilt, anger, etc. are taught as indicators for safe and unsafe touches, situations and behaviours. It is very much possible that a child may feel good when he/ she goes through an unsafe touch.



Children Against Child Abuse

Project CACA



A safety programme for children
under the safety policy of the school.

CACA Safety Workbooks UKG to 9

Book Titles

My Beginner's Safety Workbook

My First Safety Workbook

My Second Safety Workbook

My Third Safety Workbook

My Fourth Safety Workbook

My Fifth Safety Workbook

My Sixth Safety Workbook

My Seventh Safety Workbook

My Eighth Safety Workbook

My Ninth Safety Workbook



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End the Stigma, Raise Awareness

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