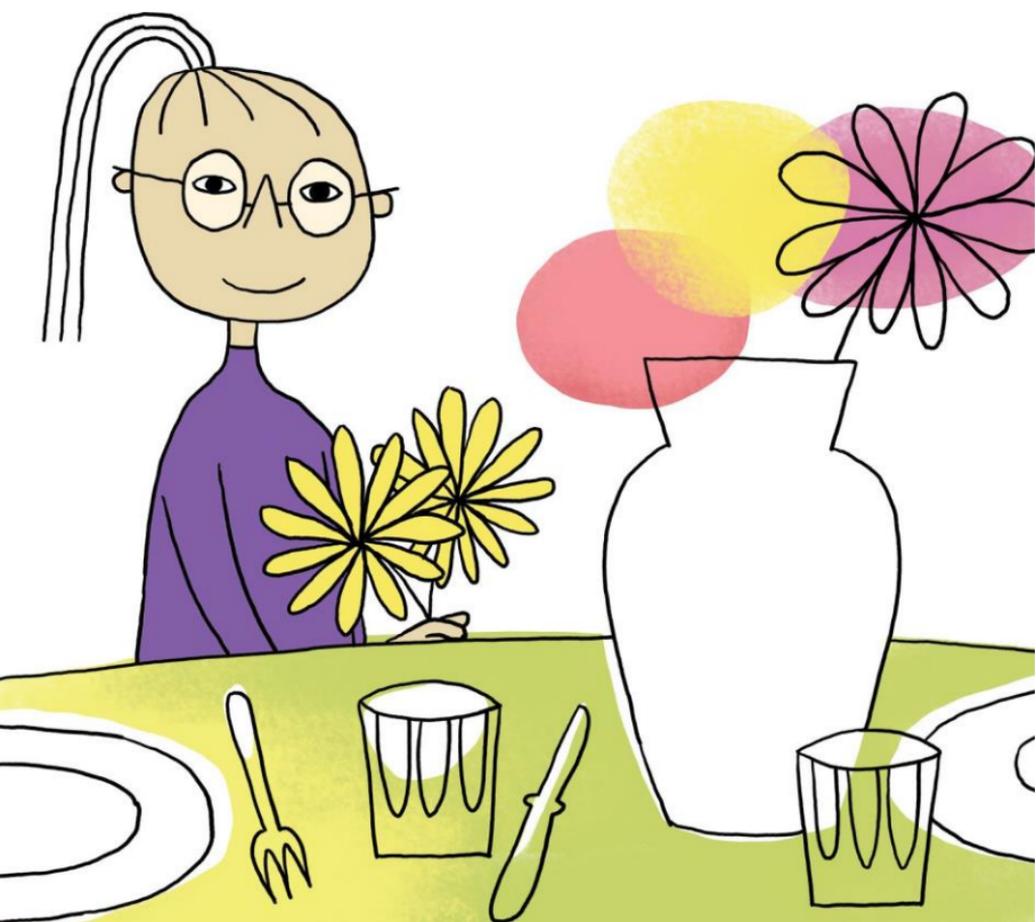
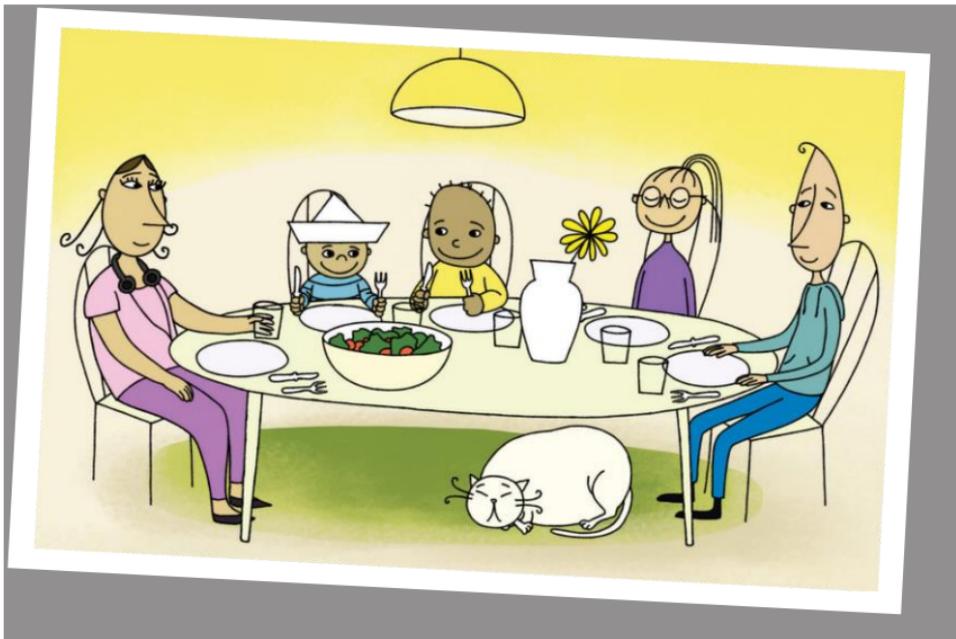


Guidance

for the films
“The Shelter” and “The Birdhouse”





INTRODUCTION

The films are designed to explain to children, briefly and in easily understood form, what crisis centres are about. The key messages are to tell children that they are safe in the crisis centre, they are not alone and what happened is not their fault.

It is important for caring adults to watch the films with the child on the first occasion. Allow a few minutes to explain what the films are about, before watching them. It is also important to respond to any questions or reactions afterwards. Explain to the child that there are different types of crisis centre and adapt the information to the one in question. The common feature of all crisis centres is that they are safe places.

“THE BIRDHOUSE”

In this film the child is told the main messages: You are safe here, you are not alone and it is not your fault.

“THE SHELTER”

Here, five children talk about their experiences of living in a crisis centre and what it was like having to leave home.

THE FILMS CAN BE USED:

- To give a brief explanation of what a crisis centre is
- When moving-in is being planned
- If the child knows someone who lives in a crisis centre
- If you are going to talk about crisis centres, e.g. to a kindergarten/school group



Questions and answers must be adapted for each individual crisis centre. Here are some examples:

Do all crisis centres have a playroom? *Most crisis centres have one.*

Do you always get your own room with mother/father? *Yes, in most crisis centres. In some crisis centres you have your own kitchen and bathroom. In others, you share a kitchen, bathroom and sitting room with the others who live there.*

Do both mothers and fathers live in the crisis centre? *There are crisis centres for both women and men. Women and men do not live together in the crisis centre.*

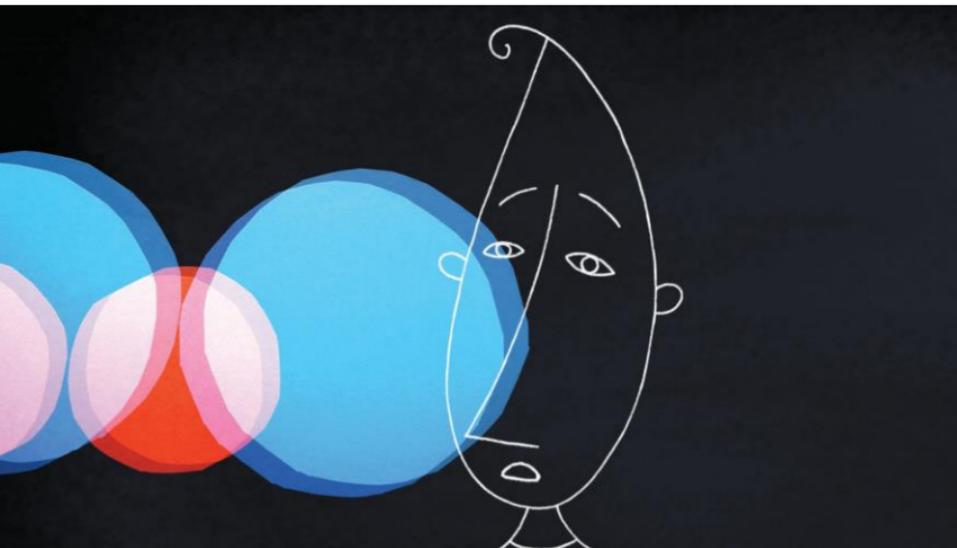
Can friends come and visit? *The crisis centre staff decide on this. Sometimes it is possible, sometimes not. But the child can go and visit friends if everyone will be safe.*

THE SHELTER

Explain that “family members” may include: father; stepfather; mother; mother’s partner; stepmother; father’s partner; siblings; aunts; uncles, grandparents etc. all of whom can make up different kinds of family.

Noise in the home may be because the parents argue, fight and break things. Sometimes children try to protect or help the one being hit. At other times children are frightened and run away or hide. Sometimes, children may even help the angry, dangerous person. This may be to avoid being hit themselves. Children in the crisis centre will often have experienced such things.

Sometimes, children leave home so quickly that they can’t take treasured possessions with them. This may for example be a cuddly toy, or other some other plaything associated with security. Children can be very preoccupied with such things. Sometimes it is possible to go back and fetch some of these things, or it may take time or be impossible.



Children coming in to a crisis centre have experienced the move in different ways. Some have to leave home immediately, while others have time to plan. It is always important to think about what will be safest for the children leaving. The person from whom the child is moving away must not know where he/she is going.

Children in a crisis centre have many different feelings and experiences, and they are allowed to be fond of both parents - regardless of what they have done. They may also miss the siblings, pets, room, friends, neighbours, class, teacher etc. they have left behind. They may be worried, or have a bad conscience, or feel sorry for and want to return to the other adults who are still at home. They may also be angry with the adult who came to the crisis centre with them.

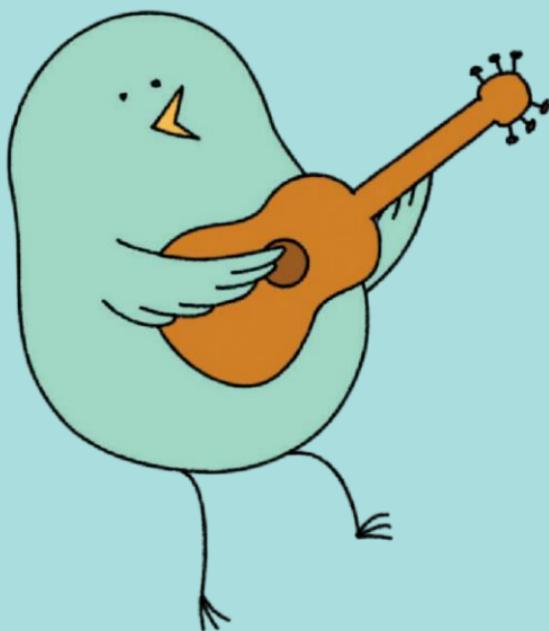


These are all normal feelings and experiences for children moving in to a crisis centre.

What the parents do is never the child's fault. It is important for the child to be able to talk to a reliable adult, so that he/she is not just left alone coping with difficult thoughts. You can, for example, ask the child: *What do you think you could have done? Do you think it would have helped?* However, regardless of what the child thinks he/she could have done, it is always the adults who are responsible for their own actions.

"The Shelter" has different sequences with fish and rain to give us time to think and allow the impressions sink in. There is also a cat in the film, which allows us to focus on pets. Children are often very preoccupied with animals they have left at home and this can be difficult for many. They think about what is happening to the animal, whether it is being fed and whether the people still at home are kind to the animal.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to have pets in the crisis centre because of allergies, but sometimes the crisis centre may be able to help with finding someone to care for the pet.



TO THE CHILDREN

All parents can argue and disagree. There is no harm in that. But if they hit, damage things and say bad things to one another, pester or frighten one another so that they are sad or afraid, that is not good. This makes some children afraid and insecure and they think they must take care of mother/father. Children may also become angry, or sad, or want to do silly things themselves, like hitting for example.

IMPORTANT RULES IN THE CRISIS CENTRE

- Don't take pictures and put them on the Internet or social media, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram etc.
- Don't save pictures of the crisis centre on your mobile phone
- Switch off Location Services on your mobile phone
- Don't tell anyone who is living in the crisis centre

How long you can stay varies from centre to centre, but nobody will have to move back to anywhere that is unsafe or dangerous. In that case you will be helped to find somewhere else to live. Sometimes finding somewhere else to live may be a slow process, sometimes it may be quick. The adults will be able to tell you about this.

The crisis centre must be a safe place for all who live there, so it is important that you do not tell anybody else who is living there. Living in a crisis centre is different. Other adults and children live there, so you can become sad, angry or irritated that there are always other people around you. It is important to try and respect each other and be nice to one another. If you find something difficult, you can ask someone who works at the crisis centre for advice and help.



The crisis centre will help you to continue going to school or kindergarten. Sometimes, children have to change school or kindergarten and sometimes they have to stay indoors in the crisis centre. School children will be helped with their school work by a teacher or other person who is responsible for schooling. As soon as it is safe and practical, children will go to school as usual.

It is quite normal for children to think they have done something wrong, and it is their fault that Mummy and Daddy are cross with one another. But is never the children's fault if adults hit, threaten or say nasty things to one another. Many children think about this. They may have a bad conscience or be cross with themselves because they feel, think or do what they do, but it is always the adults' responsibility.



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