



Facilitator's Guide

Welcome to the Facilitator's Guide for Lala's Journey. This guide will help you facilitate children learning and practicing skills that bring balance after trauma. It can also help prepare a child to respond to the natural ups and downs of life. The curriculum was created using the dialogue education pedagogy, aligned with best practices, designed with patterns that offer comforting predictability, and includes facilitation notes to help your time together be successful. Each activity teaches a helpful skill and/or ties into the learning objections. Facilitation groups are encouraged to meet well before that week's session to go over it, learn and practice the skills for themselves, and practice facilitating with each other.

Training & Preparation

Requirements for leaders:

Complete Lala's Journey Leader training through FirstAidfortheSoul.org before leading activities.

Preparation for all 5 Sessions:

1. **Size of group:** This curriculum is designed to be used with children 8-11, although adjustments can be made so it fits with other ages. The ideal group size is 6-8 children and two leaders. (An important safe-guarding best practice is always having two adults in the room.) If you must have a group size bigger than eight, plan to divide into small groups for the discussion time. How small can it be? Some even use this material one-on-one with families.
2. **Session shape:** These sessions take 60-90 minutes on their own. You can add activities so the group will last two hours. Having a longer time together can build relationships and lead to greater trust within the group and with the leaders. You may need several sessions before starting Lala's Journey to get to know each other, if you don't already. For get-to-know-you session ideas, contact Home@FirstAidfortheSoul.org.
3. **Session layout:** The order of the sessions is consistent each week, providing a sense of stability for the children. The elements are included in their order based on trauma-informed and a tailored pedagogy.
 - o Elements to not change (without permission): 1) Grounding Activity, 2) Book, 3) Discussion Questions, 4) Book-based activity, and 5) Reflection/Journal
 - o Elements that can change order: Snacks and Games (while having them first does provide connection time, establishes safety, and the chance to "get the wiggles out.")
4. **Journals:** The journal activity at the end of each session is helpful for children who can read and write. There are some alternate activities for kids who prefer to draw. Decide before you begin if you'll be doing the journal activities. It's helpful if the leaders store the journals between each session, and let the children take them home at the end. Purchase small journals, or make them out of paper (cardstock folded vertically makes a good cover. At the beginning of the first session, each child can draw or decorate their journal cover. You can access more ideas for less literate societies by contacting Home@FirstAidfortheSoul.org.
Ask about Workbooks that can be used in place of journals which include some additional exercises.
5. **After your group:** Many find that they want to continue meeting with their group of children after going through Lala's Journey. You can contact Home@FirstAidfortheSoul.org for a list of ideas or ask about additional curriculum available.

How to Read the Facilitator’s Guide

The leader’s guide is your detailed script to follow to lead your club. It has everything you need as far as *materials* (things like paper, markers, books, balls, etc.), *equipment* (larger things like projector, TV, recorder, tables and chairs, etc.), *what to say*, and *extra ideas*.

What the Children Do

This is in the left, colored column of the table. It is written as your script of exactly what to say. You can read it directly from the guide. It is bulleted into each individual *task* (activity). “Trust the design of the guide and follow the script!”

What the Leader Does

This is in the right, white column of the table (or in an entire white row).

Notes are in *italics*.

Things you can say are in regular font, and are bulleted.

If the text in one row begins higher than the other (e.g. what the children do begins higher than the notes for the Leader), then begin in that cell.

Curriculum Color Code

Each of the sections of the curriculum is color-coded. You’ll find this pattern repeated each week. Repetition is helpful in stabilizing after trauma. It creates safety for children by being predictable. You’ll find the order is intentional as well. The facilitator training goes deeper into this topic. Each element in the flow of each lesson will be seen every week and the following preview offers a bit of the why behind the design.

[Preparation for Facilitators: Materials & Equipment]	In this section you will find critical guidance for how to create the best experience for the entire group. We encourage every member of the facilitation team to be familiar with what the session holds. Find a list of all materials for the program below.
Welcome, Game	ATTENDANCE Ideally all of the children will attend each session and will grow together and in their stabilization through your time together. This may not be the case, so it is important to keep track of what is there each week and follow up with families when necessary. WELCOME & GAME How you open your time together sets the tone for the rest of the session. Play is a key skill, teaches interdependence, helps with self-regulation, balances brain chemicals, and can reduce trauma symptoms.
Grounding Activity	Additional skills are taught during this time, and having grounding before the story, sets the mood and allows children to be ready to learn. These moments may be the most useful and memorable. Take time to understand the goal and flow of each grounding practice.

Story, Discussion	The story of Lala is the core of each session, so make this time of reading engaging by practicing reading each chapter aloud before reading it to the children.
"Trying it on" Activity (to practice new skill)	This comes directly after reading Lala's Journey because the children will be able to do the same activity that Lala's just told them about in the book. Each week the children will grow more and more excited about doing what Lala did and building this connection is helpful to provide stability each week and help the children feel connected to Lala.
Optional Additional Activity	While the session is complete without this activity, it provides deeper understanding or expands the topic in a new way.
Reflection Time (Application) Includes "JOURNALS"	Each child now has the opportunity to apply what they have learned and practiced to their own situation. Having a time of quiet and reflection, or using a journal, may be new for some of the children in your group. Have facilitators be ready to help children focus. Create coloring time for younger members. Be sure to adapt the questions if your group is all or partially not reading yet. Creating their own journal and decorating it will create ownership and independence in this time of reflection on what you did together that day.
Closure	Having the same closing procedure will once again provide consistency for the group and help wrap things up each week. Learning to say goodbye in a meaningful way may also bring stability.

Thank you for your desire to provide First Aid for the Soul to children who may need it. Your care and friendship are a key element of resilience. Care for yourself as well, so you can give care to others out of an overflow of health. Thank you!

The First Aid for the Soul team

Materials Overview:

- Paper for journals/coloring activities
- Coloring pens/ pencils
- Snacks (suggestion: high in protein, low in sugar)
- Attendance Sheet and stickers (if using)
- Grounding Activities PDF
- Whiteboard (a blackboard or large paper on wall could also be used)
- Props for the goodbye song (if using)
- String or jump ropes - [Session 1](#)
- Heavy box - [Session 2](#)
- Paper cups - [Session 2](#)
- Clear jars (such as a Mason jar), 1 per child plus participating leaders - [Session 3](#)
- Water (enough to fill the jars) - [Session 3](#)
- Glitter glue (or make your own glitter glue using dry glitter and glue) - [Session 3](#)
- Smooth stones (enough for the whole group to have two) - [Session 3](#)
- Pens that can write on the stones - [Session 3](#)
- Plastic building blocks - [Session 4](#)
- Small pots/cups - [Session 4](#)
- Printed copies of image of plastic brick house - [Session 4](#)
- Materials needed to play music (e.g. speakers, CD player, mobile phone) - [Session 4](#)
- Pre-written Welcome Cards - [Session 5](#)
- Blank Welcome Cards - [Session 5](#)
- Printed copies of Circle of Emotions - [Session 5](#)

Session 1: Knots are normal

Materials & Equipment	Preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper for journals or coloring • Pens/pencils for coloring • Snacks (suggestion: high in protein, low in sugar) • Attendance Sheet and stickers • String or jump ropes • String or more jump ropes for final activity • Whiteboard for journal prompts (optional) • Props for the goodbye song (if using). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out supplies for free drawing time (blank paper or journal covers). • Cut pieces of string 20cm long so each member of the group can be given one. • Prepare larger tangled and knotted balls of string (1m length of string for every 2 people in the group. Each tangle should contain a maximum of 6 pieces of string. If the group is larger (more than 12) use multiple bundles. Make sure both ends of each piece of string can be reached). • Print out image of knots (Appendix B). • Decide if sharing a personal story (see Learning and Reflection, below). • If using journals, write out prompts on a whiteboard. • Choose whether to use a goodbye song and prepare anything you might need for the song (e.g. words printed, music).
<h3>Introduction and The Name Game</h3>	
<p><i>The <u>purpose</u> of this beginning part is to help children feel comfortable by helping them engage with the teachers and each other.</i></p> <p><i>If you do not already know the children in attendance, or if they do not know all of the leaders, consider spending an additional week at the beginning getting to know each other. For ideas, write to Home@FirstAidfortheSoul.org.</i></p> <p><i>Lay out drawing/coloring materials (blank paper or journal covers). As the children arrive, invite them to draw/color.</i></p> <p><i>Welcome the group. Enjoy a snack together. If helpful, take attendance. (Use the Attendance Sheet provided or make your own.)</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's all stand in a circle. • Think of something you like or like to do and couple that word with your name e.g. <i>Dancing Melissa, Pony Kate.</i> • Now introduce yourself with your name combination. 	<p><i>Do several rounds of this, making sure everyone gets a turn. Repeat each week if desired.</i></p> <p><i>Idea: Turn this into a memory game by adding a bean bag or ball. Have them toss it to each other by saying each other's word + name combination before throwing it.</i></p>

Grounding Activity: In and Out

- Let's **choose** one word together that represents a feeling we want more of.
- Now, let's **choose** one word that describes a feeling we want less of, like "hurt".
- As I say the word we want more of, we will **take a slow breath** in.
- And then as I say the word we want less of, we will **let out** the air.

Finish game time with this breathing exercise.

Suggest words if needed. Examples: Breathing in: peace, love, hope. Breathing out: fear, hate.

When choosing words for "breathing out", look for opportunities to explain that feelings like anger or sadness are not bad.

Repeat several times. Change the words and do again. Repeat each week if helpful.

"Lala's Journey," Chapter One

- **Listen** to this story about a girl named Lala.
- **What kinds of feelings** did Lala have about her journey so far?
- **What kinds of ways** did Lala's experiences affect her? Look back at the story for clues if you need to.

Read chapter one.

(Some extra comments for discussion, if needed):

- Most people who have experienced sad and challenging circumstances struggle for a while afterwards.
- It can be very difficult to move on from the events, and recovering can take time. Did you know? Painful and scary experiences can affect our minds, our hearts and our bodies.

"Trying it on" Activity: Jump Rope

- **Take** your piece of string and try to **tie** a simple knot in it.

Give each child a piece of string. Use jump ropes if possible.

	<p><i>As children are tying knots, describe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you tie a knot, you take the ends of the string on a journey. • Because of the journey the string takes, looping in and out, and up and down, it becomes tied up resulting in a knot. This is the expected outcome. It is normal. • In a similar way when we have been through certain journeys, aspects of our life can become knotted too. When we face a painful or frightening situation we are like a piece of string being looped around. A knot is the usual result of these journeys.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the knot in your string. Can you trace its journey with your finger? • Now, look at this picture of many kinds of knots. Are some more complicated than others? • Try tying two of the complicated knots, or you can make up your own. 	<p><i>Give enough time for the group to finish tying knots in their string.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you're done, hold up your piece of string. Look at the knots each of you have tied. Some knots may be big and complicated. The one you tied before is probably smaller and simpler. Some knots can easily come loose and others are more difficult to untie. 	<p><i>Discuss:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The knots created through a hard journey like Lala's can also be difficult. They can affect different parts of our lives. Sometimes they come loose over time, and other times we may need help to untie them. • Sometimes, Lala might feel like there is a knot in her mind. She keeps thinking of the same situation over and over. She might have trouble sleeping or have nightmares.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think one of Lala's friends said to her when she was feeling this way? 	<p><i>Allow any children to respond who want to.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here's what one friend said to her, "Do not worry if you are having these experiences. It does not mean there is something wrong with you." Remember, a knot like this in your mind is the natural outcome of the journey you have taken, just like a knot in a jump rope. Many other people have had the same experience.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look back at your string. Let's untie the simple knot. Notice the journey the end of the string takes. See how some parts come loose easily and others take more effort. As you untie the knot remember, knots are normal. You are not alone. Others have been on this journey before you. 	<p><i>Give time for the group to untie the simple knot.</i></p> <p><i>Then say:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes a knot is more complicated. It can affect the way we think and feel too. Like Lala, some may find it hard to concentrate. Some feel anxious or guilty or sad. Others have trouble sleeping or have pain in their body for no reason. All of these feelings can be a normal result of the painful events.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lala isn't the only person who has felt this way. Untie the second of the knots in your string. • What did Lala do with the knot in her jump rope? 	<p><i>Give time for the group to untie the second knot.</i></p> <p><i>Then say:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knots are normal. And sometimes they take time to untangle.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's use our jump ropes with one knot left in it – let's jump and have fun! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lala learned she could live with a knot still in her jump rope. It was not enough to stop her from doing what she wanted to do next. <p><i>Give the group time to jump rope.</i></p>
<p>Optional Activity</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take one end of string from the ball of knots the leader is holding. 	<p><i>Hand out the bigger tangled pieces of string or jump rope (see "Preparation") making sure each child starts off holding the end of a piece of string. Involve leaders if possible.</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the giant ball of knots. With your finger, try to follow the route <i>your</i> string takes through the knot. Sometimes a knot can seem to be just a confusing tangle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tie a knot, the string has to go through a journey, and to untie a knot the string has to go through another journey too. Sometimes, when the knot is so tight that we need help untangling it. It's the same way in life, we often need each other! <p><i>Give time for the group to try to trace the route of their piece of string through the tangle.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe it seems like the knot never ends, but let's see if we can figure it out. As a group, work together to untangle and untie the knots in your piece of string. • How many people did it take to untangle that big knot? 	<p><i>Give the group time to untangle their piece of string.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can help each other with the knots in our lives!
<p>Reflection Time</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do YOU want to remember about knots in life? 	<p><i>Have a leader tell a story about a knot in their life, choosing one that will be an example of living with a knot, or seeing a knot resolved. Avoid sharing about something too painful for the children to hear about.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each week we will write down a truth that we learn from Lala. What is a good sentence to use for this lesson? 	<p><i>Create a sentence together or use: "Knots are normal." Write the sentence on the board.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the people that can help you with the knots in your life? 	<p><i>Remember, every knot is the normal outcome of things we go through in life. We can learn to live with the knots and untie them, one knot at a time.</i></p>

<p>JOURNALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let's write in our journals! Follow the instructions to think about what today's lesson means to you. 	<p><i>Prompts for journaling:</i></p> <p><u>Write:</u> <i>Our truth of the day.</i></p> <p><u>Answer:</u> <i>What do I want to do about knots that happen in my life?</i></p> <p><u>Draw</u> <i>a picture of someone who helps you with the knots of life.</i></p> <p><u>Draw:</u> <i>A picture of myself, like Lala, jumping rope.</i></p>
<p>Closure</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let's sing our good-bye song together, learning and doing the actions that go with it. 	<p><i>Pick a goodbye song or theme song to sing each week that has motions. Teach to children.</i></p> <p><i>Thank everyone for coming and participating. Share the date of the next session.</i></p>