

15. When the going gets tough...

INTRODUCTION

Ask children for their ideas about sports and games:

- What are the best and worst things about them?
- How important is winning?
- What might the health benefits of sport and games be?
- What might the dangers be?
- What is better – taking part or watching sport?

Listen to their answers and explain that this session is about *resilience*, that means, the toughness you need to stick to your beliefs, or to bounce back when you suffer a setback.

Can they think of a time when they nearly gave up because they didn't succeed right away?

ACTIVITY

Explain that they are now going to play a game, but during the game they are going to watch their own feelings and emotions as fortunes go up and down.

Provide the children with some simple competitive board or computer games such as draughts or, if there's sufficient room, a more physical game involving, e.g., throwing and catching. Alternatively, paper and pencils for noughts and crosses will do.

Encourage the children to start playing, probably in pairs, and stop them every so often to ask 'What are you feeling right now?'

After some minutes of play bring the games to a stop and ask the children for their reflections on such questions as:

- Who was winning?
- What did it feel like to be winning / losing?
- Why do we get these feelings?
- Why does it matter who wins? And why do some people care more than others?
- What advice might you give someone who has failed or lost?

ACTIVITY

Ask the children to think of the end of an important football match where one team has won and the other has been defeated. What do

the players look like on each side? [You could show some pictures here.] How might the manager of the losing team behave?

Encourage the children to work in twos or threes; some could script a TV interview with the losing team's manager that takes place after the match. Others could write the manager's speech to her players and add side comments from what the players are thinking and saying at each key point.

When they are ready, ask a few groups to re-enact their interviews or speeches and ask the rest of the group to comment on what is said. Is the manager a 'good loser' or does he/she blame everyone but themselves? What might happen in the next match?

CONCLUSIONS

Show the children this video of the highlights of the London 2012 Paralympics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yj4RcyeUbQQ> or 2016 in Rio: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6Cp_MCes1I

Remind the children of the idea of resilience: the toughness you need to stick to your beliefs, or to bounce back when you suffer a setback, and ask them to reflect on the qualities needed (a) by the paralympians and (b) by themselves when they suffer a setback, failure or defeat.

Instead of 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going' there is a new saying: 'When the going gets tough, the tough meditate.'

Ask the children – which version of the saying they prefer... and why?