

# Guided Imagery as an Intervention for Children in Key Stage 2

## Session outlines and information for facilitators

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# Session Outlines

## Session 1 – Using our imaginations

After a game where children introduce themselves, group rules are established. Children then explore the concepts of imagination and relaxation, and experience using guided imagery to imagine being a cat. Children share their thoughts and feelings with the rest of the group.

## Session 2 – What makes me a special person?

Using the idea of “famous people” as a starting point, children consider what it is that makes people special. They then use guided imagery to imagine being at a ceremony where different people in their lives give them a message telling them why they are special.

## Session 3 – Being happy with myself!

In this session, children explore the idea that no-one is perfect and everyone has things about themselves they would like to change, but that we have to learn to accept ourselves as we are. Using guided imagery children imagine meeting a monster who says hurtful things to them; however they are able to “burst” the speech bubbles that contain the hurtful messages, and watch the monster get smaller and smaller until it disappears.

## Session 4 – Being a good friend!

Children start by considering what qualities make a good friend or a bad friend, and then use guided imagery to be a “Friendship Fixer” – an invisible being who can freeze time and offer advice to children in the playground who are experiencing a problem with others.

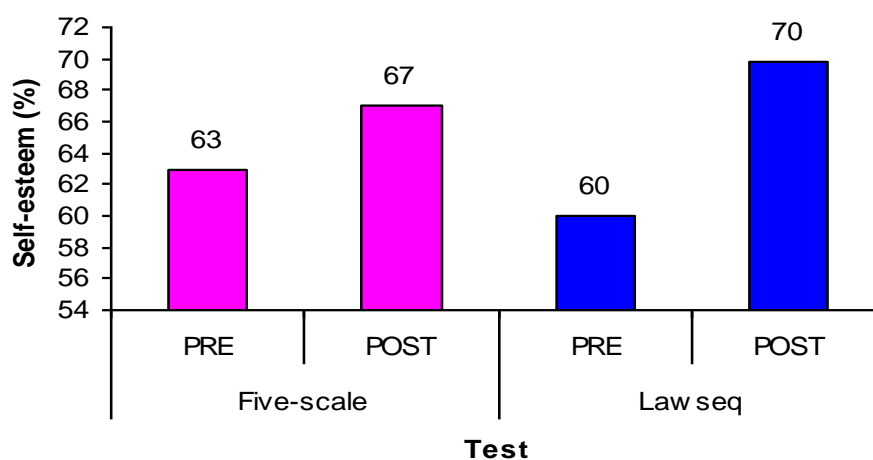
## Session 5 – How would I like to be?

In this final session, children use guided imagery to imagine being the best version of themselves that they could be. They then consider some small things they could do to try and make this achievable.

# Information about the intervention

## Where has this intervention come from?

This guided imagery intervention was devised in 2006-2007, when working as an Assistant EP for [REDACTED] Psychology Service. It was piloted in three mainstream primary schools, where results indicated that, in most cases, the guided imagery sessions had a statistically significant effect on self-esteem (as measured by two different questionnaires). The graph below shows the average change in self-esteem over the course of the project, for all 17 children:



In light of this it is hoped that the intervention can now be rolled out to more schools, with the impact being monitored in more detail. The results of this study will be fed into a national research project, which is being contributed to by trainee EPs on courses across the country.

The materials were devised with supervision from two Senior EPs in [REDACTED] and with guidance from Deborah Plummer, author of several published guided imagery resources including “Using Interactive Imagework with Children - Walking on the Magic Mountain” (1998) and “Self-Esteem Games for Children” (2006).

This current research will be conducted under the supervision of [REDACTED], academic tutor on the Nottingham University EP doctorate training course, and [REDACTED], Senior EP at [REDACTED].

\*The relaxation exercise in each session has been taken from “Using Interactive Imagework with Children – Walking on the Magic Mountain”; Deborah Plummer (1999) Jessica Kingsley Press, by kind permission of the author

# Practicalities

## How do the sessions work?

Each of the five sessions lasts between 45 and 60 minutes and follows the same structure:

- Welcome/recap of previous session
- Warm-up activity related to today's theme
- Introduce today's session and discussion around theme
- **Guided imagery:** relaxation\*, experience, normalisation
- Group discussion and sharing of experiences/thoughts
- Follow-up activity, in Imagination Diary
- Goodbyes

## Which children are suitable for the intervention?

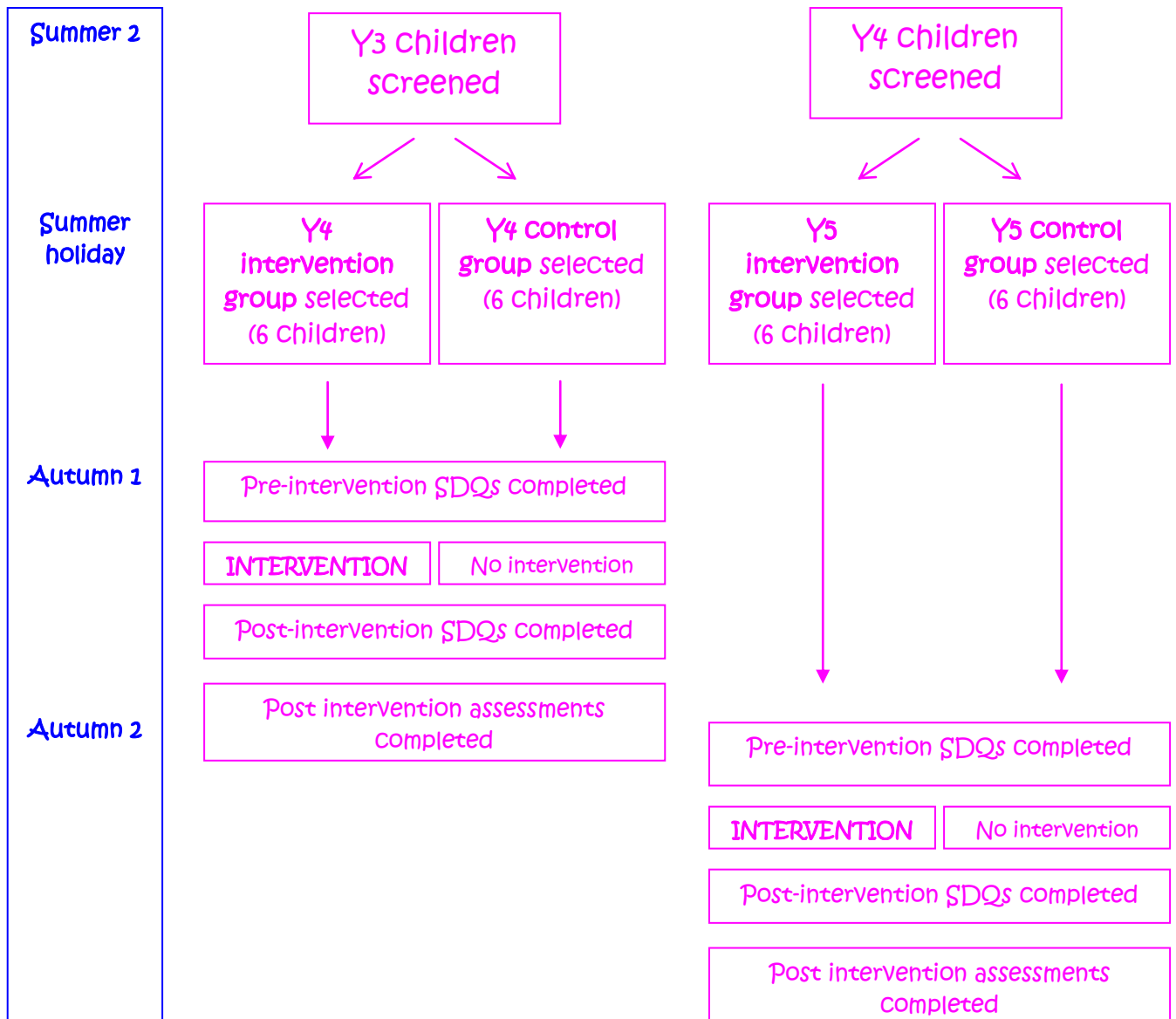
This intervention primarily aims to boost the self-esteem of children in KS2, but also has knock-on effects in other areas such as social skills and emotional literacy. Children in Year 3 and 4 will be selected for the intervention before the Summer holidays using an individual assessment of self-esteem (I will do this!). This will give two intervention groups for the Autumn term – a Year 4 group and a Year 5 group. From experience it is especially important that children are able to concentrate and focus during the guided imagery – for this reason it will also be important to carefully consider the dynamics of the group as a whole when selecting children.

## How will the impact of the intervention be measured?

The assessments of self-esteem will be repeated after the intervention, to measure the amount of change. These results will also be compared to the change in self-esteem of two groups of “control” children (a Year 4 and a Year 5 group), who will not receive the intervention.

In addition to this, you will be asked to complete a short Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for each child both before and after the intervention. The SDQ consists of 25 questions which provide information on five psychological attributes – emotion, conduct, peer relationships, hyperactivity/inattention, and pro-social behaviour.

## Timescale:



Children in Years 3 and 4 will be “screened” before the Summer holiday to see which children are most suitable for the groups. The parents/guardians of the selected children will then be asked for their consent for their child to then receive the intervention.

The guided imagery intervention will be run in the Autumn term, one before half term and one after. It is up to you whether the Year 4 group or the Year 5 group is run first.

For ethical reasons, the 12 children in the control groups should also be offered the intervention. Parents/guardians of these children will therefore be informed that their children are on a waiting list. You will be

left with the skills and resources to re-run the sessions with these children at a time convenient to you and the school.

For all 24 children in the intervention and control groups, SDQs will be completed by the child, a parent/guardian and their class teachers both before and after the intervention period.

## Running the sessions!

### Resources

You have been provided with a pack containing a book of session plans, the resources needed for each session, a CD of music to play during the guided imagery, and workbooks for each child.

Although session plans are clearly outlined in the book, they will be explained in more detail during the training session so that you are fully familiar with the structure and content of each session.

### Where should sessions take place?

Ideally in a quiet room, where children will not be distracted by outside noise, interruptions or bells. If possible children should have the option of sitting on a chair or the floor, perhaps switching between the two depending on the activity.

### How often should sessions take place?

Ideally once a week, at a regular time.

### What happens when the intervention's finished?

Once all the post-intervention assessment data has been collected and analysed, schools will be given feedback about the effects the guided imagery intervention had in their school.

**Thank you for agreeing to run sessions in your school - your cooperation and enthusiasm is much appreciated!**