

TOGETHER WE ARE BETTER



Physical activity, especially team-based sports, can play a vital role in helping primary school students recover from traumatic experiences such as natural disasters.

Incorporating sports into trauma-informed lessons also promotes trust, communication, and a sense of belonging—key components in emotional recovery. Activities focused on cooperation rather than competition can help students experience feelings of safety, support, and success. By working in pairs or small teams, children learn to rely on each other, express empathy, and feel part of a community again. This sense of connection is essential for healing, especially when students have experienced disruption, loss, or displacement.

Lesson

Sports

Grade

4

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Rebuild a sense of safety and trust through cooperative physical activities that mirror the importance of support during disasters.
- ✓ Strengthen peer relationships and develop empathy by working in inclusive teams, connecting these skills to helping others in times of crisis.
- ✓ Develop resilience by reflecting on emotional responses and identifying positive coping strategies useful in both everyday challenges and disaster situations.

Duration

Two lessons (2 x 40 Minutes)

Required Materials

- ✓ WORKSHEET (one for each student)
- ✓ Cones, balls, and bibs for small-sided games and cooperative drills
- ✓ Blindfolds or simple obstacles (optional, for challenge elements)
- ✓ Whiteboard and markers

Preparation and Implementation

- ✓ Duplicate the WORKSHEET as many as the number of students.
- ✓ Set up a playing area and divide students into balanced teams.
- ✓ Assign roles within teams (e.g., captain, defender, passer, encourager).

PROCESS

Teacher Disclaimer:

These activities are designed to support students' learning, well-being, and inclusion. Children exposed to trauma may not always feel safe or ready to participate, and forcing roles or challenges can risk retraumatization. Teachers are encouraged to use a trauma-informed approach: offer choice, provide alternative roles, use supportive language, and prioritize emotional safety so all students can learn and thrive.

FIRST LESSON

1 INTRODUCTION (5 Minutes)

- Begin with a group circle and brief discussion:
 - “Imagine a flood has washed out part of your town. How could people work together to stay safe and help each other?”
 - “How is teamwork important when things don’t go as planned, like during an earthquake or wildfire?”
- Explain that today’s games are about support, respect, and working together.

2 TEAM GAMES – COOPERATION CHALLENGES (30 Minutes)

- Set Up (5 minutes):
 - Divide students into balanced teams.
 - Assign rotating roles such as team motivator, helper, and timekeeper.
- Games Rotation (25 minutes):
 - Games can have disaster-themed storylines without triggering trauma:
 - Group Relay: “Carry the emergency supplies safely across the village without dropping them.”
 - Trust Path: “Guide your teammate through the ‘collapsed street’ safely.”
 - Team Balloon Keep-Up: “Keep the ‘rescue balloon’ in the air while a storm blows—it represents keeping hope alive.”
- Focus Areas:
 - Encourage helping, listening, and celebrating others’ efforts.
 - Teachers model how to comfort or support a peer who gets frustrated.

3 COOL-DOWN (5 Minutes)

- Guided breathing and stretching.
- Ask students:
 - “What could your team do if you were helping people in a flood?”
 - “How did your teamwork make the ‘disaster challenge’ easier?”

SECOND LESSON

4

WARM-UP & DISCUSSION (5 Minutes)

- Begin with light warm-up exercises (jumping jacks, arm circles, deep breathing) to energize and regulate students.
- Connect to disaster scenarios:
 - “Think of a wildfire. How do firefighters and neighbors work together to stay safe?”
 - “When someone struggles in the game, how is that like someone needing help during a storm?”
- Encourage 2–3 students to share examples of kindness and teamwork from last time to set a positive, supportive tone.

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TEAM GAMES – ROLE SHARING & PROBLEM SOLVING (30 Minutes)

- Introduction (3 Minutes):
 - Explain: “Today we will work together to complete challenges as a team. The goal is not to win fast but to help each other and solve problems together.”
 - Emphasize:
 - Listening to each other
 - Including everyone
 - Trying again if we fail the first time
- Cooperative Challenge Game: “Cross the River” (15 Minutes)
 - Frame it as a rescue mission:
 - Mats = ‘rocks in a flooded river’
 - Soft ball = ‘precious resource or survivor’
 - Encourage planning, communication, and care for teammates, just like a disaster response team would.
- Rotate Roles (5 Minutes)
 - Midway, pause the game:
 - Ask a different student to be the team leader (responsible for planning).
 - Another student can be the encourager (cheering and helping others).
 - Another can be the timekeeper (watching the time and reminding the group calmly).
- Second Challenge Option (Optional, 7 Minutes): “Island Rescue”
 - Students navigate to ‘safe islands’ as a flood evacuation exercise
 - Switch roles to emphasize trust, guidance, and empathy.

6

DEBRIEF AND REFLECTION (5 Minutes)

- Gather students in a circle, sitting comfortably to cool down with breathing exercises (breathe in for 4 counts, out for 4 counts).
- Give worksheets to students.
- Ask reflective questions:

- “How could your teamwork help people after an earthquake or wildfire?”
- “What did you learn about helping others stay safe?”

EVALUATION

- Observe participation, cooperation, and role-sharing during games.
- Use the **Worksheet** to assess understanding of empathy, resilience, and teamwork.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Use soft language and warm tone throughout to create a trauma-informed, safe space.
- 2 Reinforce teamwork by praising empathy and leadership over performance.
- 3 Encourage students to carry these skills into other parts of their school life (e.g., classroom group work, recess play).
- 4 Consider inviting a school counselor for co-facilitation, if available, to support students processing trauma.

ANNEX



These pictures illustrate teamwork and cooperation in sports. They can be used as discussion prompts, asking students how working together in games is similar to supporting each other during challenges or disasters.

WORKSHEET

Teacher Guidance for Worksheet Use:

This worksheet should be completed by students immediately after the activity during the reflection phase (last 5–10 minutes). Teachers may choose to collect and review the worksheets to evaluate whether learning objectives are met, or keep them in student portfolios to track progress over time. Feedback can be provided verbally in class discussion or individually in writing, depending on time and context.

Name of the Student:

Date:

Part 1: My Team Role

Answer the following questions in 1–2 sentences each:

- 1. What role did you have in your team today?**

- 2. How did you help your teammates during the activity?**

Part 2: Teamwork Reflection

Answer the following questions in 1–2 sentences each:

- 1. Describe a moment when your team worked together like a rescue team in emergency.**

- 2. What was challenging, and how did your team overcome it?**

Part 3: Personal Growth

Answer the following questions in 1–2 sentences each:

- 1. One thing I will remember about teamwork for next time is**
