



# LOST VOICES

## BREAKDOWN OF FAMILY LIFE

### USER GUIDE



Lost Voices is a FME Programme



FRESH MINDS  
EDUCATION

HEALING HEARTS & HELPING HANDS



# Introduction

This Slide can be used as your group enter the space and before you get started and move onto the next slide for welcoming.

## Welcome & Setting Up

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

- Welcome the group of young people into the set environment.
- Introduce yourself if you are unfamiliar to the group.
- Create a Group agreement.
- Introduce the topic - Breakdown of Family Life.
- Create a signal young people can use throughout presentation when needing to leave the room.

"Hello guys, welcome to today's presentation where we will be exploring breakdown of family life as a topic, the effects it can have on young people and their family dynamic, and ways of coping and supporting each other."



*If you feel it would be beneficial for the young people to have copies of the presentation, printouts or copies can be handed out at this time as well as pens for writing down additional information.*

"My name is (*your name*) and I will be leading today's presentation which we will start exploring together in just a minute.

First, let's create a group agreement for this topic together. Let's think of all the things we would like to have in place for us to feel more comfortable discussing this topic together".

- » Compassion
- » Confidentiality
- » Empathy
- » Respect
- » Time management
- » Use of language



Before moving on to the next slide agree a signal with the young people that will let you know they are ok or if they need to leave the room at any time. If they feel uncomfortable, they can leave without signalling and another leader can follow them to check they are okay.

“Just before we get started, I would like all of you together to come up with a hand signal that you can use throughout the presentation if you need to leave the room for something like needing the toilet. However, because this can be a sensitive topic for many young people if you do find yourself feeling uncomfortable you are more than welcome to leave without signalling and another team leader will assist you outside of the room.”

## LEADER NOTES



## Course Contents

### We will explore:

"Our hopes for this presentation. What is a breakdown in family life and what does it have to do with young people. We will look at some statistics and preconceptions

We will be looking at artwork created by Young People around this topic, and exploring how can creating Art help us to navigate things that happen around us.

We will be watching an animated Lost Voices Podcast, which will be followed by a discussion and activity around the topic.

Finally, we will recap on the **AMBER Approach** and ways to feel better and keep safe, before we close the session with some time for questions and a group discussion"



## Our Hopes for This Presentation

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

- Outline key learning objectives.
- Outline hopes for the presentation.
- Encourage interaction and engagement from the young people.

### Reviewing Key Learning Objectives and Hopes for the Presentations

The young people are now introduced to both you and the presentation. Now you must introduce them to their learning objectives and what you hope they will take away from these slides and discussions. .

### We want them to leave this lesson with:

- A clear understanding of what a family breakdown might be or can look like
- Knowledge around stigmas or preconceptions around the topic
- A small amount of statistical knowledge
- Understanding of ways to keep safe and feel better and hopefully support other people around us.
- Confidence to talk about tricky topics with our peers and adults.



"Our hope for all of you after this session is that you will all have a clearer understanding of what a family breakdown might be, such as divorces or family deaths.

We also want to provide you with the knowledge about stigmas and preconceptions surrounding a family breakdown so that you can understand that they aren't always necessarily accurate. We are also going to provide you with some statistical knowledge to comprehend how relevant all of this is today and to young people.

Another key aspect of this presentation is to look at ways to create a safe environment in which young people like yourselves can feel better and more supported, so that you can go on to support others around you".



Young people should be encouraged to engage in all activities to the best of their ability, (some young people may be naturally more introverted, and this can be seen as a negative). As a leader, you should encourage the young people to engage the best they can, with care and acknowledgement for their fellow peers. The most effective learning takes place in a comforting and kind environment.

"This topic will be more relevant to some of you more than others which can be a great way for us to learn from each other, I would ask that you consider that maybe your peers are struggling with something along these lines and would benefit massively from this session. It is highly encouraged that you all listen and engage to the content to the best of your abilities and that we will all be understanding as a group if anyone feels the need to take a break during this session so we can create a comfortable, kind and open environment to learn effectively."



## LEADER NOTES

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# What is a breakdown in the family?

## TRANSITIONING INTO THIS SLIDE:

From this slide, it is encouraged to open the conversation to all the young people in the room. Discuss the definitions of the breakdown of a family, the young people’s opinions, and any relevant information they are willing to share.

Leader can use a flipchart and pens to list what comes up in this brief discussion.

“So, let’s delve into everything now, first let’s start with a definition ‘What is a breakdown in family?’”

Prompt the young people to give suggestions and ideas on the definition, allow time for discussion.

Leader can suggest, in the case the group is not forthcoming with ideas – *Divorce. separation, incarceration, sibling separation, entering the care system, death etc.*

Then turn attention to the presentation slide and discuss these points.

“From looking at the slide we can see that there are various different family situations that we may find ourselves living in, these may be formed due to a relationship breakdown between parents, guardians or other family members but also can arise from other scenarios such as a death, addiction, illness or loss of job or home”.

## LEADER NOTES

Always allow the young people time between slides in case they need to ask any questions.





## What does it have to do with Young People?

### LEADERS KEY POINTS:

This can be a sensitive area to discuss when young people are presented with information that is directly linked to them. Language is something to be extremely mindful of when talking about breakdowns in family life; bereavements, loss of any kind, or addiction. It is important to approach this topic with care and understand that these situations are out of any child or young person's control, these decisions were made for them and therefore, need more care and caution when discussing these topics.

This slide is important to link the topics of family breakdown to the young people in the room as well as encouraging their voices to be heard by making space and time for them to discuss this area both in small groups and as an open group discussion to reflect on their ideas and opinions.

"So, what does all of this have to do with you all as young people? Well as you are a young person, you are likely to experience at least one of these events in your life and you may find it difficult to open up to an adult about how it has affected you or your thoughts and feelings surrounding your experiences"

"You may find you have feelings such as anger or discomfort, if there is a separation between your parents, these are vital times for connection and support, and working with these Lost Voices resources, we can see how young people can turn to other young people who may be able to relate and form a positive friendship from these situations"

- Why do you think these experiences have such a big impact on young people?
- What do you think are the effects of a breakdown in family life?
- What emotions do you expect to feel during this time?



### Allow time for questions or queries.

It is found that young people often feel they have no control over these things happening in their lives, and this is sadly true, things often happen around the young person, and they have no say in the matter. This can be difficult, young people want the adults in their life to just talk to them about these things, and not to exclude them from the conversation.

Having a space like this where we can open the conversation around these topics is going to greatly impact our wellbeing and help us to gain resilience as we work through hard things, connected to others.

**LEADER NOTES**

Lined area for leader notes.







# Statistics and Preconceptions

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

- Using statistics can give deeper understanding and a more informative foundation when discussing topics such as breakdowns in family life.
- Helps to see how relatable a certain situation may be.
- It is important to remember statistics in any case are collected from real people, understanding and an upheld level of respect when discussing these statistics and/or anything related to this topic of conversation should always be paramount.

Using this slide, it will be the optimum time to create a supportive environment by allowing the young people to share experiences and stories. Introduce this slide by talking through the statistics around divorce and its prevalence. Allowing the young people to visualise and converse about these figures can help them to understand how common these types of events are and show them that they are not alone if they are currently experiencing something similar.

Effects of family breakdowns are also presented in this slide which is a key discussion. Some of the effects include mental health issues and alcohol use. It is important to approach this topic in an understanding and sympathetic manner.



"This next slide is going to help all of us to understand how common things like family breakdowns really are.

It would be great if we could all keep in mind that we might not necessarily be going through these experiences ourselves but that maybe the person sitting beside you is.

So, I would ask that we have supportive, respectful conversations and approach this area with an open mind and heart. "



"From the slide we can see that divorce rates here in Northern Ireland are increasing. There could be many reasons for this for example it is more accepted than it was 10 years ago.

"London contained the largest proportion of lone parent families compared with the other regions in the UK in 2019 (19.1%), followed by Northern Ireland (18.0%)"



“We can also see that this does in fact influence the children and young people that go through these divorces with their parents or guardians. The effects include emotional difficulties and these young people, like yourselves, can experience anxieties and mood disorders which can be difficult at such a young age.

It can be hard to speak up about your feelings and your situations at home and that's why it's great to have each other to talk to because you are all similar ages, and you might be able to relate to each other better.

**Some stigmas that might stop Young People from reaching out might be:**

- Sometimes we feel that we are the only ones going through family breakdown.
- Maybe we feel like we can't talk about it because we feel embarrassed or ashamed.
- Sometimes we might blame ourselves for something that was out of our control.
- Sometimes there are positives to come along with the negatives, and we might feel guilt for being 'okay'.
- Does anybody have any questions or thoughts that they would like to share with the group?"
- Why might these things impact on our emotions and our mental health?
- What do you think about these statistics? Did they shock you? Were you not surprised? "

**LEADER NOTES**



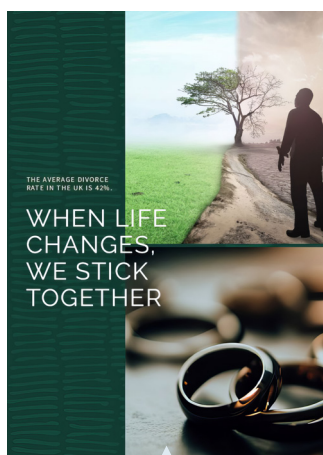
**SLIDE:  
7**

## How can creating Art help?

Let's have a look at how artwork can be used to express ourselves and to connect with one another.

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

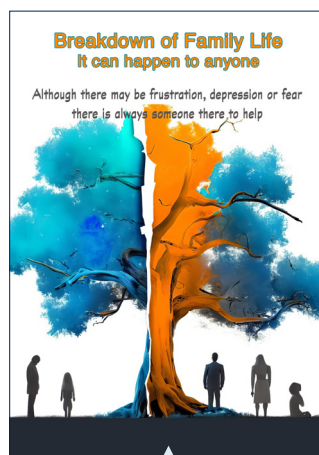
- What do the colours say to you?
- What do the images say to you, and how the artist has used them?
- What does the text used make you feel?
- What does the poster, say to you? What is it about?
- Is there a particular poster that stands out to you?



**Bonds That Won't Break**



**Broken Family Broken Life**



**Changing Colours of Family Trees**



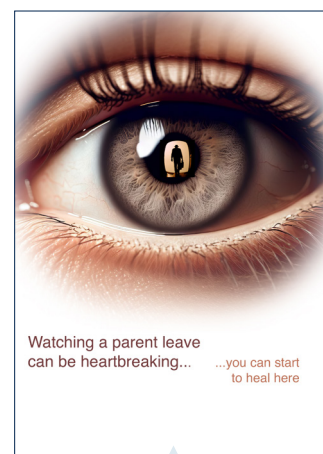
**In Between**



**Different Doors**



**Slipping Pieces**



**Watching You Leave**



## Activity:

"Let's get into different pairs, half the group is going to choose images they feel would be good in a poster, the poster should aim to connect with other young people, to let them know that are not alone in whatever they are experiencing, and that there is support for them available."



Leader can organise the group into A's or B's, each pair will have an A and B.

### Group A:

You will be gathering and choosing images that speak to you, this might be 1 or many images collated to make one poster with a cohesive message.

**You will be thinking about:**

- » Colours
- » Shapes
- » Shadows
- » Styles
- » Tone
- » Location
- » Theme
- » If a person(s) in images:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity etc.

### Group B:

You will be choosing slogans, or text that you would like to see on a poster. These should have a clear and concise message, with the hopes to resonate with young people. They should reflect the theme, and offer direction to support (Resources) like the Lost Voices Support Page

**You will be thinking about:**

- » Colours
- » Shapes
- » Shadows
- » Tone
- » Font
- » Size
- » Rhyme
- » Sentence structure
- » Storytelling
- » Impact
- » Flow

"Now we are going to work with our partner to put our ideas together, we are going to create at least 1 final design joining our two ideas together.

Think about what text your partner has created, does it work with the images you have chosen? Once you have agreed on what aspects can be merged, draft your final poster design"



Leader allows time for this activity to be completed. Before the group shares with each other.

*"So, we are going to share our ideas with one another, let's work from (PAIR 1 onwards). We would love to hear why you have chosen the ...." (Refer to bullet points).*

"What part of the **AMBER Approach** have we just explored together?

We have gone through all the things in AMBER's name today.

We can see how **EXPRESS** can help us to work through feelings, emotions, and our thoughts around things. Using art to create these posters, we engaged with each other and came up with ways to help connect with other young people. This has been a demonstration of how **ANCHOR** shows up for us in group settings, connecting with our pair in the safe space we have created.

For a lot of people, art can be a way to **RELAX**, when we are focused and creating something this can be very therapeutic, encouraging space to **BREATHE**.

Through the creation of art, we have all explored the **MOVE** in **AMBER**. As we have moved our creative energy onto our pages."

## LEADER NOTES



# Lost Voices Podcast



## LEADERS KEY POINTS

Watching the Lost Voices podcast can allow young people to feel related to, as it is young people discussing issues in relation to how they affect young people.

These podcasts may also highlight topics that may not have been previously discussed, giving young people an opportunity to delve deeper into the topic i.e., Breakdowns in Family Life.

“Let’s watch a Lost Voices animated podcast together. The lost Voices Group opened conversation for young people around this topic, and created safe space for sharing thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

Let’s go back to our group agreement and the points we agreed on around empathy and respect, lets ensure we are being kind to each other while we watch this together and when we share with each other on reflection.”



**Watch Podcast**

## LEADER NOTES





## Discussion

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

This is the time to allow for a discussion following the podcast. Leader should allow for group to offer their initial thoughts before prompting. See below for prompt questions:

- » Why do you think the Lost Voices group wanted to make this podcast?
- » Why is it relevant to us?
- » What did you like about what they had to say?
- » What did you not like about what they shared?
- » What do you think they want adults to know from this podcast?
- » Do you think the podcast was informative/ relatable?
- » What have you taken away from the podcast?
- » Do you think young people need to be included in the conversation?
- » How did the poem make you think/ feel?
- » Do you think you would like to bring up the conversation up with the people around you?
- » Do you feel more encouraged and equipped to connect with other people around this topic?
- » What do you think about what the group shared about things they could do to help or support the people around them?
- » What coping methods/ measures have you picked up from the podcast?

### LEADER NOTES

---

---

---

---

---





## Activity (Suggested- Time Permitting)

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

Additional activities can be found in the Mental Health Booster Booklet.



### Activity: 'Circle of Control'

#### Learning Objectives:

- Give us an insight into what is under our control and what we may need help with when we feel out of control.
- Thinking about our strengths and our worries within a space where resources like Lost Voices are available.
- Understand what aspects of our lives are out of our control and how that affects our emotions and daily activities.

*"Take a sheet of printed paper and some markers.*

*In the bubble labelled 'I can control', write all the things relevant to the topic discussed that you believe you can control, e.g., breakdown in family life – I can control what healthy habits I take up to make myself feel better*

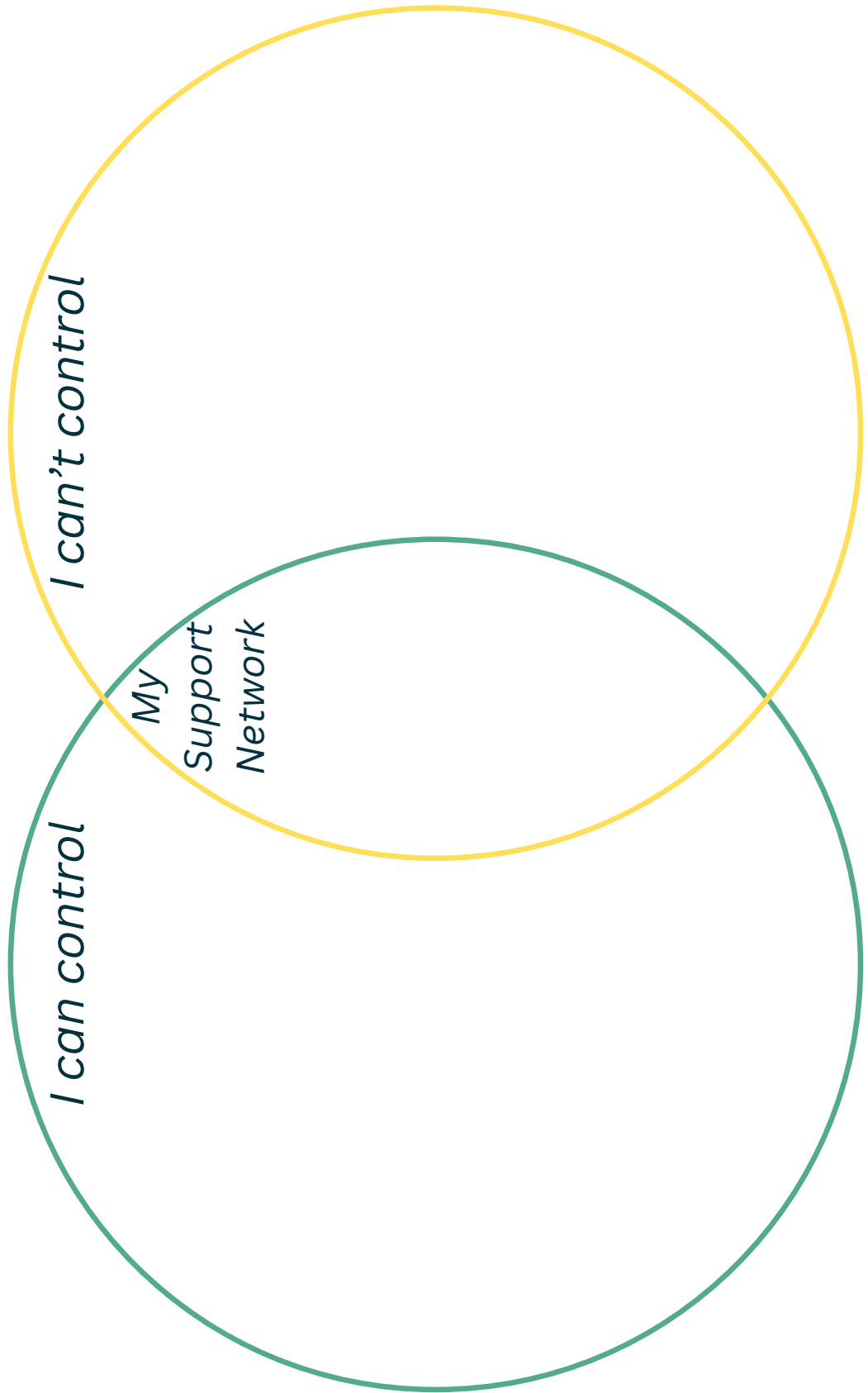
*In the bubble labelled 'I cannot control', write down anything you feel you cannot control within your environment e.g.; I cannot control the actions of other people.*

*We can share our answers with each other if we would like to, but we do not need to if you don't feel comfortable doing so".*





## Circle of Control Activity.





# Amber Approach

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

Leader should open this up to the group and ask what they can tell us about each part of **AMBER**'s Name.

"So, we looked at the **AMBER Approach** before we started looking at these topics.

Let us recap on what **AMBER** is and how we use it"

Leader should open this up to the group and ask what they can tell us about each part of **AMBER**'s Name.



### A - ANCHOR

Anchoring, we can anchor through co-regulation, this is from friendships, family members, teachers, youth workers etc.



### M - MOVE

Moving your body releases built up energy through exercise, making art or music. Taking care of yourself both inside and outside, making your bed, having a shower.



### B - BREATHE

Breathing is the crucial link between mind and body. Taking space and time to breathe can help calm the mind.



### E- EXPRESS

Express yourself safely. Expressing through crying, talking, creativity can release difficult emotions.



### R- RELAX

Finding activities that help you relax and feel restored are important to aid your body regulate and process what is going on within your life.



**SLIDE:  
12**

## Ways we can feel better & stay safe

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

Sometimes it's hard to express how we feel or to share things we may be going through. We may find it easier to approach tricky topics through an activity or use an activity to alleviate those emotions.

Engaging in a hobby or a practice whether that be inside or outside of the home, it can help us to feel better and allows time to process and heal from the experiences we might have had or are currently going through.

"We have talked a lot about the facts and figures attached to family breakdowns. All those things can be quite negative and difficult to talk about but hopefully with more talks like this it will get a lot easier.

Now we're going to talk about some of the things that we can do to make ourselves feel better or that could give us a little break from our home life if we needed it. You could use these even if you are not being affected by today's topic, maybe there's other areas of your life that make you feel anxious or stressed and you need an outlet to feel more comfortable and supported."



"From the PowerPoint, we can see some examples like speaking to a trusted adult or friend, joining a youth club or taking up a new hobby. It is important to keep in mind that whatever you decide to use in terms of making yourself feel better should be safe and healthy. Creating healthy habits and cycles will benefit you all enormously in the long run.

For example, when I feel stressed after ..... I will talk to ..... Or go play ..... Or go to .....

Now that I've shared what I do to make myself feel less anxious and more settled and supported I want you guys to give me some examples of what you think works best."



Gather everyone's ideas and write them on a board where everyone can see them so that the young people can make their own lists to promote healthy habits for when they need them.

LEADER NOTES

Lined area for leader notes.



## Questions

It is important to be open and honest with the young people and if there are any questions that are of a serious nature, or you believe show there is something more harmful going on within the home then it is best to refer these onto the appropriate organisations or leaders.

## LEADER NOTES



## Group Discussion

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

It is beneficial to give the young people time to talk to each other and to yourself as a type of debrief.

Topics such as these can create discomfort when talking about them for the first time and allowing time for self-thought and self-reflection can ease these feelings before continuing with day-to-day activities.

## LEADER NOTES



## LEADERS KEY POINTS

"I just want to thank you all for taking the time to listen and respect the talks we've had today. I hope you can all take something away with you and feel more supported and motivated to make a positive change.

I'm going to give you guys some time to talk amongst yourselves about everything mentioned today and feel free to come talk to me and ask loads of questions if you would like to".



## LEADER NOTES



[www.fmelostvoices.com](http://www.fmelostvoices.com)

Lost Voices is a FME Programme

**FME** FRESH MINDS  
EDUCATION  
HEALING HEARTS & HELPING HANDS