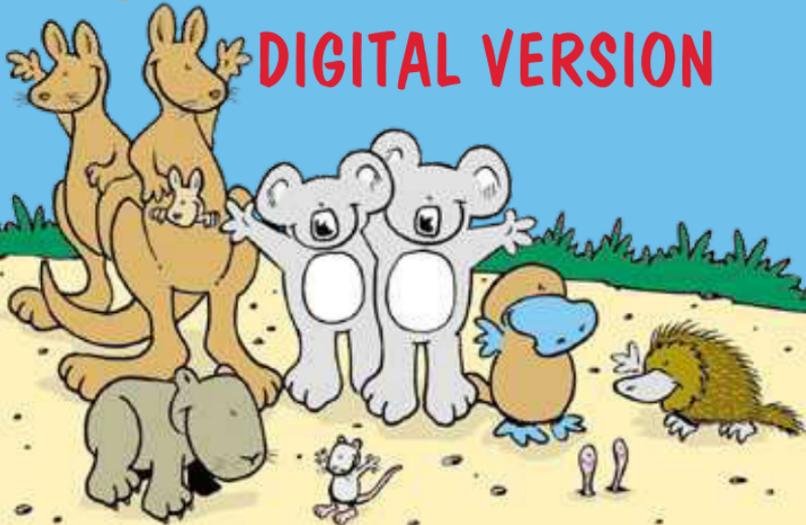


MATES TRAITS

DIGITAL VERSION



St Luke's
Innovative
Resources

Concept and booklet: Russell Deal
Illustrations and design: Mat Jones
Editing: Karen Bedford

Welcome to the
Digital Version of

MATES TRAITS



St Luke's Innovative Resources is delighted to bring you the interactive, versatile, digital version of this conversation-building resource, first published as a hard copy card set packaged in a polypropylene box.

You can:

- swipe through the digital cards, one at a time
- swipe through a row of thumbnail images at the bottom of the screen
- bookmark/tag images
- write, scribble or draw on the digital cards—you may want to circle a relevant statement or scribble notes as a card is discussed
- add and drag notes anywhere on the images
- highlight, draw and write in multiple colours
- take a screen shot and access the image in your photo gallery
- send the image to the person you are working with so they have a copy
- print the image and mail it to the person so they have a hard copy
- save the image in your files as a record of your conversation.

How can I use this digital tool remotely with groups or individuals?

If you are running groups or meetings using Skype, Zoom or other similar video conferencing tools, you can use our digital cards and tools in a number of different ways.

A good place to start is to give the group or person some time to get to know the cards:

- The facilitator can share their screen, and scroll through the images so everyone can see.
- Point out the different features of the card set including the types of images, the format of the words (if any), the suits (if relevant) and any other unique features.
- Show them some of the features such as the scribble and text tools.

Deliberate Selection

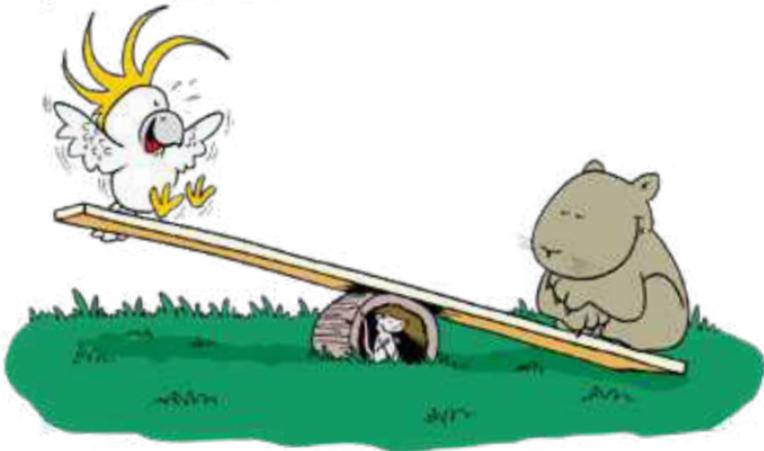
- As you scroll through the cards, invite the person or group to pick cards that jump out at them for any reason. Perhaps it is the image that catches their attention. Perhaps it is a word or a question, or some other quality of the card. It may be a card they are curious about, or would find most helpful to focus on, or think is very important, or it may be a card that matches something they are thinking about or experiencing at the moment, or even a card that expresses something they have never thought about before.
- As the facilitator, you may wish to choose one or two cards to prompt an activity or discussion.

Random Selection

An alternate way of getting activities started is to select images randomly, for example:

- Ask each person to close their eyes and randomly say, 'Stop!' as the facilitator swipes through the images.
- Or ask each person to choose a number between 1 and X (X being the number of cards in the set). This is the number of their randomly selected card.
- Or use the timer on your phone set to a chosen interval—5 seconds, 10 seconds, etc. Stop on the image that is on screen when the timer dings.

Many videoconferencing tools allow you to put people into groups using 'breakout' rooms. So you may want to invite two or more people to discuss what a particular card means to them, and then come back to the whole group.



Some questions for reflection and conversation

Whether you use a deliberate or random selection method, you can then build the conversation by inviting each person to read or comment on their card, if they wish.

Facilitators can then ask individuals or groups questions like:

- What does this card mean to you?
- Have you thought about the topic on the card before?
- On a scale of 1-10 how important is this to you?
- Can you think of a time when this card was particularly relevant?
What happened?
- When this is happening, what is the effect?
- When this is not happening, what is the effect?
- Do you know anyone who is really good at this?
- What do they do?
- What is one simple thing you could do today or tomorrow that would make a difference?
- How will you notice the effects? (Some people ask for feedback, and others prefer to notice carefully how it feels inside themselves and what the effect is on others.)

In the booklet written especially for the card set you have chosen, you will find a lot more information. It includes the purpose of this card set, its origins and practice base, things you should take into consideration before using the cards, and many creative ideas for using the cards. Please adapt the suggestions to the digital environment.

**Don't hesitate to call us for support
in using this digital resource.**



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Innovative
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Acknowledgements

Ah, friendships!

A number of friendships were required to build *Mates Traits*. Some new ones were forged and, hopefully, none were lost.

Karen Bedford (editor of *Mates Traits*) and I shared a cramped, cluttered office and built a creative working relationship punctuated frequently by mutual accusations of who had lost which item. Despite the endemic madness of publishing, our friendship remains.

Cristina Gay (at time of publication) manages the complexities of Innovative Resources' purchasing and accounts. One day she introduced us to a family friend, Mat Jones, who is an illustrator. We are so pleased that she did! Mat worked patiently with us over many months to bring *Mates Traits* alive with his colourful, humorous cartoons.

We appreciate the flair and professionalism with which Mat created the cards, stickers and colouring book in the *Mates Traits* set. Mat remains an important mate and colleague of Innovative Resources.

Thanks are also due to the rest of the team at Innovative Resources who all contributed to the success of this resource—Georgena

Stuckenschmidt, Chris Cain, Kim Cairncross and Caitlyn Lehman.

Everything that comes off the press is the result of teamwork and reminds us that 'no man or woman is an island' and that there is tremendous strength and learning in friendships and teams.

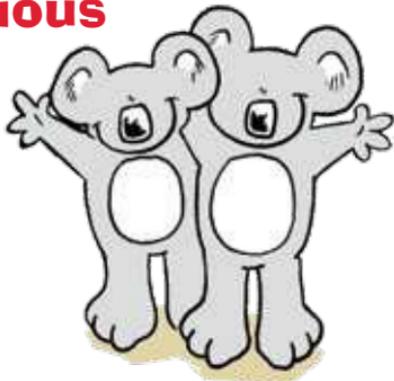
Many thanks also to all our friends, both inside and outside St Luke's (now a division of Anglicare Victoria) who provided feedback on the idea for *Mates Traits* in a rolling series of informal focus groups. In fact, we probably should have included an extra card as a tribute: 'We give robust feedback!'

Finally, thanks to another group of friends—our 'packers' who tirelessly collate and box up our card sets. Thanks gang.

Russell Deal
Former Creative Director



Friendship is precious



Despite libraries full of works about friendship—literature, poetry, philosophy and psychology—for many people it remains a precious but elusive dream.

From road rage to global terrorism, surely history tells us that we know less now about friendship, despite the billions of words written about it, than our ancestors.

Why then produce yet another work about friendship? What difference could it possibly make when the evidence for the absence of friendship surrounds us every day in the form of bullying, intimidation, violence and harassment?

A set of cards itself will not prevent another 'September 11'. However, the implications of giving up, of becoming fatalistic about the power of aggression and ill-will are unimaginable. We need to keep building and celebrating our houses of friendship, even if they are periodically damaged or destroyed by catastrophes.

Jesus once told a simple story about a man who was robbed and bashed by thieves. While some turned a blind eye, this man was cared for and befriended by a member of his social group's historical enemies. After 2000

years the story of 'The Good Samaritan' still stands as a powerful benchmark in defining real friendship.

A simple story. A simple set of cards. Simple reminders of the fundamentals of friendship—love, respect, kindness, tolerance, connectedness—fundamentals that have the potential to be life-changing.

This is the hope summed up in Innovative Resources' motto: 'seriously optimistic'. We are indeed 'seriously optimistic' in our belief that some things that are simple, small and of seemingly little consequence can make a profound difference.

Mates Traits grew out of such thinking. Rather than fatalistically accepting the tyranny of terrorism, hatred and war, perhaps we could make a start by creating a tool that identifies and celebrates some of the common components of friendship.

- What is it that friendship does?
- How do friends behave towards each other?
- What is it in the chemistry of friendship that enables them to survive the rough times?
- What generates the love, care and concern that leads to generosity and acts of selflessness?

Mates Traits aims at building small microcosms of friendship in the school ground, in neighbourhoods, in sports clubs and in families. We may not be able to prevent international bullying but perhaps we can help to prevent the

small, everyday bullying that occurs in schools and families.

Mates Traits is a light-hearted picture of some of the possible components of friendship. It uses delightful, colourful cartoons of Australian birds and animals to suggest ways that friendships can be built.

Mates Traits cards, stickers and the pages of the colouring book can be used as 'conversational prompts' to help uncover the secrets of how to maintain genuine, mutually—enriching friendships.

Enjoy the humour. Indeed, we hope you laugh out loud at the cartoons. But we also hope you use the opportunity offered by *Mates Traits* to examine the significance of friends in your life and what you can do to ensure you don't take them for granted.

If *Mates Traits* works in this way perhaps it will help make sure 'good Samaritans' will be found in playgrounds and possibly even in international conflicts.



Who might use Mates Traits?

Do you know anyone who hasn't got any friends at all? If there are such people—and there can't be that many—it's difficult to imagine how they could be happy. Even thinking about being happy but having no friends to share this with is really hard.

Most of us depend on our friends for lots of things and happiness is just one thing that goes hand-in-hand with friendships. But while friendships are a very important part of the lives of most of us, it is easy to take them for granted. We like having friends, we enjoy their company, we learn a lot from them and they help make us who we are. But have you ever stopped to think about how friendships are made? How does a friendship start? How do we choose who we will be friends with? How do we get to know people well? What makes a friendship resilient; able to cope with the ups and downs?

We know how we feel when something goes wrong. When friendships fall apart we can feel anger, sadness, loneliness and a mixture of many other feelings. But can we reverse a friendship that is going badly? How can we keep friendships happy and healthy?

Mates Traits is a very simple but unusual tool that helps us think about the elements of good friendships. Being able to identify the dimensions

of friendships is perhaps the first step in knowing how to make good choices in the friends we make.

Practising the traits mates use can help us avoid the sadness of things going wrong—such as bullying, loneliness, despondency and manipulation.

Mates Traits is a tool that can be used by:

- Parents—to build conversations with their children about safe friendships (and how kids and their parents can stay friends!)
- Teachers—to develop healthy, cooperative learning environments and conversations about values that can prevent bullying and self-harm
- Youth workers—on camps and adventure activities to build trusting relationships and celebrate the friendships that have emerged
- Family workers—to strengthen sibling relationships and prepare caregivers' children for the pressures of foster care
- Sports coaches—to develop teamwork
- Social workers/school welfare staff—in problem-solving and decision-making activities
- Pastoral care workers—as a means of dealing with loss and grief.

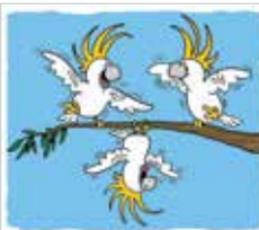
The complete set of cards



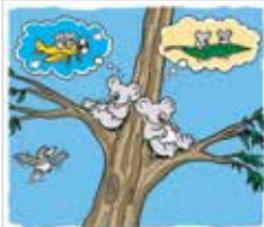
We are great mates



We sing



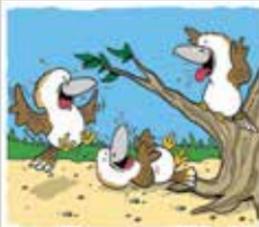
We dance



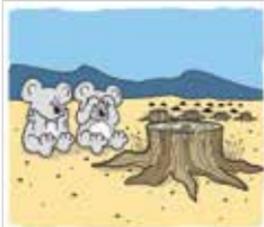
We imagine



We make plans



We laugh



We cry



We struggle together



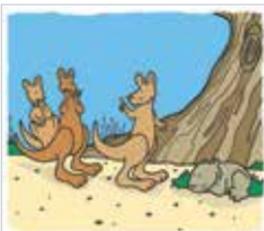
We celebrate



We give each other space



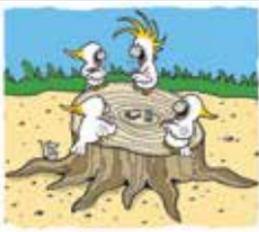
We are proud of each other



We respect each other



We cooperate



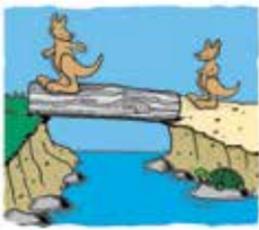
We talk



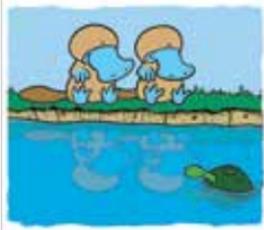
We share



We care about each other



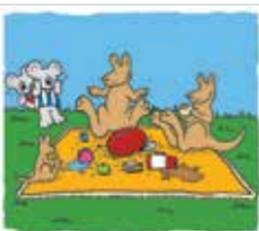
We encourage each other



We are similar



We are different



We forgive



We surprise



We are loyal



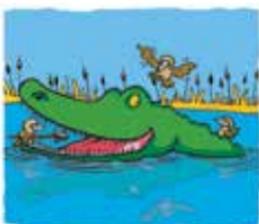
We have fun



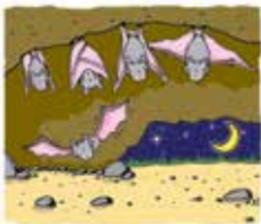
We want the best for each other



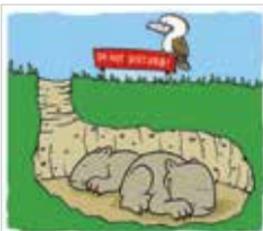
We care about others



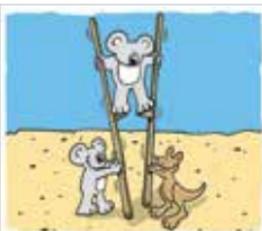
We trust



We hang out together



We can be quiet



We support each other



We have our moments



We do things together



We share our strengths



Using the cards

No rules, no instructions, no recipes!

This tends to be the approach that underpins all the seriously optimistic materials published by Innovative Resources. These resources depend upon the creativity of the person introducing them and we don't wish to diminish this creativity by suggesting that they have to be used in a certain way. For this reason we don't write instruction manuals or insist that training is necessary before using our resources.

Your creativity is the key ingredient and if you enjoy *Mates Traits* you are likely to discover unique ways of introducing them.

We do, however, like to publish suggestions for using our materials, and in our online newsletter and on our website we like to include stories from others who have found useful or novel ways of incorporating card sets into their work.

We would also say that *Mates Traits*, like all our other materials, is not a panacea. It is not guaranteed to produce the results you might be hoping for. As with any tool, it needs to be used respectfully and with an awareness of the needs of the individuals and the culture of the group using it.

Using any tool also requires a certain amount of risk-taking or experimentation. If the cards

don't work, put them away. However, you may also decide to talk about why it was they weren't useful in this situation. Such a conversation may provide valuable insights into what might work more effectively next time.

Each of the *Mates Traits* cards can be used individually to build a conversation. A teacher might select one card as a 'trait of the day' or 'trait of the week' and build a range of learning activities around each card. Alternatively, the cards can be stacked and used in sequence to discuss the different components of friendship.

However, we have discovered that cards generally work well when the entire set (or part of a set) is spread out on a table so they can be readily scanned by an individual or small group. Once scanned, sorting or selection can then take place in a variety of ways.

Some of the questions you can ask to help build conversations around the meaning and significance of friendships might be:

- What are the most important things you think friends should do together?
- Do you do different things with different friends? How does this feel? Is it okay?

- Do you have a best friend? What do you do with that person? What do you not do? Are there other things you would like to do together?
- Can you become friends with someone you don't like? Which of the cards describes something that would help in this situation? Have you ever done this before?
- How do you go about making friends?
- Can you have good friends who are very different from you? How does this work?
- Have you ever lost a friend? What happened? Is there anything that you would now do differently?
- What do you think makes a friend different from a mere acquaintance?
- Why do you think some friendships last a long time and other friendships just seem to fade away?
- How is it that some people seem to stay very good friends for a long time even when they don't see each other much?
- If there were a series of friendship awards to be handed out, which of the 32 *Mates Traits* would you like to win? In other words, what do you think you do well with your friends?

Sometimes children who are targets of bullying are confused about friendships. They may feel that they have done something to cause the bullying or they may think that bullying behaviour is something that friends do.

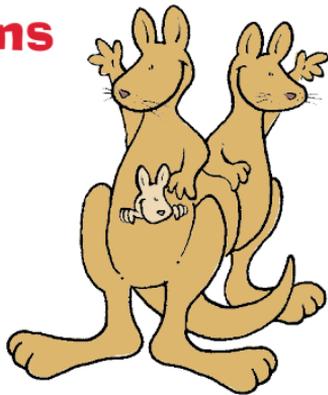
Some questions that might help a child in this situation are:

- All friendships have up and down times and friends can hurt us at times. But is the behaviour of this other person something that real friends do? Would a real friend later regret their behaviour?
- Can a friendship be one-sided or allow one person to dominate another? What do fairness and equality mean in friendship?
- When should friends say they are sorry? And when should we forgive our friends for their mistakes?
- Do you think there are times when we just can't be friends with someone? What is the best way to do this?
- When is it important to be a friend to yourself? How might you do this?

More great questions about friendships

Here are some more really intriguing questions to get you thinking and talking about the nature of friendships:

- Can anyone live without friends?
- What is the difference between a friend and an acquaintance?
- What is the difference between being friendly and having friends?
- What makes a really good friend?
- What do you think is the maximum number of really good friends any one person can have?
- How many really good friends do you have?
- What do you do together?
- Can children be good friends with adults? What about with their parents?
- Who is your best friend? How would you describe them?
- Do good friends argue? How can you argue and still remain friends?
- Why do friends fall out?



- Why do some friendships last a long time?
 - What is the difference between healthy friendships and dangerous friendships?
 - Do boys have different friendships from girls?
- Mates Traits* contains 32 ideas about the sorts of things friends do together. It certainly doesn't pretend to be a comprehensive list of all the characteristics of friendship. In fact, the 32 cards might suggest other characteristics of friendships that you think should be included:
- Are there other characteristics of friendships not included that you think could have been? What are they? How would you draw the cartoon for this additional trait?

- What else intrigues you about friendships?
- Has *Mates Traits* helped you think about your friendships in different ways? Can you think of any other interesting questions about friendships?
- Are there people you would like to become friends with but for some reason you haven't?
- Why would you like to become their friends in particular?
- How do you think you could start a friendship with them?
- Do you think you could be a better friend? How? To whom?
- Do you think it is important to have lots of friends? Is it okay to have just a couple of friends? Which do you prefer? Why?



Learning through games

So much can be learned through games. Games can so easily involve pairing, group work, body movement, silence, music, storytelling, and general hilarity. These activities open up trust and alternative ways of learning, releasing participants from the predominantly linguistic or mathematical learning styles that have until recently dominated our educational curricula. Here are just a couple of ideas for games. You will undoubtedly be able to adapt or invent many more.

The 'memory' game

Just about everybody knows the memory game or 'Fish'. It is the game where the aim is to turn over two matching cards from a pack which has been shuffled and randomly spread face down on a table. It is a great game for even very young children and it can be played with two sets of *Mates Traits* cards.

We have a non-competitive version where the aim of the group is to make sure each player finishes the game with at least one matching pair, so each player can help the others with their memory.



When someone turns up a matching pair normally they get a second turn but in our version of the game to get a second turn you have to tell a story about the pair of cards that have been turned up. For example, participants can be asked to tell a story about a time they (with a friend) did what was on the pair of cards. Say, for example, the 'We sing' cards were turned up, that player would be asked to tell a story about a time they sang with a friend. If they can't think of an example, another player who can gets the second turn.

The memory game is a simple yet fun way of reinforcing positive pro-social messages for young children and preventing corrosives like bullying.

The 'find-your-partner' game

Again, two sets of *Mates Traits* are needed. The group is divided into two with the same number of participants in each group. Each group receives and distributes a matching set of cards, with each participant receiving one card.

The first challenge is for the partners to find each other. This can be done by requiring each person to act out what is on the card as the players mingle. The only question permitted is, 'Does your card say ...?' when someone thinks they have found their partner.

The second challenge is then for each pair to act out their *Mates Traits* cards in front of the whole group, followed by stories and discussion about why this can be an important characteristic of a friendship.

A range of further activities can then be built around the matching pair. Perhaps participants might identify a person who embodies that trait for them or write a short story or create a collage around one of the friendship themes.

When we are visited by strangers

Sometimes knowing how to become friends with someone new can be very difficult. It might be a new person who joins a class or sports team. It might be going to a party where there are people you have never met before. Or it could even be that cousins you don't know well are coming to stay or that Mum and Dad are foster parents and will sometimes care for children who are complete strangers in your home.

How we make friends can be a tricky business at the best of times. But when new relationships are thrust upon us and perhaps threaten other long-standing relationships or routines, negotiating a successful pathway into a new friendship can be very difficult indeed.

Rather than merely accepting that such new 'imposed' friendships will work out somehow, *Mates Traits* provides a way of taking pre-emptive action. The introduction of *Mates Traits* into a classroom or family conversation before the new arrival appears can provide a positive context that may well increase the likelihood of mutual acceptance.



In foster care, for example, sometimes it is the children of the caregivers who feel put out when new children arrive and they are expected to share their home, their toys and their parents. In *Mates Traits* perhaps there is the opportunity to build a positive expectation of what new friendships may mean and to talk about ways of being friends even if the foster children disrupt some family routines.

Mates Traits colouring book

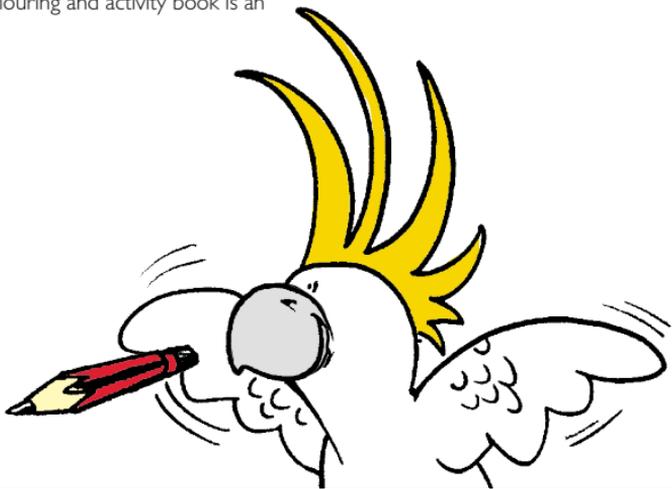
The *Mates Traits* illustrations have also been used to create a delightful colouring and activity book. The same humorous Australian birds and animals from the card set appear on each right-hand page of the colouring book—this time as line drawings ready to be coloured in. The phrase that goes with each illustration is featured on each left-hand page so that children can add stickers, paste in other pictures and write about all their friends.

Teachers, parents and care-givers will find that the *Mates Traits* colouring and activity book is an

enjoyable way to get across positive, pro-social messages and build values-based discussion for even very young children.

Used separately or in conjunction with the cards and stickers, the colouring book is a great way for children to engage actively with the important friendship skills that are such an integral part of building emotional literacy.

A set of *Mates Traits* stickers comes with each colouring book.

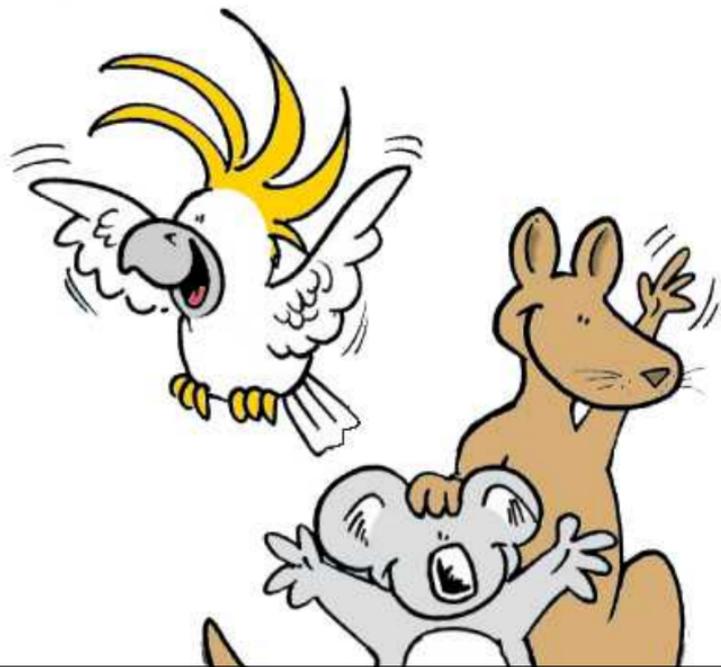


About St Luke's Innovative Resources

St Luke's Innovative Resources is part of Anglicare Victoria, a community services organisation providing child, youth and family services in Victoria and New South Wales, Australia. We publish card sets, stickers, books, and digital and tactile materials to enrich conversations about feelings, strengths, relationships, values and goals. Our resources are for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, ability or age. They are used by counsellors, educators, social workers, mentors, managers and parents. We also offer 'strengths approach' training and 'tools' workshops, both online and in-person.

www.innovativeresources.org





First published in 2003. Reprinted in 2006, 2008, 2015, 2019 and 2020



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St Luke's Innovative Resources acknowledges the Jaara people of Dja Dja Wurrung country, the traditional custodians of the land upon which our premises are located and where our resources are developed and published. We pay our respects to the elders—past, present and future—for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and other First Nations peoples. We must remember that underneath this earth, upon which we so firmly stand, this is, was and always will be, the traditional land of First Nations peoples.

Mates Traits is a set of 32 colourful, light-hearted cards that describe some of the characteristics of real friendships. Using delightful cartoon characters of Australian birds and animals created by artist Mat Jones, *Mates Traits* attempts to unlock the complexities of friendship-making.



What are the strengths that make friendships work?
How can you make new friends? Do things always go the way you planned?

Mates Traits can be used by people of all ages to open up conversations about relationships, social skills, communication, personalities and interests. Here is a truly unique way of working towards overcoming bullying.



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