

ADOLESCENT TRAINING - ILLNESS PHASE
(HRA PROJECT)

SESSION 1: HOW DO I MAKE SENSE OF MY MOTHER'S ILLNESS?

(Day 1, Morning. Two hours in length.)

GOALS: To explain the purpose of the workshop. To create a desire to return for future sessions. To develop comfort in dealing with issues around their mother's illness. To begin the process of bringing meaning to this situation.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will understand what the workshop is designed to accomplish.
2. Participants will establish ground rules for the way they interact with each other in the workshop.
3. Participants will begin to connect their feelings to the situation with their mothers.
4. Participants will identify what their current personal projects are.
5. Participants will identify what is important to them.
6. Participants will determine what would be helpful to them.
7. Participants will increase positive feelings toward their mothers.
8. Participants will begin to build group cohesion.

RATIONALE:

The first sessions in the intervention focus on the youths' emotional responses to their mothers' having AIDS. There are two reasons for this approach. First, these feelings probably dominate the youths' experiences at this time. As such their emotions need to be accepted and recognized as natural responses. Learning ways to cope with their feelings will help the youths move on to the tasks that confront them. Second, emotions integrate thoughts, feelings and action tendencies. They are messages about what is happening and provide motivation for working things out.

Moving into emotional responses needs to occur slowly so that the youths are not too frightened and pushed into denial. Thus, this first session deals with "what does my mother's having AIDS mean to me." Dealing with meaning is critical for successful coping in a situation filled with loss and anxiety. It is recognized that the struggle to create acceptable meaning is not over after the first session. Forming a positive personal meaning in their life stories will continue throughout the workshop.

This first session also addresses working comfortably in the group. It focuses on what the youths will get out of the workshop with an eye to encouraging them to return.

Throughout the metaphor is used of taking an unexpected trip. There was no chance to prepare for it, to determine what was needed, to find directions. The trip began before the workshop started. Participants are experiencing feelings without being prepared to cope with them. Thus, the first part of the workshop tries to catch up. As it is not too late to prepare for what is ahead, the rest of the workshop deals with issues they are beginning to encounter and will face in the near future on their journey.

PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce the participants and facilitators. Explain the purpose of the workshop. Tell how to use Strokes. Cover administrative details. Do a lottery. (15 minutes)
2. Develop ground rules for how to interact with each other in the group. (15 minutes)
3. Tell a story to introduce the topic of meaning and ask youths for their stories. Relate stories to feelings with the Feeling Thermometer. (20 minutes)
4. Ask youths to share the personal projects with which they were involved before they learned of their mothers' illness. (15 minutes)
5. Have youths identify their personal values by sorting value cards. (20 minutes)
6. Role play helping a youth find out what would be useful and supportive at this time of crisis. (20 minutes)
7. End the session with between session tasks, administrative matters, and showing appreciation to each other. (15 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Strokes
Lottery Tickets
Lottery Prize
Chart on Workshop Topics
Feeling Thermometer
Value Cards

Exercise 1: What Is This Workshop All About?

(15 minutes)

[In this exercise self-esteem is enhanced through the introductions and the purpose of the workshop is explained. The point is to begin encouraging youths to return and to feel comfortable.]

Hello. I'm really glad to see you here.

Before we explain what this workshop is all about, I'd like to have people introduce themselves.

Please tell us your first name and tell us one quality that you have which has helped you get through a difficult situation.

It could be something like your courage, your faith - whatever outstanding characteristic of yours that pulls you through.

You could say something like this.

"I'm Ed, and I'm very stubborn. That's what gets me through."

I'll start to show you what I mean.

My name isWhat gets me through difficult situations is....

HAVE EVERYONE INTRODUCE HIM/HERSELF GIVING FIRST NAME AND TELLING ONE QUALITY THAT HAS HELPED THEM GET THROUGH TOUGH SITUATIONS.

Thank you.

Now let me tell you about this workshop.

Each one of you learned that your mother has AIDS.

I would guess that finding this out has already caused you a lot of unhappiness.

There is no denying that there are difficult times ahead.

It is like taking an unexpected trip.

You start the trip by learning that your mother has AIDS.

In the middle is a personal and family crisis with unexpected events, stormy weather, accidents, and moments of calm.

You end the trip having survived and leading life that you want.

Unfortunately, the trip began when you didn't expect it.

It started before you had a chance to prepare for it, to get directions, to find out what you needed to take, to pack your bags.

But it is not too late.

This workshop is designed to prepare you for the trip and at the same time help you deal effectively with the situation you are in and what will come.

The purpose is to give you what you need to survive your journey with as much strength and happiness as possible.

To be in charge of your life where you can.

There are two parts to the workshop: one now when you are dealing with your mother and one later on.

Here are some of the things we will cover in the first part of the workshop.

PUT UP A CHART ON THE WORKSHOP TOPICS

WORKSHOP TOPICS

- WHAT DOES MY MOTHER'S ILLNESS MEAN TO ME?
- SHOULD I TELL OTHER PEOPLE MY MOTHER HAS AIDS?
- HOW CAN I DEAL WITH PREJUDICE AGAINST FAMILIES WITH AIDS?
- HOW CAN I COPE WITH FEAR?
- HOW CAN I HANDLE SADNESS?
- HOW CAN I DEAL WITH ANGER?
- HOW CAN I CREATE A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE AT HOME?
- HOW CAN WE DEAL WITH CONFLICT AT HOME?
- HOW CAN WE HANDLE CUSTODY ISSUES?
- HOW CAN I AVOID DRUGS AND ALCOHOL?
- HOW CAN I AVOID TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD AND FATHERHOOD?
- HOW CAN I MAKE SURE I DON'T GET THE VIRUS?
- HOW CAN I PLAN FOR MY FUTURE?

These topics help you deal with the part of the trip you have already taken and prepare you for what will happen along the way.

Some of the areas you will be learning at the same time that you are actually going through them in your lives.

Some of you may have experience with other types of groups, like support groups or rap groups. In a support group, sessions are not arranged in any particular way, so that members can come and go without necessarily missing something.

Project TALK is a little different. Our groups follow a certain order, with each session building on the session before it. When you skip a day, you'll miss material for next time.

We encourage you to attend group as consistently as possible to get the most out of the experience. We will have two sessions each time we meet, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Here in this workshop it is a safe place.

No one gets criticized, pushed, laughed at, or forced to do something he or she doesn't want to do.

There are no grades.

No one can say or do anything that will be considered a mistake.

There is a chance to try out new ways of doing things.

One thing we will use in the workshop is Strokes - little cards that mean "Thanks," "That's great!" "I like that!" "You're OK."

You will give Strokes to each other throughout the workshop.

HAND OUT TWENTY STROKES TO EACH PERSON.

You would be surprised how many times you and I do good things for ourselves and for other people, but nobody seems to notice.

Sometimes it is hard to continue doing good things if you don't get recognition.

In here we are going to break the pattern of ignoring positive actions.

If you catch somebody doing something good, give them a Stroke.

It doesn't have to be a big deal.

Give them a stroke if you are happy to see them here.

Give them a stroke if you like the way they did their hair.

Give them a stroke if you like their sneakers.

By the end of the session, try to have an empty hand.

COVER ANY ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS THAT NEED MENTIONING.

Let me cover some administrative details such as smoking rule, where the bathrooms are, how long the sessions last, where the session will be held, late policy, and how to get paid.

Every once in a while we will play a lottery.

The lottery is one way to tell you that we appreciate your participation, your presence, being on time and your contributions.

PASS OUT A LOTTERY TICKET TO EVERYONE.

Please put your name on the ticket and put it in the bowl.

MIX UP THE TICKETS AND HAVE SOME DRAW A WINNING TICKET. GIVE OUT THE LOTTERY PRIZE.

Exercise 2: What Are The Group's Ground Rules?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to build group cohesion, create group members' safety, and to empower the youths by making their own rules.]

How would you want to be treated in the group?

For example, you might say, "I don't want anyone in here to tell somebody outside the group what I say in here."

Give me your ideas about what the rules of the group should be.

PUT THEIR IDEAS ON NEWSPRINT. SHAPE THE IDEAS INTO A LIST OF GROUND RULES. IF AN AREA ON THE SAMPLE LIST DOES NOT COME UP, ASK ABOUT IT. A SAMPLE LIST OF GROUND RULES FOLLOWS:

EXAMPLE OF GROUND RULES

1. KEEP CONFIDENTIALITY WHAT YOU SAY IS YOURS. WHAT YOU HEAR IS THEIRS.
2. OPEN UP YOUR FEELINGS, BUT EXPRESS THEM WITHOUT HURTING YOURSELF, ANOTHER GROUP MEMBER, THE FACILITATOR, OR THE FURNISHINGS.
3. ASK QUESTIONS - THERE ARE NO STUPID QUESTIONS.
4. BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT - NOT TOO MUCH HIDING.
5. DON'T JUDGE OTHERS - ACCEPT OTHER GROUP MEMBERS AS THEY ARE.
6. LISTEN ACTIVELY WITH AN OPEN MIND.
7. SHOW RESPECT.
8. DON'T COME HIGH ON DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.

There is a ground rule that I feel strongly about.

I don't want any verbal or physical abuse to take place in here.

What is your opinion?

IF THERE IS A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION, TRY TO WORK OUT A REASONABLE POSITION ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH. BE CLEAR ON YOUR BOTTOM LINE AND STICK WITH IT.

I want to make sure we are clear on the drug and alcohol issue.

What if someone comes who is high?

In other groups when a group member came high, it has bothered people in drug rehabilitation programs.

TRY TO WORK OUT A NO HIGH IN WORKSHOP RULE.

Exercise 3: Did You Hear About the Teenager Whose Mothers Had AIDS?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to make personal connections between the workshop and the youths' experiences and feelings. These linkages will make the material which follows relevant and will provide motivation for going further.]

We are going to tell two stories about youths discovering his/her mother had AIDS.

EACH FACILITATOR WILL TELL A STORY. IF YOU DON'T KNOW AN APPROPRIATE STORY USE THE ONES BELOW. ONE STORY BELOW SHOWS CARING AND THE OTHER SHOWS SHAME.

Here is my story.

Example: "I heard of this guy who was so upset when he heard that his mother had AIDS that he wanted to quit school and stay home to take care of her. She told him 'no way.' She wanted to make sure he could take care of himself after she was gone. Finishing school would show that he could."

Now let me tell you my story.

Example: "This girl was so ashamed when she heard her mother had AIDS that she hardly spoke to her. When her mother was in the hospital, she didn't go visit her."

What stories have you heard about others or what is your own story, if you choose to tell it?

ENCOURAGE - BUT DON'T PUSH - SHARING. GIVE OUT STROKES FOR TELLING PERSONAL STORIES.

Knowing how we feel can be very important.

Expressing feelings can prevent negative emotions eating away at us.

Also feelings can tell us when we need to work on something.

They can give us the energy to take action.

PUT UP A CHART OF A FEELING THERMOMETER.

This is a Feeling Thermometer.

It is a way of helping us recognize what we are experiencing.

100 means that we are feeling very uncomfortable.

0 means that we are feeling completely comfortable.

In this workshop we will use the Feeling Thermometer frequently to keep us in touch with how we are feeling about what we are going through.

Let's try it.

I will give you a Feeling Thermometer with some situations on it.

HAND OUT THE FEELING THERMOMETERS.

I will also read the situations aloud.

After each one, I want you to take your feeling temperature and write it down by the situation.

Here are the situations.

- A) The first time you heard that your mother had AIDS.
- B) The first time you talked to her after you heard that she had AIDS.
- C) The first time you talked to somebody else about your mother having AIDS.
- D) When you thought about how her having AIDS might effect your future plans.

Does anyone have some examples of situations they have faced concerning their mothers that were of high discomfort to them, moderate discomfort and fairly comfortable.

ENCOURAGE SHARING AND DISCUSSION.

You will find that paying attention to your feelings will help you work things out.

Exercise 4: What Am I Trying To Accomplish?
(15 minutes)

[Personal projects are very important in behavior change efforts. New behavior must fit in with those personal projects which give impetus to work through difficult situations. This exercise tries to uncover the youths' projects.]

Most people - whether they realize it or not - have something that they are working on in their lives.

These personal projects are very important to them.

You can find them in day dreams, in what you think about when you are alone, in what you talk to your closest friend about.

These are things you are striving for.

Here are some examples of personal projects that a teenager might have.

Examples of Personal Projects:

"I am trying to be more popular."

"I am trying to be nicer to my girlfriend."

"I'm saving money to buy a trail bike."

"I'm trying to find the right boy friend."

"I want to do well in this class so that I can get into a decent college."

"I'm trying to get accepted into this new group."

"I'm trying to figure out a way to move some place else."

"I'm trying to change my image."

Let me give you an example of what my own personal project is at this time.

SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF A CURRENT PERSONAL PROJECT OR STRIVING.

Tell me what your personal project is.

GO AROUND THE GROUP AND HAVE EACH MEMBER SHARE HER/HIS PERSONAL PROJECT.

I want to emphasize that what is important to one person won't be important to someone else.

Each person's personal project should be accepted as valuable.

What did you get out of hearing other youths' personal projects?

Having these personal projects will help you get through this difficult time.

You need to find ways to keep working on them.

Exercise 5: What Do I Believe In?
(20 minutes)

[Values are critical in guiding actions and in affirming oneself. This exercise is designed to allow each youth to identify his/her highest values.]

What we believe in guides our actions and makes us feel good about ourselves.

Therefore it is helpful to be clear about which beliefs are ones you hold as most important.

This next exercise is a hard one because it asks you to make difficult choices.

PASS OUT A SET OF VALUE CARDS TO EACH PERSON.

Everyone has a set of value cards.

Each card has a value on it and a definition of what the value means.

VALUE CARDS

<u>Acceptance</u>	Approving of yourself and others.
<u>Caring</u>	Being concerned about someone or something.
<u>Community</u>	Respecting and building your community.
<u>Commitment</u>	Giving yourself to someone or something you have confidence in or believe in.
<u>Compassion</u>	Feeling sympathy for others.
<u>Confidence</u>	Believing, trusting and relying on someone or something.
<u>Cooperation</u>	Working with others to get something done.
<u>Courage</u>	Facing things.
<u>Courtesy</u>	Being polite and helpful.
<u>Diligence</u>	Sticking with it. Working hard on something.
<u>Ecology</u>	Being concerned about all living things and their environments.

<u>Education</u>	Learning those things society believes to be most important.
<u>Equality</u>	Being fair.
<u>Family</u>	Respecting the family and its traditions.
<u>Friendship</u>	Supporting and helping friends.
<u>Honesty</u>	Telling the truth. Being trustworthy.
<u>Humor</u>	Being able to see the funny side of things.
<u>Integrity</u>	Having high ethical and moral standards. Standing up for what you believe.
<u>Independence</u>	Being your own person.
<u>Interdependence</u>	Depending on each other. Knowing you need and can count on others.
<u>Knowledge</u>	Knowing things. Learning.
<u>Planning</u>	Considering your future. Making options for yourself.
<u>Respect</u>	Being considerate.
<u>Responsibility</u>	Being accountable and dependable.
<u>Self-worth</u>	Valuing yourself. Knowing you matter just because you are you.
<u>Self-control</u>	Being in charge of yourself. Regulating your emotions, desires, and actions.
<u>Self-respect</u>	Appreciating yourself. Having pride in yourself.
<u>Spirituality</u>	Searching for meaning and salvation.
<u>Trust</u>	Having faith in someone or something.
<u>Tolerance</u>	Recognizing and respecting other's beliefs and actions that are different from your own.

Please separate the cards into three piles: Very important to you, moderate importance to you, and low importance to you.

ALLOW ABOUT TEN MINUTES FOR SORTING. WHEN THEIR CARDS ARE IN THREE PILES ASK THEM TO RANK THE FIVE HIGHEST VALUES IN THE "MOST IMPORTANT" PILE.

Now that all your cards are in one of three piles, take the "very important pile" and rank the five highest values.

You will end up with five cards from the "most important" pile.

One of those values will be your most important of all, then second, third, fourth and fifth.

ALLOW A FEW MINUTES FOR SORTING.

What are some examples of the highest values?

WRITE THE VALUES ON NEWSPRINT AS THEY ARE CALLED OUT. BUILD A GROUP PROFILE OF HIGHEST VALUES.

How did you feel working on your values?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

What do you think of the group's list - does it surprise you?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

Exercise 6: What Would Help Me?
(20 minutes)

[This exercise is designed to encourage the youths to identify what would be helpful to someone whose mother has AIDS. It assumes that with this knowledge youths will be better able to see value in the sessions to follow and to seek out what will support them.]

We want you to work on what would be helpful to a teenager whose mother had AIDS.

To find that out we are going to do a little role play.

In the role play some of you will help another teenager find out what he or she needs for the journey ahead.

I need three volunteers who will be the helpers.

Their task is to find out what would help the youth deal with his mother's having AIDS.

They can ask whatever questions they want and make any suggestions.

Remember that the helpers are not to solve his problems, but are to figure out what would help him handle all these concerns.

The helpers are to work as a team of expert consultants.

The rest of the group will be the observers who will give feedback to the helpers.

I am going to play the youth whose mother has AIDS.

THE FACILITATOR'S TASK IS TO PRESENT A WIDE RANGE OF CONCERNS. THE FACILITATOR STARTS BY NAMING A GROUP OF THEM AND CAN THEN ADD OTHERS AS THE INTERVIEW CONTINUES.

Example of Facilitator's Opening Comments:

"I just found out that my mother has AIDS.

I am really upset.

One moment I feel **angry** at her for getting AIDS, and then I feel very **sad**.

I feel so badly for her.

I can't control my feelings.

I don't know **what to say to her**.

I'm **scared** too.

What's going to **happen to me**?

Who will **take care of me**?"

Example of Additional Comments to Weave In:

"She has started to ask me to do things around the apartment that I **don't want to do**.

What can I say to her?

I am worried about AIDS.

I **don't want to get AIDS**.

How am I supposed to protect myself?

There is so much tension now at home.

I wish I could **change the atmosphere at home**.

Should I **tell anybody** she has AIDS?

What happens if someone finds out and they **have an attitude about it**?

What about **my future**?

How can I plan for that?

AFTER FIVE MINUTES OF INTERVIEWING, ASK FOR FEEDBACK. BEGIN WITH THE THREE HELPERS. GIVE STROKES TO THE HELPERS.

Now let's get some feedback.

How did you helpers feel during the interview?

What one thing did you do that you liked and what one thing would you do differently?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

Now for the observers.

How did you feel watching this interview?

What one thing did the helpers do that you liked and what one thing would you do differently?"

ENCOURAGE SHARING OF FEEDBACK.

Now let's hear from the entire group.

Do you have more ideas on what would be helpful to the teenager?

LOOK FOR IDEAS ON CONTROLLING FEELINGS, COMMUNICATING WITH MOTHER, WORKING OUT NEW ROLES AT HOME, CREATING A POSITIVE HOME ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE, SAFER SEX, CUSTODY ISSUES, TELLING OTHERS, AND HANDLING STIGMA.

You can see that many of your ideas will be covered in the workshop.

Also you could see from the role play that helping someone figure out what they need to work on can be more effective than giving a person lots of advice or interfering in their life when not asked to.

Exercise 7: What Comes Next?
(15 minutes)

[This exercise ends the session and encourages group building by having group members show appreciation for each other. Also between session goals are set.]

The morning session is ending.

The trip has already begun for you, and the workshop will start by catching up on how to handle the feelings you have already experienced.

You had little opportunity to prepare for this part of the journey.

It will take a little while to catch up on dealing with how you feel and immediate worries such as whether to tell someone else about what's happening.

The next session will focus on whether to tell anyone that your mother has AIDS.

It's a tough decision you have to make.

At the end of each session we will ask you to pick one goal you will achieve between the sessions.

The goal is a task related to the session we just completed.

For example, you could agree to:

1. make a list of what would help you to get through this difficult time.
2. talk to a friend about what you want to be doing five years from now.
3. write a poem about what your mother's illness means to you.
4. write down five qualities you like about your mother.

Take a moment and think about what step you will take.

When you set a goal make sure it is realistic, clear, not too much or too little, and easy to see if you did it.

What will you agree to do between sessions?

GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE EACH PERSON INDICATE WHAT HE OR SHE AGREES TO DO.

Thank you. Those are some good goals.

COVER ANY ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS SUCH AS PAYMENT, WHERE LUNCH IS HELD AND HOW MUCH TIME THERE IS UNTIL THE AFTERNOON SESSION BEGINS.

At the end of each session we want to show appreciation to each other.

Tell others that you liked their comments or actions, or style, or their simply being present.

Let the others in the group know that you appreciate their contributions.

MODEL BY SHOWING APPRECIATION TO ONE YOUTH AND ENCOURAGE THE OTHERS TO MOVE ABOUT AND GIVE STROKES AND MAKE COMMENTS ABOUT WHAT THEY APPRECIATED IN THE GROUP MEMBERS. MAKE SURE NO ONE IS EXCLUDED OR IGNORED.

END OF SESSION ON MEANING

FEELING THERMOMETER

100 VERY UNCOMFORTABLE
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0 COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE

SITUATIONS

TEMPERATURE
LEVEL

1. The first time you heard that your mother had AIDS.

2. The first time you talked to her after you heard that she had AIDS.

3. The first time you talked to somebody else about your mother having AIDS.

4. When you thought about how her having AIDS might effect your future plans.

Acceptance Approving of yourself and others.

Caring Being concerned about someone or something.

Community Respecting and building your community.

Commitment Giving yourself to someone or something you have confidence in or believe in.

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Compassion Feeling sympathy for others.

Confidence Believing, trusting and relying on someone or something.

Cooperation Working with others to get something done.

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Courage

Facing things.

Courtesy

Being polite and helpful.

Diligence

Sticking with it. Working hard on something.

Ecology

Being concerned about all living things and their environments.

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Education

Learning those things society believes to be most important.

Equality

Being fair.

Family

Respecting the family and its traditions.

Friendship

Supporting and helping friends.

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Honesty Telling the truth. Being trustworthy.

Humor Being able to see the funny side of things.

Integrity Having high ethical and moral standards. Standing up for what you believe.

Independence Being your own person.

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Inter-
dependence

Depending on each other. Knowing you need
and can count on others.

Knowledge

Knowing things. Learning.

Planning

Considering your future. Making options for yourself.

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Respect Being considerate.

Responsibility Being accountable and dependable.

Self-worth Valuing yourself. Knowing you matter just because you are you.

Self-control Being in charge of yourself. Regulating your emotions, desires, and actions.

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Self-respect Appreciating yourself. Having pride in yourself.

Spirituality Searching for meaning and salvation.

Trust Having faith in someone or something.

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Tolerance

Recognizing and respecting other's beliefs and actions that are different from your own.

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