

JOINT TRAINING FOR MOTHERS AND YOUTHS - ILLNESS PHASE
(HRA PROJECT)

SESSION 8: HOW CAN WE CREATE A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE AT HOME?

(Day 4, Afternoon. Two hours in length.)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Mothers and youths will be able to identify positive qualities in each other and express them to each other.
2. Mothers and youths will become aware of family strengths.
3. Mothers and youths will have an appreciation of each others values.
4. Mothers and youths will be able to give positive messages to each other.
5. Mothers and youths will be able to reinforce each others' positive behaviors.

RATIONALE:

The theoretical model underlying this intervention posits three areas necessary for behavioral change: adequate skills, intention to perform the new behavior, and environmental barriers and supports. This session focuses on one aspect of the environment which the training may be able to influence. That area is the home atmosphere. We are assuming that a positive home environment will be a factor in the youths ability to cope with the difficult times he or she is facing.

Many factors go into creating a positive home environment. Some of them have already been addressed in the mothers' training on active listening and the direct expression of feelings. However, our experience in working with suicidal and depressed youth suggest that direct attempts to make the environment more positive can have an impact.

The exercises in this session are designed to increase mutual support and bonding, develop pride in the family, explore common values, and increase social reinforcement skills. Because of the nature of the objectives the session brings mothers and their teenagers together and encourages their acting as a team.

PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce the participants and the session's goals. Give out Strokes. Review steps taken between sessions. Do a lottery. (15 minutes)
2. Have the mothers and teenager identify positive qualities about each other and express them. (10 minutes)
3. Create family groups and have each one determine what their family's strengths are. (15 minutes)
4. Use value cards for mothers and teenagers to select important values and share them. (15 minutes)
5. Have each family group create a family crest. (20 minutes)
6. Practice positive reinforcement through a role play catching someone doing something good. (20 minutes)
7. Have each person write a letter from the heart to his/her parent or child. (15 minutes)
8. End with a commitment to a "care day" at home and group appreciation. (10 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Strokes
Lottery tickets
Lottery prizes
Value Cards
Blank cards and pencils
Family Crests
Colored marking pens
Pencils and paper

Exercise 1: What Has Happened Between Sessions?
(15 minutes)

[The purposes of this session are to increase self-esteem through a review of progress on steps taken and the positive introductions, to build group cohesion through the lottery and sharing and to create interest in the session.]

Welcome back.

This session is the first one with mothers and teenagers together.

These are tough times for both sons and daughters and mothers.

The more you can support each other the better.

Today we are going to work on creating a positive atmosphere at home.

We know that you have lots of strengths both as individuals and families.

Our goal is to bring those strengths out and use them.

Before we get into the session we need to introduce ourselves and review steps taken between sessions.

Please tell us your first name and what personality quality you like best about yourself.

For example, you might say, "My name is Francine and I like my caring for other people best."

I will start first.

My name is and I like best my

HAVE EACH PERSON GIVE HER/HIS FIRST NAME AND ONE PERSONALITY QUALITY LIKED BEST.

Thank you.

Remember that we give out Strokes to let others know that we like something they have done or said or maybe just their presence here in the group.

PASS OUT TWENTY STROKES TO EACH PERSON.

Try to give away as many Strokes as is possible during the session.

Now we need to take a few minutes to review the steps each person took between the sessions.

HAVE THE ADOLESCENTS MEET BRIEFLY IN ONE SMALL GROUP AND THE MOTHERS IN ANOTHER. A FACILITATOR GOES WITH EACH GROUP. THE FACILITATOR ASKS EACH PERSON WHAT WAS HER/HIS GOAL AND HOW DID TAKING THAT STEP GO. BRIEFLY PROBLEM SOLVE BARRIERS THAT CAME UP.

I would like to go around and have each person tell us what was the step they were going to take between sessions and what happened.

HAVE EACH PERSON REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS. THEN BRING THE GROUPS BACK TOGETHER.

We are so glad to see you back that we want to do another lottery.

PASS OUT LOTTERY TICKETS. HAVE PEOPLE WRITE THEIR NAMES ON THEM. PUT THEM IN A BOWL. MIX THEM AND UP DRAW. GIVE OUT A LOTTERY PRIZE. REPEAT SO THAT TWO PRIZES ARE GIVEN.

Exercise 2: What Do I Like About My Mother/Son/Daughter?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is create positive feeling between parent and child through stating something each likes about the other.]

I would like to go around the room and have each teenager indicate what he or she likes best about his or her mother, and I want each mother to tell us what she likes best about her teenager.

HAVE EACH PERSON STATE WHAT THEY LIKE MOST ABOUT THE FAMILY MEMBER WHO CAME WITH THEM TODAY.

Thank you. That was great!

To create a positive atmosphere at home it helps to let people know what you like about them.

We did it once now, but saying what you like frequently can make a difference.

Exercise 3: What Are My Family's Strengths?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase family cohesiveness and strength through identifying together what the family's strengths are.]

Now I would like mothers and teenagers to get together in a family unit.

HAVE MOTHERS AND TEENAGERS GROUP THEMSELVES BY FAMILY.

Your task is identify the strengths that your family has.

When I say "family," you can include as many relatives as you wish.

Family to some of you may mean grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews - the whole group.

Family to others may mean just mother, father, and the children.

You can define it as broadly as you wish.

"Strengths" mean the good things about your family.

You can use the family's history to help you find those strong points.

Think of difficulties the family has overcome.

Think of ways you are proud of your family.

Here are some examples:

"We stick together. If something happens to one of us, it happens to all of us."

"We are survivors. No matter what happens we make it."

"We care about each other."

"We talk things over."

"We tolerate a lot of differences in the family."

"We may fight with each other a lot, but in the end we forgive and love each other strongly."

Now take some time to come up with a list of family strengths.

ENCOURAGE EACH FAMILY TO DEVELOP A LIST OF STRENGTHS. ALLOW ABOUT SEVEN MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE TASK. THEN BRING EVERYONE BACK TOGETHER AGAIN AND HAVE EACH FAMILY TELL THE WHOLE GROUP WHAT THEIR STRENGTHS ARE.

OK. Let's go around and have each family tell us what they came up with.

HAVE EACH FAMILY SHARE THEIR STRENGTHS. GIVE OUT STROKES.

That was very good.

How did you feel hearing about the strengths of the families here?

ENCOURAGE PRIDE AND A POSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE GROUP'S STRENGTHS.
"WE HAVE A LOT OF POWER IN THIS GROUP."

Exercise 4: What Is Important to Us?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase the bond between mothers and teenagers by sharing values, confirming similarities in values, and tolerating differences. Sorting value cards and sharing results are used.]

One way to create a positive atmosphere at home is to accept and respect each others values.

We can love each other without everyone having the same point of view or considering the same things important.

So, we want to take some time to explore the values of mothers and sons and daughters.

First, each person will receive a set of value cards.

Each card has a value on it - something important to you that tells you how you want to lead your life - how you want to be as a person.

Please sort the cards into three piles - very important to you, moderate importance to you, and low importance to you.

If you put something in the high pile, it means that you want to be that way.

In other words, if I put "honest" in the high pile, it would mean that I really wanted to be an honest person.

Also that I like to see honesty in others.

The values that you put high are the guiding principles in your life.

Make sure you have some values in each pile.

HAND OUT A SET OF VALUE CARDS TO EACH PERSON. HAVE THEM SORT THEM INTO THREE PILES. THE VALUES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. AMBITIOUS (hard-working, struggling to get ahead)
2. BROADMINDED (open-minded)
3. CAPABLE (competent, effective)
4. CHEERFUL (lighthearted, joyful)
5. CLEAN (neat, tidy)
6. COURAGEOUS (standing up for your beliefs)
7. FORGIVING (willing to pardon others)
8. HELPFUL (working for the welfare of others)
9. HONEST (sincere, truthful)
10. IMAGINATIVE (daring, creative)
11. INDEPENDENT (self-reliant, self-sufficient)
12. INTELLECTUAL (intelligent, thinks a lot)
13. LOGICAL (consistent, rational)
14. LOVING (affectionate, tender)
15. OBEDIENT (devoted, respectful)
16. POLITE (courteous, well-mannered)
17. RESPONSIBLE (dependable, reliable)
18. SELF-CONTROLLED (restrained, self-disciplined)

Now I will give you two blank cards, so that if something is missing from the list that is very important to you, you can write it on them.

PASS OUT THE BLANK CARDS AND PENCILS.

From the high pile - most important to you - select the top three.

Which one is most important, next most important, and third highest in importance.

ALLOW A MINUTE OR TWO TO SELECT THE HIGHEST ONES.

Please share your highest values in your family group.

If you are interested in knowing where your mother or teenager put a certain value, feel free to ask.

You can also ask why the other person put a particular value high or low.

See how much you are alike and how much you have different values.

Try to understand the other person's point of view.

ENCOURAGE SHARING IN FAMILY GROUPS. THEN ASK THE ENTIRE GROUP WHAT THE EXPERIENCE WAS LIKE.

How did you feel sharing your values?

What did you find out by sharing your values and were there any surprises?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION. EMPHASIZE THAT IT HELPS TO KNOW WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO OTHERS AND TO ACCEPT DIFFERENCES IN VALUES.

Exercise 5: What Does My Family Stand For?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase family pride. Constructing a family crest is the vehicle used to do this.]

Here are two types of family crests.

HOLD UP BLANK FAMILY CRESTS.

I want each family to make a family crest.

First you have to decide which kind of crest you want.

You see that the spaces on the crest are numbered.

In each space you are to draw or write something that fits the description of that space.

For example, in space #3 you are to express in a drawing the most significant event your family has gone through.

In space #7 you are write the three words that you would like other people to say about your family.

Let me say a word about the drawing.

This is not a test of your artistic ability; therefore any kind of drawing will do - a stick figure is fine.

Here are the instructions.

PUT UP THE INSTRUCTIONS ON A CHART AND GO OVER THEM. THE INSTRUCTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Space 1: write the name of your family in large fancy letters.
- Space 2: express in a drawing something that represents your ancestors.
- Space 3: express in a drawing the most significant event your family has gone through.
- Space 4: express in a drawing the happiest moment your family has gone through.
- Space 5: express in a drawing what your family believes in most.
- Space 6: express in a drawing what your family is good at.
- Space 7: write the three words that you want other people to use when describing your family.

Is everyone clear on what goes into the boxes on the family crest?

ANSWER QUESTIONS AND CLARIFY THE TASK.

Here are the crests and colored marking pens.

HAND OUT CRESTS AND COLORED MARKING PENS TO EACH FAMILY. ALLOW FIFTEEN MINUTES TO WORK ON THE CREST.

Now that you are finished put your crest on the wall with masking tape.

Then wander around the room and look at each other's family crests.

ALLOW A FEW MINUTES TO LOOK AT THE CRESTS.

Those are really great family crests!

What reactions do you have to the family crests?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

Exercise 6: How Do I Catch Doing Something Good?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase positive behavior in the family through social reinforcement. Role playing "catching someone doing something good" is the approach used.]

Another way to create a positive environment at home is to do what I call "catching someone doing something good."

Usually we think of catching someone doing something bad.

Did you know that the more we pay attention to the bad things people do, the more we increase the chances that they will do it again?

Therefore we want to pay the most attention to the good things they do.

For example, mother, let's say you come in the kitchen and find that your teenager has done some of the dishes without being asked.

Recognize that something good happened - "Hey, I really appreciate your doing the dishes!"

Don't say, "How come you didn't do all of the dishes?"

Teenager, suppose you find that your mother has sewed the rip in your shirt but didn't finish sewing the hole in your jeans.

You caught her doing something good.

"Hey, mom, thanks for sewing my shirt."

Don't say, "When are you going to fix my jeans?"

Let's practice "catching someone doing something good."

We will role play catching someone doing something good.

The teenagers will go first.

Ask your mother what she did yesterday, and as she tells you, let her know when you caught her doing something good.

Then we will reverse it, and the mother will ask what the teenager did yesterday and catch them doing something good.

When each role play is over, the person doing the catching will say how he or she felt and will indicate one thing he or she did that was liked and one thing that would be done differently next time.

Then the people observing will say one thing they liked and one thing that they would have done differently.

DIVIDE THE GROUP IN HALF. A FACILITATOR GOES WITH EACH GROUP. FIRST ONE FAMILY DOES THE ROLE PLAY AND RECEIVES FEEDBACK AND THEN THE NEXT FAMILY GOES AND RECEIVES FEEDBACK. ALLOW ABOUT THREE MINUTES FOR EACH ROLE PLAY. THEN BRING THE ENTIRE GROUP BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

What was that role play like for you?

Was it hard or easy?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION. REWARD WHAT WORKED FOR THEM AND CHECK OUT OBSTACLES THEY EXPERIENCED. HOW COULD THEY OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES?

Exercise 7: What Are My Good Feelings in the Family?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of the exercise is to increase the sharing of positive feelings between mothers and teenagers. Letter writing is the method chosen to do this.]

I am going to pass out paper and pencil to everyone.

We want to increase the sharing of positive feelings we have for each other.

Please write a one page letter to your mother, if you are a teenager, and a letter to your teenager, if you are a mother.

Make the letter a letter from the heart.

Give the other person a message that is deeply felt and that is positive.

Say things you might not be able to say face to face.

Don't worry about how well you write or spell.

This is a letter from the heart where grammar and spelling don't count.

You have fifteen minutes to write your letter.

When you are finished, I will ask you to pass the letter to the other person.

Please don't read the letter here.

Put it away and read it tomorrow.

Read the letters in privacy - when the time is right tomorrow.

PASS OUT PAPER AND PENCILS TO EVERYONE. HAVE THEM WRITE THEIR LETTERS. TELL THEM WHEN TEN MINUTES IS UP. LEAVE ENOUGH TIME TO PASS THE LETTERS.

Exercise 8: How Can I Do Something Nice Next Week?
(10 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to carry the positive environment into the future, to create group cohesion, and to indicate what the next session will be about.]

Today we have worked on creating a positive environment at home.

Next time we will work on handling conflict that naturally occurs in most families.

We want to deal with conflict in a constructive manner.

We also want to carry the positive environment that we have been developing into the future.

One way to do that is to give each other a care day.

What is a care day?

A care day is when you set aside a special day for your mother or for your teenager.

On that day you do special things for the other person - breakfast in bed, a nice dinner, a little gift, going to a special place, a back rub, a bubble bath, a card, a visit from someone.

Make it fun for both the person giving and the person receiving.

I want you to agree to give each other a care day next week.

Will you agree to that?

OBTAIN AGREEMENT.

Take a moment now and decide what days will be the care days next week.

ALLOW A MINUTE OR TWO FOR THE MOTHER AND TEENAGER TO SET THE DAYS.

Now I would like everyone to show appreciation to the members of the group for their being here today, for their contributions, for their participation.

ENCOURAGE GIVING APPRECIATION TO EACH OTHER.

It was a really good session.

I want to thank all of you.

The next meeting will be on.....(date) at (time and place).

END OF SESSION ON POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE

VALUE CARD 1

AMBITIOUS (hard-working, struggling to get ahead)

VALUE CARD 2

BROADMINDED (open-minded)

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VALUE CARD 3

CAPABLE (competent, effective)

VALUE CARD 4

CHEERFUL (lighthearted, joyful)

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VALUE CARD 5

CLEAN (neat, tidy)

VALUE CARD 6

COURAGEOUS (standing up for your beliefs)

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VALUE CARD 7

FORGIVING (willing to pardon others)

VALUE CARD 8

HELPFUL (working for the welfare of others)

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VALUE CARD 9

HONEST (sincere, truthful)

VALUE CARD 10

IMAGINATIVE (daring, creative)

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VALUE CARD 11

INDEPENDENT (self-reliant, self-sufficient)

VALUE CARD 12

INTELLECTUAL (intelligent, thinks a lot)

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VALUE CARD 13

LOGICAL (consistent, rational)

VALUE CARD 14

LOVING (affectionate, tender)

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VALUE CARD 15

OBEDIENT (devoted, respectful)

VALUE CARD 16

POLITE (courteous, well-mannered)

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VALUE CARD 17

RESPONSIBLE (dependable, reliable)

VALUE CARD 18

SELF-CONTROLLED (restrained, self-disciplined)

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