

MOTHERS' TRAINING - ILLNESS PHASE  
(HRA PROJECT)

SESSION 1: WHAT ARE MY CHILDREN'S NEEDS?

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

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will identify the needs of their adolescent children.
2. Participants will analyze the meaning to an adolescent of losing someone close to them.
3. Participants will increase their ability to relax.
4. Participants will increase their self-esteem.

RATIONALE:

This session begins the second phase of the training. The first phase was devoted to the mothers alone on the assumption that they would have difficulty helping their children without first meeting some of their own needs. In the second phase the mothers' attention turns toward their children - How can they help them? What needs to be done for them? Topics such as custody, communication, conflict, AIDS prevention, drug prevention, and future planning are covered. Parent effectiveness and problem solving skills are learned.

As considerable group cohesiveness built up in the first phase of the training with just the mothers present, Session 2 begins with re-establishing contacts and sharing what has happened during the interval between phases of the training. The primary emphasis is on trying to see things from the perspective of their adolescents in order to set the tone for the rest of the training. Adolescent needs in general are examined, and then an exploration of what loss might mean to the adolescent follows.

Throughout there will still be exercises which enhance self-esteem and relaxation sequences.

## PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce the participants. Have participants share how they have been. Explain the goals of the training and what topics will be covered. Remind participants of how to use Strokes and the group's ground rules. Present the day's topic and do a lottery. (30 minutes)
2. Have the mothers sort value cards to determine what the main values are for an adolescent girl and boy. (15 minutes)
3. Have the participants tell stories of when they were an adolescent. (20 minutes)
4. Role play two youths talking about the fact that the mother of one of them has AIDS. (20 minutes)
5. Have the mothers write a letter to their adolescent boy or girl. (15 minutes)
6. Do a relaxation sequence. (5 minutes)
7. End with free time, goal setting, and group appreciation. (15 minutes)

## MATERIALS:

Strokes  
Training Outline  
Lottery tickets  
Lottery gifts  
Value cards  
Paper and pencils for letter

### Exercise 1: What Has Happened and What Is This About? (30 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is re-establish group sharing and cohesion, remind participants of procedures, and introduce the topics for the training. It is assumed that a positive group experience will be supportive to these mothers and that the idea of helping their children will strengthen and motivate them.]**

It is great to see all of you here again.

Let's go around and introduce ourselves first.

Please tell us your first name and complete this sentence: "I am a good mother because....."

So you would say "My name is Barbara and I am a good mother because I have lots of love to give to my children."

To show you what I mean I will start.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a good mother (OR PARENT, IF A MALE FACILITATOR) because \_\_\_\_\_.

HAVE THE GROUP DO THE INTRODUCTIONS.

Thank you for sharing.

Here are Strokes cards for you to use during the session.

PASS OUT STROKES CARDS.

In the first training we went through the attention was on you and your needs.

In this second part of the training the focus is on how you can show your love for your children and help them through this difficult time.

Here is the outline of sessions.

HAND OUT THE OUTLINE OF SESSIONS.

OUTLINE OF SESSIONS ON MOTHERS HELPING THEIR CHILDREN

SESSION 1: WHAT ARE MY CHILDREN'S NEEDS?

SESSION 2; WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF MY CHILDREN?

SESSION 3: WHAT KIND OF ARRANGEMENTS CAN I MAKE?

SESSION 4: HOW DO I START MY PLAN?

SESSION 5: HOW DO I LISTEN TO MY CHILDREN?

- SESSION 6: HOW DO I EXPRESS MY FEELINGS DIRECTLY TO MY CHILDREN?
- SESSION 7: WHAT DO I DO WHEN I DON'T LIKE WHAT MY CHILDREN ARE DOING?
- SESSION 8: HOW DO I CREATE A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE AT HOME?
- SESSION 9: HOW DO I DEAL WITH CONFLICTS AT HOME (PART 1)?
- SESSION 10: HOW DO I DEAL WITH CONFLICTS AT HOME (PART 2)?
- SESSION 11: HOW DO I WORK ON CUSTODY WITH MY CHILDREN?
- SESSION 12: HOW DO I HELP MY CHILDREN DEAL WITH DRUGS AND ALCOHOL?
- SESSION 13: HOW DO I DISCOURAGE BEING A TEENAGE MOTHER OR FATHER?
- SESSION 14: WHERE AM I IN MY CUSTODY PLANNING?
- SESSION 15: HOW DO I GIVE AIDS PREVENTION MESSAGES AT HOME?
- SESSION 16: HOW DO I GIVE A LEGACY TO MY CHILDREN?

As you can see, everything is directed toward being the kind of good parent you want to be.

In this session we will try to find out what your adolescent children need.

We want to see things from their point of view.

Before we get into it, let's do a lottery.

The lottery is our way of telling you that we are glad you came, appreciate your being on time, and like it when you participate.

**PASS OUT LOTTERY TICKETS. USE THE LOTTERY TO REINFORCE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUCH AS COMING ON TIME.**

Here is a lottery ticket for each of you.

Lottery are our way of saying "Thanks for being here and for trying to help your children."

Write your name on the lottery ticket and put it in the bowl.

COLLECT LOTTERY TICKETS. ASK SOMEONE TO DRAW. SELECT THE WINNER AND GIVE OUT A PRIZE.

Next we are going to explore what it is like being an adolescent.

Exercise 2: What Is Important to an Adolescent?

(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to begin the process of identifying with adolescents and entering into their value systems. It is assumed that being aware of their children's value systems will make it easier to help them effectively.]**

We want to start by trying to figure out what is important to an adolescent boy or girl.

I am going to divide the group in half.

Each half will receive a set of adolescent value cards.

Your task is to sort the cards into three piles: High importance to a young person, moderate importance, and low importance.

One group will look at the values from the point of view of a girl and the other from the point of view of a boy.

Here are the value cards.

HAND OUT A SET OF CARDS TO EACH GROUP AND INDICATE WHICH GROUP SORTS FROM THE GIRL'S POINT OF VIEW AND WHICH ONE FROM THE BOY'S POINT OF VIEW.

(ADOLESCENT 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>Compassion</u>	Feeling sympathy for others.
<u>Cooperation</u>	Working with others to get something done.
<u>Courage</u>	Facing things.

<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>Honorable</u>	Having high ethical and moral standards. Standing up for what you believe.
<u>Humor</u>	Being able to see the funny side of things.
<u>Independence</u>	Being your own person.
<u>Respect</u>	Being considerate and tolerating beliefs that are different than yours.
<u>Responsibility</u>	Being accountable and dependable.
<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.

You have seven minutes to sort the cards.

When you have them sorted, pick the five highest from the "most important" pile.

HAVE A FACILITATOR GO WITH EACH GROUP TO COACH AND HELP OUT, IF NEEDED. AFTER SEVEN MINUTES (OR SOONER IF BOTH GROUPS FINISH BEFORE THEN) BRING THE GROUPS BACK TOGETHER.

Let's hear what are the five most important values for a girl.

WRITE THEM ON NEWSPRINT.

Now what about the five highest for a boy?

WRITE THEM ON NEWSPRINT.

What do you think of these lists?

Would there be anything else that was tremendously important which you would add?

ENCOURAGE IDEAS AND DISCUSSION.

So, now we have begun to get into what is important to the typical adolescent.

Exercise 3: What About When I Was a Teenager?  
(20 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to create a personal, emotional link to what it is like being an adolescent. It is assumed that being empathic will facilitate helping their teenagers.]**

Please think back to when you were a teenager.

I want you to recall something you did as a teenager that you did not tell your mother or the person who took care of you, but now when you look back on it, it was a pretty crazy thing to do.

Something you didn't tell your mother or the person who take care of you - something that was a pretty outrageous thing to do.

I'll give you an example from my own past.

GIVE A PERSONAL EXAMPLE OR USE ONE OF A FRIEND OF YOURS.

OK, so let's hear your stories.

HAVE EACH WOMAN TELL HER STORY. WHEN THEY HAVE ALL FINISHED, ASK THE GROUP HOW THEY FELT TELLING THEIR STORIES. BE AWARE THAT BEING A TEENAGER MAY HAVE BEEN A HARD TIME FOR MANY OF THE MOTHERS - PARTICULARLY IF THEY HAD BEEN ABANDONED. SOME MAY FEEL VERY SAD DOING THIS EXERCISE. ENCOURAGE GROUP SUPPORT. GIVE OUT STROKES.

How do you feel telling that story?

What was being an adolescent like for you?

ENCOURAGE SHARING AND MUTUAL SUPPORT.

Exercise 4: How Does My Teenager Feel About My Illness?  
(20 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to identify how their teenagers might be feeling about the impending loss and to identify what they might need in this situation. It is assumed that being aware of their adolescent's feelings and needs will encourage more accurate and helpful responding to their teenagers.]**

Now let's see if we can learn more about how your teenagers are feeling, knowing that you have AIDS.

I would like two volunteers to role play two teenagers talking together.

SELECT THE VOLUNTEERS AND THEN INSTRUCT THEM.

(TO "IRENE") Your name is Irene.

You are fifteen years old.

You just found out that your mother has AIDS.

Your task is to share how you feel with your friend.

(TO "VANESSA") Your name is Vanessa.

You are sixteen years old.

Your friend just received some bad news.

Your task is to help her express how she feels.

She may have many different kinds of feelings.

You are to be gentle and understanding.

GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE OBSERVERS. EACH ONE HAS A DIFFERENT TASK.  
I will give each observer something to look for.

You pay attention to their      eyes  
   facial expressions  
   voice tone  
   gestures  
   posture  
   body tightness  
   words

OK. Go ahead and start.

ALLOW THE ROLE PLAY TO CONTINUE FOR ABOUT FIVE MINUTES. GIVE OUT STROKES TO PLAYERS

First I want to ask Irene and Vanessa three questions:  
    How did you feel?  
    What one thing did you like about what you did?  
    What one thing would you do differently?

ENCOURAGES ANSWERS.

Now I want to ask the observers what one thing they liked and one thing would they have done differently?

Also, what feelings did you have observing this scene?

ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK.

Were there other feelings which are not listed that another teenager might have had?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES.

Having just witnessed this scene, I want to ask you another question.

What do you think a teenager needs are in this situation?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES AND WRITE THEM ON NEWSPRINT AS THEY ARE SUGGESTED BY PARTICIPANTS.

That's a good list.

What do you think about it?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION. LOOK FOR ITEMS SUCH AS SUPPORT, STABILITY, ROUTINES, POSITIVE EVENTS, HONESTY, EMPATHY, PATIENCE, NON-INTRUSIVE ASSISTANCE, JUST BEING THERE, PERSONAL SPACE.

Exercise 5: What Do I Want to Say to My Teenager?  
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to make a direct connection between the mother and her feelings, thoughts, and wishes for her teenager. It is assumed that making this connection explicit will increase her desire to stay active, find meaning in her life, and continue improving parenting skills in this special situation.]**

First we explored the adolescent's values in a general way.

Then we linked into our own experiences as teenagers.

Through role playing we tried to put ourselves in the shoes of a teenager going through this difficult situation.

With each step you have taken today you moved closer to your own situation.

Now I would like you to write a letter to your teenager.

You are not going to mail it.

Say what ever you want to.

Say what you may have wanted to say, but been unable to do so.

Write about your feelings, if you wish.

Write about what you want for her or him, if you wish.

Don't write more than a page - unless you write very large.

You have ten minutes, if you need that much time.

**INDICATE WHEN SEVEN MINUTES HAVE PASSED. STOP AT TEN OR BEFORE, IF EVERYONE HAS FINISHED.**

How did you feel writing that letter?

ENCOURAGE SHARING. GIVE OUT STROKES.

Is it sometimes hard sharing what is really in your heart?

DISCUSS BARRIERS TO EXPRESSING FEELINGS IN THESE FRAGILE SITUATIONS.

IF SOMEONE WANTS TO READ HER LETTER, THAT IS FINE, BUT DON'T ASK PARTICIPANTS TO VOLUNTEER READING THE LETTER BECAUSE OF IT'S PRIVATE AND SENSITIVE MATTER.

Exercise 6: How Can I Reduce the Tension?  
(5 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to reduce some of the tension that may have built up dealing with sensitive material.]**

It can be very stressful thinking about what will happen to your children.

We need to take some time out and reduce that tension.

READ SLOWLY THE MOUNTAIN RELAXATION.

THE MOUNTAIN RELAXATION SEQUENCE

Would you please get yourself in a comfortable position? PAUSE

Can you take a deep breath and let it out slowly? PAUSE

Can you take two more deep breaths and let each one out very slowly? PAUSE

If your eyes want to shut, that is up to you.

Can you feel the cool air coming in and the warm breath flowing out? PAUSE

Can you feel the cool air coming in through your nose and the warm air flowing through your body and out your toes - taking all the tension with it?  
PAUSE

Each time you breathe in feel yourself becoming big and strong. PAUSE

Imagine that you are a mountain.

You stand majestically above the hills and valleys.

You can be seen from miles away.

Sometimes your peak is in the clouds. PAUSE

You are a mountain of patience and courage and love. PAUSE

All the fear and hurt and despair runs off your shoulders like little mountain streams. PAUSE

Feel the tension running off like mountain streams - dashing through the rocks, cascading down, down, down.  
PAUSE

Imagine your strength like pillars of rock. PAUSE

Imagine your courage as you stand high, high in the blue sky. PAUSE

Imagine your patience like the streams that wander over your broad shoulders. PAUSE

Be at peace - just like the high mountain is. PAUSE

At peace. PAUSE

Now yawn and stretch.

Yawn and stretch.

THE END

Exercise 7: How Can I Show My Appreciation?  
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to wrap-up the session, indicate what is coming next, set goals, provide free time and build group cohesion and support.]**

We are at the end of this morning's session.

This morning we focused on how your teenagers might be feeling and what their needs are.

We explained that this part of the workshop is to help you help your children.

In the afternoon session we begin to explore who will take care of your children.

Before we stop I would like you to think of a step you will take during the next week.

Make it something related to what we did today.

For example, you could spend five minutes listening to whatever your teenager wants to talk about or ask your teenager how he or she feels about your being sick or you could write a poem about what it was like for you to be a teenager.

As I said, these are just examples.

You can pick one of your own that fits you.

When taking a step or setting a goal for next week, make it realistic, clear, not too much or too little, and easy to tell if completed.

Let's go around the room and have each person tell us what goal or step they might try to accomplish next week.

**GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE EACH WOMAN SHARE WHAT HER GOAL MIGHT BE.**

Thank you for those good goals.

You may recall that in the first workshop for mothers we saved 10 minutes at the end of each session in case someone wanted to bring up something to the group.

We are doing it again; so if you have comments, feel free to make them now.

USE THE TIME FOR SHARING AND SUPPORT. IF NO ONE HAS SOMETHING TO DISCUSS, MOVE ON. INDICATE WHEN THE TIME IS UP. IF THE GROUP WANTS TO KEEP TALKING ON THEIR OWN, THAT IS FINE.

Now let us end with showing our appreciation for the contributions group members have made today.

GIVE OUT STROKES, SAY WORDS OF APPRECIATION, AND MAKE SURE NO ONE IS LEFT OUT. USE GIVING OUT STROKES TO SHAPE DESIRABLE BEHAVIOR. GIVE OUT STROKES TO WOMEN WHO GIVE APPRECIATION TO OTHERS.

Thank you. That is all for this morning.

I'll see you after lunch.

THE END OF SESSION 1

OUTLINE OF SESSIONS ON MOTHERS HELPING THEIR CHILDREN

- SESSION 1: WHAT ARE MY CHILDREN'S NEEDS?
- SESSION 2: WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF MY CHILDREN?
- SESSION 3: WHAT KIND OF ARRANGEMENTS CAN I MAKE?
- SESSION 4: HOW DO I START MY PLAN?
- SESSION 5: HOW DO I LISTEN TO MY CHILDREN?
- SESSION 6: HOW DO I EXPRESS MY FEELINGS DIRECTLY TO MY CHILDREN?
- SESSION 7: WHAT DO I DO WHEN I DON'T LIKE WHAT MY CHILDREN ARE DOING?
- SESSION 8: HOW DO I CREATE A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE AT HOME?
- SESSION 9: HOW DO I DEAL WITH CONFLICTS AT HOME (PART 1)?
- SESSION 10: HOW DO I DEAL WITH CONFLICTS AT HOME (PART 2)?
- SESSION 11: HOW DO I WORK ON CUSTODY WITH MY CHILDREN?
- SESSION 12: HOW DO I HELP MY CHILDREN DEAL WITH DRUGS AND ALCOHOL?
- SESSION 13: HOW DO I DISCOURAGE BEING A TEENAGE MOTHER OR FATHER?
- SESSION 14: WHERE AM I IN MY CUSTODY PLANNING?
- SESSION 15: HOW DO I GIVE AIDS PREVENTION MESSAGES AT HOME?
- SESSION 16: HOW DO I GIVE A LEGACY TO MY CHILDREN?

Acceptance      Approving of yourself and others.

---

Caring            Being concerned about someone or something.

---

Community        Respecting and building your community.

---

Compassion      Feeling sympathy for others.

August 1995

Cooperation Working with others to get something done.

---

Courage Facing things.

---

Equality Being fair.

---

Family Respecting the family and its traditions.

August 1995

Friendship      Supporting and helping friends.

---

Honesty      Telling the truth. Being trustworthy.

---

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

---

Humor      Being able to see the funny side of things.

August 1995

Independence Being your own person.

---

Respect Being considerate and tolerating beliefs that are different than yours.

---

Responsibility Being accountable and dependable.

---

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

Self-respect     Appreciating yourself. Having pride in yourself.

---

Spirituality     Searching for meaning and salvation.

---

Trust             Having faith in someone or something.

---