

MOTHERS' TRAINING - ILLNESS PHASE
(HRA PROJECT)

SESSION 5: HOW CAN I REALLY LISTEN TO MY CHILDREN?

(Day 3, Morning. Two hours in length.)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Mothers will understand that how parents talk to their children and whether they listen to their children is important.
2. Mothers will be able to distinguish active listening from other kinds of listening.
3. Mothers will be able to listen actively to their children.
4. Mothers will be able to overcome obstacles to listening actively.

RATIONALE:

It must be kept in mind that the goals for this project are to influence the adolescent children of mothers living with AIDS, so that the children lead lives in which successful coping with stress and safer sex are practiced. Therefore the emphasis in the illness phase of the training for the mothers is on helping their children. It is assumed that the better the mother's parenting skills the more effective the mothers will be. This session and some of those that follow are on how to be a better parent. One of the rationales for learning these skills is that their children are under a great deal of stress at this time, and that good parenting skills will aid in reducing this stress and creating a supportive home environment.

The skill to be learned in this session is active listening. There is a whole body of research findings which demonstrate that active listening is a critical skill in parenting and that it can be taught. Many of the skills presented here are based on the work of Thomas Gordon and can be found in his book P. E. T. Parent Effectiveness Training. New York: Peter H. Wyden, 1970, a version of which is in the Vermont Foster Parent Training Program. The Vermont approach combines Gordon with a cognitive-behavioral orientation.

PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce the participants, review goals, and do a lottery. (15 minutes)
2. Introduce the general topic with an exercise responding to a problem situation. (10 minutes)
3. Connect personal feelings to parenting situations with the Feeling Thermometer. (10 minutes)
4. Present examples of responding and passive listening. (10 minutes)

5. Explain what active listening is, model it, and have mothers try to respond actively. (15 minutes)
6. Present how to listen actively and illustrate it with responses to situations. Focus on responding to feelings. (20 minutes)
7. Practice responding actively through role plays. (25 minutes)
8. End with relaxation, free time, and giving appreciation to each other. (15 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Lottery Tickets
Lottery Prize
Strokes
Feeling Thermometer on Parent-child Communication
Scripts: The Job (1 & 2)
Cards on the 12 Categories of Typical Responses
Script: Gold Chain (1 & 2)
Guidelines for Active Listening
Feeling Situations
Teenagers Opening Remarks

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

[The purpose of this exercise is to build group cohesion through goal sharing and the lottery and to increase self-esteem through the introduction procedure.]

It is good to see you here again.

I hope that the time between sessions has been good for you.

Let's begin by telling your first name and one quality that your children like about you.

For example, you could say, "My name is Jill, and my children like that I am very fair with them."

I'll start.

My name is.... and one quality my children like about me is.....

HAVE THE MOTHERS GO AROUND THE ROOM GIVING THEIR FIRST NAMES AND ONE QUALITY THEIR CHILDREN LIKE ABOUT THEM.

Thank you. That was great.

Here are your Strokes for today.

GIVE OUT TWENTY STROKES TO EACH.

Remember to give them for anything you like about another group member - her comments, contributions, presence, dress, hair style, anything.

At the end of the last session you selected a step you were going to take between sessions.

Please tell us what your goal was and how you did.

GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE WOMEN SAY WHAT THEIR GOALS WERE AND HOW THEY DID. GIVE OUT STROKES AND BRAINSTORM OBSTACLES.

Remember when you select a step to take that it should be realistic, clear, not too much or too little, and easy to tell if you completed it.

I really appreciate the effort you made it working on your goals.

Let's do a lottery.

If you have won before, you get one lottery ticket.

If you have never won, you get three lottery tickets.

Write your names on the tickets.

PASS OUT THE LOTTERY TICKETS, HAVE THEM WRITE THEIR NAMES ON THEM, PUT THEM IN THE BOWL, MIX THEM UP, HAVE SOMEONE DRAW A WINNER, AND PASS OUT THE PRIZE.

Exercise 2: Why Are We Working on Active Listening?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to explain why we are working on active listening and to demonstrate that the way we talk and whether we listen makes a difference in helping our children. Having mothers respond to a situation is the approach used.]

For a few sessions we are going to work on skills that help a parent be supportive and effective with her children.

We are doing this now because your children are under a lot of stress and by improving your skills you can give them the support they need.

We are not teaching you these skills because we think you don't know how to be a good parent.

We simply want to do everything we can to make it easier for you and your children.

Imagine this scene.

I need someone to play the son and someone to play the mother.

SELECT VOLUNTEERS. DECIDE WHO WILL PLAY EACH PART AND GIVE THEM THE SCRIPT. HAVE THEM READ IT ALOUD TO THE GROUP.

SCHOOL: 1

MOTHER: Junior, what are you doing home in the middle of the day?

SON: I'm quitting school.

MOTHER: Over my dead body. You get your ass off that couch and go back to school. No son of mine is dropping out of school. If you don't get an education, you'll end up on drugs or dead like the other boys around here.

SON: I hate school. I'm not going back.

MOTHER: Don't tell me what you are going to do. If you quit school, I'm going to find your father and let him know what you are planning. He'll come over here and knock some sense in your head.

SON: It's no use yelling at me.

MOTHER: Junior, you aren't thinking straight. You're acting stupid. Are you on drugs already?

SON: I got to get out of here.

THE END

Now we will do the scene over again with a different script.

Here's the second version.

Will you read the second version?

SCHOOL: 2

MOTHER: Junior, what are you doing home in the middle of the day?

SON: I'm quitting school.

MOTHER: How come?

SON: I flunked that stupid math test. I just can't get it. I must be really dumb.

MOTHER: You sure sound discouraged.

SON: How would you feel if you studied and studied and still messed up?

MOTHER: Real bad.

SON: I give up. I'm quitting school.

MOTHER: Junior, you're not dumb. I can see why you'd feel frustrated and want to quit school.

SON: The other courses are not so bad. But this one kills me.

THE END

Thank you for playing those scenes so well.

GIVE STROKES TO THE PLAYERS.

How did the mother's action differ in the two scenes?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. IN THE FIRST SCENE THE MOTHER RESPONDED IN WAYS SHE THOUGHT WOULD BE HELPFUL. IN THE SECOND SCENE THE MOTHER LISTENED TO TRY AND UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS GOING ON WITH HER SON.

How do you think the son felt when the first scene was over?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. LOOK FOR ANGRY, STUPID, CRITICIZED, ALONE, NOT UNDERSTOOD.

What do you think the son in the first scene will end up doing?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. LOOK FOR NOT TALK ABOUT THE SITUATION. STAY AWAY FROM HOME, QUIT SCHOOL.

What about the son in the second scene?

How is he apt to feel, think and behave?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. FEELS RESPECTED, UNDERSTOOD. MAY TRY TO FIX THE SITUATION.

The point these scenes are trying to make is that what we say is important but maybe even more important is how we listen.

There are many situations in which adults are more willing to listen to other adults than to children.

Have you noticed how adult women can talk with each other for hours but would have difficulty listening to their kids.

With children we are more likely to advise and suggest and lecture.

Let's say your daughter has been going with Johnny - a boy you like and think is good for her.

She comes in the door and says, "I've just dumped that idiot, Johnny! I never want to see him again."

What would you do or say?

ENCOURAGE SHARING OR RESPONSES. LOOK FOR LISTENING, TRYING TO EMPATHIZE WITH THE DAUGHTER. AS IDEAS ARE PUT FORTH, ASK HOW THE DAUGHTER WOULD PROBABLY RESPOND TO THEM.

So, the point is that our willingness to listen - just like the way we talk to someone - is very important in communication.

The more we listen actively and respond positively, the more we can help our children.

In this session we will work on listening actively when our children have a problem, and in the next session we will learn how to express our feelings directly when we have a problem.

Exercise 3: How Do I Feel About Communicating with my Children?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to make communicating with children more personal by connecting the topic with the mother's feelings. Using the Feeling Thermometer and stimulating self-ideals around being a mother are the procedures used.]

How do you feel about the way you and your teenager communicate?

We will use the Feeling Thermometer to explore that question.

I will pass out the Feeling Thermometer and read the situations.

You record what your temperature level would be.

Remember that 100 is very uncomfortable and 0 is completely comfortable.

PASS OUT THE FEELING THERMOMETERS. READ THE SITUATIONS. THE SITUATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Your teenager says to you, "I don't want to talk about it."
2. Your teenager says to you, "You don't understand me."
3. Your teenager says to you, "I got to talk to you about something."
4. Your teenager says to you, "What do you think I should do?"

WHEN EVERYONE IS FINISHED, ASK FOR OTHER IDEAS.

Can you give me some examples of what was comfortable and uncomfortable?

Feel free to include situations that were not on the list.

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES.

Take a moment and answer the question, "What kind of a mother do you want to be?"

WAIT A MINUTE BEFORE PROCEEDING.

Will someone share what their ideas are about the kind of mother she wants to be?

ENCOURAGE SHARING. TIE LISTENING AND COMMUNICATING TO POSITIVE SELF-IMAGES AROUND BEING A MOTHER.

Exercise 4: Is Active Listening Like Any Other Kind?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to clarify what active listening is not. Examples are used for this purpose.]

Now we want to learn the skill called active listening.

Imagine that you asked your teenager to lower the sound on the TV, and she shouts at you, "Shit! I'm sick and tired of being told to do this, do that, don't do that. Nothing I do is right to you. I've had it up to here. Get off my back, will you?"

For the moment don't tell me how you would respond.

I'm going to give each of you a card with a typical way of reacting on it.

We all use these approaches, but none of them is active listening.

First, you get a card with a typical way of responding to kids on it.

Then we will go around and have you tell us what kind of reacting it is and give us an example of what a mother would say.

PASS OUT THE CARDS. TAKE ONE FOR YOURSELF.

Here's what you are to do.

For example, the kind of response my card says is _____(ordering).

That means _____ (telling someone what to do).

An example is _____ ("Don't talk to your mother like that.")

PASS OUT THE CARDS AND HAVE EACH MOTHER TELL WHAT KIND OF RESPONDING IT IS, WHAT IT MEANS, AND GIVE AN EXAMPLE FROM THOSE LISTED ON THE CARD. THE CARDS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. ORDERING

Telling the child to do something, giving him an order or a command.

"I don't care what other parents do, you have to do the work!"

"Don't talk to your mother like that!"

"Now you go back in there and take care of your sister."

"Stop complaining!"

2. THREATENING

Telling the child what will happen if he does something:

"If you do that, you'll be sorry."

"One more statement like that, and you'll leave the room!"

"You better not do that if you know what's good for you!"

3. PREACHING

Telling the child what he should or ought to do:

"You shouldn't act like that."

"You ought to do this....."

"You must always respect adults."

4. ADVISING

Telling the child how to solve a problem, giving her advice or suggestions; providing answers or solutions for her:

"Why don't you ask both your sisters to play in here?"

"Just wait a couple of years before having sex with someone."

"Go make friends with some other girls."

5. LECTURING

Trying to influence the child with facts, counter-arguments, logic, information, or your own opinions:

"College can be the best experience you ever had."

"Children must learn how to get along with each other."

"Let's look at the facts about enlisting in the Army."

"When I was your age, I had twice as much to do as you do."

6. CRITICIZING

Making a negative judgment of the child:

"You're not thinking clearly."

"That's an immature point of view."

"You're very wrong about that."

"I couldn't disagree with you more."

7. PRAISING

Offering a positive judgment of the child, agreeing:

"Well, I think you are pretty."

"You have the ability to do well."

"I think you're right."

"I agree with you."

8. SHAMING

Making the child feel foolish, putting the child into a category, calling the child a name, shaming him:

"You're a spoiled brat."

"Look here, Mr. Wise-ass."

"You're acting like a wild animal."

"OK, little baby."

9. ANALYZING

Telling the child why she is doing something or analyzing why she is doing or saying something; telling her that you have her figured out:

"You're just jealous of Maria."

"You're saying that just to bug me."

"You really don't believe that at all."

"You feel that way because you are not doing well in school."

10. SYMPATHIZING

Trying to make the child feel better, talking him out of his feelings, trying to make her feelings go away, denying the strength of her feelings:

"You'll feel differently tomorrow."

"All kids go through this sometimes."

"Don't worry - things will work out."

"You could be an excellent student with your potential."

"I know. School can be pretty boring sometimes."

"I used to think that too."

11. QUESTIONING

Trying to find reasons, motives, causes; searching for more information to help solve the problem:

"When did you start feeling this way?"

"Why do you suppose you hate school?"

"Do kids tell you why they don't want to play with you?"

"Who put that idea into your head?"

12. DISTRACTING

Trying to get the child away from the problem; withdrawing from the problem yourself; distracting the child; kidding her out of it; pushing the problem aside:

"Just forget about it."

"Let's not talk about it at the table."

"Let's talk about something more pleasant."

"How is it going with basketball?"

Remember the situation with the child and turning down the TV?

Which category was your response in?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES.

All of these responses may be acceptable.

We all use them.

In many of the cultures that you come from parents were to be respected by children, and the parents job was to instruct the child on how to live a decent life.

So, we all have been taught to use some of the styles in the cards.

But none of them are active listening.

Even asking questions which is a kind of listening and may keep the child talking and show interest is not active listening.

Active listening is very useful in building respect and in helping a child become a responsible adult.

Exercise 5: What Is Active Listening?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to present the principles behind active listening and its purpose. Explanation and modelling are used here with mothers making some preliminary attempts at doing it.]

What is active listening and why should a parent use it?

The purposes of active listening are to

- keep a child talking about a problem
- give a child the feeling that someone understands her problem
- build a relationship of trust between parent and child
- help a child begin to solve his or her own problems
- encourage a child to explore strong feelings.

Overall active listening promotes parent-child communication.

Let's listen to two different conversations between a mother and daughter.

EITHER HAVE TWO MOTHERS READ THE ROLES OR HAVE THE FACILITATORS PLAY THEM.

THE GOLD CHAIN

DORIS: Damn!

MOTHER: Don't swear.

DORIS: Someone stole my gold chain.

MOTHER: No kidding?

DORIS: Look at the mark on my neck. He ripped right off.

MOTHER: I told you not to wear a gold chain to school.

DORIS: That was my gold chain - every penny of it.

MOTHER: It happens all the time. The place is full of crooks. Cheer up. You'll get over it.

DORIS: You don't understand.

MOTHER: Remember when I had my purse stolen? We still survived.

THE END

That was the first conversation.

Did you hear any of the "typical twelve" in this conversation?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES.

Now let's do the second conversation.

USE THE SAME PLAYERS FOR THE SECOND CONVERSATION.

THE GOLD CHAIN (2)

DORIS: Damn!

MOTHER: What's the matter? You sound really upset.

DORIS: Someone stole my gold chain at school.

MOTHER: Oh! Doris! That must make you feel terrible.

DORIS: Look at the marks where he tore it off.

MOTHER: You don't want to get infected.

DORIS: I'm going to put something on it in a minute. I can't get over it. You were right. I never should have worn it to school.

MOTHER: So, you're kicking yourself?

DORIS: I guess. You know - a chain makes you look really good. I like looking nice in school.

MOTHER: It's going to be hard with out it.

DORIS: Every penny of that chain was mine. I really busted my butt working for that. It took me two summers.

MOTHER: All you did to earn it makes losing it a lot worse?

DORIS: Yes. I loved that chain. I guess I'll have to start all over again.

MOTHER: If you want a new chain, I guess you will. Do you want me to see if I hear of some after school jobs you could do?

DORIS: That would be good. If I earned it before, I can do it again.

MOTHER: I have to give you credit for the way you saved money last summer.

DORIS: Thanks, Mom. I'm going to go put some peroxide on where the chain cut me.

THE END

That is the second conversation about the gold chain.

What is the difference?

Doris feel better?

Did the real problem come out?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

When a mother is using active listening, what is she doing?

There are three things that she is doing.

First, she is reflecting back or putting a name on the child's feeling.

The teenager says, "My new teacher gives much too much homework. I'll never be able to get it done."

The mother says, "You seem worried."

Second, the mother is putting what the teenager said in different words.

Tell the teenager what you heard her say , but use your own words.

The teenager says, "What a lousy day. There is nothing to do around here."

The mother says, "It's boring on a day like this. Not much to do."

Third, the mother puts together (summarizes) what was said.

The teenager says, "For awhile I was doing good, but now I'm worse than before. I try hard, but it doesn't seem to help. What's the use? I'll never be any good in school. I should just quit trying."

The mother says, "No matter what you've tried in school, it doesn't work out. You're feeling pretty hopeless."

The key words, then, are **reflect, repeat in your words, and summarize**.

I want you try your hand at active listening.

We'll start with a mother and son talking.

I'll read the mother and the co-facilitator will play the son.

Then I will stop and you will take my place as the mother in the conversation with the son.

ONE FACILITATOR READS THE MOTHER AND THE OTHER THE SON. THE TEXT WILL SHOW YOU WHERE THE MOTHER DROPS OUT AND THE GROUP FILLS IN. EXAMPLES OF ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSES ARE GIVEN IN BRACKETS. THE FACILITATOR WHO READ THE MOTHER'S LINES ACTS AS A COACH.

THE JOB

LUCAS: I think I'm going to have to quit my job, and I really need the money.
MOTHER: You sound frustrated.

LUCAS: I am. Mr. Rodriguez is always yelling at me. I can't take it anymore.

MOTHER: You get criticized so much that you want to get out of there. You feel hopeless.

LUCAS: He tells me to bring out the vegetables. I do it, and he says I put them in the wrong place. I cut the cauliflower like he said to and he tells me I did it wrong.

MOTHER: No matter how hard you try it doesn't please him.

LUCAS: Nothing works. He always tells me I'm doing it wrong. Just thinking of going to work makes my stomach upset.

MOTHER: Getting criticized makes you very nervous.

LUCAS: Some guys it doesn't seem to bother, but me... that's a different story.

MOTHER: You wish it wouldn't get to you, but it does.

LUCAS: It sure does. Can I quit?

MOTHER: That's up to you. It's so bad, you think quitting will solve the problem.

LUCAS: I won't have stomach aches any more. I don't want to quit, but I don't know what to do.

MOTHER: _____ {You'd feel better quitting, but you'd rather solve the problem.}

LUCAS: Yes. If I could get him off my back, I would definitely stay. I like the other guys working there.

MOTHER: _____ {You enjoy the people you are with at work. If it weren't for Mr. Rodriguez, everything would be OK.}

LUCAS: You got it. I wonder how they can get along with him. I should ask them.

MOTHER: _____ {You might feel more confident if you spoke with them and they gave you some tips.}

LUCAS: That would help. Mr. Rodriguez isn't a bad guy. It's just that I can't seem to do it right for him. Maybe I don't understand what he wants.

MOTHER: _____ {If you understood

what he wanted, it might be possible to please him, and that would make you feel better. }

LUCAS: Next time he tells me to do something I'll ask him to show me exactly what he means. Then I'll do it once with him watching to make sure I got it.

MOTHER: _____ {That sound worth trying. }

LUCAS: I wonder if I can work something out.

MOTHER: _____ {You sound more optimistic. }

LUCAS: I'm not going to give up yet.

THE END

That was very good.

Now, remember the situation we brought up at the beginning with the teenager you asked to turn down the TV?

The teenager tells you to get off her back.

Would three of you volunteer to tell us what you were going to say in response.

SELECT THREE VOLUNTEERS AND HAVE THEM READ THEIR RESPONSES.

Do these responses demonstrate actively listening?

ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION.

Before we end this exercise on what is active listening, I want to point out when active listening is not appropriate.

Do not use active listening when a child asks a simple question.

"Is dinner ready?"

"Can I get in the bathroom now?"

"Is it supposed to rain tomorrow?"

Only use active listening when a child is expressing either positive or negative **feelings**.

Exercise 6: How Do I Listen Actively?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to present practical tips on how to listen actively and to improve reflecting feeling and content. Identifying feelings and responding to teenager's remarks with feeling and content are practiced.]

How do you listen actively?

Earlier we said that the three things a mother did who listened actively was to **reflect feelings, put what the child said in the mother's words** (paraphrase), **and summarize.**

Here are some guidelines for active listening.

HAND OUT THE GUIDELINES AND GO OVER THEM.

GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

1. LISTEN TO WHAT THE CHILD HAS TO SAY.

Make sure you have the time to listen.

2. TRY TO NAME THE FEELING THE CHILD IS EXPRESSING.

Don't try to guess what is at the root of the problem.

Don't make the problem any bigger than it is. Stick to what the child has to say.

3. REPEAT WHAT THE CHILD HAS SAID USING YOUR OWN WORDS.

4. STOP! LISTEN - LET THE CHILD GO ON.

HELPFUL HINTS

1. LOOK FOR SITUATIONS WHERE THE CHILD IS UPSET.

Use "upset" as a cue to active listening.

2. IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE, TRY THIS FORMULA:

"You seem _____" (label the feeling).

"Sounds like you're _____" (label the feeling).

3. TRY TO SET IT UP.

Consciously pick some area where you know the child is negative.

4. TRY POSITIVE SITUATIONS.

Remember that changing your way of communicating is very difficult.

Actively listening will feel awkward at first, especially when people are upset or emotional.

Learning the skill of active listening will take practice.

One of the hardest and most important parts is identifying and labeling the feelings.

I am going to give you some situations that might occur at home.

I want you to pick the feelings that the child might be expressing.

There is a list of feeling words at the bottom of the page.

HAND OUT THE LIST OF FEELING SITUATIONS. ASK THE GROUP TO DECIDE WHICH FEELINGS APPEAR IN EACH SITUATION.

FEELING SITUATIONS

1. Brian, 18, comes running into the kitchen, shouting, "Hey, Mom. I got accepted at City College."

2. Lisa, 12, is staring at a book in her lap, not turning a page. As you look over at her, she says, "What a waste of time. There's nothing in this history book about people of color."
3. Miranda, 16, is complaining about spending money. "How come you don't give me any spending money? Other kids get it. I never have hardly anything. It isn't fair."
4. Leon, 14, is just sitting there messing with his food, not eating anything. He says, to no one in particular, "I wonder how come Joe asked me if I was gay?"
5. Yvette, 17, comes in the door and tells you that her basketball team won today and move into the semi-finals. Then she says quietly, "I scored 25 points."
6. Theresa, 18, just came from the bus station where she saw her boyfriend off to the Army. She says, "I miss him already. How am I going to stand it without him?"
7. Mark, 15, comes in quickly and bolts the door. He says, "A guy down the block just got shot. I'm not going out there again."
8. Malcolm, 17, comes in the door with a new girl. "Mom, this is Denise. She is something special, and I just wanted you to meet her." He puts his arm around Denise and gives her a squeeze. Then they leave. Later he comes back smiling and says to you, "Well?"

Examples of feeling words: happy, pleased, frustrated, guilty, proud, frightened, scared, embarrassed, resentful, sad, affectionate, bothered, worried, bored, discouraged, excited, angry, mad, upset, hurt.

A KEY TO THE APPROPRIATE FEELING WORDS FOLLOWS:

FEELING SITUATIONS AND KEY

1. Brian, 18, comes running into the kitchen, shouting, "Hey, Mom. I got accepted at City College." Key: **proud, excited, happy.**
2. Lisa, 12, is staring at a book in her lap, not turning a page. As you look over at her, she says, "What a waste of time. There's nothing in this history book about people of color." Key: **frustrated, discouraged, irritated.**
3. Miranda, 16, is complaining about spending money. "How come you don't give me any spending money?"

Other kids get it. I never have hardly anything. It isn't fair." Key: **resentful, angry**.

4. Leon, 14, is just sitting there messing with his food, not eating anything. He says, to no one in particular, "I wonder how come Joe asked me if I was gay?" Key: **worried, upset, bothered**.
5. Yvette, 17, comes in the door and tells you that her basketball team won today and move into the semi-finals. Then she says quietly, "I scored 25 points." Key: **happy, proud**
6. Theresa, 18, just came from the bus station where she saw her boyfriend off to the Army. She says, "I miss him already. How am I going to stand it without him?" Key: **upset, sad, discouraged**.
7. Mark, 15, comes in quickly and bolts the door. He says, "A guy down the block just got shot. I'm not going out there again." Key: **frightened, scared**.
8. Malcolm, 17, comes in the door with a new girl. "Mom, this is Denise. She is something special, and I just wanted you to meet her." He puts his arm around Denise and gives her a squeeze. Then they leave. Later he comes back smiling and says to you, "Well?" Key: **affectionate, pleased**.

Now we are going to practice responding to these situations.

I'll ask each one of you what you would say to the teenager in the situation.

This time say both the feeling word and put into your own words what the teenager has told you.

We will use the formula to practice.

The formula is "You feelbecause....." or "Sounds like you're..... because.....?"

All you have to do is to say either "You seem....." and put in the feeling "because....." and use your own words to say what the teenager said or "Sounds like you're....." fill in the feeling word and "because..." use your own words.

For example, the teenager says to me, "I hate Ed for leaving me and going out with Karen."

I could say, "You feel furious with Ed because he's seeing someone else."

Or, "Sounds like you are really angry at Ed because he has dropped you for Karen."

When you fill in the "because" part make sure you stick with what the teenager has said.

Don't make a statement which tries to analyze the teenager or the situation.

Has everyone got it?

EXPLAIN ANY ISSUES THAT ARE NOT CLEAR.

Here we go.

START WITH THE FIRST MOTHER.

How would you respond with active listening to Brian?

AFTER THE FIRST MOTHER HAS GONE, ASK THE NEXT ONE TO RESPOND TO LISA. KEEP GOING UNTIL EACH MOTHER HAS HAD A TURN. GIVE OUT STROKES.

That was very good.

Exercise 7: How Can I Improve Listening Actively?
(25 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to improve active listening skills through role playing.]

We are now going to practice active listening in more real life situations where there is give and take.

I will give you a list of opening statements by teenagers.

You pick which one you want to work on and tell your partner.

You can also make up your own line for the teenager to say.

Your partner will then make the statement to you and act the role of the teenager.

You try to listen actively to your teenager.

DIVIDE THE GROUP IN HALF AND THEN INTO PAIRS. THE FIRST PAIR WILL ROLE PLAY ONE SITUATION AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK FROM THE OBSERVING PAIR. THEN THE SECOND PAIR WILL DO ONE. THEN BACK TO THE FIRST PAIR WITH THE MOTHERS SWITCHING ROLES. THEN THE SECOND PAIR WITH THE MOTHERS SWITCHING ROLES. GIVE OUT STROKES.

When you give feedback to the mothers doing the role play, keep in mind the three steps in active listening: reflecting feelings, putting what is said in your own words, and summarizing.

HAND OUT THE LIST OF OPENING REMARKS. IF MOTHERS HAVE AN OPENING LINE OF THEIR OWN, ENCOURAGE THEM TO USE IT.

TEENAGERS' OPENING REMARKS

1. "Even if Harry takes drugs, I still like him and won't stop seeing him."
2. "All you do is to keep giving me jobs to do. What do you think I am - your maid?"
3. "I am not going to call Salim and Mo. They probably wouldn't want to go with me anyway."

4. "Why do you keep asking me if I am having sex with Manuel? It is none of your business."
5. "I may have gotten two C's in class but I also got an A."
6. "I can't stand school. What do I need that crap for anyway?"
7. "I thought they were my friends, but since they found out you have AIDS, they ignore me completely."
8. "I don't know why he hasn't called me. Maybe I should get up the courage to call him."
9. "I hate that teacher. There is no way I'm going back to her class."
10. "I don't know why you had to get sick. It's messing up everything for me."

Pick the statement you want your teenager to make and tell your partner to role play saying it to you and then keep the conversation going with active listening.

A FACILITATOR GOES WITH EACH SMALL GROUP AND HELPS KEEPING THE PROCESS GOING. MAKE SURE EVERY MOTHER HAS A TURN AT PLAYING "MOTHER." ALLOW ABOUT THREE MINUTES PER ROLE PLAY AND TWO MINUTES FOR FEEDBACK. GIVE FEEDBACK INSTRUCTIONS. USE STROKES.

To the mother, tell us how you felt, what one thing you that you liked and what one thing would you have done differently.

To the teenager, how did you feel?

Also, what one thing did the mother do that you liked and what one thing would you have done differently?

To the observers, tell us one thing that the mother did that you liked and one thing that you would have done differently.

OBTAIN FEEDBACK AFTER EACH ROLE PLAY.

Exercise 8: What's Next?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to build group cohesion, to release tension, and to create interest in the next session.]

At the beginning of this session we learned that whether we listen and how we talk are both important.

Much of today was involved with listening.

Next time we will work on talking - expressing our own feelings as parents directly.

We have 10 minutes set aside for you to bring up things to the group.

This is free time for you to say what's on your mind or ask about things we aren't covering.

Who has something on her mind that she wants to group to deal with?

USE 10 MINUTES FOR UNSTRUCTURED SHARING.

You have worked hard this morning and need some time to relax.

THE FLOWER

Get yourself in a comfortable position.

Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. PAUSE

Again - take a deep breath and breathe out very slowly. PAUSE

Breathe out very slowly. PAUSE

Let your eyes close very slowly. PAUSE

See the bud of a beautiful flower. PAUSE

The flower is closed - waiting for the sun to shine on it.

Imagine that you are the flower. PAUSE

Slowly the flower begins to open. PAUSE

Feel yourself expanding. PAUSE

As the flower opens, see the beautiful colors. PAUSE

See how lovely you are.

The flower is opening wide. PAUSE

Feel the power and strength in you as the flower opens. PAUSE

See your beauty. PAUSE

Feel how strong, caring and open you are. PAUSE

Let the image stay in your mind. PAUSE

Now yawn and stretch.

THE END

We want to end this morning's session with giving appreciation to each other.

ENCOURAGE THE GROUP TO GIVE APPRECIATION TO EACH OTHER.

It is time for lunch.

I will see you back here this afternoon.

THE END OF THE SESSION ON ACTIVE LISTENING

SCHOOL: 1

MOTHER: Junior, what are you doing home in the middle of the day?

SON: I'm quitting school.

MOTHER: Over my dead body. You get your ass off that couch and go back to school. No son of mine is dropping out of school. If you don't get an education, you'll end up on drugs or dead like the other boys around here.

SON: I hate school. I'm not going back.

MOTHER: Don't tell me what you are going to do. If you quit school, I'm going to find your father and let him know what you are planning. He'll come over here and knock some sense in your head.

SON: It's no use yelling at me.

MOTHER: Junior, you aren't thinking straight. You're acting stupid. Are you on drugs already?

SON: I got to get out of here.

THE END

SCHOOL: 2

MOTHER: Junior, what are you doing home in the middle of the day?

SON: I'm quitting school.

MOTHER: How come?

SON: I flunked that stupid math test. I just can't get it. I must be really dumb.

MOTHER: You sure sound discouraged.

SON: How would you feel if you studied and studied and still messed up?

MOTHER: Real bad.

SON: I give up. I'm quitting school.

MOTHER: Junior, you're not dumb. I can see why you'd feel frustrated and want to quit school.

SON: The other courses are not so bad. But this one kills me.

THE END

FEELING THERMOMETER ON PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION

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

SITUATIONS

TEMPERATURE
READING

1. Your teenager says to you, "I don't want to talk about it."

2. Your teenager says to you, "You don't understand me."

3. Your teenager says to you, "I got to talk to you about something."

4. Your teenager says to you, "What do you think I should do?"

CARD 1: ORDERING

Telling the child to do something, giving him an order or a command.

"I don't care what other parents do, you have to do the work!"

"Don't talk to your mother like that!"

"Now you go back in there and take care of your sister."

"Stop complaining!"

CARD 2: THREATENING

Telling the child what will happen if he does something:

"If you do that, you'll be sorry."

"One more statement like that, and you'll leave the room!"

"You better not do that if you know what's good for you!"

CARD 3: PREACHING

Telling the child what he should or ought to do:

"You shouldn't act like that."

"You ought to do this...."

"You must always respect adults."

CARD 4: ADVISING

Telling the child how to solve a problem, giving her advice or suggestions; providing answers or solutions for her:

"Why don't you ask both your sisters to play in here?"

"Just wait a couple of years before having sex with someone."

"Go make friends with some other girls."

CARD 5: LECTURING

Trying to influence the child with facts, counter-arguments, logic, information, or your own opinions:

"College can be the best experience you ever had."

"Children must learn how to get along with each other."

"Let's look at the facts about enlisting in the Army."

"When I was your age, I had twice as much to do as you do."

CARD 6: CRITICIZING

Making a negative judgment of the child:

"You're not thinking clearly."

"That's an immature point of view."

"You're very wrong about that."

"I couldn't disagree with you more."

CARD 7: PRAISING

Offering a positive judgment of the child, agreeing:

"Well, I think you are pretty."

"You have the ability to do well."

"I think you're right."

"I agree with you."

CARD 8: SHAMING

Making the child feel foolish, putting the child into a category, calling the child a name, shaming him:

"You're a spoiled brat."

"Look here, Mr. Wise-ass."

"You're acting like a wild animal."

"OK, little baby."

CARD 9: ANALYZING

Telling the child why she is doing something or analyzing why she is doing or saying something; telling her that you have her figured out:

"You're just jealous of Maria."

"You're saying that just to bug me."

"You really don't believe that at all."

"You feel that way because you are not doing well in school."

CARD 10: SYMPATHIZING

Trying to make the child feel better, talking him out of his feelings, trying to make her feelings go away, denying the strength of her feelings:

"You'll feel differently tomorrow."

"All kids go through this sometimes."

"Don't worry - things will work out."

"You could be an excellent student with your potential."

"I know. School can be pretty boring sometimes."

"I used to think that too."

CARD 11: QUESTIONING

Trying to find reasons, motives, causes; searching for more information to help solve the problem:

"When did you start feeling this way?"

"Why do you suppose you hate school?"

"Do kids tell you why they don't want to play with you?"

"Who put that idea into your head?"

CARD 12: DISTRACTING

Trying to get the child away from the problem; withdrawing from the problem yourself; distracting the child; kidding her out of it; pushing the problem aside:

"Just forget about it."

"Let's not talk about it at the table."

"Let's talk about something more pleasant."

"How is it going with basketball?"

THE GOLD CHAIN

DORIS: Damn!

MOTHER: Don't swear.

DORIS: Someone stole my gold chain.

MOTHER: No kidding?

DORIS: Look at the mark on my neck. He ripped right off.

MOTHER: I told you not to wear a gold chain to school.

DORIS: That was my gold chain - every penny of it.

MOTHER: It happens all the time. The place is full of crooks. Cheer up. You'll get over it.

DORIS: You don't understand.

MOTHER: Remember when I had my purse stolen? We still survived.

THE END

THE GOLD CHAIN (2)

DORIS: Damn!

MOTHER: What's the matter? You sound really upset.

DORIS: Someone stole my gold chain at school.

MOTHER: Oh! Doris! That must make you feel terrible.

DORIS: Look at the marks where he tore it off.

MOTHER: You don't want to get infected.

DORIS: I'm going to put something on it in a minute. I can't get over it. You were right. I never should have worn it to school.

MOTHER: So, you're kicking yourself?

DORIS: I guess. You know - a chain makes you look really good. I like looking nice in school.

MOTHER: It's going to be hard with out it.

DORIS: Every penny of that chain was mine. I really busted my butt working for that. It took me two summers.

MOTHER: All you did to earn it makes losing it a lot worse?

DORIS: Yes. I loved that chain. I guess I'll have to start all over again.

MOTHER: If you want a new chain, I guess you will. Do you want me to see if I hear of some after school jobs you could do?

DORIS: That would be good. If I earned it before, I can do it again.

MOTHER: I have to give you credit for the way you saved money last summer.

DORIS: Thanks, Mom. I'm going to go put some peroxide on where the chain cut me.

THE END

GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

1. LISTEN TO WHAT THE CHILD HAS TO SAY.

Make sure you have the time to listen.

2. TRY TO NAME THE FEELING THE CHILD IS EXPRESSING.

Don't try to guess what is at the root of the problem.

Don't make the problem any bigger than it is. Stick to what the child has to say.

3. REPEAT WHAT THE CHILD HAS SAID USING YOUR OWN WORDS.

4. STOP! LISTEN - LET THE CHILD GO ON.

HELPFUL HINTS

1. LOOK FOR SITUATIONS WHERE THE CHILD IS UPSET.

Use "upset" as a cue to active listening.

2. IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE, TRY THIS FORMULA:

"You seem _____" (label the feeling).

"Sounds like you're _____" (label the feeling).

3. TRY TO SET IT UP.

Consciously pick some area where you know the child is negative.

4. TRY POSITIVE SITUATIONS.

FEELING SITUATIONS

1. Brian, 18, comes running into the kitchen, shouting, "Hey, Mom. I got accepted at City College."
2. Lisa, 12, is staring at a book in her lap, not turning a page. As you look over at her, she says, "What a waste of time. There's nothing in this history book about people of color."
3. Miranda, 16, is complaining about spending money. "How come you don't give me any spending money? Other kids get it. I never have hardly anything. It isn't fair."
4. Leon, 14, is just sitting there messing with his food, not eating anything. He says, to no one in particular, "I wonder how come Joe asked me if I was gay?"
5. Yvette, 17, comes in the door and tells you that her basketball team won today and move into the semi-finals. Then she says quietly, "I scored 25 points."
6. Theresa, 18, just came from the bus station where she saw her boyfriend off to the Army. She says, "I miss him already. How am I going to stand it without him?"
7. Mark, 15, comes in quickly and bolts the door. He says, "A guy down the block just got shot. I'm not going out there again."
8. Malcolm, 17, comes in the door with a new girl. "Mom, this is Denise. She is something special, and I just wanted you to meet her." He puts his arm around Denise and gives her a squeeze. Then they leave. Later he comes back smiling and says to you, "Well?"

Examples of feeling words: happy, pleased, frustrated, guilty, proud, frightened, scared, embarrassed, resentful, sad, affectionate, bothered, worried, bored, discouraged, excited, angry, mad, upset, hurt.

TEENAGERS' OPENING REMARKS

1. "Even if Harry takes drugs, I still like him and won't stop seeing him."
2. "All you do is to keep giving me jobs to do. What do you think I am - your maid?"
3. "I am not going to call Salim and Mo. They probably wouldn't want to go with me anyway."
4. "Why do you keep asking me if I am having sex with Manuel? It is none of your business."
5. "I may have gotten two C's in class but I also got an A."
6. "I can't stand school. What do I need that crap for anyway?"
7. "I thought they were my friends, but since they found out you have AIDS, they ignore me completely."
8. "I don't know why he hasn't called me. Maybe I should get up the courage to call him."
9. "I hate that teacher. There is no way I'm going back to her class."
10. "I don't know why you had to get sick. It's messing up everything for me."