

S U C C E S S F U L
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A C T I N G
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A Brief Cognitive-behavioral Family Therapy Manual
For Adolescent Suicide Attempters and Their Families

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	.iii
2. A Model For Understanding People's Actions	vii
3. A Model For Understanding A Family's Actions	.ix
4. Goals	.xi
5. Methods	.xiii
6. Special Techniques	xv
7. Assessing Imminent Danger	.xxi
8. Triage Plan	.xxxi
9. Difficult Treatment Situations	.xxxiii
10. How To Use This Manual	xv
11. Session 1	1
12. Session 2	17
13. Session 3	35
14. Session 4	57
15. Session 5	82
16. Session 6	95

Introduction

This manual provides detailed instructions for six structured sessions of family therapy for adolescent suicide attempters and their parents. The basic approach combines cognitive-behavioral methods with a family systems orientation. The primary assumption is that suicide attempts are actions in response to unsolved family problems stemming from stress and, in some cases, intergenerational dysfunctions. The therapy will focus on identifying strengths in the family, problem-solving interpersonal conflicts, and planning for coping with future suicidal crises. The manual is written with the expectation that most of the attempters will be adolescent girls, but the techniques are applicable to either sex.

Each session begins with goals and objectives and with a rationale for the activities which are to follow. Then there is a section on the procedures for that session and the materials needed.

Prior to the instructional manual are descriptions of a series of issues which will provide useful background for the therapist. Those matters include treatment philosophy, models for understanding how individuals and families behave, goals, methods, special techniques, a section on assessing imminent danger of suicide, a triage plan, and dealing with difficult treatment situations.

TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY

From a family systems perspective families with ongoing crises use these emergencies to protect themselves from the pain of confronting basic dilemmas. These dilemmas arise from multi-generational patterns in which issues of abandonment, rejection, family disintegration, trust, and abuse have not been resolved. Crises are considered resistance, and resistance to change is seen as a commitment to support the family. Even for families with less chaos, a crisis such as a suicide attempt is considered an effort designed to stabilize the family, to prevent the family from moving toward an integration which shifts power, independence, and responsibilities. For example, in one family an adolescent suicide attempt may be interpreted as the child's sacrificing herself in order to keep the secret of the father's abuse of the mother from coming out and increasing the potential for family disintegration.

It is the philosophy of this treatment manual that changing symptom clusters can reduce the risk of adolescent suicide and alter long-standing family dynamics. The families of suicide attempters are definitely in trouble, and there may be many underlying issues. However, a therapist providing structured, short-term therapy may facilitate the expression of symptoms in a controlled setting where they can be reshaped and eliminated. Symptom relief can change the basic problem. As new behavior emerges, new feed-back loops are established.

The need for continuing actions which are self-protective but dysfunctional in the context of family growth and development is reduced.

Central strategies for dealing with these families include beginning with the families where they are and appreciating their efforts to prevent disintegration. Communicating respect for the family's integrity and clearly indicating that the family has no reason to trust the therapist at the beginning of treatment are also important. Therapists need to be sensitive to the family's desire for control, and therapeutic strategies should be designed to empower the family. Reframing is frequently used. For example, problems are redefined as events that occur when people are under a great deal of stress. The family members' experiences must be constantly validated. Frequently solving practical issues related to family needs provides a basis for the trust which will allow the family to finally explore the dilemmas that they have been avoiding. (See Kagan, R. & Schlosberg, S. (1989). Families in Perpetual Crisis. New York: W.W. Norton)

While employing a family systems perspective which thinks in multi-generational terms, it is critical to 1) avoid blaming the victims and 2) recognize the socio-economic factors. It must be made explicit that many of these families are struggling with the devastation of poverty, lack of educational opportunities, illness, crime, discrimination, and multi-generational racism.

Cognitive-behavioral change strategies stem from a social learning theory framework. Within that orientation, for families in crisis to change successfully, a number of factors are required. First, they will need the cognitive and social skills that result in successful performance of tasks such as sharing, emotional control, disclosure, assertive communication, negotiation, and problem-solving. Next, these family members will have to change their belief systems so that they perceive themselves as worth the trouble to make adjustments, and so that they think they can make a difference and perform effectively. Learning experiences will have to be carefully structured in order to develop competencies and to provide the opportunity for demonstrating the fallacies in their misconceptions. These misconceptions are the attitudes and incorrect information that create barriers to change.

To bring about effective change in these families requires that there are incentives for putting new ways of thinking and acting into practice. These incentives may come from self-rewards, interpersonal reinforcement, and social systems rewards. Besides incentives, active social supports for personal and family change are essential. Many of these families are isolated and live without the support networks that are required to sustain family change. Creating a supportive environment is critical. (See Bandura, A. (1986). Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory. Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall)

Through the problem-solving framework of the six treatment sessions and the structuring of a positive social atmosphere where family members appreciate each other, family systems theory and social learning theory come together. Families are respected. They are not pushed to expose themselves and trust prematurely. They are not rushed into confronting basic dilemmas. While the format is structured, families retain considerable control. They are considered worth the time and effort to assist them in learning a new set of skills - problem-solving, negotiating, communicating - and they are considered able to master these skill areas. Finally, increasing their problem-solving skills allows them to become more empowered. They can begin to predict when crises might arise, prepare for them, and confront them.

There may be some areas where family systems theory and cognitive-behavioral theory do not mesh nicely. For example, behavior is often considered a metaphor for the systems theorist, while behavior is behavior for the cognitive therapist. The goals for the social learning theorist are explicit with regard to attitude and behavioral change. In this manual reframing is employed to find what is positive in the intent behind actions, and at the same time the desired results are in thought and action patterns that will reduce the likelihood of future suicide attempts.

A Model For Understanding People's Actions

PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO BEHAVE IN A CERTAIN WAY IF.....

1. They expect something good to come out of it.
2. Something that they want does come out of it.
3. Something good comes out of it often.
4. Anything negative that comes out of it happens a long time after the good part.

PEOPLE WILL BEHAVE EFFECTIVELY IN THEIR BEST INTERESTS IF.....

1. They know what is in their best interest.
2. They have the skills.
3. They have opportunities to learn skills in many ways: observing, imitating, and practicing.
4. They believe they can be effective and have effective tools.
5. They fit into the environment in which they live and the environment supports them.

A Model For Understanding A Family's Actions

A MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING A FAMILY'S ACTIONS

1. Each person's behavior in a family is largely a function of the consequences provided for that behavior by other family members.
2. Each person's behavior in a family is at the same time being affected by other family members and influencing other family members.
3. Happy families are the result of the number of positive outcomes available for each person.
4. Happy families influence each other's behavior more through positive rewards than through punishing.
5. Family members who give positive rewards get positive rewards.
6. Family members are more aware of aversive actions from other family members than positive ones.
7. Family members "store" up how other family members have treated them.
8. As children in families grow older, more of their satisfactions come from outside the family, until the time in later years when the family emerges again as a source of sustenance.

FAMILIES WILL BEHAVE EFFECTIVELY IF

1. The community environment in which they live supports their economic, educational and social well being.
2. The family lives in an environment of physical safety.
3. The society's social problem-solving strategies for families provide alternatives to violence and self-destruction.

- 4. Individual members are respected and understood by others in the family structure.*
- 5. Opportunities for growth and the maintenance of the self-esteem are provided for all individual members regardless of age or gender.*
- 6. There is legitimate power sharing within the family.*
- 7. The adults in the family take responsibility for the nurturance, education, and safety of the children.*
- 8. The responsibilities of the individual members toward the family's functioning are clearly articulated.*

Goals

The overarching goal is to reduce suicidal attempts. As mentioned earlier, adolescent suicide is a poor solution to escaping a chronically dysfunctional family or coping with a serious family problem. Therefore, enabling the family to resolve conflicts and work out difficult situations is the strategy employed here.

There are three primary goals. The first goal is to increase the positive affective state of the family. Frequently these families come to therapy with a negative, depressed stance. Their interpersonal communications are highly critical in nature, and there is a sense of helplessness. Without a change the family environment will not be conducive to learning and using family problem-solving techniques.

The second goal is to demonstrate the therapist's effectiveness, understanding and reliability. Even with successes in resolving family conflicts and increased skills, these families often move from crises to crises. Establishing the therapist's credibility not only enhances family learning during these six sessions, but also establishes the therapist and clinic as a safe, positive place to go for future assistance.

Becoming more skilled at solving family conflicts which often lead to suicidal acts or feelings is the third goal. Social problem-solving has been shown to be a most effective coping tool and one which can be taught. Without learning how to deal with the issues at home, there can be no expectation that suicidal attempts will be reduced.

Methods

In every therapy session there will be exercises to create a positive family atmosphere and to demonstrate therapist credibility. As the sessions progress, the family members learn additional steps in solving problems. They practice on their own problems, first solving an easier one and then working on the problem considered most important.

The basic model for improving skills is "tell, show, and do." First, family members are told what they will be learning how to do and why it is important. Then they will be shown how to do it through modeling, vicarious learning and scripts. Finally, they will practice through role playing and other active methods.

Intervention Strategies

1. Establishing a family climate. At the beginning of each session, family members will compliment each other and notice positive events in the family. To help the family accomplish this goal, small tokens will be exchanged among family members.
2. Learning to recognize feelings. Family members need to increase their ability to label their feelings, describe and assess the intensity of their feelings, and manage and self-control highly charged emotional reactions. Families will become more aware of feelings by learning to use a Feeling Thermometer.
3. Learning how to solve family problems. Family members will learn how to apply a basic problem-solving approach which consists of
 - a. problem definition
 - b. problem hierarchies.
 - c. determining important outcomes.
 - d. analyzing obstacles to problem-solving (rules, roles, expectations, attributions).
 - e. brainstorming solutions.
 - f. evaluating solutions.
 - g. selecting a solution.
 - h. trying out a solution.
 - i. assessing how it works out.
4. Practicing solving problems. Family members will practice problem-solving through role-playing, scripts, and observed interactions with feedback.
5. Learning to negotiate. Family members will learn what makes a negotiation successful and what are the basic principles of negotiating with each other. Then they will practice negotiating, first in structured situations and then in unstructured situations.

Special Techniques

Tokens

Behaviors which are noticed and encouraged by others increase in frequency. Those which are not noticed or punished usually decrease. This process generally occurs without awareness, and encouragement can be as simple as a smile. To help group leaders make this process explicit in the group, tokens are used. You have probably participated in group discussions or activities (with friends, family members, associates or formal groups) when you heard someone say or do something that you liked or with which you agreed. However, because you may not have wanted to stop the person at that moment to tell them how you felt, your feelings went unexpressed until after the discussion was over, or may never have been expressed at all. Adolescents, who are just developing awareness of their own feelings, are often even less likely than adults to give affirming statements to each other. Adolescents sometimes affirm themselves by communicating in a disrespectful or negative manner towards each other. They find it easier to give negative rather than positive feedback. To facilitate building on strengths, therapists should use tokens in each of the sessions to encourage positive affirmation of the family members by each other and by the therapist.

Tokens are pieces of 2" X 2" colored construction paper that anyone can make or poker chips (Flowers, J., Rotheram, M. & Kenny, B. 1980). Therapists give each group member a stack of the tokens at the beginning of each session. Family members sit in a close circle as a discussion or activity is underway. The therapist brings the tokens in a plastic container (a sandwich container is fine) and counts for each participant an equal number of tokens with which to begin. When any member says or does anything someone else likes or agrees with, finds encouraging, causes him/her to think, etc., he or she hands the person a token. It is best when the person explains why the token is being given. The tokens are not "turned in" at the end of the session for something of value. Simply receiving a large number of tokens from their family and making others feel good about themselves leaves most participants at the end of the session with positive feelings about themselves.

The key to everyone using the tokens rests with the therapist's comfort with tokens. If the therapist takes tokens seriously and uses them at every opportunity to offer positive encouragement, the family members will also respect their value and will actively use them. Note that we recommend using "tokens" in every session, to encourage all participants to give positive feedback to each other.

White tokens are not recommended. In our experience with minority families, if "white" is associated with "good," the therapist loses credibility.

FEELING THERMOMETER

100 VERY, VERY UNCOMFORTABLE

90

80

70

60

50

40

30

20

10

0 VERY, VERY COMFORTABLE

Problem-solving

Problem-solving is central to increasing the family's capacity to deal with routine problems and to preventing future suicide attempts. Typically problem-solving has nine steps to it.

Those steps are as follows:

- 1) define the problem;
- 2) determine what is important to the person or people involved;
- 3) set a goal;
- 4) list at least three ways to solve the problem and reach the goal;
- 5) weigh the pro's and con's of each alternative approach to reaching the goal;
- 6) select the one which will be tried;
- 7) decide how to implement that approach;
- 8) try it;
- 9) evaluate what happened.

Some guidelines for family members in defining the problem are as follows:

1. Start saying something positive about the other family members involved.
2. Do not criticize the other family members involved.
3. State what specific actions (words or behaviors) are troublesome.
4. Indicate how you feel in response to these behaviors.
5. Admit how you played a role in the problem.
6. Be brief.
7. Stay focused on the present instead of listing everything that happened in the past.

Some guidelines for family members in deciding on what actions to take to solve the problem are as follows:

1. Brainstorm as many solutions as possible.
2. Look for mutual solutions that require several family members to change.
3. Offer to change something in one's own behavior.
4. Accept, for a beginning, a change that is less than you want.
5. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each solution.
6. Write out an agreement that is clear and which states the behavior to be changed.
7. Include in the agreement cues to remind each person of the changes he or she agreed to make.

Feeling Thermometer

Adolescents and family members, while becoming more aware of their feelings, often need help to recognize, name, discuss and appropriately express those feelings. Learning these skills is important because, without them, family members' intense feelings can interfere with their abilities to make good decisions and act wisely. Improving and honing their affective skills is essential to be able to recognize and appropriately express their feelings of anger, excitement (sexual or otherwise), nervousness, anxiety, etc. Only when family members can recognize their feelings are they able to use self-calming techniques to allow them to make sound decisions about solving explosive situations.

Therapists should use a Feeling Thermometer to allow adolescents and their parents to better assess and discuss their feelings. The Feeling Thermometer ranges from 0 to 100, with 100 representing the most discomfort: extreme anger, anxiety, excitement, nervousness, depression, happiness, etc. Zero represents a total lack of discomfort whether, it be "happy" comfort or the "blues" comfort. The person at or near zero is better able to think and make decisions regardless of the particular emotion. After reviewing the Feeling Thermometer with the family, the therapists ask them to identify ways to reduce their level of emotion and regain control and practice techniques in different exercises in the therapy sessions.

6. Enjoying pleasant activities. "Caring Days" (Stuart & Stuart, 1971) and other ways to show positive feelings for each other will be encouraged. In "caring days" a specific family member will be chosen and the entire family will perform small, kind acts and give gifts to the person.

Some general tips for the family when using problem solving are as follows:

1. Develop an agenda for each problem solving discussion.
2. Work on only one problem at a time.
3. Avoid getting side-tracked.
4. Don't guess about why a family member did something; instead talk about only what you can see, hear, or touch.
5. Tell the other family member what you heard that person say to see if you heard correctly before responding.

[Adapted from Margolin, G. & Fernandez, V. (1985) Marital dysfunction. In M. Hersen & A. S. Bellack, Eds. Handbook of Clinical Behavior Therapy with Adults. NY: Plenum.

While the steps of problem solving appear quite logical, problem solving is often not successful because of a wide variety of human biases and limitation. Examples of biases include paying attention to things presented first or last rather than in the middle, getting suckered into competition, being trapped by superficial elements (being willing to pay more for the same product but from a "high class" establishment), and taking greater risks depending on whether we are trying to gain or protect against a loss. Limitations refer to a lack of information, time pressures, limited resources, imperfect perceptions, short term memories, and that there are levels of complication we can't handle. These biases must be considered and guarded against while practicing problem solving.

Role-Playing

Instructions for role playing are as follows: After asking the family members to identify problematic situations, request that they choose one of the situations to act out.

- a) Provide the description of a problem situation, e.g., "The daughter wants to come home at 11:45 p.m. and the parents want her home by 10:00 p.m. "
- b) Assign two persons as the principal actors: e.g., the daughter and the father.
- c) Assign other family members to monitor the interaction, for example a person to watch eye contact and a person to watch body language.
- d) Check Feeling Thermometers of actors.
- e) Check goals of actors.

The rest of the family should be asked to pay close attention because the therapist will be asking for their suggestions about other ways to play the scene. Be sure that each person understands his or her role.

There is a recommended sequence for delivering feedback at this point:

1. Ask the principal actors to tell where their Feeling Thermometers are at this moment.

2. Ask the actors what aspect they liked about what they did?
3. What words or acts would they change?
4. Sequentially ask family members observing eye contact and body language to report one positive aspect they observed and what these observations suggest the person was feeling.
5. Ask observers what they liked and what they would have done differently.

Therapists should make every effort to avoid stereotyped role playing. Many of the activities involve role plays between persons with specific characteristics. Be sure that these exercises do not stereotype individuals by sex, age and/or race. Reverse stereotype roles whenever possible. For example: "Let's have the daughter want to come in early and the parents want her to go out and have fun". Also have sons and daughters play parents and parents play children.

Reframing

Reframing is used frequently in this therapy. The goal of reframing is to be more positive. For example, this technique can make problem-solving easier by placing the problem in a new context where there is less blame. In the new context problems belong to the family not to individuals. Furthermore, the emphasis is on situations which elicit behavior from family members, not on individual pathology. For the therapist this means always addressing the situation and fleshing it out rather than isolating a family member as the cause of something.

In addition to stressing the situation, the therapist helps family members uncover the intent of behavior. That way family members can see that while the action may have seemed negative (antagonistic, for example), the intent was positive (caring and protective, for example).

Therapists also turn "negative" characteristics into positive ones, often using paradoxical techniques. Over-controlling becomes caring, refusal to do something becomes patience, and rigidity becomes strength. The example might be of the crooked tree. As a sapling it had a choice: grow straight, hit the ledge above it and die or grow crooked around the ledge above it and live. Symptoms are in fact the signs of a person's survival through difficult times.

One strategy added to the reframing is to portray the family as a team working together to solve, counteract or defeat a situation which becomes the opponent. This distancing may enable the family to become an effective unit and to reduce personal attachments to, and identification with, the problem.

Assessing Imminent Danger

(Based on "Evaluation of Imminent Danger for Suicide" by M. J. Rotheram-Borus, 1987; J. Bradley & M. J. Rotheram-Borus, 1989)

After a suicide attempt, the emergency room therapist still needs to determine if there is an imminent danger of repeating the act in the near future. The assessment approach which follows covers six capabilities which, if present, mitigate against another suicide attempt. These capabilities are as follows:

1. Can say positive things about oneself.
2. Can identify suicide-provoking situations.
3. Can identify uncomfortable feelings using a Feeling Thermometer in the uncomfortable situation.
4. Can make plans for ways to avoid suicide-provoking situations.
5. Can identify sources of social support.
6. Can make a written promise for no suicidal acts.

As the family may be present, instructions are written for both the teenager alone, and for the presence of parents. In each case a rationale is given for determining if the capability is present. After the description of the process, there are two forms: one if the adolescent is interviewed alone, and one if the family members are participating in the assessment.

1. Self-positives:

Rationale: Adolescents who are in immediate danger feel hopeless and cannot perceive positive things about themselves and their environment. Identifying self and environmental positives is non-suicidal behavior, and the process of identifying these qualities with the therapist begins bonding.

Instructions: (Teenager Alone) Try to elicit at least three positive self-compliments. Compliments can include statements about physical appearance, peers, family, personality characteristics, school, relationships with the interviewer or others in the youth's life.

If the youth has difficulty identifying these, compliment the youth and ask the youth to choose between two positive features. For example, "I like your eyes. What do you like better - your eyes or your hair?"

ASK, "What do you like best about yourself? What happened to you today that made you feel good?"

RECORD RESPONSES.

(If the parents are present) Try to elicit three responses from the youth, and ask the parents what they like about their son or daughter. Then elicit three qualities from everyone about what they like about the family.

SAY, "I would like to hear three qualities that your parents like about you (daughter/ son) and three qualities that you (daughter or son) like about your self."

RECORD RESPONSES.

ASK, "What three qualities do all of you like about the family?"

RECORD RESPONSES.

2. Identifying Suicide-Provoking Situations:

2.A. Using The Feeling Thermometer

Rationale: Adolescents who make suicide attempts often describe having little or no feelings when they make the suicidal gesture. The capacity to identify, through emotional and physical feelings, situations when one is likely to make an attempt, gives an adolescent the capability of developing a more thoughtful response to those situations.

Instructions: (Teenager Alone) Show a Feeling Thermometer to the youth. Explain that 100 means very uncomfortable - the worst. Zero (0) is totally at ease - chilled out. Ask the teenager for a situation where she/he felt totally uncomfortable. Write it down on the page following this section. Ask for a situation where the teenager felt between 60 and 70 and write it down. Ask for a situation that was around 30 and write it down. Ask for a situation that was around 0-5 and write it down. Next have the teenager describe what bodily reactions went with each of these situations. Write down these physical reactions.

Sample

<u>Feeling Thermometer</u>	<u>Situation</u>	<u>Bodily reaction</u>
100	Thrown out of home for stealing	Couldn't breathe, hands sweaty
90	Girl friend broke up with me	Angry, red face, yelling, shaking
60	Bought a new radio. It was broken	Frowning, nervous stomach tight, moving feet back and forth
40	Came home late, parents unhappy	Lick my lips more

20	Got a B on a test; thought I had failed	Calm, smiling
05	Reading a book in bed	No tension, smiling

(Parents Present) Show and explain the Feeling Thermometer. Ask the family for four situations: very uncomfortable, uncomfortable, comfortable, very comfortable. Write them down. Make sure the adolescent is participating by directing prompts to him/her. Ask each person for one word that describes their bodily reactions to these four situations. Write them down.

Example

<u>Feeling Thermometer</u>	<u>Situation</u>	<u>Bodily reaction</u>
100	Father hit daughter for coming in late	Tight, angry, hot
70	Mother and father yelled at each other	Upset stomach, sweaty, nervous
30	Visited relatives in New Jersey	Relaxed, sleepy, easy breathing
10	Watched a good movie on TV	calm, happy, smiling

2.B. Selecting Suicide-Provoking Situations

Now that the youth and family know how to use the Feeling Thermometer, have them identify three situations that have the potential for provoking a suicide attempt. Complete the lower half of the assessment form under number two - "F. G. H."

3. Plans For Ways To Cope With Suicide-provoking Situation:

Rationale: Adolescents and family members who have been able to identify suicide-provoking situations and describe their own feeling states can generally begin to develop strategies for coping with these situations. Although this activity may appear obvious, many teenagers who make suicide attempts act impulsively and become unable to generate alternatives in highly stressful situations. When family members also become involved in identifying plans of action, modelling opportunities are increased and greater support is created.

Instructions: Give an example of coping strategies. One girl felt suicidal when left alone for the night in the family apartment. She found great relief from carrying out an instruction sheet with her which outlined five steps she would follow if this situation arose. The card read:

1. Call her friend Maria.
2. Go to her grandmother's apartment on the floor above.
3. Make arrangements for her older sister to come over and spend the night.

4. Spend the night at her cousin's house.
5. Ask her mother if she could hang out at the place where her mother worked until her mother was off duty.

If the adolescent is interviewed alone, encourage her to take the lead in the search for alternatives. Make sure the alternatives are realistic, accessible, and as safe and supportive as possible. If the family is interviewed, encourage all of them to brainstorm ideas and assist them to consider if the alternatives meet the criteria listed above. Keep the plans simple and short.

4. Identification Of Emergency Supports:

Rationale: Adolescents who make suicide attempts generally feel socially isolated at the time of the attempt and cannot identify someone to call for help. It is important to help adolescents and families think of whom they might talk to if they begin to feel suicidal. The need for others to support them is also true for families in crisis.

Instructions: Record the teenager's available support persons in the fourth section of the Imminent Danger Assessment form. The family's task is to identify people who can help them when they are dealing with a situation that has the potential for provoking a suicide attempt.

5. Commitments For No Suicidal Acts And Involvement In Therapy:

Rationale: If a high risk youth has been able to deliver self-positives, to identify feeling states, especially those which are suicide-provoking, and to develop alternatives for avoiding suicide-provoking situations, he or she can now be asked to make a time-limited commitment for no suicidal acts. Essentially, this contract is made between the youth and crisis worker, and in it the youth agrees to make no suicide attempts during a specific time period until therapy is underway in this case. Also, the teenager agrees to seek supports and alternative solutions should a highly stressful situation arise. If the contract is with the family, the emphasis is on participating in therapy for the full six sessions. When asked for a clear, realistic, short-term commitment, adolescents usually will not lie or make false promises. With families the issues are more complicated because of the rigidity of patterns and interacting relationships and because of the social forces that act upon them.

Instructions: In section five of the assessment form have the participants write a clear and specific contract. The adolescent's agreement is related to a time frame in which help will be sought, supports contacted, alternatives put into effect, and no suicidal acts will occur. The family contract is very specific about following through on treatment. The quid pro quo is that the crisis worker, therapist, and emergency facilities will be available to them at any time.

Imminent Danger Assessment (Adolescent Alone)

1. SELF-POSITIVES:

Try to elicit at least three positive self-compliments. Compliments can include statements about physical appearance, peers, family, personality characteristics, school, relationships with the interviewer or others in the youth's life.

If the youth has difficulty identifying these, compliment the youth and ask the youth to choose between two positive features. For example, "I like your eyes. What do you like better - your eyes or your hair?"

"What do you like best about yourself? What happened to you today that made you feel good?"

2. FEELING THERMOMETER AND IDENTIFYING RISK SITUATIONS:

Describe a **FEELING THERMOMETER** to each youth. Ask youth to identify situations of great discomfort (a thermometer of 100) and those in which the youth feels very comfortable (a thermometer of 0). Identify at least five situations of varying discomfort. Ask specifically about the last three situations in which the youth felt suicidal and the behaviors associated with suicidal feelings.

Feeling
Thermometer
(0-100)

Situation

Behavioral Response

A. _____	_____	_____
B. _____	_____	_____
C. _____	_____	_____
D. _____	_____	_____
E. _____	_____	_____

Suicidal Situations

F. _____	_____	_____
G. _____	_____	_____
H. _____	_____	_____

3. PLAN OF ACTION:

Make a plan with the youth about how the youth will cope in each situation which elicits suicidal thoughts.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Plan</u>
F.	_____
G.	_____
H.	_____

4. SUPPORT PERSONS:

Identify three resource persons to help the youth with suicidal feelings. "Who are the three people you will call if you are feeling suicidal? Which adult or counselor do you feel comfortable calling?"

5. PROMISE:

Elicit a promise for no suicidal behavior for a specified period.

"Please write me a promise that you will not try to kill yourself within the next two weeks. Also I want you to promise me that if you feel suicidal you will talk to me (not leave a message) and/or another counselor about your feelings, before you try to kill yourself."

SUMMARY

What are the warning signs or the situations which are likely to lead this youth to feel suicidal, based on the FEELING THERMOMETER and the situations described above?

Situations likely to elicit suicide (e.g. boyfriend breaks up with youth):

Behaviors which this youth is likely to show when feeling suicidal:

Imminent Danger Assessment (Family)

1. SELF-POSITIVES:

Try to elicit from adolescent and the family at least three positive qualities of the adolescent. Compliments can include statements about physical appearance, peers, family, personality characteristics, school, relationships with the interviewer or others in the youth's life.

If the youth has difficulty identifying these, compliment the youth and ask the youth to choose between two positive features. For example, "I like your eyes. What do you like better - your eyes or your hair?"

"What do you like best about yourself? What happened to you today that made you feel good?"

"I would like the parents to tell me what they like about their teenager."

"Now I want to know three qualities that you like about the family."

2. FEELING THERMOMETER AND IDENTIFYING RISK SITUATIONS:

Describe a FEELING THERMOMETER to the family. Ask the family to identify situations of great discomfort (a thermometer of 100) and those in which the family feels very comfortable (a thermometer of 0). Identify at least five situations of varying discomfort. Encourage the family to think of situations where all of them have a stake in the outcome. Ask the family to come up with three more situations that could be suicide-provoking. Ask specifically about these last three situations and the behaviors associated with suicidal feelings and the situations themselves.

Feeling
Thermometer
(0-100)

Situation

Behavioral Response

A. _____	_____	_____
B. _____	_____	_____
C. _____	_____	_____
D. _____	_____	_____
E. _____	_____	_____

Suicidal Situations

F. _____

G. _____

H. _____

3. PLAN OF ACTION:

Make a plan with the family about how the youth will cope in each situation which elicits suicidal thoughts.

Situation

Plan

F. _____

G. _____

H. _____

4. SUPPORT PERSONS:

Identify three resource persons to help the family with suicidal provoking situations and suicidal feelings. "Who are three people you could contact for help if a suicide-provoking situation was occurring?" "Who are the three people the youth will call if she or he is feeling suicidal?"

5. PROMISE:

Elicit a promise for no suicidal behavior on the part of the youth for a specified period and a family commitment to therapy.

"Please write me a promise that you will not try to kill yourself within the next two weeks. Also I want you to promise me that if you feel suicidal you will talk to me (not leave a message) about your feelings, before you try to kill yourself."

Signature of Adolescent

FAMILY CONTRACT FOR THERAPY

We agree to attend 6 weeks of therapy beginning _____.

Each session will last one and a half hours.

The following family members will attend:

The session will be held in _____ (location) at the following
time: _____.

During the therapy the family members will practice

1. creating a positive atmosphere,
2. communicating effectively,
3. negotiating with each other, and
4. solving family problems of their choice.

Family Signatures

SUMMARY

What are the warning signs or the situations which are likely to lead this youth to feel suicidal, based on the FEELING THERMOMETER and the situations described above?

Situations likely to elicit suicide (e.g. boyfriend breaks up with youth):

Behaviors which this family is likely to show when dealing with a suicide provoking-situation:

Triage Plan

In each therapy session the danger of suicide is assessed. If the therapist decides that the adolescent is in imminent danger, the therapist must take a number of steps.

1. Explain to the adolescent and family what you are going to do.
2. Ask the family to stay with the adolescent until arrangements have been made.
3. Do not leave the adolescent alone.
4. Make arrangements for the adolescent to receive an emergency psychiatric examination to determine if hospitalization is necessary.
5. Accompany the adolescent to the evaluation.
6. Make whatever follow-up arrangements are necessary.
7. If the parents are not waiting at the hospital, inform them of the outcome.
8. Make sure the adolescent and the family knows that you will continue to see them in family therapy and help them solve the current situation.

Difficult Treatment Situations

When a family's behavior disrupts the sequence of treatment activities and creates barriers to achieving treatment goals, therapists frequently label that behavior "resistance." Within the therapeutic framework presented here these kinds of behaviors typically serve the purpose of maintaining self-esteem and protecting the integrity of the family. Consequently useful strategies consist of respecting the family members' attempts to protect the family and themselves, validating their experiences, recognizing the strengths in their actions, and empowering them through giving them choices and soliciting their advice. Some brief examples of situations which might present a difficult time for a therapist and ideas for dealing with them follow.

Fails to Attend: "Dad couldn't make it today."

Rationale: Recognize that it is hard to deal with painful issues. Avoid power struggles and blaming.

Response: "I'm sure your dad will come when he thinks the time is right."

Doesn't Do Homework: "I didn't give anyone a token between sessions."

Rationale: Going against a request can be a way of demonstrating self-esteem.

Response: "It's good that you can do what you think is best for you."

Denies that a Situation Occurred: "What my mother just described didn't happen."

Rationale: Denial reflects protecting oneself and struggling to maintain self-esteem. Avoid challenging and blaming.

Response: "When a family is under a lot of stress, individual family members often see things differently."

Claims Therapy Isn't Working: "This therapy isn't helping us."

Rationale: This statement may be another way of saying, "I can keep you from getting too close to us." Respect not wanting to become dependent. Empower the family.

Response: "I need your advice. Let's say a family had this situation. (Describe a

problem situation) What do you recommend to them?"

Tries to Change the Agenda: "I want to tell you what happened in school."

Rationale: Recognize the need to assert oneself and enhance self-esteem. Also be alert to an important new problem area. Listen and validate before responding.

Response: "This sounds like an important area for you. How does it fit into solving a family problem?" Also, "We are going to want you to make your own choices about which problems you work on."

Appears Helpless: "There's nothing I can do about this."

Rationale: It may be that the family member is demonstrating one of the agreed upon family roles. Validate and raise the role issue.

Response: "When a family is under a lot of stress, it is easy to see how someone can feel overwhelmed. Also I wonder if your role in the family is to be the one who says that nothing can change."

Blames: "It's not my fault."

Rationale: Here there is a need to address both the person denying blame and the person being blamed. Avoid blaming.

Response: "Look back at the Feeling Thermometer. How do family members feel when they are blamed?" To the person receiving blame, "Is it hard to sit here and get blamed?" "I wonder what would have to happen in the family for you not to be blamed?"

Has Trouble Trusting: "I don't know if I should tell you about it."

Rationale: There is no reason they should trust you at this point. Many of these families have been let down by the "system" time and time again. Make it clear that you do not expect trust from them. It isn't completely necessary for them to improve their own ability to solve their problems.

Response: "You would be crazy to trust me without getting to know me and seeing how this therapy works."

How To Use This Manual

Each session begins by stating the goals and objectives of the session. Then the rationale is given and the procedures to be followed. Also the materials needed are listed.

Next what the therapist says is written out word for word in order to give a therapist a concrete example of how to do the exercises that make up the therapy. The expectation is that once a therapist reviews a session and becomes familiar with how to explain what the process is, the therapist will use her or his own words.

Instructions to the therapist are always in CAPITAL LETTERS. The manual attempts to provide the therapist with what to do if.... happens. Regardless of how specific the manual is, the therapist's skill, judgment, compassion, and credibility will determine the outcome of the therapeutic transaction.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE SESSIONS

- Session 1:** Establishing a positive family atmosphere and creating the therapist's credibility.
- Session 2:** Identifying problem situations and ranking them.
- Session 3:** Analyzing a problem of medium difficulty and discovering the obstacles that prevent the family from resolving it.
- Session 4:** Deciding how to cope with the problem, learning how to negotiate, and brainstorming solutions.
- Session 5:** Evaluating solutions, selecting, and negotiating a solution.
- Session 6:** Solving an important family problem.

Session 1

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goal 1: To enable family members to feel positively about each other and about belonging to their special family.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Experience positive moods in a positive atmosphere.
2. Express appreciation of each other.
3. Identify each other's strengths and those of the family.
4. Obtain something they want from each other.

Goal 2: To establish the therapist as credible and effective.

Objectives: Family members will

1. Understand the goals of therapy and the steps that will be taken to reach those goals.
2. Observe the therapist modeling how to reframe a situation.
3. Observe the therapist modeling how to negotiate a solution.
4. Receive something they want from other family members through the therapist's intervention.

Goal 3: To teach family members how to anticipate, plan for, and cope with suicidal situations that might occur next week.

Objectives: Family members will

1. Participate in an assessment of the daughter's likelihood of trying suicide again in the near future.

2. Identify situations that could happen next week which might be highly upsetting.
 3. Connect their feelings and thoughts to these high risk situations.
 4. Plan what to do if a high risk situation occurs.
 5. Learn about emergency resources.
-

Rationale:

This therapy assumes that an adolescent suicide attempt is an action which tries to solve a problem. For families in perpetual crisis with multigenerational issues, these problems can reflect both psychopathology and deficits in effective family problem-solving. Thus the goal of therapy is to improve family problem-solving through 1) increasing positive interactions; 2) identifying family strengths; 3) identifying problem areas; 4) connecting feelings and their intensity to provocative situations; 5) recognizing the links between feelings, thoughts, and behaviors; 6) developing self-control mechanisms for feelings; and 7) learning cognitive-behavioral strategies for coping with stress.

As it is important that the therapeutic process models the problem-solving approach outlined above, Session 1 needs to begin immediately with interactive tasks that start the family along the desired path. Therefore, establishing a positive tone, sharing, appreciating each other, understanding the approach to solving problems, connecting feelings to situations, and observing negotiating skills all establish key elements which will appear throughout the therapy.

Procedures:

1. Introductions and starting the Family Album by taking a family photograph. Also begin using tokens.
 2. Explain what the therapy entails and is trying to accomplish.
 3. Have family members indicate what they like about themselves and each other.
 4. Have family members identify the family's strengths.
 5. Assess suicidal risk with the imminent danger procedure involving both the adolescent and the parents.
 6. Prepare for situations that place the teenager and family at high risk for suicide through identifying situations, assessing feelings, and developing a plan for coping with the situation.
 7. Assist family members in getting something they want from each other, using re-framing techniques and modeling negotiations.
 8. Assign homework of giving tokens to each other.
-

Materials:

Audiotape recorder
Tokens
Feeling Thermometers
Polaroid camera and film
Binder-style notebook
Newsprint and pens
Paper and pencils
Handouts: What Happens in Therapy

The therapist begins.

Task 1: Introduction and Starting the Family Album

Welcome.

My name is _____ I'm really glad to see you here today.

It takes a strong family who loves each other to come and work on such a serious issue as suicide.

I appreciate your willingness to do this.

Many families just want to sweep problems under the rug in hopes the problems will go away - which doesn't usually happen.

But your family is different.

Times are difficult for families.

They have to struggle with money, crime, drugs, keeping the family together, moving from one place to another, having good values, being optimistic, and loving each other.

Obviously you have gone through a lot together and survived.

That is really positive.

I am sure you can all remember tough times and how you came through them.

Also, it is very clear that you care for each other and want the best for each other.

That is to your credit as well.

We are going to use your strength and love for each other to solve the problems that face you now.

Before I explain how the therapy is going to work, I wonder if you have any questions?

Answer questions and keep emphasizing the positive aspects of this particular family.

Before we get started I wanted to mention that we record our sessions on tape.

We do this so that you can listen to how you work together and so that we can review the tapes in order to see what progress we make.

The tapes are confidential and will be erased when the therapy is over.

Does anyone have a problem with that?

Deal with issues around taping.

If we are going to be successful at making sure that there are no suicide attempts in the future, I really need the help of all of you.

One of the things that we do often in therapy is to show our appreciation for working together.

We do that by giving out tokens of appreciation.

So here is a token for each of you.

It is for being here and for the strengths that you have.

The token is also for the fact that you care about each other.

Pass out tokens.

In a few minutes I'll give out tokens to each of you so that you can give each other strokes when you like what another member of the family has said or done.

First, each family that comes here is different and very special.

We are going to make a book for this family.

In the book we will keep a record of the good things you do together.

After the therapy is over, you can look back at the book and feel proud of the progress that you made in therapy.

To get started we need to make a cover for the book by taking your picture together.

So, if you can just get close together now, I'll take your picture and then paste it to the front of the book.

If someone resists, acknowledge that it is all right to be camera shy, but encourage them by saying that you think they will be pleased by the results and in the future will like having their photo on the front. If someone is absent, indicate that we can take another picture when they appear.

‡ Thank you very much.

Give out tokens.

Task 2: Understanding Therapy

‡ It is really important that you understand what we are going to be doing together for these six sessions.

‡ Let me give you a page that explains the therapy.

Hand out to each family member "WHAT HAPPENS IN THERAPY." Go over the handout.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THERAPY

ADOLESCENTS WHO ATTEMPT SUICIDE ARE OFTEN TRYING TO SOLVE A PROBLEM

BUT

IT IS A HURTFUL SOLUTION.

In therapy families learn to solve their problems successfully by:

1. *Appreciating each other.*
2. *Knowing which situations make them feel bad.*
3. *Recognizing when they feel bad.*
4. *Controlling negative feelings.*
5. *Changing thoughts that makes things worse.*
6. *Finding a number of alternatives for solving a problem.*
7. *Choosing the best solution.*
8. *Putting the solution into effect.*

Families learn these skills by working on the real problems that led to the suicide attempt.

‡ Why not put a copy of what happens into your family album?

Encourage putting a copy in the family album.

‡ My job is to help you learn how to solve your problems.

Task 3: Feeling Good About Each Other

The first step for a family is to feel good about each other.

When there is a problem, it is easy to be critical of each other and forget what is good.

A few moments ago I mentioned giving tokens to each other to express our caring and appreciation.

Here are some tokens for each of you.

Pass out twenty tokens to each person.

Please give a token to another family member when that person does or says something you appreciate.

"I appreciate that you came today."

"I appreciate that you didn't yell at me."

You can also give them a compliment and a token.

"That dress looks nice on you."

"I like the way your hair is styled."

Now I want each of you to tell me one thing you like about yourself and one thing you like about each of the other family members.

Encourage each person to say what he/she likes about him/her-self and about the others present. If one of the family members gives out a token, indicate that you appreciate their giving a token and reward them with one.

If a family member has trouble thinking of something positive, help them out.

- **"Which do you appreciate more, the way your daughter has fixed her hair today or her jewelry?"**
- **"I'll bet your daughter was a really cute little girl."**
- **"What do you think about your teenager's smile?"**
- **"Which do you appreciate more, how hard your dad works or the fact that he cared enough to come today?"**
- **"Which do you appreciate more, your mother's cooking or how clean she keeps the apartment?"**
- **"Can you think of a time when your mother took care of you when you were sick?"**
- **"What do you like better about yourself, the color of your eyes or the way you dress?"**
- **What do you like better about yourself, how hard you work or how much you care about the family?"**

If a family member refuses to participate, find something positive about the refusal. Give out tokens for positive actions.

- "I can see you think things out carefully before jumping into them."
- "I appreciate your honesty in saying that you want to wait before sharing the positive things that you can think of."
- "It is good that you are not afraid to take a position and stick with it."
- "Sharing your feelings about giving appreciation is really important. Knowing how we feel and then telling others is one of the skills we will work on in therapy."

You catch on fast about how to give compliments to the members of your family.

That was really good. Thank you.

Task 4: Identifying Family Strengths

Life can be difficult.

It presents us with many problems.

Families often go through a lot together and have many strengths.

I am sure you can remember tough times that you went through successfully together.

Think of a few of them.

Let the family members have a few moments to recollect.

What are your family's strengths?

Tell me and I will write them up here.

Write the strengths on newsprint so that everyone can see. If the family has trouble at first, indicate that one strength is seen in coming here, facing their problems, and being willing to work on their problems. If needed, use prompts such as "What about work and working hard?" "What about characteristics like caring for neighbors, being honest, being humorous, having good times together?"

It can be difficult to think of positive things at certain times in the life of the family, but you have come up with a great list.

Would someone please write in your book "Family Strengths" and then copy down this list?

Encourage someone to record the list in the family's album.

Task 5: Assessing Suicidal Risk

Each time we meet I will take a few moments to find out if anything has happened in the family the week before that would create a high risk of suicide.

As far as I know, there was no trip to the Emergency room or suicide attempt last week.

Is that correct?

Obtain an answer.

No suicide attempt means that somehow you as a family worked things out enough to reduce the risk of suicide.

That is really good news.

Give out tokens for a suicide free week.

People who feel good about themselves are less likely to try suicide.

A few moments ago you each told me one characteristic of yours that you liked.

I would like you to take a moment and think of two more things that you like about yourselves.

Wait a minute and then go around asking each person for two more things they like about themselves. Remember that being able to list self-positives is inconsistent with high suicidal risk.

Please tell me some more positive qualities that you have.

Try to elicit at least three positive self-compliments. Some prompts might be as follows:

- "What are some things in your life that make you feel good?"
- "How about your boy friend? Do you feel good about him?"
- "I love your blouse (t-shirt, shoes)."

If anyone has trouble identifying at least three positive self-compliments, compliment the family member and ask that person to choose between two positive features. For example, "I like your eyes. What do you like better - your eyes or your hair." Do not put words in anyone's mouth or help too much because you are trying to see if family members can come up with three self-positive statements.

It really pleases me that you can think of good characteristics that you have.

Being able to do that is a sign of your strengths.

Give out tokens for their strengths.

Now we want to look at the situations that can lead to suicide.

Almost always there is an uncomfortable situation around a problem that occurs before a suicide attempt .

Remember what I said before: suicide is often an attempt to solve a problem.

The problem can be about trying to resolve feelings, stressful situations, and ways of thinking.

Sometimes we may not even be aware of the situation until we think back about it.

Knowing in advance that one of those situations is on the way can be very useful.

If we know ahead of time, we can fix the situation before it gets out of hand.

To locate those unpleasant situations we need to start with our feelings.

Here is a Feeling Thermometer.

FEELING THERMOMETER

MOST UNCOMFORTABLE AND UPSET

HOTTEST
100%

UNCOMFORTABLE AND UPSET

HOT
65%

FEEL OK, COMFORTABLE

COOL
32%

FEEL GREAT, COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE

COOLEST
0%

Hand out a feeling thermometer to each person.

One hundred means that you feel really uncomfortable, and zero means that you are completely comfortable.

How are you feeling right now?

Encourage responses.

Sometimes coming for therapy for the first time can make a person feel anxious or uncomfortable.

How did you feel in the Emergency Room?

Encourage responses.

It is easy to understand not being totally comfortable in that situation.

I would like each of you to think of a situation in which you felt really uncomfortable and upset.

The situation could have occurred anywhere and at any time.

It could be related to work, school, friends, family - anything.

Wait while family members think of an uncomfortable situation.

Will you share what those situations were with the rest of us?

Encourage sharing and reward those that do. If someone doesn't want to share, ask if they have the situation well in mind. Give recognition for vividness of their memory.

That is good that you could relate your feelings of discomfort to a specific situation.

Now I would like you to think about situations within the family that made you feel upset or uncomfortable.

What has happened with each other that you would call "upsetting" for yourself?

Allow a minute to think of uncomfortable family situations.

Again I would like you to share these situations.

What made you very uncomfortable with each other?

Encourage responses and give out tokens.

Thank you very much for sharing that situation.

Was there a really uncomfortable situation that came up last week which could have led to suicidal feelings?

Encourage a response. but if the adolescent denies that any situations occurred, go back in time. Ask what event precipitated the previous attempt. "Can you think of a really upsetting situation that happened right before you tried suicide?" Try to identify a situation that is high in risk for suicide.

It is really important to find the situations that trigger serious discomfort and which could lead to considering suicide.

Therefore I am really glad we uncovered some.

If a situation like the one we have pinpointed came up next week, what could all of you do to keep things under control?

What kind of a plan could you make if that situation happened again?

For example, if feeling terribly lonely while you were sitting around watching TV at home was the situation, your plan might include going to visit a friend.

Encourage a few constructive ideas to cool the situation down, recognizing that the family may not yet have adequate problem-solving skills. Therefore it is crucial to reward any close approximations. Planning for next week will take place in more detail later in the session, therefore this brainstorming need not be extensive.

Those were some helpful ideas for making the situation less unpleasant and for supporting each other.

As I understand it, no situation has occurred recently that could have led to suicide or suicidal thoughts.

Is that correct?

Obtain a response. Address the adolescent.

Am I right in assuming that you didn't think of doing it this week?

Obtain a response. If there is a recurring suicidal episode, refer to the "TRIAGE PLAN" section in the beginning part of this manual. There is also a set of instructions for assessing "imminent danger." If no suicidal threat is imminent, proceed as follows:

That's great that you worked things out this last week.

Give out tokens.

Has anyone else in the family felt like trying suicide in the last week?

Encourage response. If the answer is "yes", ask about the situation and what could be done if it happens again next week.

How could you deal with this situation to reduce the discomfort?

Encourage a plan of possible actions to take.

Those were constructive ideas.

From my questions you can see what are some of the factors that keep a person from suicide.

They are feeling good about oneself, being able to recognize your feelings in upsetting situations, having a plan to fix these situations, knowing people who can help you, and agreeing to control suicidal actions.

What would all of you say today?

Is there a risk of a suicide attempt right now?

Obtain a family answer. Indicate your impression.

It sounds like everyone is in agreement that the risk is less today.

To keep the risk down we will need to look at those situations that are upsetting, see what makes them tick, find out why they are hard to solve, and then work on solving them.

That's our agenda.

Each session we will take a reading of whether suicide is a strong possibility.

Task 6: Preparing for Next Week's High Risk Situations

We just finished determining that suicide was a problem today, and we can understand that suicidal feelings sometimes grow out of difficult situations.

These situations are made worse by not knowing how you feel, thinking in ways that exaggerate the difficulty, and being unsure how to handle what is happening.

So now we need to figure out what upsetting events could happen between the time when you leave today and when we meet next week.

You all know what is going on in your lives next week.

I want each of you to think of at least three family situations which could possibly occur that would be very uncomfortable and which could throw you into conflict.

If you want to write down more than three situations, that is fine.

Here is a piece of paper and pencil to make your list.

Hand out paper and pencils to the family.

I am not going to ask you to turn your lists in so feel free to write them any way you want to.

Allow five minutes for each person to make a list.

Now I will go around and ask each person to give me one situation.

I'll write it up here on the newsprint, and then we'll keep going until all the ideas that you thought of are written up here.

Establish an order for going in round robin fashion. Then ask for situations from the family members until all the ideas are written. Obtain only one idea per person on each round. A family member may pass if he/she wishes. When the list is completed, stick it up on the wall where everyone can see it.

Will each of you please pick out the situation that you think is most likely to happen?

Obtain each person's choice. Write them on newsprint. Give out tokens as appropriate.

Using the Feeling Thermometer, I want each person to tell me what their feeling level would be for each of these three situations.

Obtain feeling thermometer readings from each family member for the three different situations. Put them up on the newsprint sheet where the situations most likely to occur are listed. Figure out which situation has relatively uncomfortable ratings for everyone but is not the most intense. Put the newsprint up on the wall.

I am going to select the situation at the middle level of discomfort for us to work on.

Indicate which situation you have chosen.

Let's think about this situation.

If it happened, what could you as a family do that would make the situation less uncomfortable, less stressful, less tense for everyone?

For example, let's say that the situation was that the mother and father wanted to visit relatives in New Jersey, and the teenager didn't want to go. Some solutions for reducing discomfort in this situation might be

1. to invite the relatives to New York,
2. go when the teenager was away during the summer,
3. have the teenager take a friend along, and
4. find out what would make the trip more pleasant.

Give me as many ideas as possible.

Don't screen your ideas out even if they sound far fetched.

Also state what you would like to see happen and not what you don't want another person to do.

Write the ideas on newsprint. Give out tokens. If the family has trouble, give them some prompts such as the following:

- "Are there other people who could be helpful?"

- "Is there a way you could avoid the situation?"
- "Is there a way to put the situation off."
- "Is there a way you could look at the situation from a different angle?"
- "Is there a way a family member could change the way he or she acts without giving up self respect and pride?"
- "Is there a way you could fix the situation?"

Those are very good options for handling the situation if it came up.

You can see there are a number of ways for dealing with a difficult situation.

If an emergency occurs, use the Emergency File Card.

[INSERT A COPY OF THE EMERGENCY FILE CARD]

Handout a copy of the emergency file card.

As you can see, the card has on it instructions for what to do in an emergency, phone numbers, ideas for staying calm, and other useful ideas.

Please put the card up where everyone can see it.

Task 7: Giving to Each Other

So far today we started the Family Album, understood what therapy is trying to do, worked on feeling good about each other, identified family strengths, agreed on the rules, assessed the risk of suicide for today, and prepared for next week's difficult situation.

You worked very hard.

And people started to be open about their feelings which is good and will really help us head off upsetting situations.

You can see the family's strengths coming out.

Give out tokens.

There is one final task for this session.

I want each of you to think of one small thing you would like from another family member here.

For example, Mom might say, "I want Dad to kiss me goodbye when he leaves for work each day."

For now, if you could just want one thing from one another person here, what would it be?

Select someone to start. Consider choosing the person who could most clearly state what she/he wanted. Work through getting what that person wants before going on to the next person.

‡ What would you like and from whom?

Obtain a response. Model converting the response into a behavior. For example, "I want her to be nice to me" becomes "I want her to smile at me and say 'good morning' every day."

We took what you wanted and turned it into something the other person can either say or do.

It is much easier for people to change if they know exactly what way to behave - to say or do.

Now, if the other family member did not do what you wanted, what would be as many reasons as you can think of?

In order to get away from "they don't like me" or "she wants to hurt me" help the family member come up with many possible interpretations - find ones that are innocuous, circuitous, and counter-intuitive. For example, "she didn't do it because she hates me" becomes "she didn't do it because she was tired."

‡ You can see there are many reasons for why people behave as they do.

We need to avoid jumping to conclusions or making a mountain out of a molehill.

Shape what the first person wants into something reasonable and negotiate it for them.

‡ Now that we know what you want let's see if we can get it for you.

Continue the process until each family member gets at least one thing that she/he wants.

‡ That was very good of you to give to each other.

It shows how much you care for each other and want the best for each other.

Give out tokens.

‡ Although it may not always be clear, I am convinced that every family member here has good intentions.

You all want the best to happen for the other family members.

We'll work on finding those good intentions.

For homework I would like you to keep giving each other tokens of appreciation.

When you see something you like, give the other family member a token.

When the person does something good, give them a token.

Remember that you can give a token to someone simply because they exist and you like them.

Here are two tokens for each of you to take home with you.

Pass out tokens for homework.

By the end of the week please distribute your tokens.

I am very pleased with the way you worked today, and I enjoyed being with you.

Pass out tokens for their hard work.

If you have any crises, please call me.

Here is my number again: _____

Also refer to the Emergency Card if you are in trouble.

I will see you again at _____ (time) on _____ (day and date).

THE END OF SESSION 1

WHAT HAPPENS IN THERAPY

ADOLESCENTS WHO ATTEMPT SUICIDE ARE OFTEN TRYING TO SOLVE A PROBLEM

BUT

IT IS A HURTFUL SOLUTION.

In therapy families learn to solve their problems successfully by:

1. *Appreciating each other.*
2. *Knowing which situations make them feel bad.*
3. *Recognizing when they feel bad.*
4. *Controlling negative feelings.*
5. *Changing thoughts that makes things worse.*
6. *Finding a number of alternatives for solving a problem.*
7. *Choosing the best solution.*
8. *Putting the solution into effect.*

Families learn these skills by working on the real problems that led to the suicide attempt.

Session 2

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: To continue enhancing the family's positive perceptions of themselves and the therapist.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Experience appreciation for positive actions taken during the time between sessions.
2. Agree on the rules for fighting fairly and engaging in therapy.

Goal 2: To create a therapeutic environment to which the family would want to return because coming to therapy reduced conflict and minimized blame.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Participate together in the assessment of current suicidal danger.
2. Learn to reframe problems so that behavior is divorced from intent and is perceived to flow from situations.

Goal 3: To increase problem solving abilities.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Learn the steps to take in solving a family problem.
2. Identify the problems they are confronting at this time.
3. Relate Feeling Thermometer levels to each problem.
4. Assign priorities to the problems.
5. Select a problem to solve.

FEELING THERMOMETER

MOST UNCOMFORTABLE AND UPSET

HOTTEST
100%

UNCOMFORTABLE AND UPSET

HOT
65%

FEEL OK. COMFORTABLE

COOL
32%

FEEL GREAT, COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE

COOLEST
0%

Rationale:

While the first session established a positive atmosphere in which family problem-solving can flourish, the second session begins the process of problem-solving itself. First a step by step model of problem-solving is presented, and it is in some ways a repetition in different form from the first day's outline of what happens in therapy. This repeating is intentional, so that the family receives multiple exposure to the message about an orderly process to be used to resolve difficulties.

The second part of the session is devoted to developing a problem list, connecting that list to feelings, and establishing priorities. Here family dysfunctions are minimized through a structured, task oriented system. The family also functions as a problem-solving team which actually produces a joint product and experiences a success. The process used to build the prioritized problem list encourages individual contributions, reduces conflict, and makes it difficult for the family to become bogged down in power issues.

Support for a positive environment is maintained through the use of tokens and making notes in the family album. The feeling connection is continued through the Feeling Thermometer. As these families may well experience future crises, the intent is to make this first therapeutic venture successful and self-confidence building in hopes that they will return when needed.

Procedures:

1. Review of successful positive events, feelings, homework, the use of tokens and the content of Session 1.
2. Present proposed rules for fighting fairly and involvement in therapy so that an agreement can be reached.
3. Assessment of suicide risk through materials from "Imminent Danger."
4. Exposure to a problem-solving model which incorporates family dysfunctional issues such as attributions, faulty beliefs, roles, and rules.
5. Making a family problem list through a modified Nominal Group technique.
6. Attaching Feeling Thermometer levels to the problems on the list.
7. Setting problem priorities through the continued use of a modified Nominal Group process.
8. Identifying the first problem to attack.
9. Assigning homework which entails A) using the Feeling Thermometer to rate levels of discomfort on situations that arise between sessions and B) providing each other "care days" where something small but special is given.

Materials:

Audiotape recorder
Family Album
Tokens
Feeling Thermometers
Newsprint and pens
Blank index cards and pencils
Suicide risk materials from "Imminent Danger."
Handout: Steps in Family Problem-Solving
Rules for Fighting Fairly
Worksheet: Family Problem List

Task 1: Review Feelings, Tokens, Events, Session 1 and Homework

Therapist says

Welcome back. I'm glad to see you here.

Thank you for coming.

Give out tokens for returning.

Remember the Feeling Thermometer?

Here is a copy of it.

Pass out feeling thermometers.

Tell me on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is completely comfortable and 100 is very uncomfortable, how you feel right now?

Obtain readings and give out tokens for the family members' willingness to respond.

You will recall also that we used tokens to express appreciation to each other for the good things we saw people saying and doing or just because we wanted to compliment another family member.

We will use tokens every session.

Here is your stack for today.

Give out twenty tokens to each family member. Remember to reward them occasionally for giving a token to someone else.

Your homework assignment was to continue giving out tokens to each other.

How did that work out?

Encourage responses and use tokens to shape behavior. Ignore negative behavior. Redirect toward desired behavior and reward any small movement toward the desired end.

I would like each family member to tell me about a successful event that took place between our last session and today's meeting.

It could be something related to solving a problem at home, preventing a problem from getting started, something you did you are proud of, or something that makes life better for you.

Go around and have each person report on one event. Give out tokens as appropriate and encourage others to show appreciation for positive things family members did. If someone does not come up with a success, use prompts around different areas - friends, work, achievements. Remember also there are prompts that force reports - "Which are you more pleased with, the amount of effort you spend at work or how well you have been a good example to your children?" If you are still unsuccessful at obtaining a response, you can say, "I appreciate your being honest about how you see things at this time. Such honesty is often hard to find."

As you know, the purpose of this therapy is to stop suicide from occurring again.

We do that by showing you how to solve the problems that lead to suicide.

Last time we focused on creating a positive atmosphere so that you could work together on solving family problems.

Here is your Family Album.

Look inside where you listed you family's strengths.

Hand them the family album and give them a moment to read the strengths they listed last time.

You also learned what we were going to do in therapy.

Today we will work on figuring out what your problems are and which ones we are going to solve.

Task 2: Presenting the Rules of Therapy

As I said earlier, we are going to meet for six sessions.

Our goals are to 1) feel better; 2) stop suicidal acts; and 3) resolve fights in a constructive manner.

We will use your strengths as a family and as individuals to reach these goals.

Also, we will use your caring for each other to help reach our goals.

It may surprise you to hear me say that one of the goals is to fight fairly.

Families often use fighting as a way to solve problems.

There is nothing wrong with fighting if it is done fairly.

Fights have a beginning and an ending.

In other words they don't have to go on forever.

In therapy you will learn that there are ways to solve problems so that you don't need to stay mad at each other.

There are some rules for therapy that will help you fight fairly.

Let's go over those rules.

Hand out "RULES FOR FIGHTING FAIRLY IN THERAPY."

RULES FOR FIGHTING FAIRLY IN THERAPY

1. Angry words or talking about suicide are all right, but no assaultive or suicidal behavior is allowed.
2. Tell the therapist if you, the teenager, or you, the parents, think that there is a desire to commit suicide.
3. Talk about feeling angry rather than acting on your feelings.
4. Try to solve problems when they arise.
5. Listen to what other family members are saying so that you could tell them what you have heard.
6. Do not repeat what you have heard in here to anyone outside of the people in this room. Keep confidentiality.
7. If there is an emergency, call your therapist or the clinic right away, or go to the emergency room.

The first rule means that you can tell others you are angry, but do not hit them or hurt them.

The first rule also means that you may feel like trying suicide or harming yourself, but you agree not to take any action.

The second rule says that if any family member thinks he or she cannot control hurting herself or himself or harming someone else, then that family member agrees to tell the therapist or call the clinic right away.

The third rule tells you that when you are angry or upset, you agree to talk about it rather than doing anything.

The fourth rule says that you agree to try and solve the problem.

Don't just yell about it or walk away or bury it.

Try to figure out a way to work the problem out.

The fifth rule means that you agree to try to listen to other family members.

You need to listen so hard that you can tell them what you heard.

For example, you might say, "You are angry at me because you think I don't obey you."

The sixth rule says that you agree not to talk about what others have said in here to someone not present.

Remember, if you say something, you own it - the words are yours, but, if someone else says something, they own it - the words are theirs.

You can't repeat what someone else owns unless they tell you it is OK.

The last rule means that if an emergency comes up, you agree to contact your therapist or the clinic immediately.

We don't want emergencies to continue without taking constructive action to stop them.

That is dangerous.

Are the rules clear?

Clarify any confusion.

‡ Can you agree to these rules - can you live with them?

Obtain agreement by all family members. Give out tokens for the agreement.

‡ Are there any other rules you would like to add?

If family members suggest new rules, try to get agreement on them and integrate them into the list. Also give out tokens for any rules added.

‡ How about placing a copy of the rules into the family album?

Encourage placing the rules into the family album.

Task 3: Assessing Suicidal Risk

You may remember that we took a few minutes to decide if there was a danger of suicide happening.

I told you that we would go through the process of checking out the danger each time we met.

We are going to do that now before we start finding out what the problem is.

Am I correct in assuming that you did not need to go to the emergency room and that no suicide attempt was made between sessions?

Obtain a response.

Then you obviously did something right, and you are to be congratulated.

Give out tokens.

What did you do to prevent any situation from growing into a high risk affair?

Obtain responses and give out tokens for constructive actions.

That's great.

The fact that there wasn't a suicide problem shows your strength as a family.

Is there any indication that suicidal feelings are present today?

The probability is high that suicidal feelings will be denied. If they are present, use the "imminent danger" approach explained in the overview of the therapy.

Right now then suicidal feelings are under control.

That is another very positive sign.

Do you remember what are some of the factors that keep a person from suicide?

Obtain their ideas and give out tokens for close approximations.

The factors are feeling good about oneself, being able to recognize your feelings in upsetting situations, having a plan to fix these situations, knowing people who can help you, and agreeing to control suicidal actions.

You are really making progress.

Task 4: Understanding the Steps in Family Problem Solving

Here are the steps a family takes in successfully solving its problems.

Hand out "OUTLINE OF STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM-SOLVING" and go over the main steps. The full form follows the outline at the end of the session. Mention only the numbered steps and not the detail under each step. The detail will be covered when the family works on that section.

STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM-SOLVING

STEP 1: Establish a positive working feeling.

The family's strengths are _____

STEP 2: Identify the family's problems

<u>Problem List</u>	<u>Priority</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The problem we will work on first is _____

STEP 3: Analyze the problem

What words or actions do family members want changed?

Mother's _____

Father's _____

Daughter's _____

Why is the problem happening?

Mother's view _____

Father's view _____

Daughter's view _____

What do family members get out of keeping the problem?

Daughter _____

Father _____

Mother _____

How can each person change the problem?

Father _____

Daughter _____

Mother _____

What beliefs prevent the family from solving the problem?

What rules prevent the family from solving the problem?

What roles prevent the family from solving the problem?

STEP 4: Decide how the family wants to deal with this problem.

Don't give in. _____

Forget about it. _____

Control your feelings. _____

Get support from others. _____

Solve the problem. _____

Try harder next time _____

Escape the scene. _____

Change the meaning _____

STEP 5: List possible solutions.

Solution 1: _____

Session 2

Solution 2: _____

Solution 3: _____

Solution 4: _____

Solution 5: _____

STEP 6: Evaluate solutions.

	<u>Pluses</u>	<u>Minuses</u>
Solution 1:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Solution 2:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Solution 3:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Solution 4:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Solution 5:	_____	_____
	_____	_____

STEP 7: Select a solution to try.

The best solution is _____

STEP 8: Negotiate and bargain a solution.

What are the family members' basic interests in this matter?

Mother's _____

Father's _____

Daughter's _____

The agreement reached is _____

STEP 9: Evaluate how the solution is working and make adjustments.

Working well _____ So-so _____ Needs improvement _____

Changes needed are _____

The first step regarding a positive atmosphere we have already taken.

That's what we worked on in our first session together.

Staying positive is an ongoing affair and will need work at each session.

Today we are going to take the second step - identifying the problem.

In the next session we will analyze the problem and see what keeps it going on.

Why hasn't the problem been fixed?

That's the question.

Then we will decide what is the best way to solve the problem and spend the rest of the time negotiating a solution to a big problem and as many others as we have time for.

There are blank spaces under the steps and questions which we will answer and write down.

This page with the steps on it will be our guide as we go along, and it will show the results of our work together.

Task 5: Making a Family Problem List

I am going to give each of you a piece of paper which says at the top "Family Problem List."

Hand out the "FAMILY PROBLEM LIST" and pencils.

FAMILY PROBLEM LIST

Write down as many family problems as you want to. Please try to be specific. For example, do not say, "We don't get along." What don't you get along about? For example, say instead, "We disagree about her going out with Billy."

<u>Problems</u>	<u>Feeling Thermometer Level</u>
1. _____ _____	_____
2. _____ _____	_____
3. _____ _____	_____
4. _____ _____	_____
5. _____ _____	_____
6. _____ _____	_____

Write down as many problems as you want to.

You won't be asked to hand this form in.

At this point it is all right to have a lot rather than a few problems because we can sort them out later and decide which one we want to solve.

As the instructions say, be specific.

The more we can pinpoint the problem the better.

But if you can't be specific, list the problem anyway, and together we will try to figure it out.

Don't worry right now about the "Feeling Thermometer Level" column.

Take some time and make up your problem list.

Allow enough time for each member to write down his/her ideas.

Now let's go around and each person give me one problem at a time.

I'll write them up on newsprint.

‡ If someone has already given a problem on your list, go on to the next one.

Select a person to start. Go around obtaining one problem at a time. Do not duplicate. Number the problems as you put them up on newsprint. Try to use the family member's words, but help clarify the problem before putting it up on newsprint. If you change the wording, ask the family member if this new way of phrasing the problem is OK. Keep going around until there are no more problems to list.

NOTE TO THERAPIST. The family members can have the same basic problem but perceive it very differently. For example, the problem is that the teenager stays out past the time which has been set. Dad sees the teenager as irresponsible and immature. Mom believes it is because the teenager doesn't love her. Older brother thinks sister stays out too late because her boy friend is a bad influence. The teenager doesn't consider the time of arrival as "late" because all her friends come in at that time. When problems are being discussed, the therapist can reframe the problem definition so that the problem is stated in terms of behaviors - what people can observe - rather than forcing family members to agree with the interpretations of others.

‡ That's a good list.

Give out tokens.

Task 6: Attaching Feelings to Problems

Now look at your original list and, using the Feeling Thermometer, write down how much discomfort you feel regarding each problem.

One hundred is a tremendous amount of discomfort and 0 is no discomfort at all.

Allow a few minutes for each family member to record their feeling thermometer levels.

A sample problem list might look like this:

SAMPLE

Family problem list

Write down as many family problems as you want to. Please try to be specific. For example, do not say, "We don't get along." What don't you get along about? For example, say instead, "We disagree about her going out with Billy."

<u>Problems</u>	<u>Feeling Thermometer Level</u>
1. Mother yells at me to keep my room clean.	50
2. I am flunking math.	90
3. My father doesn't like my friend Alex.	65

4. My mother is too noseiy about my boy friend. 80
5. My mother wants me to come in too early on the weekend. 90
6. I want some spending money each week. My parents say they can't afford it. 80

END OF SAMPLE

Which problems are associated with the highest discomfort levels?

Obtain responses and note them on the newsprint.

You can see the problems that your family has come up with and how much discomfort these problems cause.

Some problems are more distressful than others.

Next we want to figure out which problems are the most important from your point of view.

Before we do that, however, I want to know two things.

First, are these problems clear to you?

If someone is confused about a problem, seek clarification from all the family members until a consensus arises.

Second, do you think of a problem that we missed - one that has to go up here on the newsprint?

Add any new problems, number them, and ask about their feeling thermometer levels.

Task 7: Setting Priorities from the Problem List

Looking at our list and the feelings that go with them, I would like each of you to tell me what you think of the list.

Do you feel some of these problems are not that important?

Give family members a chance to indicate what are the key problems and the ones that don't need immediate resolution.

Thank you. Your comments are very helpful.

I am going to pass out three index cards to each of you.

Think about which three problems are most important to you.

Write the number of the problems in the middle of separate cards and write one word related to the problem - like "boy friend" or "grades."

Draw a card on the newsprint and write a number with a key word in the middle - for example, "7" and "staying out." You are going to employ an approach which minimizes dominance by more powerful family members and which allows each person to participate.

‡ Has everyone got the idea?

Allow some time to write the three most important on separate cards.

‡ You should have three cards.

‡ On each card is one number of a problem and a key word from that problem.

‡ Think about those three most important problems.

‡ Put the most important problem at the top of the pile and write a "3" in the lower right hand corner of the card.

Allow time for the selection.

‡ Now pick out the most important problem of the two you have left.

‡ Write a "2" in the lower right hand corner of that card.

Pause.

‡ Take the last card and write a "1" in the lower right hand corner.

Pause.

‡ Please pass the cards to me, and I will shuffle them, so we won't know whose card is whose.

Shuffle the cards and put the scores up on the newsprint. Total them. Show the family which problems came out highest. You are trying to teach the family how to choose an important problem to work on and still respect everyone's views without letting power issues unduly influence the choice. Try to get the family to agree on an order. Agreement may require some clarification and discussion. If people want a different order, ask them what is important to them about the problems they want first.

‡ Does anyone have a comment about how the order came out?

Obtain comments. Give out tokens.

‡ Let's see if we can reach agreement on the order of the problems.

Clarify and discuss. Give out tokens.

‡ Now we can see what the top issues are for your family.

‡ Earlier today I went over with you "Steps in Family Problem Solving."

⌋ We have worked on the first two steps during the first session and this one which we are just finishing.

Hand out the first two steps so that they can be filled in.

SAMPLE

Steps 1 And 2 In Family Problem-Solving

STEP 1: *Establish a positive working feeling.*

The family's strengths are: have stayed through rough times, don't yell at each other, love each other, want good things for each other.

STEP 2: *Identify the family's problems*

Problem List

Priority

<i>Can't agree on time for Maria to come in</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>No good place for Maria to study</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Father doesn't like Maria's new boy friend</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Mother doesn't get enough help with younger children</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Disagreement over punishment when Maria was caught drinking</i>	<i>5</i>

The problem we will work on first is punishment for drinking

END OF SAMPLE

⌋ First write in your family's strengths.

Pause while they write in the strengths.

⌋ Now write in the space under Step 2 what the problems we listed were and what their priorities were.

Pause and then ask a family member to record the top problems in the family album.

⌋ Will you please write in the family album what the top problems are?

This list will remind you how to go about finding what areas your family wants to work on.

⌋ Next week we will begin analyzing one of these problems to see what has kept you from solving it and what you want to do about that problem.

Select a problem that is important but not the most difficult. You want the family to have success on working out a solution before tackling the most complicated problem.

We will analyze the problem about _____.

For homework I would like you to use the Feeling Thermometer for rating three situations that come up in the family between now and when we meet again.

When we come back together, I would like to know what Feeling Thermometer levels you experienced for each of these situations.

Pass out a feeling thermometer for each person to take with them.

What are your Feeling Thermometer readings right now?

Obtain responses. Give out tokens.

I want to take a moment and let you show your appreciation to each other.

I am really pleased with the way you have jumped into therapy.

Please tell each other what you appreciate.

Encourage sharing of appreciations.

We also need to keep the positive feelings going.

One way to do that is to set aside a day for each of you between now and when our next session is.

The day will be called a "care day," and on your day each of you will receive something small but nice from the other two.

Like a special snack with lunch, breakfast in bed, doing one of their regular chores - a special favor that does not require much effort or money.

Will you agree to try that?

Encourage the family's adopting "care days." Tell them that "care days" are to be seen as having fun not work.

You really worked hard today on selecting problems, finding out what feeling levels go with them, and ranking the problems.

You are a great family.

I really enjoy working with you.

Thank you very much for all your effort, your strengths, and the way you care for each other.

That is all for today.

Session 2

I will meet with you again on _____ (day and date) at _____ (time).

END OF SESSION 2

Session 3

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: To continue enhancing the family's positive perceptions of themselves and the therapist.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Experience appreciation for positive actions taken during the time between sessions.
2. Demonstrate appreciation to each other for each person's contributions during Session 3.
3. Experience competence through active involvement in exercises dealing with the analysis of problems.

Goal 2: To create a therapeutic environment to which the family would want to return because coming to therapy reduced conflict and minimized blame.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Participate together in the assessment of current suicidal danger.
2. Learn to reframe problems so that behavior is divorced from intent and is perceived to flow from situations.
3. Turn what family members want from each other into behavioral patterns.
4. Have fun in the process of developing analytical skills.

Goal 3: To increase problem solving abilities.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Identify their expectations and attributions and apply their understanding to the problem they have selected.
2. Determine what benefit each person might receive from maintaining the status-quo.
3. Identify family held beliefs that might hinder problem solving.
4. Discover which family rules are obstacles to resolving the current problem.
5. Explore how the roles played by family members could impede problem solving.

RATIONALE

This session is based on the assumption that problem solving is enhanced by the ability to analyze a problem along family systems and interpersonal dimensions combined with a cognitive-behavioral approach. Consequently the first task is to teach the family members how to transform wants and complaints into behavioral statements. For example, "being respected" is a difficult goal to achieve without knowing the words, actions, and affective displays that communicate "respect" to any given family member.

With desired behaviors identified, current behaviors can be examined with regard to the intent behind them. By so doing family members can experience less hurt and antagonism. They can appreciate what another person was trying to do and see the caring behind their actions even though they disliked the behavior.

Two other useful concepts in problem analysis are assumptions and attributions. Assumptions refer to our expectations and thus are a prelude to disappointment, hurt, joy and other affective states. More objective knowledge about family members' expectations may enable them to recognize how their assumptions lead them to experiencing negative emotional states. Similarly, identifying attributions may result in more self-efficacious behavior and greater responsibility. Attributions are assumptions which define perceived causality for different life events. Causal attributions amount to the ways in which people assign responsibility for their actions and the actions of others. These attributions have a powerful impact on the ability of people to view their interactions with others accurately and to determine their own options and responsibilities.

The problem analysis addresses another issue as well. What do family members get out of the problem, or what are the benefits of maintaining the status quo? This session also focuses on beliefs, rules, and roles that may impede problem solving. All families have belief systems and operating rules. All family members play one or more roles. These factors can foster successful conflict resolution or they can prevent it. Frequently, inflexibility, arbitrariness, prejudice, insensitivity, and the inability to be empathic are the factors that turn rules, roles and beliefs into obstacles.

This session is intended to cover a great deal of content, and although it is not expected that a family can master all these analytic concepts in a short period of time, it is hoped that the interactive exposure will create some cognitive dissonance which will sustain itself throughout the remaining three sessions and beyond. If family members can have some small awareness of behavior, intent, assumptions, attributions, beliefs, rules and roles, they may question their own actions and sense more accurately what is transpiring within a situation.

PROCEDURES

1. Introduce a review of the past week, homework, tokens, Feeling Thermometers and ways to appreciate each other.
2. Assess current suicidal risk.
3. Turn family wants and complaints into desired behaviors by first practicing with a script.
4. Identify expectations and explanations of causes which might impede problem-solving. Practice with a script.
5. Discover what benefits family members might receive by keeping the current problem unsolved. Practice with the use of a metaphorical story.
6. Decipher the intent behind a family member's actions, using a script to illustrate the ideas.
7. Identify beliefs that may well act to hamper problem-solving.
8. Make explicit family rules which may place obstacles in the way of effective problem-solving.
9. Explore whether there are any family roles that need attention in order to solve the current problem. Practice with the use of "Role Cards".
10. Give appreciation for family member's contributions.

MATERIALS

Pencils

Album

Worksheets for "Steps in Problem-Solving"

Scripts

Father and the Therapist

Inez and her Mother

Mother's Intent

Role Cards

Task 1: Review Feelings, Tokens, Events, Session 2 and Homework

Therapist says

Welcome back. I'm glad to see you here.

Thank you for coming.

Give out tokens for returning.

I was really impressed with how well you worked last time.

Also, it was evident that you really cared for each other.

Could you see that in the last session?

Encourage sharing of positive perceptions of caring.

Remember the Feeling Thermometer?

Here is a copy of it.

Pass out feeling thermometers.

Tell me on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is completely comfortable and 100 is very uncomfortable, how you feel right now?

Obtain readings and give out tokens for the family members' willingness to respond.

You will recall also that we used tokens to express appreciation to each other for the good things we saw people saying and doing or just because we wanted to compliment another family member.

We will use tokens every session.

Here is your stack for today.

Give out twenty tokens to each family member. Remember to reward them occasionally for giving a token to someone else.

Your homework assignment was to provide a "care day" for each other.

How did that work out?

Encourage responses and use tokens to shape behavior. Ignore negative behavior. Redirect toward desired behavior and reward any small movement toward the desired end. If no care day was provided, you can say, "It's good that you want to give care days at your own pace. Being in control of life is an important ability to develop", or "the fact that you want to show love in your own way is important. Then you can really make it special because you know the other person so well."

It sounds like one way or another you expressed deep concern for each other at home.

That is really a positive thing to do.

Let's hear what else happened at home in your lives during the past week.

I would like each family member to tell me about a successful event that took place between our last session and today's meeting.

It could be something related to solving a problem at home, preventing a problem from getting started, something you did you are proud of, or something that makes life better for you.

Go around and have each person report on one event. Give out tokens as appropriate and encourage others to show appreciation for positive things family members did. If someone does not come up with a success, use prompts around different areas - friends, work, achievements. Remember, also, there are prompts that force reports - "Which are you more pleased with, the amount of effort you spend at work or how well you have been a good example to your children?" If you are still unsuccessful at obtaining a response, you can say, "I appreciate your being honest about how you see things at this time. Such honesty is often hard to find".

As you know, the purpose of this therapy is to stop suicide from occurring again.

We do that by showing you how to solve the problems that lead to suicide.

Last time we focused on selecting and ranking the problems you wanted to solve.

Here is your Family Album.

Look inside where you listed you family's strengths.

Hand them the family album and give them a moment to read the strengths.

You also can see how you ranked the problems.

Today we will work on understanding your problems.

That means you will develop new and helpful ways of looking at your problems.

You did a great job last time, and this session should be a good one today.

Task 2: Assessing Suicidal Risk

Before moving into analyzing your problems I want to check out the risk of suicide.

We will do this at each session.

You are all here, and, as far as I know, no suicide attempt was made between sessions.

Is that correct?

Obtain an answer. If the family says there was a suicide attempt, determine if there is a high risk of suicide today. You can ask, "Is the situation that triggered the attempt still present?" "Do you think that an attempt might occur today?" If the situation still exists and if the answer is "yes, it might happen today", then follow the procedure described in "Imminent Danger" contained in the overview. If there is no high risk for today, ask what the situation that triggered the attempt was and how they resolved it. Encourage problem-solving and give tokens for problem-solving. If the family says that there was no attempt, continue.

It is great that you avoided a suicide attempt between sessions.

Give out tokens for their success.

What about today?

Is there a high risk situation today?

Obtain an answer. If the answer is "yes", find out how they can resolve the issue. You may need to help them get from each other what they need even if the problem has not been solved. If the answer is "no", continue.

I know it is hard to work out these high risk situations when we have not given you all the tools yet in therapy. But it looks to me like you are really coming along.

Task 3: Identifying Specific Behaviors for Change

As I said earlier, today we are going to work on Step 3 in "Steps in Family Problem-solving".

That's the step where we analyze the problem.

I'll give you some help on each part of analyzing the problem and then we will try to answer the questions there.

Last time you chose the problem to work on.

It is _____.

The first task is to state what we want the other people involved to do or say.

That means what should they say and how should they say it.

For example, I could say that you are nice person, but I could say it with anger or love or sarcasm in my voice.

It also means what should they do and how should they do it.

I can shake your hand gently or roughly.

What we don't want to end up with is a statement like this: "I want my mother to be nice to me".

What should your mother do to be nice to you?

We would like you state the action or words.

For example, "I want my mother to be home when I get there after school".

A little scene will show you what I mean.

I will read the therapist.

Who will read the father?

Select anyone who volunteers. It doesn't need to be the father. Give the volunteer the script.

Father and the Therapist

THERAPIST: What is it you want from your daughter?

FATHER: She doesn't respect me.

THERAPIST: What do you mean by that?

FATHER: You can just tell. She doesn't show me any respect.

THERAPIST: What would she do or say if she showed you respect?

FATHER: She would act respectful.

THERAPIST: Give me a concrete example of what she would say or do.

FATHER: OK. When I tell her to be home by eight o'clock, I want her home.

THERAPIST: So you want your daughter to be at home by eight at night unless you tell her she can stay out later.

FATHER: That's right. That's showing respect.

THE END

‡ That was great!

Give out a token.

‡ Can you see how we got very specific about what behavior the father wanted?

If we didn't get that specific, the daughter would not know how she was supposed to act.

Just saying I want respect isn't enough.

Look at your "Steps in Family Problem-solving" - Step 3, which is analyzing.

Hand out "STEP 3 IN FAMILY PROBLEM-SOLVING" to each family member.

STEP 3 IN FAMILY PROBLEM-SOLVING

STEP 3: Analyze the problem

What words or actions do family members want changed?

Mother's _____

Father's _____

Daughter's _____

Why is the problem happening?

Mother's view _____

Father's view _____

Daughter's view _____

What do family members get out of keeping the problem?

Daughter _____

Father _____

Other _____

How can each person change the problem?

Father _____

Daughter _____

Mother _____

What beliefs prevent the family from solving the problem?

What rules prevent the family from solving the problem?

What roles prevent the family from solving the problem?

It says, "What words or actions do family members want changed?"

From the mother, father, and daughter.

You can state it in terms of "please do and say" or "please don't".

Remember the problem is _____.

Looking at that problem, what do you want from each other?

For the statement to be correct, you have to be able to see it, hear it, taste it, feel it, or smell it.

Not all of them - just one.

Obtain an answer from each person. Help them shape the response until it is a clear "say or do".

EXAMPLE OF TEENAGER'S LIST

What words or actions do family members want changed?

Mother's: Explain to me why I should be punished for drinking before punishing me.

Father's: Tell me ahead of time what the punishment will be (not after I have done something wrong).

END OF EXAMPLE

That is very good.

Now we know what behavior you want changed and we have something to work on.

Give out tokens.

Task 4: Uncovering Expectations and Causes

Now we have moved to the next part: "Why is the problem happening?"

What is important to keep in mind here, is that we create our own worlds by the way each one of us sees and explains what is going on.

First, we see the world through our expectations.

For example, Maria says to herself, "Johnny is so cute, but he could never be interested in me".

So she expects Johnny not to want her.

We also explain the world to ourselves according to what we think causes things.

Maria might also think, "He would never be interested in me because I am so fat".

From her point of view the cause is her weight.

Juanita and Frank broke up.

Juanita could think, "He dumped me because he is such a scheming rat".

The blame is on Frank.

Or she could think, "He broke up with me because I was too clingy".

Here she blames her possessiveness.

Let's read another short script.

You did a great job on the last one.

Who will read Inez and who will read her mother?

Encourage role reversals. Have mother read daughter and father read mother or what ever mix puts family members in different shoes. Select volunteers and read the script.

Inez and her Mother

INEZ: I am so miserable.

MOTHER: What's the matter.

INEZ: I just know that Antonio is going to break up with me.

MOTHER: Why do you think that way?

INEZ: I always knew it would happen. I'm so ugly and I have such terrible luck with boys.

MOTHER: You're not ugly!

INEZ: I can't do anything right. I might as well be dead.

MOTHER: I know it hurts a lot when you break up, but it hasn't even happened yet. Besides there are plenty of others boys who like you.

INEZ: Nobody else is like Antonio. I'm so depressed.

THE END

Thank you for the great reading!

Give out tokens.

We'll take a moment and talk about the scene.

What does Inez expect?

Encourage answers such as "Antonio will dump her." Reward even slight movement in the right direction.

That's a good answer.

What does Inez think causes her situation?

Encourage answers such as "her bad luck - her ugliness".

If she believes that Antonio might break up because she is ugly and has bad luck with boys, how hard will she work on trying to fix the situation?

Obtain answers.

Not much, right? As Inez sees it, everything is beyond her control.

Now why don't all of you share how you view the problem we have chosen.

Then we can write your responses in the space left there for us.

Encourage sharing of perceptions of the problem. Make no effort at this point to change any one's point of view. Recognize that the role playing that took place may have already brought about a slight shift.

EXAMPLE of why the problem is happening

Mother's view: Daughter is rebelling.

Father's view: Mother isn't strict enough with daughter.

Daughter's view: Her boy friend got her drunk. She didn't want to.

END OF EXAMPLE

You did a great job coming up with the different points of view.

That is very useful to have your point of view expressed here.

Task 5: Understanding the Benefits In Keeping the Problem

It may be hard to believe, but often families keep a problem going.

Unpleasant as the problem may be the family thinks that it will be worse if they fix it.

Don't misunderstand me - the family did not sit down together and openly agree to keep from solving the problem.

Let me tell you the first part of a story.

Once upon a time there was a king who had a young and beautiful daughter.

He wanted her to marry the prince of a neighboring kingdom so that his land would be safe from attack from that kingdom.

Secretly, the princess loved a handsome young man who worked in the stables and broke in horses, but she knew the king would never permit her to marry him.

Also the princess did not like the prince her father had chosen for her.

She did not want to have to marry him.

The prince was known for chasing after every attractive woman that he could find.

Even the king in his heart wished that the prince would grow up and stop chasing women all the time.

The queen thought her daughter was too young to marry, but her husband - the king - would not listen to her.

The wedding was planned for a year away.

The queen announced that her daughter would wear the same wedding dress she had worn when she was slim and tiny.

Preparations for the wedding began.

Soon people began to notice that the princess did nothing but eat.

She began to get bigger and bigger.

The king was worried.

The queen was worried.

Everyone told the princess that it wasn't good for her health.

Her skin would stretch.

Her heart would fail.

Her legs would not be able to carry the load.

She continued to grow fatter and fatter.

Doors had to be widened.

Finally the princess could no longer move at all.

Then the Queen announced that there would be a rehearsal for the wedding, and the main feature would be the princess appearing in the Queen's wedding dress.

Of course, the princess could not even get the wedding dress over her head.

So the Queen announced that the wedding would have to be postponed until the princess could fit into the Queen's wedding dress.

But the princess kept on eating, and no one could stop her.

The king tried to stop her.

The queen tried to stop her.

All the ladies of the court tried to stop her.

The king's magician tried to stop her.

The king called all the wise men and women together to offer a solution to the problem.

That's as far as the story goes, but I want you to figure out if the king and the queen and the princess were getting any benefits from the problem of the princess being so heavy.

Encourage answers, give tokens for trying, and help shape answers if necessary. IDEAS:
Princess avoids wedding and sleeping with prince. Mother keeps princess around longer until she is older and ready for marriage. King lets the prince grow up a little and can see if he settles down while the king still has protection from the other kingdom.

|| So have you got the idea about looking to see what people can get out of a situation even though it appears to be a problem?

Clear up any confusion.

Why not try to determine what all of you might get out of the problem you have presented.

At this point you don't have to agree with each other.

What is important is getting out some ideas.

Then you can let those ideas float around in your head and help you understand the problem better.

Encourage sharing of ideas and then have the family write them down in the space provided.

EXAMPLE of what family members get out of keeping the problem

Daughter: Arguing about the punishment keeps the attention away from the fact that she got drunk with her boyfriend.

Father: Arguing over the punishment is a good way to make his wife feel guilty over not keeping an eye on the daughter.

Mother: Arguing over the punishment will keep reminding the daughter that she did a terrible thing. Other wise she would just be punished and forget about it.

END OF EXAMPLE

‡ That was very good.

Give out tokens.

‡ It shows you catch on quickly.

Task 6: Looking at Problems from a Different Point of View

Now we are up to the question, "How can each person change the problem?"

By changing the problem we are talking about changing the meaning of the problem - changing how each member of the family defines the problem.

One way to change meaning is to separate what each family member says and does from what their intent was - their purpose.

We will illustrate what I mean with another script.

In this script we need a mother and a daughter, and I will be the mother's thoughts.

Who will read the mother and who will read the daughter?

Select volunteers. Set up two chairs facing each other. In one chair is the mother and in the other the daughter. You stand behind the mother. Pass out the script. Read the mother's thoughts in a quiet, inner voice - like a loud whisper.

Mother's Intent

MOTHER: You are going out with Dizzy MacArthur tonight?

DAUGHTER: Yes. So what?

THOUGHTS: Dizzy is 28 years old. Much too old for her. He's a hyena too. He'll take anything he can get.

MOTHER: I just wondered.

DAUGHTER: Dizzy is real bad in the good sense. What time do I have to be in?

MOTHER: Where are you going?

THOUGHTS: Please don't go some place where he can get you.

DAUGHTER: To some party that Dizzy knows about.

THOUGHTS: Oh, my God!

MOTHER: I want you in by 11:30 - that's pm. Tonight.

THOUGHTS: I love my baby so much. I don't want to see her hurt or pregnant or with AIDS.

DAUGHTER: Mom! That's crazy. The party will just be starting. I won't have any fun at all. Dizzy will never ask me out again if I tell him I have to be in by 11:30.

THOUGHTS: That would be fine by me. Then you'd be safe for awhile.

MOTHER: Eleven-thirty it is. Don't argue with me.

DAUGHTER: You're so mean. Why do you hate me?

THE END

‡ That was terrific!

Give out tokens.

‡ Is the problem that the mother hates the daughter?

Obtain responses.

‡ What is the mother's intent - her purpose - in setting the time for 11:30 p.m.?

‡ And what is the daughter's purpose in wanting to stay out longer?

Encourage discussion. Look for the mother wanting to protect the daughter because she cares so much. Look for the daughter wanting to be liked by a "mature" man.

It looks like you have got the idea.

How could each of you see the problem differently?

Encourage discussion and write down some responses.

EXAMPLE of changing the problem

How can each person change the problem?

Father: The problem is wanting to be accepted by kids who also happen to think drinking is grown up.

Daughter: The problem is having clear rules in the family.

Mother: The problem is showing I care through rewards and not punishments.

END OF EXAMPLE

Now you have analyzed how each of you could change the way you see your problem.

I really like the way you are catching on and moving right along.

Task 7: Discovering Beliefs that Influence the Problem

Sometimes what the family believes makes it hard to solve the problem.

For example, if the family believes that the father is the head of the family and must make all decisions on his own, the family will have a difficult time working together and solving the problem.

I'll read you a few statements that illustrate family beliefs.

"Good girls are not interested in sex."

"Parents are too old to understand a teenager today."

"If a teenager is kept in the home as much as possible, she will be protected from evil and grow up OK."

"A man must be macho and never reveal his feelings."

"Parents who were raised in another country cannot understand what it is like in the United States."

Those are some examples of beliefs.

Now what beliefs does your family have that might get in the way of solving the problem you are working on?

Encourage a discussion and give out tokens for identifying beliefs.

EXAMPLE of family beliefs

What beliefs prevent the family from solving the problem?

1. *It is OK For parents to get drunk but not their teenagers.*
2. *Rewarding kids for good things they do is too soft. Punishment works better.*
3. *Only fathers should do the discipline in the house.*
4. *Teenagers should not have a say in what kind of punishment they get.*

END OF EXAMPLE

You have come up with some good ones.

I can see that you are really on target.

Write down the beliefs you have uncovered in the space under Step 3 where it says, "What beliefs prevent the family from solving the problem?"

Task 8: Looking at How Rules Affect the Problem

Our next question is "What rules prevent the family from solving the problem?"

Each family has rules it lives by.

The rules are different for each family.

Here are some examples of family rules.

"Girls cannot go out with boys unchaperoned until they are 18 years old."

"Everyone goes to church on Sunday."

"Teenagers have to be at home by 6 p.m. on weekdays."

"Husbands cannot cheat on their wives."

"Ten year old kids get 50 cents each week for spending money."

"Mothers do not contradict fathers in front of the children."

First, take a few minutes and think of some of your family rules.

You don't have to agree with each other at this point.

I just want you to practice identifying rules.

Are there rules about how people treat each other, about daily activities, about tasks around the house, about coming and going, about how rules get made, and so on?

You call them out, and I'll write them up on newsprint.

Encourage identifying rules. Write up their examples.

Those examples of rules are great.

Now let me ask you a different question.

Can you see some rules in your family which will make solving your problem harder?

Encourage discussion and give out tokens for identifying rules.

I can see you have mastered finding rules.

That is terrific.

Write down some of your ideas where it says, "What rules prevent the family from solving the problem?"

EXAMPLE of rules that hinder

What rules prevent the family from solving the problem?

1. *Kids take their punishment and don't complain.*
2. *Daughters should not drink before they are eighteen years old.*
3. *What father says is the law.*

END OF EXAMPLE

Task 9: Examining How Roles Influence the Problem

We just talked about rules that might get in the way of solving this specific problem.

Now I want you to look at the roles family members play.

All families have roles, and there is nothing wrong with playing a role.

We simply want to explore when a role can get in the way of working out a solution to a difficult situation.

Roles can become very fixed in a family.

No matter what the situation is family members will often play the same roles.
If family members cannot break out of those roles, solving a problem together can be difficult.
I am going to pass out some cards with a role on it and what that person might say.
Then we will go around and you read aloud what your card says.
I want to know what name you would give to this role.
One possible name is on the back of the card.

ROLE CARDS

CARD 1, FRONT

"THAT'S OK. I DON'T MIND DOING THE DISHES, THE COOKING, THE CLEANING, THE SHOPPING, AND PAYING THE BILLS."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE THIS ROLE?

CARD 1, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE MARTYR

CARD 2, FRONT

"EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT. DON'T ARGUE WITH EACH OTHER. LET'S KEEP OUR VOICES DOWN. JUST SMOOTH OVER THIS PROBLEM."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE THIS ROLE?

CARD 2, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE PEACE-MAKER

CARD 3, FRONT

"EVERYTHING ALWAYS HAPPENS TO ME. THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT. YOU JUST DUMP ALL OVER ME."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE THIS ROLE?

CARD 3, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE VICTIM

CARD 4, FRONT

"JUST BE QUIET AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE THIS ROLE?

CARD 4, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE BOSS

CARD 5, FRONT

"I LOVE EVERYONE AND WILL DO ALL I CAN FOR YOU. I EXPECT NOTHING IN RETURN."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE THIS ROLE?

CARD 5, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE SAINT

CARD 6, FRONT

"LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND. HERE, I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO DO IT."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE THIS ROLE?

CARD 6, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE HELPER

CARD 7, FRONT

"THE FOOD HERE IS TERRIBLE AND THE SERVINGS ARE TOO SMALL. I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING RIGHT."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE THIS ROLE?

CARD 7, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE CRITIC

Have family members draw two cards from the stack. Then go around and have them read one card. Let the entire group come up with names. Go around a second time, reading the next card. Make sure all the cards are read. You may want to read one yourself.

Those are examples of roles family members might play.

Do any of them sound familiar?

Encourage sharing without naming individuals in a way that criticizes family members.

Can you think of some other roles that people take in your family?

At this point, saying who plays the role is not necessary.

Encourage exploration. Give out tokens for ideas.

Now are there roles that come to your mind which will make it hard to solve the problem we are working on?

For example, think of the last time you had a fight in the family.

Were people playing roles that either started the fight or kept it going?

Help the family briefly analyze their last fight only from the point of view of the roles played.

Coming up with these roles can be tricky because we don't want it to sound like we are blaming someone for their role.

To the "Helper" you might say, "I think you play the helper a lot. I appreciate your wanting to help me and often find it very useful, but this time I need to work it out on my own."

Or to the "Boss" you might say, "I think your role is one of the boss. It is good that you are firm and give us direction. We need a leader. In this case we all need to explore the problem and reach a decision together."

Let's go ahead and try to figure out what roles may get in the way of successfully solving the problem you choose.

We can write them down in the space reserved for them in Step 3.

Encourage identifying roles and give out tokens for approximations. Help shape answers so that roles are clear.

EXAMPLE of identifying roles

What roles prevent the family from solving the problem?

1. Daughter plays the "I'm going to eat worms and get sick" role when limits are set.
Poor baby role

2. Father plays the "I have to be tough and give out punishment" role. Enforcer role

3. Mother plays the "I have no right to give my opinion" role. Passive role

End of example

Again you did a great job.

I hope you have a record of all your fine work in your Family Album.

Today's session really required a lot of effort to cover all the material.

You are to be congratulated.

Your homework assignment is to take a situation that comes up during the week and analyze it - just like we did here.

Follow the form.

Set aside a time where you will all meet for no more than twenty minutes.

In that time do whatever analyzing you can.

Just once - for twenty minutes - that's all.

Is everyone clear?

Answer any questions and clarify.

I want to end up today's therapy with giving appreciation to family members.

I'll start.

Give a compliment to each person. Ideas include appreciation for being active, insightful, hard working, open, analytic, supportive, friendly, warm, and understanding. Then encourage the family members to show appreciation and give strokes.

Thank you.

We are really making progress.

That is all for today.

I will see you next time on _____ (date) at _____ (time).

THE END OF SESSION 3

Mother's Intent

MOTHER: You are going out with Dizzy MacArthur tonight?

DAUGHTER: Yes. So what?

THOUGHTS: Dizzy is 28 years old. Much too old for her. He's a hyena too. He'll take anything he can get.

MOTHER: I just wondered.

DAUGHTER: Dizzy is real bad in the good sense. What time do I have to be in?

MOTHER: Where are you going?

THOUGHTS: Please don't go some place where he can get you.

DAUGHTER: To some party that Dizzy knows about.

THOUGHTS: Oh, my God!

MOTHER: I want you in by 11:30 - that's pm. Tonight.

THOUGHTS: I love my baby so much. I don't want to see her hurt or pregnant or with AIDS.

DAUGHTER: Mom! That's crazy. The party will just be starting. I won't have any fun at all. Dizzy will never ask me out again if I tell him I have to be in 11:30.

THOUGHTS: That would be fine by me. Then you'd be safe for awhile.

MOTHER: Eleven-thirty it is. Don't argue with me.

DAUGHTER: You're so mean. Why do you hate me?

THE END

STEP 3 IN FAMILY PROBLEM-SOLVING

STEP 3: Analyze the problem

What words or actions do family members want changed?

Mother's _____

Father's _____

Daughter's _____

Why is the problem happening?

Mother's view _____

Father's view _____

Daughter's view _____

What do family members get out of keeping the problem?

Daughter _____

Father _____

Other _____

How can each person change the problem?

Father _____

Daughter _____

Mother _____

What beliefs prevent the family from solving the problem?

What rules prevent the family from solving the problem?

What roles prevent the family from solving the problem?

Inez and her Mother

INEZ: I am so miserable.

MOTHER: What's the matter.

INEZ: I just know that Antonio is going to break up with me.

MOTHER: Why do you think that way?

INEZ: I always knew it would happen. I'm so ugly and I have such terrible luck with boys.

MOTHER: You're not ugly!

INEZ: I can't do anything right. I might as well be dead.

MOTHER: I know it hurts a lot when you break up, but it hasn't even happened yet. Besides there are plenty of others boys who like you.

INEZ: Nobody else is like Antonio. I'm so depressed.

THE END

CARD 1, FRONT

**"THAT'S OK. I DON'T MIND DOING
THE DISHES, THE COOKING, THE
CLEANING, THE SHOPPING, AND
PAYING THE BILLS."**

**WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE
THIS ROLE?**

CARD 2, FRONT

**"EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT.
DON'T ARGUE WITH EACH OTHER.
LET'S KEEP OUR VOICES DOWN.
JUST SMOOTH OVER THIS
PROBLEM."**

**WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE
THIS ROLE?**

CARD 1, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE MARTYR

CARD 2, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME:
THE PEACE-MAKER

CARD 3, FRONT

**"EVERYTHING ALWAYS HAPPENS
TO ME. THERE IS NOTHING I CAN
DO ABOUT IT. YOU JUST DUMP ALL
OVER ME."**

**WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE
THIS ROLE?**

CARD 4, FRONT

**"JUST BE QUIET AND I'LL TELL YOU
WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO."**

**WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE
THIS ROLE?**

CARD 5, FRONT

"I LOVE EVERY ONE AND WILL DO
ALL I CAN FOR YOU. I EXPECT
NOTHING IN RETURN."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE
THIS ROLE?

CARD 6, FRONT

"LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND. HERE,
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO DO IT."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE
THIS ROLE?

CARD 5, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE SAINT

CARD 6, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE HELPER

CARD 7, FRONT

"THE FOOD HERE IS TERRIBLE AND
THE SERVINGS ARE TOO SMALL. I
DON'T KNOW WHY YOU CAN'T DO
ANYTHING RIGHT."

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU GIVE
THIS ROLE?

CARD 7, BACK

POSSIBLE NAME: THE CRITIC

Session 4

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: To continue enhancing the family's positive perceptions of themselves and the therapist.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Experience appreciation for positive actions taken during the time between sessions.
2. Demonstrate appreciation to each other for each person's contributions during the Session 4.
3. Experience competence through active involvement in exercises dealing with brainstorming and negotiations.

Goal 2: To create a therapeutic environment to which the family would want to return because coming to therapy reduced conflict and minimized blame.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Participate together in the assessment of current suicidal danger.
2. Learn to reframe problems so that behavior is divorced from intent and is perceived to flow from situations.
3. Broaden their range of coping skill options.
4. Increase their skills in negotiating and bargaining.

Goal 3: To increase problem solving abilities.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Re-state wants and understanding of the other parties' needs in terms that set the stage for active problem solving.

2. Brainstorm a list of possible solutions to the selected problem.
-

RATIONALE

This session focuses on coping skills repertoires and negotiations. First, it is assumed that the broader the range of coping interventions available to a person the more likely that a coping response which fits the stressful situation will be found. Thus, family members are exposed to eight categories of coping actions. Furthermore, when and where these actions are appropriate is presented. The point is made that a coping strategy may work in one situation and not another. It should be recognized as well that a particular response may subject to timing, so that, for example, it may be useful to employ at the beginning of a coping sequence but not at the end.

The second major area during Session 4 is building negotiating skills. While the problem solving sequence provides a rational set of steps, the way in which a family follows this path is dependent on their interactions with each other. Furthermore, it is assumed that learning how to negotiate improves those family interactions. Simple models of a successful negotiation and how to negotiate are articulated and then practiced.

Finally, with these negotiation skills sharpened the family is asked to brainstorm a list possible solutions to their real problem. The family is on their own in completing this task, having to decide who, if anyone, will lead the efforts, write down proposals, keep the other members from premature screen of alternatives. Thus, the therapist is permitted to see how well the family is managing new found skills and strengths, and the therapist is provided with an opportunity to serve as a consultant to family - enhancing their success.

PROCEDURES

1. Introduce the fourth session, the Feeling Thermometer, the continued use of tokens, a review of homework, and a preview of what is to come.
2. Assess current suicide risk.
3. Broaden the range of coping responses through examples and coping cards which foster discrimination of coping approaches. Also select a general coping strategy for the problem at hand.
4. Learn the characteristics of successful negotiations through a scripted scene and analysis.
5. Learn and practice the very basics of negotiations through the use of a scripts.
6. Practice family negotiations through free form role plays of typical situations.
7. Prepare to apply the skills learned today by re-stating what each person wants and understands that other want from that person.
8. List possible solutions to the real problem the family selected through brainstorming and using negotiating skills to work together at the task.

MATERIALS

- Albums
- Feeling Thermometers
- Tokens
- Marking pens and newsprint
- Coping Cards
- Handout: Signs of a Successful Negotiation
- Handout: Guidelines of Negotiating
- Scripts: Tina and her Mother
- Sandy and her Parents

Task 1: Review Feelings, Tokens, Events, Session 2 and Homework

Therapist says

- ↑ Welcome! I'm glad to see you back here.
- ↓ Thank you for coming.

Give out tokens for returning.

- ↑ I was really pleased with how well you worked last time.
- ↓ Also, anyone could see that you really cared for each other.
- ↑ Are you aware of that?

Encourage sharing of positive perceptions of caring.

- ↑ Remember the Feeling Thermometer?
- ↓ Here is a copy of it.

Pass out feeling thermometers.

- ↑ Tell me on a scale of 100 which is very uncomfortable to 0 which is completely comfortable how you feel right now?

Obtain readings and give out tokens for the family members' willingness to respond.

- ↑ You will recall also that we used tokens to express appreciation to each other for the good things we saw people saying and doing or just because we wanted to compliment another family member.
- ↓ We will use tokens every session.
- ↑ Here is your stack for today.

Give out twenty tokens to each family member. Remember to reward them occasionally for giving a token to someone else.

Your homework assignment for the family was to try analyzing at least some parts of a problem that came up.

How did that work out?

Encourage responses and use tokens to shape behavior. Ignore negative behavior. Redirect toward desired behavior and reward any small movement toward the desired end. If no analysis took place, search for accepting yet rewarding and shaping things to say. for example, "Wanting to wait until you felt really good at analyzing can be helpful. That way you don't make a rash move without careful planning."

It sounds like you really wanted to do a good job at analyzing a problem situation.

Let's hear what else happened at home in your lives during the past week.

I would like each family member to tell me about a successful event that took place between our last session and today's meeting.

It could be something related to solving a problem at home, preventing a problem from getting started, something you did you are proud of, or something that makes life better for you.

Go around and have each person report on one event. Give out tokens as appropriate and encourage others to show appreciation for positive things family members did. If someone does not come up with a success, use prompts around different areas - friends, work, achievements. Remember also there are prompts that force reports - "Which are you more pleased with the amount of effort you spend at work or how well you have been a good example to your children?" If you are still unsuccessful at obtaining a response, you can say, "I appreciate your being honest about how you see things at this time. Such honesty is often hard to find."

As you know, the purpose of this therapy is to stop suicide from occurring again.

We do that by showing you how to solve the problems that lead to suicide.

Last time we focused on selecting and ranking the problems you wanted to solve.

Here is your Family Album.

Look inside where you listed you family's strengths.

Hand them the family album and give them a moment to read the strengths.

You also can see how you ranked the problems.

Today we will work on understanding your problems.

‡ That means you will develop new and helpful ways of looking at your problems.

Task 2: Assessing Suicidal Risk

‡ Before moving into analyzing your problems I want to check out the risk of suicide.

‡ We will do this at each session.

‡ You are all here, and, as far as I know, no suicide attempt was made between sessions.

‡ Is that correct?

Obtain an answer. If the family says there was a suicide attempt, determine if there is a high risk of suicide today. You can ask, "Is the situation that triggered the attempt still present?" "Do you think that an attempt might occur today?" If the situation still exists and if the answer is "yes, it might happen today" then follow the procedure described in "IMMINENT DANGER" contained in the overview. If there is no high risk for today, ask what the situation that triggered the attempt was and how they resolved it. Encourage problem solving and give tokens for problem solving. If the family says that there was no attempt, continue.

‡ It is great that you avoided a suicide attempt between sessions.

‡ Did you feel suicidal at all?

Obtain a response. If the teenager answered "yes," ask the next question.

‡ What did you do to change your situation?

Encourage a response.

‡ You are doing a great job in controlling suicidal actions.

Give out tokens for their success.

‡ What about today?

‡ Is there a high risk situation today?

Obtain an answer. If the answer is "yes," find out how they can resolve the issue. You may need to help them get from each what they need even if the problem has not been solved. If the answer is "no," continue.

‡ I know it is hard to work out these high risk situations when we have not given you all the tools yet in therapy.

‡ But it looks to me like you are really coming along.

Exercise 3: Building a Broader Base for Coping

There are a number of different ways to deal with a situation.

But, if you only know one or two ways, you are handicapped.

The more ways of coping that you know the better.

Here is a list of ways of coping.

Hand out "WAYS OF COPING" and go over it.

WAYS OF COPING

DON'T GIVE IN

Fight back. Stand your ground. Let your feelings out. Pressure people. Take risks.

FORGET ABOUT IT

Push the pressure away from you by forgetting it, playing it down, getting involved with something else.

CONTROL YOUR FEELINGS

Keep feelings to yourself. Relax. Stay cool. Don't act in haste. Rehearse things in your mind.

GET SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

Get help and sympathy from other people such as friends, family, religious or spiritual leaders as well as professionals.

SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Finds ways to work the situation out by defining what is wrong; seeing what is important to you; coming up with alternatives and trying an alternative out.

TRY HARDER NEXT TIME

Admit your responsibility in the matter. Apologize. Lecture yourself. Make commitments to change and do better.

ESCAPE THE SCENE

Avoid the problem by wishing it would go away. Taking it out on others. Sleeping, eating, drinking, drugging, smoking too much. Acting like nothing happened. Running away.

CHANGE THE MEANING

Look at the situation differently. See the opportunities in the situation. See how you can grow from the situation. See the situation as bearable. See the situation as less important to you.

I want you to become familiar with each one.

"Don't give in" means to stand your ground.

For example, stick your finger up in someone's face and argue with them.

"Forget about it." Go to the movies or take a walk - anything to take your mind off it.

"Control your feelings" means to chill out, take a few deep breaths, soak in the tub, do some relaxation exercises.

"Get support from others" refers to discussing the situation with your friend or your priest or just hanging around with people who understand you and what it is all about.

"Solve the problem." Here in therapy you are working on fixing the situation.

"Try harder next time" means giving your self a pep talk, admitting you made a mistake, trying to correct your behavior.

"Escape the scene." Get smashed, get high, leave town, run away.

"Change the meaning" refers to looking at the problem differently.

You might tell yourself that it wasn't important to you anyway or that this was the way God wanted it to be.

Let's play with these types of coping.

I will give you a card with what a family does in a situation, and you tell me which type of coping it falls in.

For example, if my card said, "The Martinez lived in a building where there were a lot of people who did not like Latinos. They decided to move to another area."

I would say that goes in the "Escape the scene" category.

I want all of you to work together as a team.

Here is the first card.

Pass out the cards one at a time. Try to coach the family if needed, so that they have as many successes as possible. The answers are as follows:

- | | |
|--------|---------------------|
| CARD 1 | SUPPORT |
| CARD 2 | MEANING |
| CARD 3 | ESCAPE |
| CARD 4 | PROBLEM SOLVE |
| CARD 5 | DON'T GIVE IN |
| CARD 6 | FORGET IT |
| CARD 7 | TRY HARDER |
| CARD 8 | CONTROL FEELINGS |
| CARD 9 | ? (LET THEM DECIDE) |

COPING CARDS

CARD 1

THE SMITH FAMILY HAD A BIG FIGHT OVER THE BOY THEIR DAUGHTER WAS DATING. AT WORK MR. SMITH TOLD ONE OF HIS BUDDIES THAT HE JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HER.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 2

AT FIRST THE SANCHEZ FAMILY WAS REALLY UPSET BECAUSE THEIR UNWED DAUGHTER WAS PREGNANT. THEN THEY TALKED TO THEIR PRIEST AND DECIDED THAT IT WAS GOD'S WILL THAT MADE IT EASIER TO ACCEPT.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 3

GEORGE WAS FLUNKING OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL HIS MOTHER WAS REALLY ANGRY. WHEN GEORGE RECEIVED HIS LAST REPORT CARD AND SAW ALL FAILING GRADES, HE WENT OUT AND SHOT UP. GEORGE STAYED HIGH FOR A WEEK AND DID NOT GO HOME.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 4

ON SATURDAYS BOTH MR. AND MRS. WASHINGTON WORKED. THEY WANTED THEIR DAUGHTER, BELINDA, TO BABY SIT WITH HER YOUNGER SISTER. BELINDA THOUGHT SHE DESERVED SATURDAY FOR HERSELF AFTER A HARD WEEK IN SCHOOL. AFTER A LOT OF DISCUSSION, THE WHOLE FAMILY AGREED THAT SHE WOULD GET PAID FOR HALF A DAY AND NOT HAVE TO DO JOBS ON MONDAY.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 5

RHONDA'S MOTHER TOLD HER TO BE HOME BY 8 P.M. ON WEEKDAYS. SHE HASN'T MADE IT THE LAST THREE DAYS. TODAY WHEN SHE CAME IN AT 9 HER MOTHER GRABBED HER, PUSHED HER AGAINST THE WALL AND SAID TO HER, "BABY, IF YOU PULL THIS ON ME ONE MORE TIME, I'M GOING TO LOCK YOU UP."

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 6

AFTER A BIG FIGHT WITH THEIR SON, MRS. PARADES SAID TO HER HUSBAND, "I CAN'T DEAL WITH THIS NOW. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. WHY DON'T WE GO TO THE ZOO. I LIKE THE MONKEYS."

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 7

JULIE LOOKED AT HER MOTHER AND FATHER AND SAID, "I AM SORRY TO CAUSE YOU SO MUCH GRIEF BY TRYING TO KILL MYSELF. I WON'T DO IT AGAIN. I'M STILL MAD AT YOU FOR NOT LISTENING TO ME. I KNOW I AM A BIG DISAPPOINTMENT, BUT I PLAN TO STUDY MORE."

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 8

DONNA'S PARENTS ARE ALWAYS HARSHING HER OUT TO THE MAX. SHE IS CONSTANTLY ANGRY AND TENSE. SO SHE STARTED TAKING DANCE AT SCHOOL IT MAKES HER FEEL MUCH MORE CHILLED OUT.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 9

AFTER INEZ'S BOY FRIEND DUMPED HER, SHE SWALLOWED A WHOLE BOTTLE OF TYLENOL AND TRIED TO KILL HERSELF.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

|| You did a really great job!

Give out tokens.

|| You are really learning this material.

|| Are there ways of coping that work for you which are not here?

Discuss their preferred ways of coping.

I want to make two points about coping.

First, the best coping strategies are said to be problem solving, getting support, controlling your feelings, and changing the meaning.

Second, but what works in one situation may not work in another.

For example, if I am really stressed out at work and I learn a few relaxation techniques that I can use on the job, that will help me a lot.

But if I am sitting under a tree in the park and this guy comes running at me with a butcher knife, is this the time for relaxing or for problem solving?

No! Run away - run away.

That's the best thing to do.

If the daughter in the family is being sexually abused, she needs to escape first, get support second, and then work on solving the problem.

Also a coping strategy may work at the beginning but not later or the other way around.

For example, right after the accident it was good to put the problem out of her mind, but three months later trying to solve the problem was a better approach than trying to forget it.

So you have to be flexible and figure out the best coping strategy for the situation.

Step 4 in Family Problem Solving is deciding on how you want to cope with the problem that you are trying to solve.

Here is Step 4.

Handout STEP 4.

STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING

STEP 4: Decide how the family wants to deal with this problem.

- Don't give in. _____
- Forget about it. _____
- Control your feelings. _____
- Get support from others. _____
- Solve the problem. _____
- Try harder next time _____
- Escape the scene. _____
- Change the meaning _____

What would you say is the best coping strategy for your problem which is _____ ?

Encourage discussion and the selection of problem solving.

Take a look at Step 4 in the problem solving steps.

You decided on _____ for coping with the problem that you are solving.

So, check off the right category on the form.

Wait while the family members check off the coping strategy they plan to use.

We have now completed Step 4.

You are really making progress.

Exercise 4: Learning about Successful Family Negotiations

Now we need to focus on a skill that is required to complete the rest of the problem solving process.

That skill is negotiating with other family members.

How do you talk to each other so that you can both get what you want?

How do you know if the negotiations were successful?

Remember you are usually going to have to live with that other family member for awhile, so the result can't be a destructive one.

If one family member loses heavily when negotiating a solution, a lot of resentment gets generated, and living with that person is going to be difficult for some period of time.

Here are some ideas about what makes a successful negotiation.

Pass out "SIGNS OF A SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION" and go over it.

SIGNS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY NEGOTIATION

The family members involved

1. Think it was a worthwhile process.
2. Got what they wanted.
3. Left with their self-respect unharmed.
4. Feel good about each other and learned from each other.
5. Would negotiate with the others again.
6. Will comply with the agreements.

Would you change, add to, or drop any of these ideas about a successful negotiation between family members?

Encourage discussion and make changes if the entire family agrees.

We are going to practice negotiating today and after each try we will look at this list to see if all of these conditions were met.

Here is a little scene.

Let's see if the negotiation meets the list on conditions.

Who will read Tina and who will read her mother?

Select volunteers and give out the script.

Tina and her Mother

MOTHER: So we discussed it, and you agreed that you wouldn't see Doris and Louise anymore. They are a bad influence.

TINA: I agreed to get you off my back. They are my friends. Now I won't have any friends.

MOTHER: You do bad things when you hang out with them.

TINA: I do not. You just imagine things.

MOTHER: You agreed not to see them, and you are going to keep your word.

TINA: Maybe.

THE END

‡ Thanks! That was really good.

Give out tokens.

‡ If you look at the list of what makes for a successful negotiation, would you say that this was a successful negotiation?

Discuss and obtain "no" for the answer.

‡ What conditions were not met by Tina and her mother?

Discuss. Look for 1) both parties did not "win," 2) Tina may not keep the agreement, 3) Tina probably would not want to bargain with her mother again, and 4) Tina did not leave with her self-esteem intact.

‡ Those were some good observations.

Exercise 5: Learning How to Negotiate

The way that family members can meet all of these conditions for successful negotiations is to follow the guidelines for negotiating that I will give you.

These are pretty simple guidelines but, they work.

Pass out "GUIDELINES FOR NEGOTIATING" and go over it.

GUIDELINES FOR NEGOTIATING

1. State each want that you have in one short sentence.
 2. State what you want to see or hear - nothing else.
 3. State what you want to have happen, not what you don't want.
 4. State what you think the other person wants also.
 5. Explain without blaming.
 6. Listen without interrupting.
 7. Go away if you are really upset and promise to return.
-

Those look like pretty simple guidelines.

Let's go over them.

The first guideline means keep it short and clear.

If you can do that, it will make it easier to fulfill your wishes.

The second guideline makes what you want understandable and do-able.

It says when you ask for something make it an action - what a person says or does.

Saying, "I want you to be nice to me" is very fuzzy.

What specifically should I say or do to make you feel I am nice to you?

If you put the first two guidelines together, what you get is a sentence like this.

"I want you to give me permission to stay out until 12 midnight on Saturday nights."

Not. "If you really loved me, you would give me more freedom. All I am asking for is what other kids have. You make me come in so early. It's not fair. I want you to loosen up on me. Let me do what I think is best."

Which statement do you like better and why?

Encourage discussion.

Stating what you want and not what you don't want is next, and doing it that way, you come out with positive statements.

For example, saying, "When I come home from work, I would like you to ask me about my day" sounds a lot better than "I want you to stop ignoring me when I come in the door. It is like I am a ghost."

Do you agree?

Obtain comments.

Let's take guideline number 4.

It always helps to know what the other people want.

Why?

First, it allows you to see where you both want the same thing.

That makes negotiations easier.

Second, how can you help the other person achieve their negotiating goals if you don't know what they are?

Remember a successful negotiation is one where both parties are satisfied.

Third, by stating your understanding it gives an opportunity for any confusion to be cleared up.

You may be going in the wrong direction because you didn't understand what the other family member felt was important.

The fifth guideline talks about explaining rather than blaming.

Why shouldn't you blame other people?

First of all it sets up an immediate fighting situation.

Second, how you react to what other people do or say is your problem.

So it isn't really fair to blame them for your reactions.

Dad says, "I am angry because you got two C's in school."

But that really isn't a true statement.

He's angry because he has some expectation of the grades you should make and has attached an importance to the grades which reflects on him.

Which statement is it easier to take?

"I feel hurt when you criticize me" or "you hurt my feelings because you criticized me."

One statement is blaming and the other is explaining.

Encourage a discussion of the two statements.

In other words, blaming makes it hard to have a positive negotiation.

The sixth guideline makes things go better as well.

When you listen, you learn a great deal and you communicate that you care about the other person and what he or she has to say.

When you interrupt, other people will interpret the interruption as showing a lack of interest and respect.

Lastly, there is nothing wrong with taking a time out if your feelings are rising.

When you take the break, make it clear you will return to finish getting agreement.

There is no sense trying to negotiate when you are very upset.

When you have calmed down, come back and complete the negotiation.

We will go through another little scene to get a feel for a family negotiation in action.

After the scene is over, I will ask you what you liked and didn't like about the way the family members handled it.

Did they follow the guidelines we just went over?

Here are the three roles that we need to have read: Sandy, her mother, and her father.

If there are only two family members present, you read one of the parts. Decide who will read which role, give out scripts, and begin.

Sandy and her Parents

MOTHER: Young lady, you are not acting responsibly.

FATHER: This has got to stop.

SANDY: I don't know what's the matter.

MOTHER: I've told you over and over.

FATHER: You know what we are talking about.

SANDY: You're mad at me about something and think I know what it is?

MOTHER: You got it.

FATHER: Don't play dumb, Sandy.

SANDY: Please, give me a break. I'm willing to talk about it and try to fix it, but what is it?

MOTHER: You are supposed to be home after school by 6 o'clock. You don't show up. You don't call. Nothing.

FATHER: We think something happened to you.

SANDY: Once that happened. Last week. I had to stay after school.

MOTHER: You should call if you are going to be late.

FATHER: You just aren't acting responsible.

SANDY: They wouldn't let me use the phone. Stop picking on me.

MOTHER: Don't tell me last week was the first time you were late and didn't call. It happens three or four times a month.

FATHER: It has to stop or you don't go out at all. Period.

SANDY: Come on! Don't be mean. Just tell me what you want.

MOTHER: Be home by six on school days unless you have permission before hand. If there is a problem, call me before 5:45.

FATHER: I got something to add to that. Always carry enough change to make a phone call. I don't want to hear, "Daddy, I didn't have the money." Next, if you know where you are going to hang out after school, leave us a note.

SANDY: I left notes before. You couldn't find them.

FATHER: I'll get a blackboard and put it up in the kitchen. We can all leave messages on it.

SANDY: There's something else I want to say. Don't jump all over me if I'm five minutes late. And don't go calling up all my friends unless it is an emergency. It's embarrassing.

MOTHER: OK. It's a deal. We're not trying to be mean. We get scared with all that's going down on the streets.

FATHER: Don't disappoint me now.

SANDY: I'll try to make it work. Sometimes me and my friends are having a good time and I forget until it's past six. You're only a teenager once. I don't want to miss anything.

THE END

☞ That was really wonderful!

Give out tokens.

☞ What did you like and what would you have done differently if you had been any of the characters in this little drama?

☞ Use your list of guidelines for negotiating to give you ideas.

☞ What are your reactions to the way the characters handled the negotiations?

Encourage discussion. Pluses might be that Sandy tried to clarify what specific actions were requested, did not interrupt, and seemed to listen. After a certain amount of pushing, her parents finally indicated what they wanted. Negatives might be that her parents had trouble being specific and behavioral. They didn't communicate an understanding of what she wanted. But Sandy didn't indicate what she wanted until the very end. Her parents put her down a little bit and were blaming. They did communicate their care for her. No one did much to set up a positive atmosphere. Give out tokens for responses that can appear to be reasonable pluses and minuses.

Exercise 6: Practicing Negotiations

☞ I want you to have a chance to practice what we have been talking about.

☞ So we will do two short role plays.

☞ Everyone will have a chance to play a different role.

Based on your knowledge of the family, assign the roles in the way that would help this family most. At least once the parent plays the child and vice versa.

☞ In this first role play I want you (SPEAKING TO PERSON SELECTED) to play the daughter and you (SPEAKING TO PERSON SELECTED) to play the mother.

☞ Daughter, you are fourteen and want to go to a party at your friend's home.

☞ Here is what you know:

☞ Her parents know the party is happening.

Many of your friends - both boys and girls - will be there.

She doesn't live too far away.

The party is from 7:00 until 11:00.

You plan to walk over there by yourself.

Now tell me what your goal is.

Make sure the daughter knows that her goal is to go to the party by herself.

Mother, your fourteen year old daughter wants to go to a party by herself.

There will be boys and girls there.

You came to this country five years ago, and in your country your daughter would only go to such a party with an older person present.

You want your younger sister who is twenty-two to go along with your daughter.

Mother, what is your goal?

Make sure the mother knows that her goal is to have her daughter attend the party only if the aunt attends with her.

OK, daughter, tell your mother you are going to the party.

Allow the role playing to go for a few minutes. Try some coaching, if necessary, to move the dialogue to a solution. Give out tokens when the role play is finished.

Thanks. That was great role playing.

Daughter, what did you do that you liked and what would you change if you could do it again?

Obtain a response. Check it out against the "GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY NEGOTIATIONS."

Mother, what did you do that you liked and what would you do differently next time?

Obtain a response. check it out against the "GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY NEGOTIATIONS."

Daughter, what would you have done differently if you had played the mother?

Obtain a response.

Mother, what would you have done differently if you had played the daughter?

Obtain a response.

Using the guidelines we looked at earlier, was this a successful negotiation?

Discuss both responses and whether it was a successful negotiation. Give out tokens.

Here is the second role play.

I would like you (TO THE PERSON SELECTED) to play the father, and you (TO THE PERSON SELECTED) to play the daughter.

Daughter, you are having trouble with your math course in school, even though you get B's in other courses.

You think it is because your teacher - Mr. Roach - is not helpful, won't answer questions, mumbles, and goes too fast.

You have a test coming up, and you would like put the test off a week so that you could have more time to study.

You need to get a note from your father, asking the teacher if you can make the test up.

What is your goal?

Make sure the daughter is clear that her goal is to get her dad to sign a note which would let her delay a test by a week.

Father, your daughter is having trouble in math.

Usually she does OK in school.

She wants to put her math test off for a week.

You believe in facing problems head on - not avoiding them.

You also want your daughter to do well in this course.

You want her to take the test when everyone else does and really study hard for it.

Stay up all night if she has to.

Father, what is your goal?

Make sure the father is clear that his goal is to have his daughter not avoid a difficult math test and to do well in the course.

OK, daughter, speak to your father about the math test.

Allow a few minutes for the negotiations to proceed. Coach, if necessary, to help find a resolution. Give out tokens at the end.

I appreciate the way you did that role play.

Daughter, what did you do that you liked and what would you change if you could do it again?

Obtain a response. Check it out against the "GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY NEGOTIATIONS."

‡ Father, what did you do that you liked and what would you do differently next time?

Obtain a response. Check it out against the "GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY NEGOTIATIONS."

‡ Daughter, what would you have done differently if you had played the father?

Obtain a response.

‡ Father, what would you have done differently if you had played the daughter?

Obtain a response and discuss both responses. Give out tokens.

Remember we talked earlier about what makes a negotiation successful?

One quality was that both people win.

Was this a successful negotiation?

Obtain responses and discuss.

Exercise 7: Getting Ready to Negotiate the Problem

You have had a chance to practice.

It is time we to work on the problem that you had chosen earlier.

That problem was _____.

Now that you have learned more about negotiations, it would be helpful if you thought through what you want for this problem to be fixed.

Think about it.

Allow a minute to think about the problem.

Let's re-state what you want to end up with in this situation.

In terms of this problem I want each person to state what he or she wants and your understanding of what the other family member or members want from you.

Remember the guidelines are one short sentence for every want and make sure you have made the want into something that can be seen or heard - a behavior.

Have the family members go around and 1) re-state what they want and 2) their understanding of what others want from them.

‡ Does anyone want to clarify what another family member just said?

Work for clarification and behavioral specificity.

That sounds good - like we are all clear about what the goals are.
Let's move on.

Exercise 8: Listing Possible Solutions

Take a look at Step 5 in "Steps in Family Problem Solving."

Hand out step 5.

STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING

STEP 5: List possible solutions.

- Solution 1: _____
- Solution 2: _____
- Solution 3: _____
- Solution 4: _____
- Solution 5: _____

Here we list the possible solutions to your problem.

To build this list we do not want to start off by throwing any ideas out.

Too often good ideas are discarded by criticizing them at the beginning.

We will get a list of possibilities and then go through the process of screening them.

A good way to build the list is called "brainstorming."

"Brainstorming" means writing down whatever solution pops into your head - no matter how far out it may seem.

Here is an example.

Janet's mother has a new boy friend, and Janet doesn't like him.

He's always joking around.

Janet's mother wants her daughter and new boy friend to get along, and she keeps wanting Janet to eat dinner with them, watch TV with them, and go to the zoo with them.

Both Janet and her mother are unhappy about the situation.

What are some ideas about solutions?

Try some brainstorming.

Encourage responses without evaluating them. Examples are

- *Get a new boy friend.*
- *The boy friend jokes around on the stage of a night club.*
- *Janet leaves home and lives with her aunt.*
- *Mother stops trying to get Janet to like him.*
- *Janet goes to the zoo with her friends and meets her mother and boy friend there briefly.*
- *Mother only sees the boy friend at his apartment.*
- *Janet always has her boy friend there when her mother's boy friend is around.*

Can you see how brainstorming works?

Now let's back to your real problem.

I want you as a family to come up with the list of possible solutions.

I am not going to be in charge of this task.

You all decide how you are going to come with your list.

Who will write the ideas up on newsprint?

Will you take turns or just take the ideas as they come?

It is up to you.

If I can throw in a helpful suggestion that leads to your being more successful, I will, but this is your problem to solve.

Here is a pen for writing your brainstormed list up on newsprint.

Put a pen on the table without giving it to any family member.

Why don't you get started?

Allow time to build a list of possible solutions. If the family seems stuck, coach them, but generally let them struggle with the process. On the other hand, you do not want this to be

a negative experience for them, so that if the movement appears too down hill, bring more positive affect back in. Look for areas to compliment. Use tokens for shaping. Recall positive events in therapy. Give them reminders from material already covered successfully.

‡ That was very good.

Give out tokens.

‡ Now fill in on your form with Step 5 the solutions you developed.

EXAMPLE of solutions

STEP 5: List possible solutions.

SOLUTION 1: Don't punish daughter for drinking.

SOLUTION 2: Ground daughter for a week.

SOLUTION 3: Have daughter sign promise not to drink.

SOLUTION 4: Give daughter a record she wants if she doesn't drink for a month.

SOLUTION 5: Forbid daughter to go out with drinking friends.

END OF EXAMPLE

‡ You really seem to be working effectively as a group.

‡ How are you feeling?

‡ On your Feeling Thermometer what is your comfort level?

Encourage sharing of comfort levels. Give out tokens.

‡ That is all for today.

‡ Next time you will start evaluating the ideas that you just put up on newsprint.

‡ And you will select a solution and try it.

‡ That's where a lot of negotiating will come in.

‡ Two things before we stop for the day.

‡ First, let's take some time and give out appreciations.

Encourage giving strokes among the family members. Make sure everyone gets some.

‡ Second, for homework, I would like you to try negotiating a very small problem when it comes up between now and the next therapy session.

State what you want, what you think the other person wants, and try to solve it so that everybody gets something that they want.

I thought you did very well with the negotiations.

I was particularly impressed with how you worked together to build your list of possible solutions.

You are coming along and using many of the strengths that you noted earlier.

I'll bet you have found strengths you didn't know you had.

The next therapy session will be on _____ (date) at _____ (time).

END OF SESSION 4

WAYS OF COPING

DON'T GIVE IN

Fight back. Stand your ground. Let your feelings out. Pressure people. Take risks.

FORGET ABOUT IT

Push the pressure away from you by forgetting it, playing it down, getting involved with something else.

CONTROL YOUR FEELINGS

Keep feelings to yourself. Relax. Stay cool. Don't act in haste. Rehearse things in your mind.

GET SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

Get help and sympathy from other people such as friends, family, religious or spiritual leaders as well as professionals.

SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Finds ways to work the situation out by defining what is wrong, seeing what is important to you; coming up with alternatives and trying an alternative out.

TRY HARDER NEXT TIME

Admit your responsibility in the matter. Apologize. Lecture yourself. Make commitments to change and do better.

ESCAPE THE SCENE

Avoid the problem by wishing it would go away. Taking it out on others. Sleeping, eating, drinking, drugging, smoking too much. Acting like nothing happened. Running away.

CHANGE THE MEANING

Look at the situation differently. See the opportunities in the situation. See how you can grow from the situation. See the situation as bearable. See the situation as less important to you.

CARD 1

THE SMITH FAMILY HAD A BIG FIGHT OVER THE BOY THEIR DAUGHTER WAS DATING. AT WORK MR. SMITH TOLD ONE OF HIS BUDDIES THAT HE JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HER.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 2

AT FIRST THE SANCHEZ FAMILY WAS REALLY UPSET BECAUSE THEIR UNWED DAUGHTER WAS PREGNANT. THEN THEY TALKED TO THEIR PRIEST AND DECIDED THAT IT WAS GOD'S WILL. THAT MADE IT EASIER TO ACCEPT.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 3

GEORGE WAS FLUNKING OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL. HIS MOTHER WAS REALLY ANGRY. WHEN GEORGE RECEIVED HIS LAST REPORT CARD AND SAW ALL FAILING GRADES, HE WENT OUT AND SHOT UP. GEORGE STAYED HIGH FOR A WEEK AND DID NOT GO HOME.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 4

ON SATURDAYS BOTH MR. AND MRS. WASHINGTON WORKED. THEY WANTED THEIR DAUGHTER, BELINDA, TO BABY SIT WITH HER YOUNGER SISTER. BELINDA THOUGHT SHE DESERVED SATURDAY FOR HERSELF AFTER A HARD WEEK IN SCHOOL. AFTER A LOT OF DISCUSSION, THE WHOLE FAMILY AGREED THAT SHE WOULD GET PAID FOR HALF A DAY AND NOT HAVE TO DO JOBS ON MONDAY.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 5

RHONDA'S MOTHER TOLD HER TO BE HOME BY 8 P.M. ON WEEKDAYS. SHE HASN'T MADE IT THE LAST THREE DAYS. TODAY WHEN SHE CAME IN AT 9 HER MOTHER GRABBED HER, PUSHED HER AGAINST THE WALL, AND SAID TO HER, "BABY, IF YOU PULL THIS ON ME ONE MORE TIME, I'M GOING TO LOCK YOU UP."

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 6

AFTER A BIG FIGHT WITH THEIR SON, MRS. PARADES SAID TO HER HUSBAND, "I CAN'T DEAL WITH THIS NOW. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. WHY DON'T WE GO TO THE ZOO. I LIKE THE MONKEYS."

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 7

JULIE LOOKED AT HER MOTHER AND FATHER AND SAID, "I AM SORRY TO CAUSE YOU SO MUCH GRIEF BY TRYING TO KILL MYSELF. I WON'T DO IT AGAIN. I'M STILL MAD AT YOU FOR NOT LISTENING TO ME. I KNOW I AM A BIG DISAPPOINTMENT, BUT I PLAN TO STUDY MORE."

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 8

DONNA'S PARENTS ARE ALWAYS HARSHING HER OUT TO THE MAX. SHE IS CONSTANTLY ANGRY AND TENSE. SO SHE STARTED TAKING DANCE AT SCHOOL. IT MAKES HER FEEL MUCH MORE CHILLED OUT.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

CARD 9

AFTER INEZ'S BOY FRIEND DUMPED HER, SHE
SWALLOWED A WHOLE BOTTLE OF TYLENOL
AND TRIED TO KILL HERSELF.

WHAT KIND OF COPING IS THIS?

STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING

STEP 4: Decide how the family wants to deal with this problem.

Don't give in. _____

Forget about it. _____

Control your feelings. _____

Get support from others. _____

Solve the problem. _____

Try harder next time _____

Escape the scene. _____

Change the meaning _____

What would you say is the best coping strategy for your problem which is

_____ ?

SIGNS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY NEGOTIATION

The family members involved

1. Think it was a worthwhile process.
2. Got what they wanted.
3. Left with their self-respect unharmed.
4. Feel good about each other and learned from each other.
5. Would negotiate with the others again.
6. Will comply with the agreements.

Would you change, add to, or drop any of these ideas about a successful negotiation between family members?

Tina and her Mother

MOTHER: So we discussed it, and you agreed that you wouldn't see Doris and Louise anymore. They are a bad influence.

TINA: I agreed to get you off my back. They are my friends. Now I won't have any friends.

MOTHER: You do bad things when you hang out with them.

TINA: I do not. You just imagine things.

MOTHER: You agreed not to see them, and you are going to keep your word.

TINA: Maybe.

THE END

GUIDELINES FOR NEGOTIATING

1. State each want that you have in one short sentence.
 2. State what you want to see or hear - nothing else.
 3. State what you want to have happen, not what you don't want.
 4. State what you think the other person wants also.
 5. Explain without blaming.
 6. Listen without interrupting.
 7. Go away if you are really upset and promise to return.
-
-

Sandy and her Parents

MOTHER: Young lady, you are not acting responsibly.

FATHER: This has got to stop.

SANDY: I don't know what's the matter.

MOTHER: I've told you over and over.

FATHER: You know what we are talking about.

SANDY: You're mad at me about something and think I know what it is?

MOTHER: You got it.

FATHER: Don't play dumb, Sandy.

SANDY: Please, give me a break. I'm willing to talk about it and try to fix it, but what is it?

MOTHER: You are supposed to be home after school by 6 o'clock. You don't show up. You don't call. Nothing.

FATHER: We think something happened to you.

SANDY: Once that happened. Last week. I had to stay after school.

MOTHER: You should call if you are going to be late.

FATHER: You just aren't acting responsible.

SANDY: They wouldn't let me use the phone. Stop picking on me.

MOTHER: Don't tell me last week was the first time you were late and didn't call. It happens three or four times a month.

FATHER: It has to stop or you don't go out at all. Period.

SANDY: Come on! Don't be mean. Just tell me what you want.

MOTHER: Be home by six on school days unless you have permission before hand. If there is a problem, call me before 5:45.

FATHER: I got something to add to that. Always carry enough change to make a phone call. I don't want to hear, "Daddy, I didn't have the money." Next, if you know where you are going to hang out after school, leave us a note.

SANDY: I left notes before. You couldn't find them.

FATHER: I'll get a blackboard and put it up in the kitchen. We can all leave messages on it.

SANDY: There's something else I want to say. Don't jump all over me if I'm five minutes late. And don't go calling up all my friends unless it is an emergency. It's embarrassing.

MOTHER: OK. It's a deal. We're not trying to be mean. We get scared with all that's going down on the streets.

FATHER: Don't disappoint me now.

SANDY: I'll try to make it work. Sometimes me and my friends are having a good time and I forget until it's past six. You're only a teenager once. I don't want to miss anything.

THE END

STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING

STEP 5: List possible solutions.

Solution 1: _____

Solution 2: _____

Solution 3: _____

Solution 4: _____

Solution 5: _____

Session 5

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: To continue enhancing the family's positive perceptions of themselves and the therapist.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Experience appreciation for positive actions taken during the time between sessions.
2. Demonstrate appreciation to each other for each person's contributions during Session 5.
3. Show their competence through active involvement in solving another family's problem and completing work on a problem of their own.

Goal 2: To create a therapeutic environment to which the family would want to return because coming to therapy reduced conflict and minimized blame.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Participate together in the assessment of current suicidal danger.
2. Learn to reframe problems so that behavior is divorced from intent and is perceived to flow from situations.
3. Work collaboratively to solve problems.
4. Focus on situations and their impact rather individuals and on intentions.

Goal 3: To increase problem solving abilities.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Evaluate the possible solutions developed last time.
2. Select a solution to try.

3. Try the solution through negotiation.
-

RATIONALE

While the family has been working on a problem for several sessions, in this session that work comes to fruition and the problem is solved. The tasks that remain are to evaluate possible solutions and then work out the best approach through family negotiation. The therapist again acts as a coach, letting the family demonstrate how much they have learned. The family will be instructed on how to call for time out during their negotiations and ask for help when they need it. This session is designed to be the real thing - not practice any more.

As session 6 is reserved for solving a more difficult problem, extra time in session 5 can be used by having the family help another family (in case study form) work through a situation. This exercise should insure a sense of competence and success.

PROCEDURES

1. Introduce the fifth session, the Feeling Thermometer, the continued use of tokens, a review of homework, and a preview of what is to come.
 2. Assess current suicide risk with the family.
 3. Review with the family the list of possible solutions that were generated last time and ask the family to make any desired changes.
 4. Enable the family to evaluate the list of possible solutions.
 5. Have the family select a solution to try and put it into effect.
 6. Assist the family in determining if the solution is working and what adjustments might need to be made in the family agreement.
 7. Provide the family with an opportunity to show others what they have learned through giving advice to a family with a problem.
 8. Begin getting ready for next time by developing a plan for selecting the problem to solve in Session 6.
 9. Give appreciation for contributions during the session and raise the notion that next session is the last time. Check Feeling Thermometer levels and give homework.
-

MATERIALS

Albums
Feeling Thermometers
Tokens
Marking pens and newsprint
Handout: The Bradleys

Task 1: Review Feelings, Tokens, Events, Session 2 and Homework

Therapist says

↑ Hello! It's good to see you again.

↓ I'm sure you will whiz through today's session like you have all the others.

Give out tokens for returning.

↓ You are really looking sharp today.

Compliment family members on appearances - clothes, jewelry, hair, smile, complexion.

↓ I was really pleased with how well you worked last time.

↓ Despite any difficulties or fights the love for each other always shines through.

↓ Are you aware of that?

Encourage sharing of positive perceptions of caring.

↓ Remember the Feeling Thermometer?

↓ Here is a copy of it.

Pass out feeling thermometers.

↓ Tell me on a scale of 100 which is very uncomfortable to 0 which is completely comfortable how you feel right now?

Obtain readings and give out tokens for the family members' willingness to respond.

↓ You will recall also that we used tokens to express appreciation to each other for the good things we saw people saying and doing or just because we wanted to compliment another family member.

↓ We will keep using tokens today.

↓ Here is your stack to give out to each other.

Give out twenty tokens to each family member. Remember to reward them occasionally for giving a token to someone else.

↓ Your homework assignment for the family was to try negotiating a problem that came up.

↓ How did that work out?

Encourage responses and use tokens to shape behavior. Ignore negative behavior. Redirect toward desired behavior and reward any small movement toward the desired end. If no negotiation took place, indicate that you are pleased they waited for the right

moment to start negotiations. You know that when the time is ripe they will use what they have learned here to solve their problems. Shape and compliment for what you can.

It sounds like you would have used what you learned about negotiations if a real tough situation had come along.

It's good that you are handling things before they become a crisis situation.

Let's hear what else happened at home in your lives during the past week.

I would like each family member to tell me about a successful event that took place between our last session and today's meeting.

It could be something related to solving a problem at home, preventing a problem from getting started, something you did you are proud of, or something that makes life better for you.

Go around and have each person report on one event. Give out tokens as appropriate and encourage others to show appreciation for positive things family members did. If someone does not come up with a success, use prompts around different areas - friends, work, achievements. Remember also there are prompts that force reports - "Which are you more pleased with the amount of effort you spend at work or how well you have been a good example to your children?" If you are still unsuccessful at obtaining a response, you can say, "I appreciate your being honest about how you see things at this time. Such honesty is often hard to find."

As you know, the purpose of this therapy is to stop suicide from occurring again.

We do that by showing you how to solve the problems that lead to suicide.

Last time we focused on different coping strategies and on how to negotiate successfully.

Here is your Family Album.

Look inside where you listed you family's strengths.

Hand them the family album and give them a moment to read the strengths.

Are there new strengths that you want to add?

If so, go ahead and write them in.

Today we will solve one of your problems.

Task 2: Assessing Suicidal Risk

Before moving into solving one of your problems I want to check out the risk of suicide.

We will do this at each session.

↑ You are all here, and, as far as I know, no suicide attempt was made between sessions.

↓ Is that correct?

Obtain an answer. If the family says there was a suicide attempt, determine if there is a high risk of suicide today. You can ask, "Is the situation that triggered the attempt still present?" "Do you think that an attempt might occur today?" If the situation still exists and if the answer is "yes, it might happen today" then follow the procedure described in "IMMINENT DANGER" contained in the Overview. If there is no high risk for today, ask what the situation that triggered the attempt was and how they resolved it. Encourage problem solving and give tokens for problem solving. If the family says that there was no attempt, continue.

↑ It is great that you avoided a suicide attempt between sessions.

↓ Just remember now that it has been five weeks without a suicidal action.

↑ You have really come a long way.

↓ Was there a time when you had suicidal feelings?

Obtain a response. If the answer is "yes," indicate that the teenager is to be commended for having coped with those feelings.

↑ The fact that you had those feelings and still found a way to handle them is a real sign of your success and strength.

Give out tokens for their success.

↑ What about today?

↓ Is there a high risk situation today?

Obtain an answer. If the answer is "yes," find out how they can resolve the issue. You may need to help them get from each what they need even if the problem has not been solved. If the answer is "no," continue.

↑ I know it is hard to work out these high risk situations when we have not given you all the tools yet in therapy.

↓ But it looks to me like you are really coming along.

Exercise 3: Evaluating Possible Solutions

↑ Last time you brainstormed a list of possible solutions.

↓ Let's go over them.

Review the list.

‡ Are there any you want to add to the list?

Add any that the family wants.

When you are trying to solve a problem, you come up with a bunch of solutions - like you did - but then you have to decide which solution to try.

The way to make a smart decision is to think of the pluses and minuses of each possibility.

Here is an example.

Louise thinks she might be pregnant, but she is afraid to tell her mother.

One solution she came up with was to get tested to see if she really is pregnant.

A plus for getting tested is that she could see if she did in fact have a problem.

Minuses are that 1) she doesn't know where to go and might make a bad choice; 2) the doctor's visit might cost money which she doesn't have; 3) the doctor might tell her mother.

Another possible solution was to have an abortion. The plus is that it would get rid of the problem.

The minuses are that 1) she might not get the right doctor; 2) it might cost too much; 3) her mother might find out; 4) she'd be in trouble with her church; and 5) it sounds very scary to her.

Louise also has telling her mother as an option.

The plus is that her mother would know what to do or could find out.

Her mother would protect her, but on the other hand, her mother would be furious with her.

Her mother would ground her and forbid her to go out for a long time.

Her mother would stop her from seeing her boy friend, and she would be made to work to pay for any bills that were involved.

Have you got the idea of how it works?

Answer any questions.

‡ Let's take a few minutes so that you can practice.

Hand out "PRACTICE FOR EVALUATING SOLUTIONS."

PRACTICE FOR EVALUATING SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM: Judy is doing poorly in her high school history class.

SOLUTION 1: Quit high school

Pluses _____

Minuses _____

SOLUTION 2: Get help from someone who passed the class

Pluses _____

Minuses _____

SOLUTION 3: Change to a different teacher

Pluses _____

Minuses _____

Take a few minutes and practice on this form.

Work together and list some pluses and minuses for each of those three solutions.

Wait several minutes and ask for their ideas. Some examples are as follows: Solution 1: "Quit school" Pluses: Gets rid of having to go to class. Minuses: Could mess up getting a degree and job. Also lowers self-confidence. Solution 2: "Get help" Pluses: Could make the course easier. Learn study habits. Go on with education. Minuses: Might cost money. Tutor might not know how to help. Might not be able to locate tutor. Solution 3: "Change teacher" Pluses: Might be able to start fresh. Teacher might be better. Teacher might be easier. May be behind in new teacher's class. Minuses: Teacher may be worse. The problem might not be the teacher.

That was very good.

Let's turn to your problem.

I want you as a family to list the pluses and minuses of your possible solutions - the ones you came up with last week.

That's step 6 in your Steps in Family Problem solving.

Hand out Step 6.

STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING

STEP 6: Evaluate solutions.

	<u>Pluses</u>	<u>Minuses</u>
SOLUTION 1:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
SOLUTION 2:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
SOLUTION 3:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
SOLUTION 4:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
SOLUTION 5:	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Then I want you to select a possible solution to try: Step 7 in the Family Problem Solving process.

To decide on what you are going to do will probably mean that you have to negotiate with each other.

Try and reach an agreement - Step 8.

Hand out Steps 7, 8 and 9 of Family Problem Solving.

STEPS 7, 8, AND 9 IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING

STEP 7: Select a solution to try.

The best solution is _____

STEP 8: Negotiate and bargain a solution.

What are the family members' basic interests in this matter?

Mother's _____

Father's _____

Daughter's _____

The agreement reached is _____

STEP 9: Evaluate how the solution is working and make adjustments.

Working well _____ So-so _____ Needs improvement _____

Changes needed are _____

To prepare the therapist for the family's interaction, review the example at the end of the material for Session 5.

‡ There is one rule I want to throw in.

That is if any one of you wants help, you can say, "Time Out" and I will try to give you a hand.

Or if all of you seem to be stuck, you can all say, "Time Out" and invite me to assist you.

Remember that you have a lot of strengths and skills and all of us want you to be successful at solving the problem.

So go ahead and see what you can do.

While you should wait until invited in to help, feel free to give out tokens and compliments as the family works together. If you are invited in, there are four principles to follow: 1) Reframe so that the emphasis is on situations which elicit behavior rather than on individual characteristics or pathology. 2) Focus on behavior rather than qualities of family members; 3) Bring out the positive intent behind actions. 4) Help family members state what the situation would look like if the problem were fixed. Try to make sure this problem (an easier one) is resolved during this session.

The way you worked together was wonderful!

I am really pleased.

Give out tokens and try to be specific, telling each person some of the things they did that you liked.

Another point is found in step 9.

After awhile, all of you should check on how the solution is doing.

Is the agreement being kept?

What changes need to be made?

To check on an agreement doesn't mean you don't trust each other.

It is a way of preventing disappointment or irritation in the future.

Exercise 5: Helping Another Family (OPTIONAL)

This next exercise is optional. If there is enough time after the problem is solved, this exercise can bolster the family's confidence.

Here is a chance for you to show how you would help another family who has not gone through the training you have and who is not as experienced in problem solving.

This story is about the Bradleys.

Let's read it together.

‡ Then I want to hear how you would help them.

Pass out "THE BRADLEYS" and go over it.

THE BRADLEYS

Julie is kind of shy. She has finally made two really good friends - Roberta and Carla. These two girls can be wild at times and get in trouble. Occasionally they have stolen small stuff from stores. Julie does not go with them when they steal, and they let her know that is what's going to happen. Neither Roberta or Carla are into drugs or sex.

Julie's mother, Anita Bradley, has heard rumors about Roberta and Carla. She has forbidden Julie to see them. Julie has said "No" loud and clear. Julie and her mother have been in some big, screaming fights over this matter. Before they moved to this new neighborhood, Anita and her daughter had been very close. Anita Bradley does not know what to do, but she will do anything to keep her daughter away from those two "tramps."

Horace Bradley, Julie's father, works two jobs and is very tired when he gets home. Peace and quiet is what he expects. He can't stand the screaming that now takes place in his house over Roberta and Carla. The Bradleys have been married twenty-two years, and never had any big family problems until now. Julie is the youngest of three girls and two boys. She is his baby. Horace finally told his wife and daughter, "You two better settle this fast. I don't want this screaming to continue. If I have to get involved, neither of you are going to like it."

What advice can you give them to work this situation out?

Remember to consider

What actions need to be changed?

Why is the problem happening?

What are the family members getting out of the problem?

Beliefs

Rules

Roles

Solutions and their consequences

‡ Think about it for a few minutes.

‡ Use any of your handouts or notes.

‡ Then tell me what you would say to them.

Allow a few minutes for thinking.

‡ Now tell me what you would say to them.

Reward all suggestions that seem positive and find what is positive in suggestions that need re-shaping. Use this exercise as a concrete example to the family of how much they have learned.

- ↑ That was very good.
- ↑ You made a number of very helpful suggestions.

Exercise 6: Preparing for Next Week and Ending

- ↑ Next week will be our last therapy session together.
- ↑ I want to know how you feel about that, but before I do, what is your Feeling Thermometer level right now?

Obtain responses.

- ↑ When you think about next week being the last time, does your comfort level change at all?
- ↑ I could see feeling happy and confident to have completed the therapy or I could imagine feeling a little sad over stopping something where you have come so close together.

Encourage feeling thermometer level responses and discuss.

- ↑ In the second session you ranked which of your problem situations was the most important to work on.
- ↑ Let's review that list to make sure we are still clear about the problems.

Review the list both in terms of the problems and their rankings.

- ↑ Do the problems look the same to you now as they did that first week?
- ↑ Would you rank them the same?

Encourage a discussion of how changes in their competence have influenced how they look at things.

- ↑ Next time we are going to work on solving the most important one.
- ↑ Is there a situation that you would like to add to the list?

Put any suggestions up on newsprint.

- ↑ Does anyone have an objection to adding these new problems?

Reach an agreement on the additions.

- ↑ Your homework is to decide as a family which one of the problems to work on.

Should we take the one that was the highest in Session 2 when we made the list or since that time has another one become the most important?

That is the question.

When you come back to therapy, I want you to come with the problem that you plan to solve in Session 6.

Select the problem within fifteen minutes.

Don't take anymore time than that.

When are you going to meet for fifteen minutes to select the problem?

Have the family agree on a time during the week when they will take 15 minutes to select the problem.

That is very good.

There is one other piece of homework.

I want each of you to take five tokens home with you and give them out to each other.

Have you had any caring days for each other in the last three weeks?

If the answer is yes, reward heavily. If the answer is no, don't push it.

We need to show our appreciation for the contributions that people made during the session today.

Spend time showing appreciation for each other.

You are really doing things right the way you compliment each other, work hard, and work cooperatively.

Every session you show your strengths and how much you care for each other.

I will see you for our last session on _____ (date) at _____ (time).

END OF SESSION 5

PRACTICE FOR EVALUATING SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM: *Judy is doing poorly in her high school history class.*

SOLUTION 1: Quit high school

Pluses _____

Minuses _____

SOLUTION 2: Get help from someone who passed the class

Pluses _____

Minuses _____

SOLUTION 3: Change to a different teacher

Pluses _____

Minuses _____

Working well _____ So-so _____ Needs improvement _____

Changes needed are _____

THE BRADLEYS

Julie is kind of shy. She has finally made two really good friends - Roberta and Carla. These two girls can be wild at times and get in trouble. Occasionally they have stolen small stuff from stores. Julie does not go with them when they steal, and they let her know that is what's going to happen. Neither Roberta or Carla are into drugs or sex.

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What advice can you give them to work this situation out?

Remember to consider

What actions need to be changed?

Why is the problem happening?

What are the family members getting out of the problem?

Beliefs

Rules

Roles

Solutions and their consequences

CLINICAL EXAMPLE

The Martinez have a problem: Juanita, 14, keeps her room like a pig pen. Mom thinks it is because Juanita hates her. Mom never had problems with Juanita like this before. Dad says that Juanita has too big an ego and thinks she is a little princess. Juanita believes that her room is about all she has of any value - she treasures the privacy - and should be able to do what she wants with it. The three of them are in one big long, fight about this problem. It is souring their whole relationship.

After talking about the changes that are desired, the specific actions requested were that Mom and Dad will not enter her room. Mom and Dad want Juanita to have all clothes put away in the closet and dresser and nothing on the floor.

Some of the beliefs that get in the way of resolving the problem are 1) that teenagers should remain quiet and do what parents tell them; 2) that teenagers are adults and deserve complete freedom; 3) that parents own the place and teenagers are "paying guests." 4) that teenagers have a right to keep parents out of their rooms.

The main family rules that affect this problem are that the kids do not talk back to their parents and that the entire apartment is to be kept neat and clean.

The roles involved are that dad is boss outside the apartment and mom is boss inside. Dad usually keeps quiet and tries to smooth things over. Mom wades right into conflict and starts screaming. Until a few years ago Juanita was both very good and considered spoiled by her brothers and sisters.

Here are the solutions and consequences that the family listed.

<u>Solution</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
Get a housekeeper.	Costs too much. Someone would have to work more.
Send Juanita away.	Everyone loves her and wants her here. Juanita and family would be miserable.
Have little sister clean Juanita's room.	Unfair. Juanita is responsible for her room.
Lock Juanita's room and keep her out.	The apartment is small. They need the space.
Parents and Juanita compromise and reach solution.	Would change family rules. Could solve problem but might encourage other kids to disobey parents.

Session 5

The family decided to try negotiations with the help of the therapist. The agreement reached was that Juanita picked up her room on every Saturday before 5 pm and her parents would enter her room to check on it only between 5 and 6 pm on Saturday. If her clothes were left in any other part of the apartment, they would be picked up by her parents and then kept by her parents for two weeks. No food or garbage could be kept in her room. If Juanita failed to meet her commitment, she lost her spending money for the week. Her parents could only enter her room at other times with her permission.

STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING

STEP 6: Evaluate solutions.

	<u>Pluses</u>	<u>Minuses</u>
SOLUTION 1:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
SOLUTION 2:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
SOLUTION 3:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
SOLUTION 4:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
SOLUTION 5:	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Session 6

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: To continue enhancing the family's positive perceptions of themselves and the therapist.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Experience appreciation for positive actions taken during the time between sessions.
2. Demonstrate appreciation to each other for each person's contributions during Session 6.
3. Experience satisfaction and success through completing work on a high priority problem in a collaborative and positive manner.
4. Make explicit what they have learned about themselves during therapy.

Goal 2: To create a therapeutic environment to which the family would want to return because coming to therapy reduced conflict and minimized blame.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Participate together in the assessment of current suicidal danger.
2. Learn to reframe problems so that behavior is divorced from intent and is perceived to flow from situations.
3. Work as a team to solve problems.
4. Focus on situations rather individuals and on intentions.

Goal 3: To increase problem solving abilities.

Objectives: Family Members will

1. Resolve an important problem situation on their own.
2. Review their strengths as problem solvers.

RATIONALE

In Session 6 the family will try to solve one of their important problem situations. While this session may be seen as a test of the skills and resources the family has recently acquired, it is more appropriate to perceive this session as an opportunity for the family to use their strengths in a safe and supportive environment.

While the family works as a team on their problem, the therapist plays two roles. One is that of consultant, ready to assist if called by the family. The second is observer. After the family is finished, the therapist will give feedback on the problem solving performance. Also without taking the initiative away from the family, the therapist must subtly influence the quality of the family interactions, trying to continue the positive environment which has been established.

PROCEDURES

1. Introduce the sixth session, the Feeling Thermometer, the continued use of tokens, a review of homework, and a preview of what is to come.
2. Assess current suicide risk with the family.
3. Explain to the family how the problem solving task will work.
4. Start the family on the problem solving task.
5. Provide consultation to the family, if requested.
6. Have the family members and the therapist provide feedback when the problem solving is finished.
7. Provide appreciation and discuss termination reactions.

MATERIALS

Albums
Feeling Thermometers
Tokens
Marking pens and newsprint
Handout: The Bradleys

Task 1: Review Feelings, Tokens, Events, Session 2 and Homework

Therapist says

It is our last session, and I am really glad to see you again.

Today is the day that you use your strengths and what you have learned to solve a big problem.

It is an exciting day, and I am happy you are here to demonstrate what you can do.

Give out tokens for returning.

You are really looking ready today.

Compliment family members on signs of readiness: bright eyes, high energy, sitting up straight, paying attention, confident manner.

I have been really pleased with how well you worked during all these sessions.

Despite any trouble you have as a family, the love for each other always shines through.

I am sure you can see that by now.

Encourage sharing of positive perceptions of caring.

Remember the Feeling Thermometer?

Here is a copy of it.

Pass out feeling thermometers.

Tell me on a scale of 100, which is very uncomfortable to 0, which is completely comfortable how you feel right now?

Obtain readings and give out tokens for the family members' willingness to respond.

You will recall also that we used tokens to express appreciation to each other for the good things we saw people saying and doing or just because we wanted to compliment another family member.

Even though today is the last session, we will keep using the tokens.

I hope you use something like tokens at home when therapy is completed.

Here is your stack to give out to each other.

Give out twenty tokens to each family member. Remember to reward them occasionally for giving a token to someone else.

Your homework assignment for the family was to come with the problem that you plan to work on today and to give out tokens to each other during the week.

Did you use up your tokens?

Encourage discussion. Give reinforcement for signs of positive interactions.

Have you learned things about yourself and your family that you want to share at this time?

Encourage sharing.

How did you make out selecting a problem to work on today?

Did the problems look the same to you now as when you first considered them several weeks ago?

Encourage responses. Show how perceptions change as they feel more secure in problem solving and in setting up a positive environment. Use tokens to shape behavior. Ignore negative behavior. Redirect toward desired behavior and reward any small movement toward the desired end. If they have not selected a problem, indicate that waiting until coming here will allow the therapist to observe how good a job they do. Shape and compliment for what you can.

It sounds like you are ready to tackle a difficult situation.

Let's hear what else happened at home in your lives during the past week.

I would like each family member to tell me about a successful event that took place between our last session and today's meeting.

It could be something related to solving a problem at home, preventing a problem from getting started, something you did which makes you proud, or something that makes life better for you.

Go around and have each person report on one event. Give out tokens as appropriate and encourage others to show appreciation for positive things family members did. If someone does not come up with a success, use prompts around different areas - friends, work, achievements. remember also there are prompts that force reports - "Which are you more pleased with the amount of effort you spend at work or how well you have been a good example to your children?" If you are still unsuccessful at obtaining a response, you can say, "I appreciate your being honest about how you see things at this time. such honesty is often hard to find."

As you know, the purpose of this therapy is to stop a suicide attempt from occurring again.

We do that by showing you how to solve the problems that lead to suicidal thoughts and actions.

Last time we focused on screening different alternative solutions and solved a problem that was important but not the most difficult.

Today we solve a tougher one.

Here is your Family Album.

‡ Look inside where you listed you family's strengths .

Hand them the family album and give them a moment to read the strengths.

‡ Are there new strengths that you want to add?

‡ If so, go ahead and write them in the album.

‡ Are you ready to solve a difficult problem and show yourself what you can do?.

Task 2: Assessing Suicidal Risk

‡ Before moving into solving a difficult problem, I want to check out the risk of suicide.

‡ By now you know that we will do this at each session.

‡ You are all here, and, as far as I know, no suicide attempt was made between sessions.

‡ Is that correct?

Obtain an answer. If the family says there was a suicide attempt, determine if there is a high risk of suicide today. You can ask, "Is the situation that triggered the attempt still present?" "do you think that an attempt might occur today?" If the situation still exists and if the answer is "Yes, it might happen today" then follow the procedure described in "IMMINENT DANGER" contained in the Overview. If there is no high risk for today, ask what the situation that triggered the attempt was and how they resolved it. Encourage problem solving and give tokens for problem solving. If the family says that there was no attempt, continue.

‡ It is great that you avoided a suicide attempt between sessions.

Give out tokens for their success.

‡ What about today?

‡ Is there a high risk situation today?

Obtain an answer. If the answer is "yes," find out how they can resolve the issue. You may need to help them get from each what they need even if the problem has not been solved. If the answer is "no," continue.

‡ It looks to me like you are really coming along.

‡ Can you tell us how your coping with suicidal thoughts and actions have changed over the past five weeks?

Encourage positive, competency oriented comments so that you can give out tokens and verbal rewards.

‡ Have any changes in the family's rules or roles made a difference as well?

Help the family see the value of therapy and how they can make adjustments that benefit all of them.

Exercise 3: Solving a High Priority Problem

What is the problem you selected to work on?

If the family made a choice, use that problem. If they did not select one, do not spend a lot of time choosing one. Take the problem rated highest in Session 2 and ask the family if there are objections to working on that one.

OK, we will work on that problem.

We don't want solving a problem to take forever.

When you are sitting around the kitchen table working on a problem, we want you to finish in an hour, if you can.

Today I will give you about 45 minutes to work it out.

Here's how it will happen today.

You will go through the steps in family problem solving.

Hand out a fresh copy of the entire "STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING."

If you need me to consult with you, say, "Time Out" and I will see what I can do to help you.

It is good sense to get help when you need it.

When you have successfully solved the problem within the 45 minutes, I will ask each of you what you liked about the problem solving and what you would do differently.

Then I will give you feedback on what I observed during your working together.

Is that clear?

For a quick review I am going to pass out new copies of "Steps in Family Problem Solving."

Pass out "STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING."

We are already at the last part of step two.

So the first thing you are going to do is analyze the problem - step 3.

Take about fifteen minutes on this step.

Remember the big ideas are 1) to decide what behavior change is wanted and 2) what is getting in the way of solving the problem.

Look at family member's view, expectations, assumptions, and benefits from keeping things as they are.

Look at rules, roles, and beliefs.

Then quickly decide the coping approach - probably problem solving, but maybe not.

Step five is coming up with solutions, Step 6 is evaluating the solutions.

Then you negotiate an agreement within the family.

I want to emphasize two concepts very strongly.

The most important point here is that you are a team.

Like a basketball team or a baseball player and team.

Your opponent is the problem situation.

That means you are working together to defeat the problem.

The second point is that these steps are suggested ways to help you solve the problem, but be flexible - use your judgment.

Don't get hung up in being too rigid.

The main goal is to solve the problem in a way that gives something to everybody, that keeps a positive atmosphere going.

Before you start, are there any last minute questions?

Answer questions.

‡ Why don't you get yourselves placed like you were sitting around the kitchen table at home.

Help the family arrange themselves so that they are facing each other and ready for business.

‡ OK, then, go ahead and get your team working on the problem.

Consult with the family if they ask for it, referring back to the "STEPS" or to handouts which tell them how to do it. reframe when appropriate.

While you observe, keep a list of positive actions take by each family member. look for supporting each other, fighting fairly, positive negotiations, and trying to follow a problem solving approach. Catching them doing "something good" is as important as how well they solve the problem.

If the problem is almost solved by 45 minutes, allow a few more minutes for fixing it. If the problem ends up being solved, give praise for their success before starting on the feedback. If the problem has not been solved at the end of the 45 minutes, give praise for how much progress was made and recognize that this was a very difficult problem.

- ↑ Your team really worked well.
- ↓ That was terrific.

Give out tokens.

Exercise 4: Feedback on Problem Solving

- ↓ Now I want each person to indicate what he or she liked about the way the team worked and what you liked about what you did.

Encourage sharing of what was liked. Support giving out tokens by family members.

- ↑ Those were great comments - very wise remarks.
- ↓ What about things that you would do differently, if you had a second chance?

Encourage each family to share what they might have wanted to see happen differently.

- ↑ Those were good suggestions.
- ↓ I was the observer during your problem solving session.
- ↓ Let me tell you what I noticed.

Give positive feedback to the family members and pass out tokens as appropriate.

- ↓ I am going to write out a summary of my observations for you to place in your family album.

Write a few sentences about the family's strengths and skills and give it to them for the album.

- ↓ Make sure you write your agreement on the problem in the album as well.
- ↓ How is everyone feeling now on the Feeling Thermometer?

Obtain responses.

Exercise 5: Terminating Therapy

- ↓ We are nearing the end of therapy.
- ↓ You have done a terrific job.

I want to give each of you a token for the improvements you have made.

Let's take a few minutes to allow you to give strokes to each other for today's problem solving session.

Encourage giving appreciation to each other.

What are your thoughts and feelings about the fact that therapy is just about over?

Encourage sharing. Accept any thoughts and feelings, reframing negative ones to positive characteristics. Again keep situation focused rather than individual focused.

Those are good comments.

There is lots of useful material in your Family Album.

It shows the progress you made and give you ideas on how to solve problems.

But one thing is missing.

What is missing is a picture at the end of the album which shows a family that learned a lot and which is much more able to solve its own problem situations.

I would like to take a last picture and have you put it in the end of the album.

Take polaroid shot and have the family place it in the album.

I have really enjoyed working with you and hate to say good bye.

You are a really caring family.

Say goodbye to the family.

END OF SESSION 6

STEPS IN FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVING

STEP 1: Establish a positive working feeling.

The family's strengths are _____

STEP 2: Identify the family's problems

Problem List

Priority

<u>Problem List</u>	<u>Priority</u>
_____	---
_____	---
_____	---
_____	---
_____	---

The problem we will work on first is _____

STEP 3: Analyze the problem

What words or actions do family members want changed?

Mother's _____

Father's _____

Daughter's _____

Why is the problem happening?

Mother's view _____

Father's view _____

Daughter's view _____

What do family members get out of keeping the problem?

Daughter _____

Father _____

Mother _____

How can each person change the problem?

Father _____

Daughter _____

Mother _____

What beliefs prevent the family from solving the problem?

What rules prevent the family from solving the problem?

What roles prevent the family from solving the problem?

STEP 4: Decide how the family wants to deal with this problem.

- Don't give in. _____
- Forget about it. _____
- Control your feelings. _____
- Get support from others. _____
- Solve the problem. _____
- Try harder next time _____
- Escape the scene. _____
- Change the meaning _____

STEP 5: List possible solutions.

- Solution 1: _____
- Solution 2: _____
- Solution 3: _____

Solution 4: _____

Solution 5: _____

STEP 6: Evaluate solutions.

	<u>Pluses</u>	<u>Minuses</u>
Solution 1:	_____ _____	_____ _____
Solution 2:	_____ _____	_____ _____
Solution 3:	_____ _____	_____ _____
Solution 4:	_____ _____	_____ _____
Solution 5:	_____ _____	_____ _____

STEP 7: Select a solution to try.

The best solution is _____

STEP 8: Negotiate and bargain a solution.

What are the family members' basic interests in this matter?

Mother's _____

Father's _____

Daughter's _____

The agreement reached is _____

STEP 9: Evaluate how the solution is working and make adjustments.

Working well _____ So-so _____ Needs improvement _____

Changes needed are _____
