

**ADJUSTMENT PHASE FOR YOUTHS AND CAREGIVERS/PARENTS**  
**PROJECT TALC (TEENS AND PARENTS LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE)**

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**SESSION 15: (JOINT) HOW CAN WE CREATE A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE AT HOME?**  
(Day 8, Morning, 2 hrs)

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Youths and caregivers/parents will be able to identify positive qualities in each other and express them to each other.
2. Youths and caregivers/parents will become aware of the new family's strengths.
3. Youths and caregivers/parents will be able to give positive messages to each other.
4. Youths and caregivers/parents will be able to reinforce each others' positive behaviors.

**RATIONALE:**

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

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

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

**SUMMARY OF EXERCISES:**

1. Introduce the participants and the session's goals. Give out "Thanks." Review steps taken between sessions. Do a lottery. (15 minutes)
2. Have the caregivers and youths identify positive qualities about each other and express them. (15 minutes)

3. Create family groups and have each one determine what their family's strengths are. (15 minutes)
4. Have each family group create a family crest. (25 minutes)
5. Practice positive reinforcement through a role play catching someone doing something good. (20 minutes)
6. Have each person write a letter from the heart to his/her caregiver/parent or child. (20 minutes)
7. End with a commitment to a "care day" at home and group appreciation. (10 minutes)

MATERIALS:

"Thanks"  
Lottery tickets  
Lottery prize (one youth prize, one caregiver prize)  
Value Cards  
Blank cards and pencils  
Family Crests  
Colored marking pens  
Pencils and paper

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

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

Welcome back.

This session begins the last day of the workshop.

These are tough times for both caregivers and youths, as you get to know each other, try out new roles, and develop new rules for interacting.

The more you can support each other the better.

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

We did this before, working with youths and the parent who was living with AIDS.

But it is time to do it again, now that your mother or father has died and you have a new caregiver.

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

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

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

Please tell us your first name or the name you want to be called by and what personality quality you like best about yourself.

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

I will start first.

My name is .... and I like best my .....

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

Thank you.

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

**#PASS OUT TWENTY "THANKS" TO EACH PERSON.**

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

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

Your between sessions task could have been related to solving a family conflict, practicing safer sex, avoiding pregnancy, or reducing alcohol use.

**#THE FACILITATOR ASKS EACH PERSON OR FAMILY ABOUT BETWEEN SESSION TASKS. HOW DID TAKING THAT STEP GO. BRIEFLY ENGAGE THE PARTICIPANTS IN OVERCOMING OBSTACLES USING PROBLEM SOLVING ON THE BARRIERS THAT CAME UP. GIVE OUT "THANKS" AS APPROPRIATE.**

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

**#HAVE EACH PERSON OR FAMILY REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS.**

We are so glad to see you back that we want to do another lottery. This session we will have two prizes, one for young people and one for caregivers/parents.

#PASS OUT LOTTERY TICKETS. HAVE EVERYONE WRITE THEIR NAMES ON THEM. PUT THEM IN A YOUTH OR CAREGIVER BOWL. MIX THEM AND UP DRAW. GIVE OUT A LOTTERY PRIZE.

As we mentioned before, this is the last day of the workshop.

We hope that it has been a positive experience for you, and it seems fitting to end on creating a positive atmosphere in the new family.

That's what we will be about this morning.

The afternoon will focus on the future.

Exercise 2: What Do I Like About My Child/Caregiver?

(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to create positive feeling between caregiver/parent and young person through stating something each likes about the other.]**

I would like to go around the room and have each young person indicate what he or she likes best about his or her new caregiver or parent, and I want each caregiver/parent to tell us what she or he likes best about the young person with whom he is living.

**#HAVE EACH PERSON STATE WHAT THEY LIKE MOST ABOUT THE FAMILY MEMBER WHO CAME WITH THEM TODAY. IF NO ONE CAME WITH THEM, HAVE THEM SAY SOMETHING NICE ABOUT HIS/HER CAREGIVER OR YOUTH.**

Thank you. That was great!

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

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

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

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

Now I would like caregivers/parents and youths to get together as families.

#HAVE CAREGIVERS AND YOUTHS GROUP THEMSELVES BY FAMILY. IF THERE ARE YOUTHS WITHOUT A FAMILY MEMBER THERE, BRING THEM TOGETHER WITH THE CO-FACILITATOR AS A SURROGATE CAREGIVER.

Your task is identify the strengths that your family has.

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

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

Family to others may mean just a caregiver or caregiver and children.

You can define it as broadly as you wish.

"Strengths" mean the good things about your new family.

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

Think of difficulties the family has overcome.

Think of ways you are proud of your family.

Here are some examples:

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

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

"We care about each other."

"We talk things over."

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

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

It may be difficult to identify family strengths if you have been together only a short period of time.

What else could you do?

Also if you want to identify the characteristics you would like to see in a family, that is OK assuming you are really stuck.

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

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

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

**#HAVE EACH FAMILY SHARE THEIR STRENGTHS. GIVE OUT "THANKS."**

That was very good.

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

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

Coming up with family strengths means we consider those qualities important.

What we believe in, what we respect, what we value helps to define our character and to predict how we will get on with people of different values.

In the next exercise we are going to look at what your family stands for.

Exercise 4: What Does My Family Stand For?  
(25 minutes)

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

If you came to the groups before, we designed a family crest. But now there is a new family.

The members of the family have changed - in some cases a little and in some cases a lot.

Therefore, we need to consider what the crest of the new family would be like.

Here are two types of family crests.

#HOLD UP BLANK FAMILY CRESTS.

I want each family to make a family crest.

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

You see that the spaces on the crest are numbered.

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

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

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

Let me say a word about the drawing.

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

Here are the instructions.

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

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

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

**#ANSWER QUESTIONS AND CLARIFY THE TASK.**

Here are the crests and colored marking pens.

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

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

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

**#ALLOW A FEW MINUTES TO LOOK AT THE CRESTS.**

Those are really great family crests!

What reactions do you have to the family crests?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

The title of this next exercise is "How Do I Catch Somebody Doing Something Good?"

Exercise 5: How Do I Catch Somebody Doing Something Good?

(20 minutes)

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

**NOTE: Joint exercise]**

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

Usually we think of catching someone doing something bad.

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

When you show a person that you noticed what they did, you are rewarding them with human contact - a basic reinforcer.

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

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

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

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

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

You caught her doing something good.

"Hey, Aunt Bea, thanks for sewing my shirt."

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

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

We will role play catching someone doing something good.

The youths will go first.

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

Then we will reverse it, and the caregiver will ask what the youth did yesterday and catch him/hr doing something good.

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

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

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

What was that role play like for you?

Was it hard or easy?

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

How easy is it to tell people in your family the good feelings you have about them.

That's what we will work on next.

Exercise 6: What Are My Good Feelings in the Family?  
(20 minutes)

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

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

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

Please write a one page letter to your caregiver, if you are a young person, and a letter to your young person, if you are a caregiver.

Make the letter a letter from the heart.

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

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

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

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

What should you do if you don't really like the other person or don't know her or him too well?

Should you make things up and lie?

No, but you can try to build on something positive the other person did.

You can be thankful for what they have not done: for not pressuring me; for not asking me to.....; for not correcting me when I make a mistake.

You can also indicate what you would like to learn about the person.

You have fifteen minutes to write your letter.

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

Please don't read the letter here.

Put it away and read it tomorrow.

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

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

How can you be nice in the future?

Exercise 7: How Can I Do Something Nice Next Week?  
(10 minutes)

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

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

As I said before, this is the last day.

On this last day we want to focus on the future.

First, let's talk about the short term future - next week.

Then this afternoon we'll approach the more distant future.

One way to carry the positive environment that we have been developing into the future is to give each other a care day.

What is a care day?

A care day is when you set aside a special day for your child or for your caregiver.

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

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

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

Will you agree to that?

#OBTAIN AGREEMENT.

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

**#ALLOW A MINUTE OR TWO FOR THE CAREGIVER AND YOUTH  
TO SET THE DAYS.**

Although we won't be together in two weeks, I hope that you will be in touch with each other to find out how the care days went.

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

**#ENCOURAGE GIVING APPRECIATION TO EACH OTHER.  
MODEL IT. MAKE SURE NO ONE IS LEFT OUT.**

It was a really good session.

I want to thank all of you.

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

END OF SESSION 15

# CREST 1

CREST 2