

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

Prepared by Sutherland Miller, Ph.D.

**SESSION 4 (CAREGIVERS): RAISING AN ADOLESCENT (Day 2, Afternoon, 2 hours)**

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Caregivers will increase their empathy for adolescents.
2. Caregivers will understand the developmental needs of adolescents.
3. Caregivers will increase their knowledge and judgment about interacting with an adolescent.

**RATIONALE:**

Under the best of circumstances adolescence can be a difficult time for both the young person and his or her caregivers. Adolescents seek independence, engage in risk taking, want to make their own decisions, shift from family to peers. Parents and other caregivers often become concerned and increase efforts to protect their adolescent. These protective efforts are seen as provocative and result in family tension. With caregivers who are not the youth's parents there are special needs. Empathy for the adolescent needs expansion. Understanding of developmental needs is important. In order for caregivers to cope with the demands that this situation will bring, preparation is essential. This session attempts to provide some of the background for learning new parenting skills.

**SUMMARY OF EXERCISES:**

1. Explain how the session works, give out "Thanks." Do a lottery. Use a brief script to introduce the content of the session. (10 minutes)
2. Have the participants tell a story about themselves and a parent when they were a teenager. (15 minutes)
3. Have the participants indicate what they wanted most when they were youths. (15 minutes)
4. Present a panel of caregivers playing teenagers and discussing why their parents don't understand them. (20 minutes)
5. Do scripts to illustrate developmental principles, identify the principles and discuss their relevance. (30 minutes)
6. Present guidelines for dealing with an adolescent and discuss. Use guidelines and simulations. (15 minutes)
7. End with goal setting for between-session activities and group appreciation. (15 minutes) **[Note: please remind participants to bring memento of deceased parent to next session]**

MATERIALS:

**ATHANKS@**

Lottery tickets

Lottery prize.

Paper and pencils

Scripts

Guidelines for helping adolescents

Newsprint and marking pens

NOTES TO THE FACILITATORS: Text in **bold** letters tells you what the purpose of each exercise is. Text in CAPITAL letters tells you what to do. Text in small letters tells you what to say. Once you become familiar with what to say, please put it in your own words. Do not read aloud the text in small letters - make it natural.

The times listed under the headings of each exercise are to help you keep on target and move the session along. Exercises may be lengthened or shortened at your discretion, as long as all the material is covered.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES - REMINDERS AND POINTS TO MAKE

Exercise 1: What Is Going to Happen In This Session?  
(10 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to increase comfort, build group cohesion, reward people for attending, and introduce the session's content. Positive introductions, a lottery and a brief scene are used.]**

THE FACILITATOR SAYS

I hope you had a good lunch and are ready for this afternoon's session.

This afternoon the youths will meet in one location and the caregivers in another.

They will be exploring goals and you will be working on understanding them a bit better.

Caregivers need time with their teens but they also need some "adult-only" time.

First, however, I want to start by going around, giving your first name and telling the group one personality characteristic that you like about yourself.

By personality characteristic I mean qualities like honest, caring, sincere, hard-working, kind, friendly, humorous, good natured, patient and so on.

To show you what I mean I will start.

My name is..... and the quality I like is.....

HAVE EACH GROUP REMEMBER GIVER HER/HIS NAME AND ONE PERSONALITY  
CHARACTERISTIC SHE/HE LIKES ABOUT HERSELF/HIMSELF. GIVE OUT A THANKS@  
FOR PARTICIPATING.

Thank you. That was very good.

Here are your AThanks@for this afternoon's session.

GIVE EACH CAREGIVER 20 THANKS.

When you were having lunch today, did anything come to your mind about this morning's session on grief?

ENCOURAGE SHARING. GIVE OUT THANKS TO PARTICIPANTS WHO SHARE.

We will have two more sessions on grief, although it will take a long time for the grief to wear off naturally.

Our goal is to help the grieving process along a little bit.

Before we start getting more into today's session, I want to do a lottery.

Write your name on the lottery ticket and drop it in the basket.

Then we will mix them up, draw one from the basket, and pass out a winner's prize.

**#PASS OUT A LOTTERY TICKET TO EACH PERSON. HAVE THEM  
WRITE THEIR NAME ON IT. MIX THEM UP, DRAW ONE, AND  
GIVE OUT THE PRIZE.**

Now we want to give you a preview of what today's session is about.

I will play the teenager, and ..... (the co-facilitator) will play the caregiver.

See if you can figure out what the people need in this situation.

THE FACILITATORS PLAY THE PARTS IN THIS BRIEF SCENE.

### TAKE A WALK

CAREGIVER:           Where is baby Junior?  
TEENAGER:           In the other room.  
CAREGIVER:           Go get him and take him out for a walk.  
TEENAGER:           Oh, no! I don't want to. He always hangs on to me. I can't stand it.  
CAREGIVER:           I need you to take him out.  
TEENAGER:           I told my friends I would meet them in fifteen minutes.

Here are some questions for you based on that scene:

Do baby Junior and the teenager have the same needs?

What are their needs?

Do human beings go through stages of development?

What do you think?

**ENCOURAGE GUESSES ABOUT THE NEEDS EXPRESSED IN THE SCENE. AVOID  
DISCUSSING THE CAREGIVER/ADOLESCENT INTERACTION.**

In addition to the fact that our young people lost a parent, they are also involved in the growing up phase of their lives.

We will try to help you deal a bit better with growing up.

Exercise 2: I Remember the Time When My Mother.....  
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose is to increase empathy through placing the caregivers in the position of recalling a scene when they were a youth. Stories are used.]**

Everyone here has the skill to tell a good story.

I want you to think of an event when you were a teenager with your mother or father being involved.

It could be funny or sad, pleasant or hurtful, peaceful or angry.

Whatever brief story you want to tell the group.

Get in a story telling mood: One hot day in Puerto Rico. We were living in Ponce. It was afternoon, and my mother was fanning herself. She turned and said to me.....@

Take a few minutes and get ready to tell your story.

Let's go around the room and have everyone tell a brief story.

HAVE EACH PERSON TELL A BRIEF STORY ABOUT AN EVENT THAT OCCURRED WHEN THEY WERE A YOUTH. THE EVENT MUST ALSO INVOLVE A PARENT. GIVE OUT THANKS AS APPROPRIATE.

That was great. Those were wonderful stories.

What kind of feelings did you get telling your story and listening to the others?

ENCOURAGE SHARING AND DISCUSS REACTIONS.

Exercise 3: When I Was a Teenager What Did I Want Most?  
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to bridge empathy and understanding of needs. Again personal recollection plays a part.]**

I want you to think of how you would fill in the rest of this sentence - **When I was a teenager, I wanted.....@**

WRITE THE SENTENCE **WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, I WANTED...@** ON NEWSPRINT.

I am going to give each person a pencil and paper.

Write down as many things as you can think of that you wanted.

**Don't** worry about whether or not you got what you wanted.

Also I won't ask you to hand in your paper.

Go ahead and see how many **wants@** you can list.

ALLOW THREE MINUTES FOR DEVELOPING THE LIST.

In small groups, if you are comfortable, share with each other your **wants.@**

CREATE GROUPS OF THREE AND ENCOURAGE SHARING. AFTER FIVE MINUTES BRING THE GROUPS BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

Now I want each group to tell us one want that you identified.

**I'll** write them on newsprint as we go around the room.

**Don't** give me a **want@** that I have already written on the board.

GO AROUND THE ROOM IN ROUND-ROBIN FASHION UNTIL ALL THE WANTS ARE LISTED.

What reactions do you have to our list of adolescent wants?

DISCUSS THE LIST OF WANTS. TRY TO FRAME THIS LIST AS GOOD EXAMPLES OF NORMAL TEENAGER DESIRES.

Now let's consider whether parents and caregivers understand teenagers.



Exercise 4: Do Caregivers Really Understand?  
(20 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to encourage caregivers to identify with the teenagers for whom they are responsible. Role playing a panel of teenagers is the approach taken.]**

Now we are going to have a teenage panel to discuss the question, "Do my parents and caregivers really understand me?"

SET UP A TABLE FOR THE PANEL.

I need three volunteers to play teenagers on the panel.

SELECT THREE VOLUNTEERS AND GIVE THEM INSTRUCTIONS.

You think that your caregiver does not understand you.

Your task is to explain to the audience why you think that.

Tell me what your task is?

MAKE SURE THE PANELISTS UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ARE ROLE PLAYING TEENAGERS AND THAT AS TEENAGERS THEY DO NOT FEEL UNDERSTOOD BY THEIR CAREGIVERS. MAKE SURE THEY ARE CLEAR THAT AS A PANELIST THEY ARE TO EXPLAIN WHY IT DOES NOT SEEM THAT THEY HAVE BEEN UNDERSTOOD.

The audience will have a chance to ask you questions after you have made your statement.

We will get started.

Members of the audience, today we have a distinguished panel of teenage experts on being misunderstood by caregivers.

After they have made their statements we will open it up to questions.

Will the panel please go ahead.

HAVE THE PANELISTS PRESENT THEIR POSITIONS. GIVE OUT #THANKS.@

That was very good!

Do the panelists have anything they want to say to each other?

GIVE THE PANELISTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON EACH OTHER'S POSITION BEFORE OPENING THE DISCUSSION TO THE AUDIENCE.

Now we will encourage our audience to ask questions and make comments.

ENCOURAGE COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION.

How did the panelists feel playing a teenager?

LOOK FOR EMPATHIC FEELINGS. CHECK OUT WHAT THE GROUP LEARNED FROM THE PANEL.

What did the group learn from the panel?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION AND SHARING.

Next we want to explore the different stages and challenges that people face from the time of being a baby to being an adult.

Exercise 5: How Do Children Grow Into Teenagers?  
(30 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to increase caregivers understanding of developmental tasks.  
Role play and discussion are employed.]**

At the beginning of this session we saw a little scene where the teenager did not want to take little Junior for a walk because he always clung to her.

It is quite normal for a little child to cling to an adult.

Why is that?

All I want to say for now is that people go through stages as they grow up.

At each stage they have to take some steps to help them move on in a healthy fashion.

For example, little Junior - the child - needs to feel attached to an adult who can protect and take care of his needs.

Little Junior has to learn to trust people - that's one of his tasks.

We will do some scenes now.

Look for what is a normal step that most adolescents take in life.

I need four volunteers to play roles in these little scenes.

**SELECT THE VOLUNTEERS. USE TWO ON THE FIRST SCENE AND A DIFFERENT TWO ON THE SECOND SCENE. GIVE THE VOLUNTEERS THE SCRIPT. HAVE THEM READ IT TO THE GROUP.**

## MY FRIENDS

CAREGIVER: I want to talk to you about something.

TEENAGER: What?

CAREGIVER: I really wonder about your new friends.

TEENAGER: You mean you don't like them.

CAREGIVER: Well, I didn't exactly say that.

TEENAGER: What are you trying to say?

CAREGIVER: They look like hoods.

TEENAGER: You really shouldn't judge people by how they look.

CAREGIVER: When you are in my house, you will not speak disrespectfully to me.

TEENAGER: That wasn't disrespectful. That was true. Why can't I say what I think?

CAREGIVER: Now you sound just like those friends of yours.

THE END

Let's hear the next scene before we comment and discuss our observations.

GIVE THE NEXT SCRIPT TO THE VOLUNTEERS AND HAVE THEM READ IT TO THE GROUP.

## HAIR

CAREGIVER: What's with the hair?

TEENAGER: Is there a problem?

CAREGIVER: Your hair is purple and half of it is shaved off.

TEENAGER: That's my business.

CAREGIVER: Who are you trying to be?

TEENAGER: Myself. It's my hair.

CAREGIVER: What are people going to think when they see us together? I can't take you to church looking like that.

TEENAGER: They've never seen purple hair before?

CAREGIVER: Don't you care about how you look?

THE END

Thank you!

GIVE OUT THANKS.

These two scenes were about the developmental steps that adolescents take during their teenage years.

Let me clarify what I am asking.

Teenagers are moving from being a child to being an adult.

What do they have to do to get there?

What they have to do are called developmental tasks.

For example, one of the tasks that teenagers confront is answering the question "Who am I?"

They are trying to decide what their identity is.

What did you observe in those scenes?

ENCOURAGE CAREGIVERS TO IDENTIFY DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES THAT APPEARED IN THE SCENES.

Teenagers go through lots of changes.

There are physical changes - breasts, genitals, the capacity to make babies.

They feel sexual desire.

These changes are often frightening and confusing.

Intellectual changes occur also.

They are better at solving problems and can figure out the consequences of their actions.

To answer the question "Who am I?" they want to make their own decisions, try new ways of acting, have their own friends.

They want to become independent.

To become independent they have to break away from the family.

Parents become less important and their friends become more important.

Becoming independent can be very hard.

How do you become independent and still love the family and be an active participant in family life?

What have you noticed changing as children grow into teenagers?

How are teenagers different from little children?

DIVIDE THE CAREGIVERS INTO SMALL GROUPS. HAVE THEM IDENTIFY THE DIFFERENCES THAT TEENAGERS SHOW. EMPHASIZE BEING INDEPENDENT, INCONSISTENT, TAKING RISKS, CHOOSING THEIR OWN FRIENDS, HORMONES, BODY CHANGES, AND MOODINESS.. HAVE THE GROUPS REPORT BACK.

What do you think of our lists?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

Remember then that the teenager acts the way he or she does in order to develop an identity and become an independent person.

Now that you know what is happening during the teenage years we will look at some ways parents and caregivers can be helpful.

Exercise 6: How Can Caregivers Help Teenagers?  
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to increase skills in dealing with a normal teenager. Guidelines and questions are used.]**

Here are some guidelines and ideas about what caregivers and parents can do to respond to the adolescents' needs.

HAND OUT IDEAS ON PARENTING TO MEET DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS AND TASKS.  
GO OVER THEM AND DISCUSS.

SUCCESSFUL CAREGIVERS/PARENTS OF ADOLESCENTS

**DO**

1. SET CLEAR STANDARDS.
2. ENFORCE RULES WITHOUT BEING PUNISHING.
3. PROVIDE CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE.
4. EXPLAIN THEIR POINT OF VIEW.
5. STAY INVOLVED IN THEIR ADOLESCENT'S LIFE WITHOUT BEING OVERPROTECTIVE.
6. PROVIDE A WARM, RESPONSIVE, AND CLOSE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT.
7. PERMIT GIVE AND TAKE BETWEEN ADOLESCENT AND CAREGIVER/PARENT DURING FAMILY DISCUSSIONS.
8. PROVIDED NEEDED INFORMATION.
9. HELP DEVELOP SKILLS.
10. LET ADOLESCENTS DEVELOP THEIR OWN OPINIONS.

What are your reactions to these ideas?

ENCOURAGE REACTIONS.



Now that you have some sense of what it is like to be a teenager, what teenagers are going through, and how to help them, let's take a few minutes to practice.

I will be the teenager, and I will say something to you.

Then you respond.

ONE AT A TIME STAND IN FRONT OF EACH CARE GIVER AND MAKE ONE OF THE STATEMENTS THAT FOLLOW. HAVE THEM RESPOND. REINFORCE EMPATHIC, UNDERSTANDING RESPONSES. USE "THANKS."

#### ADOLESCENT STATEMENTS

1. I want to quit school.
2. Nothing is going right for me.
3. I don't want to go to church with you.
4. I don't need you to tell me what to do.
5. I want to be a movie star.
6. I know you don't like my friends, but who I go out with is none of your business.
7. I'll do the dishes when I get home tonight - no matter how late it is.
8. I want to eat dinner when I feel like it.
9. If you are going to limit my phone calls to five minutes, then get me my own phone.
10. It's my hair. I can do what I want with it.

That was a good practice session.

What did you think of the way the group members responded to the teenage statements?

When you give feedback, please tell us one thing that you liked about the way the caregiver responded and one thing you would have done differently.

ENCOURAGE GIVING FEEDBACK. FOLLOW THE FEEDBACK PATTERN OF WHAT WAS LIKED FIRST AND THEN WHAT THE CRITIC WOULD HAVE BEEN DONE DIFFERENTLY.

Our time is up for this afternoon.

Exercise 7: What Goal Can I Set?  
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to transfer learning to real life settings and to build group cohesion. Selecting a between session task and giving group appreciation and the methods employed.]**

At the end of afternoon sessions we set a goal or task to do between now and the next meeting.

Think of something you agree to do that is related to today's session on understanding your young person.

For example, you could ask your young person what is important to him or her.

You could do something enjoyable with your young person.

You could try to get to know one of your young person's friends when he or she drops by.

You could tell your young person about something that went on between you and your parent when you were a teenager.

Think of something you agree to do.

ALLOW A FEW MINUTES FOR COMING UP WITH A TASK OR GOAL.

Let's go around the room and have each person tell us what you plan to do.

HAVE THE GROUP MEMBERS SHARE THEIR GOALS.

Please remember that you set another goal in this morning's session. Next time we will review both of your goals.

Also for next week, I would appreciate it if everyone brought a memento of the person who died.

Don't tell others what it is.

A memento is something that reminds you of that person and maybe something you did together.

A memento could be a photo, a ticket stub, a piece of jewelry, a sea shell, a bead, a hat, and so on.

The youths are also going to be asked to bring in a memento.

If any of you speak during the past week, please remind each other about the three things you need to do before the next session.

Now let's show other people in the group that you appreciate their contributions today.

Communicate that you liked what someone said or did, that you were glad they came, or that you know they are going through a rough time. Get up and move around. Give out **AThanks.**@

ENCOURAGE GROUP APPRECIATION. MODEL PRAISE BEHAVIOR. MAKE SURE NO ONE IS LEFT OUT.

I will see you next time at.....(time and place) on ..... (day and date).

Thanks again for your participation.

END OF SESSION 4 FOR CAREGIVERS

## MY FRIENDS

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