

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

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SESSION 9 (CAREGIVER): CAREGIVER SUPPORT (2 hours, morning)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Caregivers will be able to identify what would help them deal with their new family situation
2. Caregivers will understand how to give support
3. Caregivers will be able to identify community and personal resources
4. Caregivers will learn relaxation skills

RATIONALE:

Frequently people try to help others who are in crisis, experienced a major loss, or face a difficult situation, but their help is not perceived as useful from the point of view of the recipient. In this session caregivers are given the opportunity to define what behaviors are helpful to them. Furthermore they need support and are encouraged to identify the resources that they might draw upon and to plan how to increase their support network. Lists of local resources are provided. Finally the caregivers' own resources are expanded through instruction in relaxation approaches.

SUMMARY OF EXERCISES:

1. Introduce the session's objectives and the participants. Review the achievements made on last week's goals. (20 minutes)
2. Identify helpful and unhelpful things someone might say to or do for a caregiver. (15 minutes)
3. Determine the needs of a caregiver. (20 minutes)
4. Identify: (a) who can help caregivers and (b) where in community help is available. (20 minutes)
5. Pass out list of resources and discuss. (10 minutes)
6. Share experiences that have been helpful. (15 minutes)
7. Practice relaxation (10 minutes)

8. End with group appreciation. (10 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Lottery tickets
Lottery prize (one prize)
"Thanks"
Newsprint and marking pens
Project Talk Caregiver Resource Directory
Support form

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 Happens In These Sessions?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to create a comfortable and rewarding atmosphere, to explain how the sessions work, and to review between session tasks. A lottery, "Thanks," goal review, and explanations are used here.]

#THE FACILITATOR SAYS

Welcome back to these sessions on dealing with adjusting to a new life with a youth who has lost a parent to AIDS.

I'm glad that all of you could be here.

You have all experienced a great deal of change, and change is difficult.

Some of you have lost someone close to you, and others have lost a way of life.

Some of you have gained a family member, but are still finding it challenging to adjust.

Now let's begin the session.

We often start our sessions with a lottery.

I will pass out the lottery tickets, and then we'll draw a prize.

Everyone, write your name on a ticket.

#PASS OUT THE LOTTERY TICKETS. HAVE EACH GROUP MEMBER WRITE HIS/HER NAME ON ONE, COLLECT THEM, MIX THEM UP, AND DRAW A WINNER. THEN GIVE OUT THE PRIZE.

An important thing that we do in these sessions is to let people know when we like what they said or did.

When we like that they came to the session.

When we like something they said.

When we like the way they present themselves.

When we like a quality about them.

One way to show our appreciation is to give them a "Thanks."

This is a "Thanks."

#HOLD UP A "THANKS."

Everyone will receive a pile of "Thanks," and I hope yours are all gone - given to other people in the group - by the time we end today.

Here are your "Thanks."

#GIVE TWENTY "THANKS" TO EACH GROUP MEMBER.

At the end of the last session you agreed to do a task between meetings.

Think of what you did to complete that task.

How did that work out?

#GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE EACH CAREGIVER REPORT ON HOW THE TASK WENT. GIVE OUT "THANKS" FREQUENTLY.

That was great.

Do you have any reactions to what the group members presented?

#ENCOURAGE COMMENTS.

Today we will talk about what caregivers need and how and where they can get support.

Exercise 2: Giving Comfort to Each Other
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to discover what interpersonal assistance is helpful and which kinds are not. Building a group list of helpful and unhelpful actions is the method used.]

One way to deal with unpleasant feelings and difficult times is to be with someone else who can give comfort.

I want to take a moment and get some ideas from you about what another person can do to make you feel better and what is not helpful.

Share with the group whatever comes to mind without evaluating the ideas.

The more ideas the better.

That's called brainstorming.

WRITE UP ON NEWSPRINT "HELPFUL" AND THEN LOWER DOWN
"UNHELPFUL." ENCOURAGE IDEAS. USE THE FOLLOWING AS A
GUIDE:

HELPFUL RESPONSES

CONTACT WITH PEOPLE IN THE SAME SITUATION
ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO ATTEND THIS GROUP REGULARLY
PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS
EXPRESSING CONCERN
SIMPLY BEING THERE FOR THE PERSON
PROVIDING A "BIG PICTURE" PERSPECTIVE
RELIGIOUS SUPPORT
INVOLVING THE PERSON IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

UNHELPFUL RESPONSES

GIVING UNASKED-FOR ADVICE
ENCOURAGING RECOVERY
FORCED CHEERFULNESS
SAYING, "I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL"
PROVIDING UNWANTED HELP
INTERFERING INTO THE PERSON'S LIFE.

IF SOME IMPORTANT IDEAS FROM THE ABOVE LIST ARE NOT MENTIONED, BRING THEM UP FOR CONSIDERATION.

Now it is time to evaluate these ideas.

What do you think of them?

Which ones are the most important?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION OF THE IDEAS. MAKE A NEW LIST OF THE CRITICAL IDEAS.

Those are really good ideas.

We'll try to operate that way when we support and comfort each other in here.

Exercise 3: What Would Help Me?

(20 minutes)

[This exercise is designed to encourage the caregivers to identify what would be helpful to someone raising a youth whose parent has died of AIDS. It assumes that with this knowledge caregiver will be better able to see value in the sessions to follow and to seek out what will support them.]

We want you to work on what would be helpful to a caregiver who is raising a teenager who has lost a parent to AIDS.

To find that out we are going to do a little role play.

In the role play some of you will help another caregiver find out what he or she needs for the journey ahead.

I need three volunteers who will be the helpers.

Their task is to find out what would help the caregiver deal with this situation.

They can ask whatever questions they want and make any suggestions.

Remember that the helpers are not to solve his problems, but are to figure out what would help him or her handle all these concerns.

For example, if the caregiver said she felt like running away, the consultants might validate her feelings, encourage her to explore what was making her feel overwhelmed, and walk through some problem solving steps with her.

The helpers are to work as a team of expert consultants.

The rest of the group will be the observers who will give feedback to the helpers.

I am going to play the caregiver raising the youth whose parent has died of AIDS.

THE FACILITATOR'S TASK IS TO PRESENT A WIDE RANGE OF CONCERNS. IF POSSIBLE, FACILITATOR CAN FOCUS ON THE ISSUES RAISED PREVIOUSLY IN THE GROUP. THE FACILITATOR STARTS BY NAMING A GROUP OF CONCERNS AND CAN THEN ADD OTHERS AS THE "INTERVIEW" CONTINUES.

Example of Facilitator's Opening Comments:

I have been raising my nephew for six months now.

I am really tired and upset.

One moment I feel **angry** at my sister for getting AIDS and dying, and then I feel very **sad**.

Sometimes I **feel angry** at my nephew for having to come live with me.

I want him to forget all the **bad habits** his mother taught him.

I get **angry** at him because he seems so ungrateful.

I can't control my feelings.

I don't know **what to say to him**.

I'm **scared** too.

What's going to **happen to me**?

What is going to **happen to him**?

Who will **take care of him if something happens to me**?

There is so much tension now at home.

I wish I could **change the atmosphere at home.**

AFTER FIVE MINUTES OF INTERVIEWING, ASK FOR FEEDBACK.
BEGIN WITH THE THREE HELPERS. GIVE "THANKS" TO THE
HELPERS.

Now let's get some feedback.

How did you helpers feel during the interview?

What one thing did you do that you liked and what one thing would you do differently?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

Now for the observers.

How did you feel watching this interview?

What one thing did the helpers do that you liked and what one thing would you do differently?"

ENCOURAGE SHARING OF FEEDBACK.

Now let's hear from the entire group.

Do you have more ideas on what would be helpful to the caregiver?

LOOK FOR IDEAS ON CONTROLLING FEELINGS,
COMMUNICATING WITH YOUTH, SEPARATING FEELINGS FOR
MOTHER FROM FEELINGS FOR YOUTH, WORKING OUT NEW
ROLES AT HOME, CREATING A POSITIVE HOME ENVIRONMENT,
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE, CUSTODY ISSUES, TELLING
OTHERS, AND HANDLING STIGMA.

Also you could see from the role play that helping someone figure out what they need to work on can be more effective than giving a person lots of advice or interfering in their life when not asked to.

Exercise 4: Where Can Caregivers Go For Help?
(20 minutes)

It seems like we are all alone.

Often there are many more people we could use as a resource than we have considered.

I want to remind you of something that many of you know already.

That is that other people can provide you with support and assistance at this time of need.

To help you think about who those people could be, I am going to pass out a piece of paper where you can list helpful people.

#HAND OUT "WHO CAN HELP ME" AND PENCILS. GO OVER THE FORM SLOWLY TO ASSIST CAREGIVERS WHO MAY HAVE TROUBLE READING. READ EACH QUESTION ALOUD AND THEN WAIT WHILE PARTICIPANTS FILL IN THE NAMES OF HELPFUL PEOPLE.

WHO CAN HELP ME?

Instructions: Under each heading write down people who can help you even if you are not using them now.

WHO CAN LISTEN TO ME TALK ABOUT MY FEELINGS?

WHO CAN GIVE ME GOOD ADVICE ON DEALING WITH THE CHILDREN?

WHO CAN BE A GOOD COMPANION AND DO FUN THINGS WITH ME?

WHO CAN HELP ME KEEP MY SPIRIT AND HOPES UP?

WHO CAN HELP ME DO THINGS THAT NEED GETTING DONE?

WHAT ADULTS WOULD THE CHILDREN LOOK TO AS A SOURCE OF SUPPORT?

See how many lines you can fill in.

The more names the better - even if some of them seem far fetched.

If you have trouble thinking of people, maybe you can make a plan to find others.

Maybe your church, or the Big Sisters and Big Brothers, or a local community center, or relatives you haven't

seen for a while can give you some good suggestions.

It is very important to help yourselves because if you feel hopeless and overwhelmed, it will be hard for you to assist your new children.

Take your time and fill out the support list.

ALLOW TIME FOR COMPLETING THE FORM.

Now think of the people you would like to support you.

Pick one person with whom you would like to have more contact and make a plan for how that will come about.

ALLOW TIME FOR MAKING A PLAN.

Can you give me some examples of your plans?

SELECT A FEW VOLUNTEERS TO SHARE THEIR PLANS WITH THE GROUP.

There are other resources in the community.

We will want to explore them next.

Exercise 5: Where Are The Resources?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is support the group through giving them a list of local resources organized by Aproblem@area. The list is reviewed and discussed, encouraging the participants to add other resources.]

Here is a list of resources which are organized by caregiver needs or problems.

As you can see there are resources related to areas: money problems, immigration, health care, abuse, custody, legal problems, counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups and so on.

Where there are helpful people that we could identify, we have listed their names as well.

Right here in this room there is a lot of collective knowledge that could be shared.

So It's go over the lists and you help us make this better.

If you know a resource or a person not on the list, please tell us.

**REVIEW THE LIST WITH THE GROUP AND INCLUDE NAMES AND ORGANIZATIONS
THAT THE CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT.**

Thank you for your assistance.

Hopefully we can learn from each other to make obtaining resources easier and more useful.

Now we want to hear some success stories.

Exercise 6: What Are Examples Of Good Support?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to reinforce self efficacy through telling stories of successful collaboration with someone else to work out a problem.]

I would like to hear some examples of times when you and a person who was a resource to you worked together to get something done.

What is a good experience that you had collaborating with someone else?

It doesn't have to be a situation related to caregiving of your new adolescent.

ENCOURAGE SHARING A FEW EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION. THE POINT IS TO DEMONSTRATE IT CAN BE DONE.

Thank you for sharing.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR: If time is running out and it is a choice between this exercise and the next relaxation exercise, choose the relaxation exercise.

Exercise 7: How Can We Let Out Some Tension?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to reduce tension. A relaxation sequence is used.]

Another way to support yourself is through learning how to relax.

There are three primary relaxation styles: breathing, using your imagination, and releasing physical tension.

We will do a little of each so that you can have a chance to see what works best for you.

LEAD THE GROUP THROUGH THE RELAXATION SEQUENCE .

RELAXATION SEQUENCE

Get yourself in a comfortable position.

Begin by watching your breath. PAUSE

Just let it come and go naturally. PAUSE

In PAUSE and out PAUSE.

In PAUSE and out PAUSE.

Put your hand right below your belly button and feel it move up as you take in air.

Feel your hand rise. PAUSE

And let the air out.

Feel your hand go down as you let the air out. PAUSE

In PAUSE and out PAUSE.

In PAUSE and out PAUSE.

Put your hand in the air and feel it swing back and forth like a gate as you breathe.

In and out. PAUSE

In and out. PAUSE

Now tighten your fist PAUSE

And let it go.

Do it again and make it even tighter.

Tighten. PAUSE

Loosen. Feel the difference between tight and loose.

Tighten the muscles in your jaw PAUSE

And let them go PAUSE.

Squinch up your eyes PAUSE

and let them loosen PAUSE.

Tighten all of your face PAUSE

And loosen.

Tighten your shoulders PAUSE

and let them go. PAUSE

Feel the tension flow from the top of your head out your toes. PAUSE

Now think of a place that you love

A peaceful place. PAUSE

As I count to ten, you will go to that place.

1..2..3..4..5..6..7..8..9..10

Hear the sound of that place PAUSE

Smell the fragrance of that place PAUSE.

See the colors of that place PAUSE

Feel the air on your skin. PAUSE

Soak up the warmth PAUSE

Feel at ease in this place - so at ease. PAUSE

Let this special place of yours help you feel good.

Feel safe and secure. PAUSE

Let this place take care of you. PAUSE

Now lets return to this room.

As I count from 10 to 1, you will gradually experience this room and all that is in it.

10...9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1

How was that?

We tried breathing , releasing physical tension, and imagining.

I hope you got a sense of which one was best for you.

With each one of these relaxation approaches we can make them longer and more interesting.

We are at the end of today's session.

Exercise 8: Supporting Each Other Through Appreciation.
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to build group cohesion. Giving appreciation is the approach used.]

Working together as a family is very important, but sometimes it's helpful for caregivers and youths to be able to share things privately.

Today youths worked on setting goals for their futures.

Caregivers talked about how and where to get support for themselves and for their teens.

At the end of today's session - when we set between session goals - you may want to do a task related to what you worked on this morning.

The last thing for today is to show appreciation to other group members for their contributions today.

Let them know you liked what they said or did, their presence, their style or anything else.

Use "Thanks," words, hugs, handshakes, pats on the back, and what ever what you feel comfortable.

#ENCOURAGE GIVING APPRECIATION. MODEL HOW
APPRECIATION IS GIVEN. REINFORCE GROUP MEMBERS AS
THEY COMPLIMENT OTHER PARTICIPANTS.

THE END

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PROJECT TALK CAREGIVER RESOURCE DIRECTORY

**Give out copies of The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren published by
Grandparent Resource Center
New York Department for the Aging
2 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10007
212-442-1094**

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