

JOINT TRAINING FOR MOTHERS AND YOUTHS - ILLNESS PHASE
(HRA PROJECT)

SESSION 10: HOW CAN WE RESOLVE CONFLICTS AT HOME? - PART 2

(Day 5, Afternoon. Two hours in length.)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Mothers and youths will identify obstacles to using the six step conflict resolution procedure and develop ways to overcome them.
2. Mothers and youths will increase their skills in applying the six step conflict resolution procedure to typical home problems.
3. Mothers and youths will set priorities on problems that exist in their family.
4. Mothers and youths will apply the six step method to a low level conflict between them.

RATIONALE:

The first session on resolving problems introduced participants to the procedure for a no-lose approach. In this session the focus is on practice using the procedure. Without practice in a supportive setting there is little chance that the procedure will be used in the family. After practice on typical problems, mother-teenager dyads try to resolve a low level conflict that currently exists in their family. Overcoming obstacles is also dealt with.

PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce the participants and give out Strokes. Do a lottery. (10 minutes)
2. Have the mothers and youths identify barriers to using the six step procedure and discuss ways to overcome them. (10 minutes)
3. Model using the six step procedure and have the participants critique it. (15 minutes)
4. Practice applying the six step procedure on typical conflicts. (40 minutes)
5. Set priorities on conflicts that currently exist in the families. (10 minutes)
6. Try to resolve a low level conflict that currently exists in the family. (20 minutes)
7. End the session with relaxation, between session goals, and appreciation. (15 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Strokes
Lottery Tickets
Lottery Prize for Mother
Lottery Prize for Teen
Feeling Thermometer
List of Typical Conflicts
Paper and pencils
Extra copies of the Six Step Guidelines

Exercise 1: What Is Today's Session About?
(15 minutes)

[The purposes of this session are to build self-esteem, to support participation, and to introduce the day's topic. Introductions, a lottery, and review of the between-session assignment are used.]

Welcome back from lunch.

I hope you got enough to eat.

Please introduce yourself by giving your first name.

If you are a parent, also complete this sentence: "I am a good mother because....."

If you are a teenager, also complete this sentence: "I am a good son or daughter because...."

For example, a mother might say, "I am a good mother because I listen to what my daughter has to say."

Or, "I am a good son because I help out around the home."

■HAVE THE PARTICIPANTS INTRODUCE THEMSELVES AND SAY WHY THEY ARE A GOOD MOTHER OR SON/DAUGHTER.

Thank you.

Here are your Strokes for today.

■GIVE OUT 20 STROKES TO EACH PERSON.

Remember to use them throughout the session in order to let someone know that you like what they said or did.

At the end of this morning's session I asked you to think about the conflicts that exist right now in your family.

Do all of you have the conflicts in mind?

■GIVE OUT STROKES TO THOSE THAT INDICATE THEY COULD MAKE A LIST.

Here are some pencils and paper for those of you who need them to write down your list.

■PASS OUT PENCILS AND PAPER.

While you write down your lists, I will pass out lottery tickets.

■PASS OUT LOTTERY TICKETS.

Write your name on the lottery tickets and put them in the bowl.

There will be a lottery for the mothers and one for teenagers.

■HAVE THEM WRITE THEIR NAMES ON THE LOTTERY TICKETS, PUT THEM IN THE BOWLS FOR YOUTH AND MOTHERS, MIX THEM UP, DRAW, AND GIVE OUT PRIZES.

Today we will continue learning how to resolve conflicts that exist within your families.

Last time we pointed out that conflicts can arise naturally because parents and teenagers often have different needs and different agendas.

We went over the six step procedure for resolving conflicts and emphasized that this was a no-lose approach.

We modeled doing it, and you had a chance to either practice it yourself or see group members try it out.

Today everyone will have a chance to work on resolving conflicts.

Exercise 2: What Keeps Me From Using the Six Step Procedure?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to identify and overcome obstacles to using the procedure. Small group work and brainstorming are employed to achieve this end.]

Sometimes parents and teenagers have attitudes that are obstacles to using the six step procedure.

For example, parents might think that if they used it, they would always end up giving in to their kids.

I want you to come up with a list of obstacles.

I will break you up into small groups of mothers alone and teenagers alone.

In your small groups come up with barriers to using the six step procedure.

Think of what might keep you from using it.

■DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO MOTHERS AND TEENAGERS. ASK EACH GROUP TO COME UP WITH A LIST OF OBSTACLES. AFTER A FEW MINUTES, ASK THEM TO REPORT BACK.

Please tell us what you came up with.

■IF THE FOLLOWING POINTS ARE NOT MENTIONED, BRING THEM UP.

1. PARENTS WHO TYPICALLY USE POWER MAY FEEL THAT PARENTS SHOULD NEVER "COMPROMISE."
2. PARENTS WHO USUALLY GIVE IN MAY TELL THEMSELVES, "WELL, I WILL END UP GIVING IN ANYWAY, SO WHY GO THROUGH THE PROCEDURE."
3. TEENAGERS MAY THINK, "I AM GOING TO LOSE ANYWAY, SO WHY TRY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM."
4. TEENAGERS MAY SAY THAT THEY WILL LOSE FACE IF THEY "COMPROMISE."

■DISCUSS THE OBSTACLES AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, BRAINSTORM
WAYS TO OVERCOME THEM.

I believe that a solution which satisfies both the parent and the teenager is so much better than a forced one, that it is worth trying the six step procedure.

Also when parent and teenager work together, they often find better solutions than the ones each person had before.

Together there is a lot more creative wisdom that gets generated.

Exercise 3: Can I See How You Do the Six Step Procedure Again?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to insure that the participants are familiar with the six step procedure. Review and modeling are the methods used to meet the goal.]

Please take out the page which says "Six Step Conflict Resolution Procedure."

■IF PARTICIPANTS CANNOT FIND THE HANDOUT, GIVE THEM
NEW ONES.

Let's take a moment to review it.

Step 1 is to identify and define the conflict.

Step 2 is to generate possible solutions.

Step 3 is to evaluate the different possible solutions.

Step 4 is to decide on the best acceptable solutions.

Step 5 is to work out ways to implement the solution.

And Step 6 is to follow up to evaluate how the solution worked.

The Six Step guidelines for conflict resolution are very similar to Smart for problem solving.

State the problem, make a goal, actions you could take, reach a decision, and try it.

Under each of the Six steps there are suggestions on how you do it successfully.

The two of us (FACILITATORS) are going to show you a little scene.

Using your guidelines, we want you to criticize us.

What did we do that you liked and what would you have done differently?

■THE FACILITATORS HAVE SEVERAL CHOICES AT THIS POINT. IF THE FACILITATORS ARE FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT THEY CAN TAKE A CONFLICT SITUATION PROVIDED BY A MOTHER AND THEN MODEL THROUGH ROLE PLAYING A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A SIX STEP CONFLICT RESOLUTION, DO THAT. IF NOT, FOLLOW ONE OF THE PATHS DESCRIBED BELOW.

■ROLE PLAY THE FOLLOWING SCENE, USING THE SIX STEP APPROACH. AFTER THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE MOTHER'S AND TEENAGER'S POINT OF VIEW IS AN ABBREVIATED EXAMPLE OF HOW THE DIALOGUE MIGHT GO.

■EITHER MAKE UP A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE SIX STEP APPROACH FOLLOWING THE BACKGROUND MATERIAL **OR** USE THE ABBREVIATED EXAMPLE. YOU CAN ADD LINES TO IT IF IT DOESN'T SEEM LONG ENOUGH TO YOU.

Mother

Living with AIDS takes a lot out of you. You just don't have the energy that you used to. You need help around the home.

You asked your teenager to get the two younger children - Bobby 6 years old and Charlene 8 years old - ready for school every morning.

Your teenager usually says it will make her/him late to high school. On several occasions your teenager has done it, but poorly. Both younger children were late themselves.

You feel disappointed and hurt that your teenager can't do this one thing for you. You don't ask much of him/her.

Teenager

Your mother is living with AIDS. She has asked you to get your younger brother and sister ready for school every morning. It annoys you that she has no consideration for your needs. You study late at night, and it is hard getting up in the morning. It is difficult enough getting yourself ready for high school in time.

Besides both Bobby - 6 years old - and Charlene - 8 years old - are hard to control. They seem much worse now that your mother is sick. Bobby whines all the time, and Charlene won't do what you ask of her. It isn't fair that you are stuck with the two of them.

You understand that your mother doesn't feel good a lot of the time. You want to be helpful, but there are limits to what you can do.

EXAMPLE OF ABBREVIATE DIALOGUE

MOTHER: This morning you said we could talk when you came home from school. Is this a good time?

TEENAGER: It's OK.

MOTHER: I'm upset about this business of getting Bobby and Charlene ready for school. My energy is so low. I wouldn't ask you to help if I didn't need it. I feel hurt that you can't seem to give me a hand.

TEENAGER: Don't try to make me feel guilty.

MOTHER: I didn't know that I was. I must be missing something. How do you feel about all this?

TEENAGER: It annoys me that you are always nagging me to take care of them. Don't you think I feel upset about your being sick? It is hard for me to study and keep up with all the things I have to do. I just can't get up in the morning like that. Now you want me to get up even earlier. Think of what's good for me once in a while.

MOTHER: I know it is hard for you in the morning. If you think I'm inconsiderate, you must be mad at me.

TEENAGER: I get that way. Besides Bobby gets to me. He just whines all the time and Charlene pays no attention to what I ask. She's always fighting me.

MOTHER: They are under stress too.

TEENAGER: That doesn't make it any easier on me. I don't mind helping, but getting them ready for school is terrible.

MOTHER: So, you wouldn't mind giving me a hand?

TEENAGER: Of course not. I know you don't feel good.

MOTHER: What can we do?

TEENAGER: Let me do something else. I'll do stuff when I come home from school.

MOTHER: Other ideas?

TEENAGER: If I have to get up early and take care of them, at least tell Bobby to stop whining all the time and make Charlene mind me. They won't do what I tell them.

MOTHER: Anything else?

TEENAGER: Let me sleep late on Saturday and Sunday. You always come in my room at 8 o'clock and wake me up. Why can't I sleep later?

MOTHER: I wondered if I laid out their clothes the night before and had the breakfast set out - things like that - if that would make it easier.

TEENAGER: It would save me time.

MOTHER: Some possible solutions that we mentioned are to do something to help me after school instead of getting them off in the morning, talk to Bobby and Charlene so that they don't give you trouble, let you sleep late on the week ends, and give you a hand the night before. What do you think of each of these?

TEENAGER: For me the best is another job that doesn't make me get up.

MOTHER: Would you put them to bed?

TEENAGER: Sure.

MOTHER: What about the other solutions.

TEENAGER: If I am going to take care of them any time, you got to talk to them. As for the others.....Let's see. Sleeping late is OK but not as good as putting them to bed. I don't think setting out their clothes would help me that much. If I have to get up, I can do it - if they mind me. Why is the morning so important? Is your energy low in the morning?

MOTHER: I guess it is lower at night. But I wear down faster, if I have to get them dressed.

TEENAGER: Don't they mind you?

MOTHER: They can be tiring.

TEENAGER: Look, leave the other morning jobs. I'll do the dishes when I get home.

MOTHER: That sounds even better.

TEENAGER: So, why don't we agree. When I come home from school, I'll clean up the kitchen and then I'll get them into bed.

MOTHER: Let's try it.

TEENAGER: But you got to talk to them. And I want to be there when you do. You have to back me up.

MOTHER: How about talking to them tonight?

TEENAGER: Fine.

THE END

Now that we have worked through the conflict over helping mother and getting the kids ready for school, I would like you to criticize us.

How did we do following the six step procedure?

What did you like about what we did and what you do differently?

■ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK AND DISCUSS.

Are there any questions about the six step conflict resolution procedure?

■CLARIFY ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND ANSWER QUESTIONS.

Exercise 4: How Can I Improve My Approach?
(40 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase conflict resolution skills. Role playing is the method used.]

Now we want to give everyone a chance to practice using their skills.

You will be in pairs - a mother and a teenager - not part of the same family.

If there are more teenagers than families, pair up with another teenager and one of you play the mother.

The teenager will decide what conflict to work on.

You can either make one up and tell the "mother" what the situation is or you can select one from a list of situations I will give you.

Here is the list.

■GIVE OUT THE LIST OF ROLE PLAY SITUATIONS.

CONFLICT SITUATIONS FOR ROLE PLAYING

Scene 1: The Boy Friend

Mother: You are very unhappy over your daughter's choice of boy friend - at least 10 years older, much too slick, doesn't work but has lots of money. A drug dealer? He gives your daughter expensive gifts. You think he is using her.

Teenager: You are dating an older man who seems to have everything: really cool, polite, takes you nice places and gives you expensive gifts. Your mother is against him. She thinks he's a drug dealer. He's been very good to you. It bothers you that your mother doesn't trust your judgment.

Scene 2: Household Jobs

Mother: You want your teenager to help out more around the house. You want the dishes done every night and the garbage put out. Your teenager says he (she) already has too much to do.

The only job your teenager does now is to clean the apartment on Saturday. You are hurt. Isn't he (she) aware that you are sick and need help?

Teenager: It annoys you that your mother keeps asking you to do more and more jobs. You already clean the whole apartment on Saturday. This is a big year for you. You have many school activities and hold down a part time job. You know she is sick, but there is a limit.

Scene 3: Sex

Mother: Your daughter started asking you questions about birth control. Pretty soon it became obvious that she is having sex with her boy friend. This really scares you. You don't want her to get pregnant or to get any diseases like HIV. The best thing for her is no sex at all. She is too young for sex.

Teenager: You asked your mother about birth control, thinking she would be pleased that you were taking care of yourself. She got all upset and started yelling at you about having sex. All your friends have sex. Your boy friend is very careful and uses a condom. You don't want to lose him. You know what you are doing.

Scene 4: Curfew

Mother: You think your 15 year old teenager should be in the apartment by 8 p.m. on week nights and by midnight on week ends. Your teenager doesn't agree. It irritates you he (she) won't do what you ask. Fifteen is too young to be out to all hours of the night. You are worried that something bad will happen.

Teenager: Your mother tells you that you have to be in by 8 p.m. on week nights and midnight on week ends. As far as you know, none of your friends have such restrictions. You can take care of yourself. All you are doing is hanging out with your friends. She is so strict.

Scene 5: Money

Mother: You give your teenager a little spending money, and your teenager has a part time job. All your teenager spends money on is tapes for the walkman. How can your teenager be so irresponsible? You think some of the money ought to go into savings for college, clothes, school supplies, lunch money.

Teenager: You got a part time job so that you could buy things you want. Now your mother is telling you how to spend your money. She should mind her own business. You spend your money on tapes for your walkman. It's your money.

Scene 6: Mother's Boy Friend

Mother: It upsets you that your teenager does not like your current boy friend. This is nothing new because your teenager has not liked other boy friends. This boy friend sometimes pays

for things you need, and still finds you attractive. Your teenager may have heard the two of you argue and turned against him. You wish your teenager would butt out.

Teenager: You can't stand your mother's most recent boy friend. They fight a lot. He calls her names and pushes her around. You want her to get rid of him. When it comes to men, she doesn't practice what she preaches.

Scene 7: Younger Children

Mother: You get annoyed at your teenager telling you how to raise your three younger children. You know what you are doing. Your teenager doesn't think you are tough enough. You wish your teenager would mind his (her) business.

Teenager: You think your mother is ruining your three younger brothers and sisters. She lets them do anything they want to. They are becoming spoiled brats. If you discipline them, she tells you to leave them alone. You are really frustrated.

Scene 8: Grandmother

Mother: Your mother has been coming over to help now that you are sick. You really appreciate what she is doing. Your teenager keeps getting into arguments with her and won't do what your mother says. It hurts your mother's feelings. Your teenager has got to stop fighting with grandmother and disobeying her.

Teenager: It is very confusing. Your mother tells you one thing and your grandmother tells you something else. Your grandmother has been coming over to help since your mother got sick. Your mother says take care of your little sister, and your grandmother says to stop that and clean up the kitchen.

Scene 9: School

Mother: You are upset about your teenager's grades and how much time is spent studying. You want your teenager to go to college. Recently your teenager's grades dropped to a B, two C's and one D. As far as you can see, your teenager only spends an hour each night studying.

Teenager: With all the stress of your mother being sick, school has become hard for you. You used to get mostly B's and an occasional A. Now you got one B, 2 C's and a D. You keep worrying about your mother and what will happen to you. You can't study. You know you should study more. The last thing you need is more pressure from your mother.

You want to pick a scene to practice on.

The first scene is about the choice of a boy friend.

The second scene is about doing jobs at home.

The third scene is about sex.

The fourth scene is about what time the teenager comes in.

The fifth scene is about money.

The sixth scene is about the mother's boy friend.

The seventh scene is about how the mother handles the younger kids.

The eighth scene is about grandmother interfering.

And the ninth one is about doing homework and getting good grades at school.

In a minute I will ask you to pick the scene you want to do or to make one up.

When you have finished role playing resolving a conflict, you will both receive feedback.

We will keep going until every pair has had a turn.

OK, read over the scenes on the list and see which one you want to do or if you'll create your own.

■WAIT A MINUTE FOR THE GROUP MEMBERS TO SELECT A SCENE. REMEMBER THAT ALLOWING A MOTHER OR TEENAGER TO SELECT A SITUATION FROM THE LIST PERMITS THEM TO IDENTIFY AND EXPERIMENT WITH A CONFLICT THAT THEY MIGHT NOT ADMIT TO HAVING.

Have the teenagers made a decision?

They will set the stage.

■DIVIDE THE GROUP IN HALF. THEN PUT EVERYONE INTO PAIRS - ONE TEENAGER AND ONE MOTHER (NOT FROM THE SAME

FAMILY). AS MENTIONED EARLIER IF THERE ARE TEENAGERS LEFT OVER, HAVE ONE OF THEM PLAY THE MOTHER WITH ANOTHER TEENAGER IN A PAIR. A FACILITATOR GOES WITH EACH GROUP TO COACH AND KEEP THE PROCEDURE GOING.

■FIRST ONE PAIR DOES THE ROLE PLAY AND RECEIVES FEEDBACK FROM THE OTHER PAIR. THEN THE NEXT PAIR ROLE PLAYS AND GETS FEEDBACK.

When you are not role playing, you become the observer and give feedback.

Follow the same approach as we have been using: what one thing did you like and what one thing would you have done differently?

OK, go ahead and start the role play.

■ALLOW FIVE MINUTES PER ROLE PLAY AND TWO MINUTES FOR FEEDBACK. KEEP THE ROLE PLAYS MOVING ALONG SO THAT EVERY PAIR HAS A CHANCE. WHEN EVERYONE IS FINISHED, BRING THE GROUPS BACK TOGETHER.

First, I would like to know how you felt.

■HOLD UP A COPY OF A FEELING THERMOMETER.

Using the Feeling Thermometer, think about what made you most comfortable and when were you most uncomfortable.

What feeling reactions did you have?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING.

What would make you feel more comfortable?

■OBTAIN RESPONSES AND DISCUSS.

Exercise 5: Which Family Conflicts Should We Work On?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to select a family conflict to practice on. Making a list and setting priorities is the process used.]

Now I would like you to get in family groups.

■HAVE THE FAMILIES GET TOGETHER.

The task that you worked on over lunch was to make a list of conflicts in the family.

First, I would like the mothers and teenagers to share your lists with each other.

Then please rank the list from most important to low importance.

Put a "1" by the one that is most important and then a "2" by the next most important and keep going until you have 5 situations that could be worked on.

When you have done that, look at number 3, 4, and 5.

Which of those makes you feel the least uncomfortable?

I want you to come up with a conflict situation that is a low priority and low in discomfort.

If you get stuck or have a question, raise your hand and one of the facilitators will come help you.

■HAVE THE FAMILIES WORK ON PRIORITIZING THEIR CONFLICT SITUATIONS. WANDER FROM GROUP TO GROUP MAKING SURE THEY ARE ABLE TO DO THE TASK.

Exercise 6: Can We Solve a Conflict Situation?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to provide a moderately successful experience for families in resolving a family conflict. Working on a low level conflict is the process.]

Now I want you to use some of your new skills on a real conflict situation.

Because you are just learning to use the six step method, it is best to start on an easy situation.

Make sure the situation you chose is one of the easier ones to resolve.

So, go ahead and work on the situation in your family group.

If you get stuck or have a question, raise your hand and we will come help you.

Has everyone got the idea?

■ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS. THEN HAVE THE FAMILIES GET STARTED TRYING TO RESOLVE A FAMILY CONFLICT. FACILITATORS SHOULD WANDER FROM FAMILY TO FAMILY. OFFER ASSISTANCE AND COACH AS MUCH AS NEEDED TO MAKE SURE IT IS A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE. ALLOW FIFTEEN MINUTES TO WORK ON THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION. AFTER FIFTEEN MINUTES, BRING THE FAMILIES BACK TOGETHER IN ONE GROUP.

What was that like?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING AND DISCUSSION. PROVIDE ADVICE AS NEEDED. REFER BACK TO THE SIX STEP CONFLICT RESOLUTION GUIDELINES WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

Exercise 7: What Is Next?
(15 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to reduce tension, to build group cohesion, to apply learnings at home and create interest in the next topic. Relaxation, between session tasks, giving appreciation, and previewing the next session are used.]

We are at the end of this afternoon's session.

It is possible for tension to build up when doing conflict resolution.

Therefore, let's do some relaxation.

Get yourself in a comfortable position.

Just let yourself breathe naturally.

If you wish, close your eyes.

Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. PAUSE

Feel the warm air flowing out. PAUSE

Feel the warm air releasing all the tension in your body. PAUSE

Make a fist and hold it. PAUSE

Open your fist and let the tension go. PAUSE

Bring your shoulders up to your ears and hold them. PAUSE

Let your shoulders droop and feel the tension release. PAUSE

Breathe in deeply PAUSE

And let it go. PAUSE

Say to yourself, "My breathing is quiet." PAUSE

Say to yourself, "My mind is calm." PAUSE

Say to yourself, "My mind is at peace." PAUSE

Say to yourself, "My mind is still." PAUSE

Forget your mind. PAUSE

Just breathe naturally. PAUSE

Breathe naturally. LONG PAUSE

Now yawn and stretch. PAUSE

Stretch as far as you can. PAUSE

I hope you feel refreshed and strong.

I would like you to accomplish a between-session goal.

Will the mothers and teenagers in a family, please agree to meet once next week at an agreed upon time and place for twenty minutes?

During that time you try to resolve one small conflict - not the hardest one.

■GO AROUND THE ROOM ONE BY ONE AND TRY TO GET AGREEMENT FROM EVERYONE TO MEET IN FAMILY GROUPS AND WORK ON A CONFLICT. IF SOMEONE PRESENTS A REASON

WHY IT CANNOT BE DONE, HAVE THE GROUP BRAINSTORM
WAYS TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS.

At the next session we will deal with the whole issue of custody plans.

This is a difficult matter which the mothers spend some time on when working in sessions without the teenagers present.

Now we want to include the teenagers.

Before we stop for the day, I would you to show appreciation to each other.

Remember you can show appreciation for what someone said and did, and you can also show appreciation for their simply being here, for their smile, for anything that you like.

■ENCOURAGE GIVING APPRECIATION. THIS TIME MOTHERS AND
TEENAGERS CAN GIVE APPRECIATION TO ANYONE. MAKE SURE
NO ONE IS EXCLUDED.

I'll see you again at _____(time and place) on _____ (day and date).

END OF THE SECOND SESSION ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

CONFLICT SITUATIONS FOR ROLE PLAYING

Scene 1: The Boy Friend

Mother: You are very unhappy over your daughter's choice of boy friend - at least 10 years older, much too slick, doesn't work but has lots of money. A drug dealer? He gives your daughter expensive gifts. You think he is using her.

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Scene 7: Younger Children

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