

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

SESSION 11: HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER ON SELECTING A CUSTODIAN?

(Day 6, Morning. Two hours in length.)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Mothers will be able to present their custody needs to their teenagers.
2. Youths will identify what they want in a custodian.
3. Mothers and youths will be able to solve custody issues.

RATIONALE:

Previously mothers confronted a variety of issues around custody planning and practiced developing a plan, selection of the custodian, and implementation of the plan. In a more life-like setting with youths present mother's will have the opportunity to increase their skills in dealing with concerns raised by their children.

The youths, on the other hand, have not dealt with who will be the custodian, and this session gives them the chance to work on that selection and then to interact with their mothers on questions that arise.

The purposes of this session are to increase skills in communicating what the mother and teenager want, to confront some of the many serious and complicated problems around custody arrangements, and to increase problem solving abilities related to custody arrangements. Individual families are not working on their own situations in this session. It is hoped that after learning skills they will tackle issues on their own at home.

Role playing has been selected as the method to improve skills around implementing a custody plan because it allows practice in presentation and conflict resolution. The three situations that will be used as the basis of practice are 1) exploring preferences, 2) dealing with an impasse, and 3) a youth's refusal to participate because of the need to deny that a custodian is necessary (that his or her mother will not be there in the future).

It is important to recognize that families will be at all different levels of making custody arrangements due to existing resources in their extended families, levels of support, and current skill levels. Thus, facilitators must pay attention to these differences and give as much extra support as is possible in a structured group setting.

PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce the participants, facilitators, methods, and topic. Do a lottery. (15 minutes)
2. Have mothers review their progress in custody planning and their criteria for selecting a custodian while the youths work on the qualities they want in a custodian. (20 minutes)
3. Role play the mothers telling their teenagers who they want to serve as a guardian. (30 minutes)
4. Role play a mother and teenager at an impasse and have consultants try to help the family resolve it. (30 minutes)
5. Have the participants deal with a youth who doesn't believe there is a need to select a guardian. (10 minutes)
6. End with relaxation, between session assignments, and giving appreciation. (15 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Strokes
Lottery Tickets
Lottery Prize for Mother
Lottery Prize for Teen
Newsprint and marking pens
Paper and pencils
Note paper for passing
Scripts: Uncle Albert
Stuck
"Mother's" instructions
"Teenager's" instructions
Feeling Thermometer Chart

Exercise 1: What Is This Session About?
(15 minutes)

[The purposes of this session are to increase self-esteem, to reinforce applications of what has been learned to the home, to reward being present and on time, and to create interest in the topic. Positive introductions, homework review, a lottery and a script are used.]

■FACILITATOR SAYS

Welcome back.

I hope things went well for you between the sessions.

I appreciate your being here and being on time.

Let's do a lottery - one for the mothers and one the teenagers.

■PASS OUT LOTTERY TICKETS. HAVE THEM WRITE THEIR NAMES ON THEM. COLLECT THE MOTHERS AND TEENAGERS TICKETS SEPARATELY. MIX THEM UP SEPARATELY AND DRAW A WINNER FROM THE MOTHERS AND ONE FROM THE TEENAGERS. GIVE OUT PRIZES.

It is a good idea to take some time and introduce everybody.

Please tell us your name and complete this sentence, "I have faith in_____."

For example, a mother might say, "I am Mrs. Washington, and I have faith in the power of prayer."

I'll start.

My name is _____ and I have faith in _____.

■HAVE EACH PERSON GIVE HER (HIS) NAME AND COMPLETE THE SENTENCE, "I HAVE FAITH IN_____."

Thank you for those introductions.

Remember to show appreciation when you like something that another person does or says.

Here are some Strokes for you to use.

■GIVE OUT TWENTY STROKES TO EVERYONE.

Last time everyone agreed to set aside 20 minutes at a specific time and place to resolve a conflict.

I want to know how that worked out.

■ASK EACH FAMILY FOR A REPORT. GIVE OUT STROKES. ASK THE GROUP TO BRAINSTORM ANY OBSTACLES THAT CAME UP.

I want to show you what today is all about through a script and then we will break into smaller groups.

Who will read the mother and who will read her teenager?

■SELECT VOLUNTEERS, DECIDE WHO WILL PLAY WHICH PART, GIVE THEM THE SCRIPT AND THEN HAVE THEM READ THE PARTS ALOUD TO THE REST OF THE GROUP.

UNCLE ALBERT

MOTHER: I'm real worried about what's going to happen to you afterwards....

YOUTH: I don't want to talk about it.

MOTHER: We have to talk about it. Someone's got to take care of you and your little sister.

YOUTH: Why can't you just get better?

MOTHER: I wish I could, but that's not possible. So, let me tell you what I think. I've gone over this and over this in my mind. I want Aunt Edna to take care of you.

YOUTH: Aunt Edna! She's too mean.

MOTHER: But she'd take good care of you.

YOUTH: No way! What about Grandma?

MOTHER: Too old.

YOUTH: What about Cousin Grace?

MOTHER: She already has six kids.

YOUTH: What about your girl friend, Gloria?

MOTHER: She doesn't know anything about taking care of kids. No, Aunt Edna is my choice.

YOUTH: Wait a minute! I got it. How about Uncle Albert?

MOTHER: Albert!?! He lives in Florida.

YOUTH: Sounds good to me.

MOTHER: He's always kidding around. Never serious.

YOUTH: I like that.

MOTHER: He'd make you go fishing in that old boat of his.

YOUTH: I'll try anything. Please, Mom, talk to Uncle Albert. Let me talk to him.

MOTHER: Doesn't sound as good as Edna. But, let me think about it.

THE END

Thank you! That was great.

■GIVE OUT STROKES.

You can guess that today we are going to work on who will take care of the kids in the family.

This session can be a difficult one for many families.

Some families will be much further ahead in custody planning than others because they have more resources to count on.

Also this is a very emotional topic to deal with.

It means that both mothers and teenagers recognize that they will lose something very precious.

There are all kinds of secret questions being asked.

For example, is this the right person to love my child?

The teenager might also wonder if this is the right person to love me and act as my mother or father.

If there are kids in the other family, how will they accept adding a new teenager?

In this session we must help each other and treat each other with tenderness and sympathy.

First the mother and teenagers will meet separately for a few minutes.

■SET UP THE MOTHER'S AND YOUTHS' GROUPS. CONTINUE WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND GIVING OUT STROKES. THEN MOVE TO THE SECOND EXERCISE WHICH DIFFERS FOR THE TWO GROUPS.

Exercise 2: (Mothers) Where Am I in Custody Planning?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to return the mothers' attention to custody planning and to prepare them for the role plays that follow. Reviewing where they are in custody planning and having them write down their criteria for selecting a custodian are the approaches used.]

■MAKE SURE YOU COMPLETE THIS EXERCISE ON TIME SO THAT THE GROUPS WILL ALL MEET BACK TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME.

In a few minutes you will practice talking with your teenager about custody.

You will be role playing but not with your own child.

We want to get ready for that role play.

Let's go around the room and tell us where you are in your own custody planning.

■HAVE EACH WOMAN BRIEFLY SHARE WHERE SHE IS IN CUSTODY PLANNING.

Since our earlier sessions on custody planning I am sure you have given thought to who you want to take care of your children.

Some of you may already have all your planning done and arrangements made.

That is great and by telling us what you have done you can help others in the group.

On this piece of paper I want all of you to write down the main qualities you want in a caretaker for your children.

They may have changed since you last thought about them.

■PASS OUT PAPER AND PENCILS TO EVERYONE. ALLOW A FEW MINUTES TO WRITE DOWN THE QUALITIES.

Would you mind sharing some of the qualities you are looking for?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING. IF POSSIBLE, HAVE EACH MOTHER GIVE SOME EXAMPLES FROM HER LIST. GIVE OUT STROKES. THEN HAVE THE MOTHERS GO BACK TO THE BIG GROUP.

■ASK FOR A FEW EXAMPLES FROM EACH GROUP.

Exercise 2: (Youths) What Kind of Person Do I Want?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is for the youths to identify the kind of person they want to take care of them. Brainstorming is employed.]

■MAKE SURE YOU STAY CLOSE TO THE ALLOTTED TIME SO THAT YOU CAN BRING THE GROUP BACK TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER GROUPS AT THE SAME TIME.

In a few minutes we will do some role playing around talking with your mother about who will take care of you in the future.

In the role play you will not be practicing on your own mother.

First, however, you need to have considered a few things.

Let's brainstorm what qualities you would want in the person you would live with who would take care of you.

What ideas do you have?

■ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. WRITE THEM UP ON NEWSPRINT. GIVE OUT STROKES.

That's a great list.

Which one is most important?

■ENCOURAGE COMMENTS ON IMPORTANCE.

You can see that everyone will have a different point of view about what is important.

You need to decide what is most important for you.

Take a few minutes to think about which ones are most important.

■ALLOW A FEW MINUTES FOR THINKING. THEN DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO PAIRS.

Take a few minutes to tell your partner what your highest qualities are in someone to take care of you.

■ALLOW A FEW MINUTES FOR SHARING.

Did you make this list just for you or did you include your brothers and sisters in it too?

Would the list change if you wanted someone to take care of all the children in the family?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING ON HOW THE LIST MIGHT CHANGE IF THEY INCLUDED BROTHERS AND SISTERS. GIVE OUT STROKES.

OK, has everyone got some ideas about the kind of person they would want?

Good. Then let's go back with the mothers.

■TAKE YOUR GROUP BACK TO MEET WITH THE OTHERS.

■ASK FOR A FEW EXAMPLES FROM EACH GROUP.

Exercise 3: How Do We Discuss Custody?
(30 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to become more skilled in talking about who is the best person to take care of the children in the family. Role playing is used.]

Now you are going to practice discussing who is the best person to take care of the teenagers and children in the family.

The first thing we need to do is to create smaller groups so that we can work more productively.

■IF THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE MOTHERS FOR EACH GROUP, BREAK THE LARGE GROUP INTO THREE SMALL ONES. YOU DON'T WANT THE MOTHERS TO FEEL OVERWHELMED BY ALL THE TEENAGERS. TRY TO HAVE THE MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT GROUPS.

IF YOU THINK IT WILL WORK FOR YOUR GROUP, MOTHERS CAN PLAY TEENAGERS AND TEENAGERS CAN PLAY MOTHERS. THE SAME DIRECTIONS WHICH FOLLOW ARE TO BE USED IN EACH GROUP.

For this role play I need two volunteers - one to play the mother and the other to play the teenager.

SELECT THE VOLUNTEERS AND DECIDE WHO WILL PLAY EACH ROLE.

Here are your instructions.

ONE FACILITATOR TAKES THE "MOTHER" ASIDE, GIVES HER AN INSTRUCTION CARD AND EXPLAIN IT TO HER.

"MOTHER'S" INSTRUCTIONS

1. TELL YOUR TEENAGER THAT YOU NEED TO SELECT A GUARDIAN.
2. TELL YOUR TEENAGER THAT YOU WANT HIS OR HER REACTION, AND THAT YOU WILL MAKE THE FINAL DECISION IN THE END.
3. TELL YOUR TEENAGER WHAT **YOU** ARE LOOKING FOR IN A GUARDIAN. FOR EXAMPLE:

SOMEONE WHO IS KIND AND LOVING

SOMEONE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

SOMEONE WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS

4. TELL YOUR TEENAGER YOU HAD THREE CHOICES AND WHY YOU SELECTED **GRANDMOTHER**.

GRANDMOTHER: LOVING, RESPONSIBLE, WILL GET BENEFITS.

OLDEST CHILD: PART OF THE FAMILY, TOO YOUNG, TOO MUCH OF A BURDEN ON HER (HIM), NOT SURE ON BENEFITS.

AUNT BETTY: NOT THAT CARING, RESPONSIBLE, EARNS TOO MUCH MONEY TO GET BENEFITS.

5. TRY TO REACH AGREEMENT.
6. REMEMBER THAT YOU ALSO HAVE AN 8 YEAR OLD GIRL AND A 5 YEAR OLD SON.

THE OTHER FACILITATOR TAKES THE TEENAGER, GIVES HIM/HER AN INSTRUCTION CARD, AND EXPLAINS IT.

TEENAGER'S INSTRUCTIONS

1. REACT SADLY TO YOUR MOTHER'S NEWS THAT SHE IS GOING TO CHOOSE A GUARDIAN.
2. HERE ARE SOME CHOICES AND YOUR REACTIONS TO THEM.

GRANDMOTHER: TOO STRICT.

OLDEST CHILD: TOO YOUNG. WON'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT.

AUNT BETTY: YOUR FAVORITE. LOTS OF FUN.

UNCLE ED: OK. WOULD LET YOU DO WHATEVER YOU WANTED TO.

3. TRY TO REACH AGREEMENT.

Now the rest of you will be observers.

GIVE OUT OBSERVER TASKS. IF THERE ARE MORE OBSERVERS THAN TASKS, GIVE THE SAME TASK TO TWO OBSERVERS.

Here is what you are to pay attention to.

You pay attention to	facial expressions
	eye contact
	gestures
	posture
	breathing
	feelings
	voice
	words

OK. Let's go ahead and do the role play.

ALLOW 8 MINUTES FOR THE ROLE PLAY. THEN OBTAIN FEEDBACK.

Thank you. That was great!

GIVE OUT STROKES TO THE ROLE PLAYERS.

Now let's get some feedback.

"Mother," tell us how you felt on the Feeling Thermometer, what was one thing you did that you liked, and one thing you would have done differently.

HOLD UP A CHART OF A FEELING THERMOMETER. OBTAIN FEEDBACK.

"Teenager," tell us how you felt, what was one thing you did that you liked, and one thing you would have done differently.

OBTAIN FEEDBACK.

Now for the observers.

Tell us what was one thing that the mother and teenager did that you liked, and one thing you would have done differently.

OBTAIN FEEDBACK.

What comments do you have about the role play?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

Exercise 4: How Do We Resolve a Conflict?
(30 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to improve resolving an impasse over the choice of a guardian. Conflict resolution skills are to be employed by consultants to a role play.]

This time we want to work on getting over a roadblock.

We will divide the group in half, and each small group will have a problem or conflict to work on.

■DIVIDE THE GROUP IN HALF. A FACILITATOR GOES WITH EACH SMALL GROUP.

GROUP 1

I'll need four volunteers - one for the mother, one for the teenager, and two to play consultants.

■SELECT VOLUNTEERS. DECIDE WHO WILL PLAY WHICH ROLE. THEN GIVE INSTRUCTIONS.

Here's how this is going to work.

The mother and teenager will have a script that just gets them started.

There will be a few lines and then it will say "Keep talking on your own. Make up the lines."

The two consultants will watch closely, and, then when I give you the signal, I want you to step in and see if you can help the mother and teenager reach agreement.

Remember the steps in conflict resolution: 1) Define the conflict; 2) Come up with different ways to resolve it; 3) Evaluate the different solutions; 4) pick one; 5) figure out how to do it and try it.

The rest of you can't talk to the consultants but you can pass them notes telling them what to do.

■PASS OUT NOTE PAPER AND PENCILS TO THE REST OF THE GROUP.

Here is the script.

STUCK

TEENAGER: I won't live with your brother Bill. I don't care what you say. I don't like him.

MOTHER: He's the best we've got.

TEENAGER: He's fat and ugly and sleeps all the time. He drinks like a fish.

MOTHER: I'm sorry but that's who it is.

TEENAGER: Anybody else.

MOTHER: There isn't anybody else.

TEENAGER: There's your sisters, Dad's mother, Cousin Sandy - a whole bunch.

MOTHER: My sisters won't do it. Dad's mother won't take the younger kids because he's not the father.

TEENAGER: **KEEP TALKING ON YOUR OWN. MAKE UP THE LINES.**

MOTHER: **KEEP TALKING ON YOUR OWN. MAKE UP THE LINES.**

THE END

Keep the conversation going on your own.

■ALLOW THE CONVERSATION TO CONTINUE FOR A FEW MINUTES. THEN BRING IN THE CONSULTANTS.

Now let's have the consultants step in and help Mother and Teenager work this out.

Remember, if you want to give the consultants, advice pass them a note.

■ALLOW THE CONSULTANTS 10 MINUTES TO HELP THE MOTHER AND TEENAGER. COACH IF NECESSARY, BRINGING IN IDEAS FROM CONFLICT RESOLUTION. **FOR YOUR USE ONLY, A REMINDER FOLLOWS:**

THE SIX STEP CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

STEP 1: IDENTIFY AND DEFINE THE CONFLICT

- A. Select a time when the parent and teenager are not busy.
- B. Be sure both people know that together you want to find a solution that is acceptable to the both of you.
- C. Tell the other person clearly and precisely that there is a specific problem that needs to be solved.
- D. Tell the other person what feelings you have and what needs of yours are not being met. (Don't blame the other person.)
- E. Ask the other person to express his or her feelings.
- F. Avoid giving messages that put down or criticize the other person.
- G. Stick to one specific conflict and don't bring up old criticisms that have nothing to do with this conflict.

STEP 2: COME UP WITH POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

- A. Try to get the other person's solutions first.
- B. **Don't** make fun of, evaluate or judge any of the solutions.
- C. Get all possible solutions before evaluating any of them.
- D. Try not to make comments that might indicate that any of the possible solutions is unacceptable to you.
- E. Keep pressing for possible solutions until it seems that no more will be offered.
- F. Make your own suggestions.

STEP 3: EVALUATE THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- A. Together the two of you should examine the advantages and disadvantages of each possible solution.
- B. Be honest about your feelings concerning the possible solutions.

- C. Avoid accusations, threats, commands, and critical remarks.
- D. Eliminate those suggested solutions that are unacceptable to either of you for whatever reason.
- E. If you can't end up with one or two solutions that seem best, schedule another time to meet again.

STEP 4: DECIDE ON THE BEST ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION

- A. Keep testing out the remaining solutions against the other person's feelings. ("Do you think this one would solve the problem?")
- B. Write down solutions that involve a number of points.
- C. Make sure that it is understood that each person is making a commitment to carry out the decision.
- D. Don't think of a solution as final and impossible to change.

STEP 5: WORK OUT WAYS TO IMPLEMENT THE SOLUTION

- A. Raise questions about how to try out the solution. (When do we start? What days? What do we need to start? How will we know that the other person is doing what they said they would?)
- B. Discuss answers to the questions and make sure that both people understand how the solution will be implemented.

STEP 6: FOLLOW UP TO EVALUATE HOW IT WORKED

- A. Remember that sometimes solutions may need to be changed or modified.
- B. Keep the door open for more communication if this is the case.
- C. Evaluate the solution after a week, then two weeks, and so on.

Let's stop and get some feedback.

Consultants, how did you feel on the Feeling Thermometer, what one thing did you like about what you did and what one thing would do differently?

■HOLD UP A CHART OF THE FEELING THERMOMETER. OBTAIN FEEDBACK.

Mother and teenager, how did you feel during the conversation?

Also tell us what one thing did you like about the way the consultants tried to help you and what one thing would you have done differently?

■OBTAIN FEEDBACK.

What kinds of notes did you consultants receive from others in the room?

■OBTAIN RESPONSE.

What one thing did the rest of you like and what one thing would you have done differently?

■OBTAIN RESPONSES AND DISCUSS. AGAIN BRING IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IDEAS WHEN RELEVANT AND HELPFUL.

GROUP 2

I'll need four volunteers - one for the mother, one for the teenager, and two to play consultants.

■SELECT VOLUNTEERS. DECIDE WHO WILL PLAY WHICH ROLE. THEN GIVE INSTRUCTIONS.

Here's how this is going to work.

The mother and teenager will have a script that just gets them started.

There will be a few lines and then it will say "Keep talking on your own. Make up the lines."

The two consultants will watch closely, and, then when I give you the signal, I want you to step in and see if you can help the mother and teenager reach agreement.

Remember the steps in conflict resolution: 1) Define the conflict; 2) Come up with different ways to resolve it; 3) Evaluate the different solutions; 4) pick one; 5) figure out how to do it and try it.

The rest of you can't talk to the consultants but you can pass them notes telling them what to do.

■PASS OUT NOTE PAPER AND PENCILS TO THE REST OF THE GROUP.

Here is the script.

CONFUSED

TEENAGER: Isn't it time we found someone to take care of me?

MOTHER: We should.

TEENAGER: Well, what's happening?

MOTHER: I just can't think of anybody.

TEENAGER: What about Dad?

MOTHER: I couldn't find him if I had to.

TEENAGER: There must be somebody.

MOTHER: We are pretty much alone. I just don't know what to do.

TEENAGER: **KEEP TALKING ON YOUR OWN. MAKE UP THE LINES.**

MOTHER: **KEEP TALKING ON YOUR OWN. MAKE UP THE LINES.**

THE END

Keep the conversation going on your own.

■ALLOW THE CONVERSATION TO CONTINUE FOR A FEW MINUTES. THEN BRING IN THE CONSULTANTS.

Now let's have the consultants step in and help Mother and Teenager work this out.

Remember, if you want to give the consultants, advice pass them a note.

■ALLOW THE CONSULTANTS 10 MINUTES TO HELP THE MOTHER AND TEENAGER. COACH IF NECESSARY, BRINGING IN IDEAS

FROM CONFLICT RESOLUTION. **FOR YOUR USE ONLY, A REMINDER FOLLOWS:**

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- C. Tell the other person clearly and precisely that there is a specific problem that needs to be solved.
- D. Tell the other person what feelings you have and what needs of yours are not being met. (Don't blame the other person.)
- E. Ask the other person to express his or her feelings.
- F. Avoid giving messages that put down or criticize the other person.
- G. Stick to one specific conflict and don't bring up old criticisms that have nothing to do with this conflict.

STEP 2: COME UP WITH POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

- A. Try to get the other person's solutions first.
- B. **Don't** make fun of, evaluate or judge any of the solutions.
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STEP 5: WORK OUT WAYS TO IMPLEMENT THE SOLUTION

- A. Raise questions about how to try out the solution. (When do we start? What days? What do we need to start? How will we know that the other person is doing what they said they would?)
- B. Discuss answers to the questions and make sure that both people understand how the solution will be implemented.

STEP 6: FOLLOW UP TO EVALUATE HOW IT WORKED

- A. Remember that sometimes solutions may need to be changed or modified.
- B. Keep the door open for more communication if this is the case.
- C. Evaluate the solution after a week, then two weeks, and so on.

Let's stop and get some feedback.

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■HOLD UP A CHART OF THE FEELING THERMOMETER. OBTAIN FEEDBACK.

Mother and teenager, how did you feel during the conversation?

Also tell us what one thing did you like about the way the consultants tried to help you and what one thing would you have done differently?

■OBTAIN FEEDBACK.

What kinds of notes did you consultants receive from others in the room?

■OBTAIN RESPONSE.

What one thing did the rest of you like and what one thing would you have done differently?

■OBTAIN RESPONSES AND DISCUSS. AGAIN BRING IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IDEAS WHEN RELEVANT AND HELPFUL.

■BRING THE TWO GROUPS BACK TOGETHER AND ASK FOR A REPORT.

I am going to ask each group for a quick report.

Please tell us what the conflict was about and how it was solved.

■OBTAIN RESPONSES.

What was the experience like?

■OBTAIN RESPONSES AND DISCUSS.

Exercise 5: How Do I Accept This Situation?
(10 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to increase skills in aiding a teenager face the need for custody.
The facilitator plays the teenager and others are to help her.]**

Let's take a few minutes and see how you would handle this next situation.

I am going to play the teenager.

Anyone can say what they want to me that they think will be helpful to me.

■UNDERNEATH YOUR EXTERIOR COMMENTS IS THE FACT THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO ADMIT THAT YOUR MOTHER IS DYING. THAT'S WHY YOU WON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH CUSTODY PLANNING. USE DENIAL A LOT. GRADUALLY LET THE GROUP HELP YOU.

Are you ready?

I'm the teenager, and, after I tell you my reactions to this custody planning stuff, you start talking to me.

Help me see things as they are.

Any questions?

■CLARIFY THE PROCEDURE.

Here we go.

Talking about who will take care of me is a total waste of time.

This is really stupid.

I don't see the point of it.

■AS PEOPLE RESPOND TO YOU KEEP MAKING REMARKS SUCH AS:

"WHY SHOULD I DO THIS?"

"IT ISN'T NECESSARY."

"I'LL WORRY ABOUT IT WHEN SOMETHING REALLY HAPPENS TO HER."

"THERE'S NO REASON TO GO THROUGH THIS."

"SHE'S NOT SICK NOW."

"SHE TAKES HER MEDICINE. EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE."

■KEEP IT UP FOR FIVE MINUTES.

How did you feel about me?

■OBTAIN RESPONSES.

What was going on?

■ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

What were the best ways to help me?

■ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

Exercise 6: What's Next?
(15 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to ease tensions, assign between-sessions tasks, reinforce attendance and build group cohesion. Relaxation, goal-setting, and group appreciation are included.]

We are almost at the end of this morning's session.

I know that for some of you this has been a difficult session.

Tension can build up in a session on custody planning.

Now let's take a moment to relax.

Get comfortable in your chair. PAUSE

Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. PAUSE

If you want to close your eyes, that is fine.

Breathe in deeply PAUSE

And let it out slowly. PAUSE

Breathe in deeply and let it out slowly. PAUSE

Feel the cool air coming in PAUSE

And the warm air flowing out. PAUSE

With your eyes closed imagine a clear, night sky. PAUSE

See the full moon shining brightly in the night sky.

Its creamy color lights up the darkness. PAUSE

See the faces carved on the ivory moon. PAUSE

See the moonlight on your hands. PAUSE

Look down at the tiny pool of water by your feet.

See the whole, huge, ivory moon reflected in that tiny pool of water. PAUSE

The depth of the moon is the depth of the water. PAUSE

Feel yourself becoming the moon - PAUSE

Floating easily in the night time sky PAUSE

Cool, calm, mysterious. PAUSE

Looking down on earth. PAUSE

Be the moon. PAUSE

Be the moon. PAUSE

Be silent and majestic. PAUSE

Fill the night time sky. PAUSE

See your moonlight shining everywhere. PAUSE

Take a breath in and let it out slowly. PAUSE

Now yawn and stretch. PAUSE

Yawn and stretch.

I hope you feel at peace.

■MAKE A BETWEEN-SESSION'S ASSIGNMENT

For a between-session's task I would like mothers and youths to sit down and agree on a time and place for talking about selecting someone to take care of the children in the family.

Also agree on what the agenda is for this first meeting.

Maybe all you want to talk about this first time is what each of you would look for in a guardian.

Make the first meeting short.

You don't have to talk about everything the first time you sit down together.

If you agree, the first meeting doesn't have to happen right away.

It can happen when you are both ready.

Is everyone clear?

■ANSWER QUESTIONS. THEN GO AROUND THE GROUP AND ASK EACH FAMILY IF THIS ASSIGNMENT IS AGREEABLE TO THEM. TRY TO GAIN COMMITMENTS FROM EACH FAMILY.

Now I would like you to show appreciation to each other.

Let the other group members know you appreciate their contributions.

■ENCOURAGE SHOWING APPRECIATION. GIVE OUT STROKES AND VERBAL COMPLIMENTS. MAKE SURE EVERYONE IS INCLUDED.

That's it for this morning.

This afternoon we are going to work on drugs and alcohol.

One reason this is an important topic is because substance use can lead to becoming infected with sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.

We'll go into how that can happen this afternoon.

It is lunch time.

Please be back here at _____ (time).

We will see you then.

THE END OF THE JOINT SESSION ON CUSTODY

UNCLE ALBERT

MOTHER: I'm real worried about what's going to happen to you afterwards....

YOUTH: I don't want to talk about it.

MOTHER: We have to talk about it. Someone's got to take care of you and your little sister.

YOUTH: Why can't you just get better?

MOTHER: I wish I could, but that's not possible. So, let me tell you what I think. I've gone over this and over this in my mind. I want Aunt Edna to take care of you.

YOUTH: Aunt Edna! She's too mean.

MOTHER: But she'd take good care of you.

YOUTH: No way! What about Grandma?

MOTHER: Too old.

YOUTH: What about Cousin Grace?

MOTHER: She already has six kids.

YOUTH: What about your girl friend, Gloria?

MOTHER: She doesn't know anything about taking care of kids. No, Aunt Edna is my choice.

YOUTH: Wait a minute! I got it. How about Uncle Albert?

MOTHER: Albert!? He lives in Florida.

YOUTH: Sounds good to me.

MOTHER: He's always kidding around. Never serious.

YOUTH: I like that.

MOTHER: He'd make you go fishing in that old boat of his.

YOUTH: I'll try anything. Please, Mom, talk to Uncle Albert. Let me talk to him.

MOTHER: Doesn't sound as good as Edna. But, let me think about it.

THE END

"MOTHER'S" INSTRUCTIONS

1. TELL YOUR TEENAGER THAT YOU NEED TO SELECT A GUARDIAN.
2. TELL YOUR TEENAGER THAT YOU WANT HIS OR HER REACTION, AND THAT YOU WILL MAKE THE FINAL DECISION IN THE END.
3. TELL YOUR TEENAGER WHAT **YOU** ARE LOOKING FOR IN A GUARDIAN. FOR EXAMPLE:

SOMEONE WHO IS KIND AND LOVING

SOMEONE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

SOMEONE WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS

4. TELL YOUR TEENAGER YOU HAD THREE CHOICES AND WHY YOU SELECTED **GRANDMOTHER**.

GRANDMOTHER: LOVING, RESPONSIBLE, WILL GET BENEFITS.

OLDEST CHILD: PART OF THE FAMILY, TOO YOUNG, TOO MUCH OF A BURDEN ON HER (HIM), NOT SURE ON BENEFITS.

AUNT BETTY: NOT THAT CARING, RESPONSIBLE, EARNS TOO MUCH MONEY TO GET BENEFITS.

5. TRY TO REACH AGREEMENT.
6. REMEMBER THAT YOU ALSO HAVE AN 8 YEAR OLD GIRL AND A 5 YEAR OLD SON.

TEENAGER'S INSTRUCTIONS

1. REACT SADLY TO YOUR MOTHER'S NEWS THAT SHE IS GOING TO CHOOSE A GUARDIAN.
2. HERE ARE SOME CHOICES AND YOUR REACTIONS TO THEM.

GRANDMOTHER: TOO STRICT.

OLDEST CHILD: TOO YOUNG. WON'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT.

AUNT BETTY: YOUR FAVORITE. LOTS OF FUN.

UNCLE ED: OK. WOULD LET YOU DO WHATEVER YOU WANTED TO.
3. TRY TO REACH AGREEMENT.

STUCK

TEENAGER: I won't live with your brother Bill. I don't care what you say. I don't like him.

MOTHER: He's the best we've got.

TEENAGER: He's fat and ugly and sleeps all the time. He drinks like a fish.

MOTHER: I'm sorry but that's who it is.

TEENAGER: Anybody else.

MOTHER: There isn't anybody else.

TEENAGER: There's your sisters, Dad's mother, Cousin Sandy - a whole bunch.

MOTHER: My sisters won't do it. Dad's mother won't take the younger kids because he's not the father.

TEENAGER: **KEEP TALKING ON YOUR OWN. MAKE UP THE LINES.**

MOTHER: **KEEP TALKING ON YOUR OWN. MAKE UP THE LINES.**

THE END

CONFUSED

TEENAGER: Isn't it time we found someone to take care of me?

MOTHER: We should.

TEENAGER: Well, what's happening?

MOTHER: I just can't think of anybody.

TEENAGER: What about Dad?

MOTHER: I couldn't find him if I had to.

TEENAGER: There must be somebody.

MOTHER: We are pretty much alone. I just don't know what to do.

TEENAGER: **KEEP TALKING ON YOUR OWN. MAKE UP THE LINES.**

MOTHER: **KEEP TALKING ON YOUR OWN. MAKE UP THE LINES.**

THE END