

MOTHER'S TRAINING - ILLNESS PHASE
(HRA PROJECT)

SESSION 3: WHAT KINDS OF ARRANGEMENTS CAN I MAKE?

(Day 2, Morning. Two hours in length.)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Mothers will identify feelings about custody planning and their effect on self-concepts.
2. Mothers will be able to discriminate between custody options.
3. Mothers will improve their skills in selecting the option that best fits their situation.
4. Mothers will increase their comfort with custody planning.

RATIONALE:

Now that mothers have gone through the processes of identifying, evaluating and selecting a potential custodian for their children, the next step in the sequence needs to be addressed. That step is to become familiar with the different options that exist for custody planning. These options consist of various guardianship arrangements, foster care, adoption, appointment through a will, and doing nothing.

In this session the options are presented, and their advantages and disadvantages are discussed. Mother's are given the opportunity to practice making a selection. Exploration of feelings and relaxation continue to be included. Examining feelings can increase motivation and decrease road blocks, and relaxation improves both coping and empowerment.

PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce the participants, facilitators, and topic. Give out Strokes, and do a lottery. Review achievements on the between-session goals. (15 minutes)
2. Explore feelings and meaning through using the Feeling Thermometer and examining self-concepts. (10 minutes)
3. Present the various options, introducing them through brief scripts. (35 minutes)
4. Present the advantages and disadvantages of each option. (10 minutes)
5. Match options to representative mothers' situations. (15 minutes)
6. Practice making a selection of an option. (25 minutes)

7. End the session with relaxation, announcing the next session, and giving appreciation. (10 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Strokes
Lottery Tickets
Lottery Prize
Feeling Thermometer
Handout on Options
Handout on Advantages and Disadvantages of Options
Handout on Matching Situations to Options

Exercise 1: What Happened Between Session?
(15 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to increase self-esteem, build group solidarity and increase interest in the session's topic.]

I am glad to see you here again.

Let's start with introductions.

Please tell us your first name and complete this sentence, "My inner strength comes from....."

For example, you might say, "My name is Irene, and my inner strength comes from my believe in God."

I'll go first.

My name is _____ , and my inner strength comes from_____.

HAVE EACH MOTHER GIVE HER FIRST NAME AND COMPLETE THE SENTENCE, "MY INNER STRENGTH COMES FROM....."

Thank you.

Here are your Strokes for today.

HAND OUT 20 STROKES FOR EACH MOTHER TO USE DURING THE SESSION.

Use them freely because it is real important to support each other during these difficult times.

Now let's review what you did to achieve the goal that you set for yourself between sessions.

Please tell us what you had wanted to do in taking a step toward custody planning and what you did.

HAVE EACH WOMAN STATE HER GOAL AND WHAT SHE DID. USE PROBLEM SOLVING ON ANY BARRIERS THAT CAME UP. REMEMBER TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE GOAL WAS TO HAVE BEEN REALISTIC, CLEAR, NOT TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE, AND EASY TO TELL IF IT WAS ACHIEVED. GIVE OUT STROKES.

I am glad to see all the first steps that you took.

It is time for a lottery.

Write your names on the lottery tickets.

PASS OUT LOTTERY TICKETS, HAVE A NAME WRITTEN ON THEM, COLLECT THEM, PLACE THEM IN A BOWL, MIX THEM UP, DRAW A TICKET, AND GIVE OUT A PRIZE TO THE WINNER.

Today we will learn about the different kinds of custody arrangements that you could make.

The options are appoint a guardian, foster care, adoption, a will, and doing nothing.

We will look at the consequences of each and practice making a decision about which one is best for you.

Exercise 2: What Does Making Arrangements Mean to Me?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to link feelings and meaning to making a custody plan. Using the Feeling Thermometer and exploring how planning makes each mother feel about herself is the approach taken.]

Some time has gone by since the last session when we worked on who is the best person to take care of your children in the future.

My guess is that custody planning has been on your mind.

HOLD UP A COPY OF THE FEELING THERMOMETER.

Remember the Feeling Thermometer?

A temperature of 100 is the extreme end of discomfort.

You would feeling terribly uncomfortable if you had that temperature.

A temperature of Zero means you feel completely comfortable.

What are your temperature readings now?

OBTAIN RESPONSES.

What do you think will make you more comfortable?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

How would you answer this question?

How will you feel about yourself if you make a formal custody plan?

For example, one mother might feel "I have done my duty as a mother" while another might feel, "I am abandoning my kids."

What does it mean to you and your view of yourself?

ENCOURAGE SHARING AND DISCUSSION.

How you feel and what you think of yourself will make a big difference in how you go about planning for your children's future.

Exercise 3: What Are the Options?
(35 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to make mothers familiar with the different kinds of custody plans. Scripts and presentations are the methods used.]

Now we are going to look at the different kinds of arrangements that are possible for your children.

After the options have been explained and we have looked at their advantages and disadvantages, we will practice matching mothers' situations to the options.

What is the best fit?

The five options are guardianship, adoption, foster care, wills, and doing nothing.

Here is a little scene to introduce the first option.

FACILITATORS PLAY THE PARTS IN THE FOLLOWING SCENE.

THE GUARDIAN

FATHER: Hello, Grandma Jones.

GRANDMOTHER: Well, well. At long last the father returns. Where did you come from?

FATHER: I've been away.

GRANDMOTHER: For six years.

FATHER: It's a long time. I know. But I couldn't help it.

GRANDMOTHER: So, what are you doing here now?

FATHER: I want my kids.

GRANDMOTHER: You are a little late. I have been appointed guardian by the court.

FATHER: I'm sure you're taking care of the children real good.

GRANDMOTHER: I'm trying.

FATHER: I guess I just want to see them. That's all.

GRANDMOTHER: Tell you what. I'll talk to them about it, and you come back tomorrow night.

THE END

Let's talk about guardianship and what it means.

HAND OUT DESCRIPTION OF GUARDIANSHIP.

[INSERT PRESENTATION ON GUARDIANSHIP]

ANSWER QUESTIONS.

Now we will have a little scene on the next choice.

Here we have an adoptive mother and her new child.

FACILITATORS ACT THE PARTS IN THE NEXT SCENE ON ADOPTION.

THE ADOPTED CHILD

NEW MOTHER: How do you like your new home?

ADOPTED CHILD: It's OK.

NEW MOTHER: Are you a little nervous?

ADOPTED CHILD: I don't know.

NEW MOTHER: You are going to be a part of my family now. You will have a new brother - Jack - and new sister - Mary, and you will be treated just like they are. Whatever we have is yours too. Dad and I will love you in the same way we do Jack and Mary.

ADOPTED CHILD: Do I get my own room?

NEW MOTHER: Yes.

ADOPTED CHILD: What do I call you and Mr. Franklin?

NEW MOTHER: Call him "Dad" or he said you could call him "Sonny." I prefer "Mom."

ADOPTED CHILD: I can't call you "Mom."

NEW MOTHER: I'm guess it's hard to call me "Mom." How about calling me "Aunt Joyce" for now. When it's easier, you can try calling me "Mom."

ADOPTED CHILD: OK.

THE END

The second choice of arrangements is adoption.

What is adoption all about?

HAND OUT MATERIAL ON ADOPTION.

[INSERT PRESENTATION ON ADOPTION]

ANSWER QUESTIONS.

What comes next?

This scene is between a case worker and a teenager.

HAVE FACILITATORS PLAY THE PARTS IN A SCENE ON FOSTER CARE.

WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?

CASE WORKER: How did you like your foster care parents?

TEENAGER: They seemed OK. I have to live with them?

CASE WORKER: That's what we worked out.

TEENAGER: But, why are they taking me?

CASE WORKER: Because they want to.

TEENAGER: They don't even know me.

CASE WORKER: They know you enough to think that you will fit in with them and that they can help you.

TEENAGER: What do they get out of it?

CASE WORKER: I guess they like the idea of having a teenager in the family. Also they receive some funds from the foster care program.

TEENAGER: So, they are getting paid to take me?

CASE WORKER: Yes. Does that bother you?

TEENAGER: I don't know. I guess not.

CASE WORKER: Look, making this kind of adjustment is not easy. It might be difficult at first, but I will be there to smooth things out and help both you and your foster parents.

THE END

Let's see what we can learn about foster care.

HAND OUT THE INFORMATION ON FOSTER CARE.

[INSERT THE PRESENTATION ON FOSTER CARE]

ANSWER QUESTIONS.

Here is the next option.

A lawyer and a mother living with AIDS are talking.

THE FACILITATORS PLAY THE ROLES OF THE MOTHER AND A LAWYER.

THE WILL

LAWYER: Good morning. What brings you here?

MOTHER: Well, I have AIDS. Do you know anything about that?

LAWYER: I specialize in helping mothers living with AIDS work out their legal matters.

MOTHER: So, you have done this before?

LAWYER: Yes.

MOTHER: I have been told that I ought to make a will. But I don't see why I can't write one myself.

LAWYER: The reason that it is good to make a will with a lawyer is that wills have to follow certain rules, and I can help you make sure that yours is correct. Why do you want to make a will?

MOTHER: I want to name someone to take care of my kids.

LAWYER: Who is that?

MOTHER: My sister, Jacky.

LAWYER: What about your children's father? Why don't you want him to take care of your kids?

MOTHER: That bum! He left us a long time ago. He wasn't good to us then, and I can't see he'd be any better now.

LAWYER: What did he do?

MOTHER: Nothing but knock us around. He never gave us a penny.

LAWYER: I can help you show why he should not be responsible for your children's care in the future.

MOTHER: That would take a load off of my mind.

LAWYER: Let me take a few minutes and explain what a will can and cannot do. That way you can decide whether making a will is the best thing for you.

THE END

What is making a will all about?

HAND OUT THE INFORMATION ON MAKING A WILL.

[INSERT THE PRESENTATION ON MAKING A WILL.]

ANSWER QUESTIONS.

Now we are at the last option.

Here is a little scene about that.

Two mothers living with AIDS are talking.

THE FACILITATORS READ THE PARTS OF THE TWO MOTHERS. THE SCENE IS AS FOLLOWS:

DOING NOTHING

JUANITA: Yesterday I got my uncle appointed guardian by the court. It was a lot easier than I thought. What are you doing?

PHYLLIS: I don't have to worry about it.

JUANITA: Why not?

PHYLLIS: I'm already living with mom. She helps out a lot. Nothing needs to change. She'll just keep doing what she's been doing.

JUANITA: She agreed to take care of the kids?

PHYLLIS: I didn't ask her.

JUANITA: How come?

PHYLLIS: There's no need to. She's the best person. The kids know her and love her.

JUANITA: Don't you want to ask her - just to make sure?

PHYLLIS: We don't talk about it. I know it my heart this is what she would want to do. She's devoted to the kids.

JUANITA: If it was me, I would check it out.

PHYLLIS: My family's just different than yours.

THE END

The last choice that you have is to do nothing or not make any formal arrangements.

What about that option?

HAND OUT INFORMATION ON DOING NOTHING.

[INSERT A PRESENTATION ON DOING NOTHING.]

ANSWER QUESTIONS.

Now you should be familiar with your choices.

Exercise 4: What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to familiarize the mothers with the advantages and disadvantages of the options. A brief presentation and discussion is the method used.]

We know what the options are, but what are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?

HAND OUT INFORMATION ON THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EACH OPTION.

Let's review the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

EXPLAIN THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EACH OPTION. ANSWER QUESTIONS AND DISCUSS.

Exercise 5: How Can I Make Sure I Understand?

(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase the mothers' abilities to match situations to options. Practice matching situations to options is the method used.]

To make sure that the options and their advantages and disadvantages are clear we are going to practice matching situations to options.

We will divide the group in half, and each half will be given three situations to work on.

Your job is to recommend which options are best for the situations that you have before you.

DIVIDE THE GROUP IN HALF. A FACILITATOR GOES WITH EACH GROUP. HAND OUT A DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATIONS. TAKE THE SITUATIONS ONE AT A TIME. HAVE THE GROUP TRY TO COME TO A CONSENSUS ON WHICH OPTIONS FITS BEST. THERE MAY BE MORE THAN ONE POSSIBLE OPTION FOR THE MOTHER TO EXPLORE. THE SITUATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

MATCHING SITUATIONS TO OPTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS: YOUR TASK IS TO RECOMMEND THE BEST OPTIONS FOR THE MOTHER IN EACH OF THREE SITUATIONS BELOW.

THE OPTIONS ARE 1) GUARDIANSHIP; 2) ADOPTION; 3) FOSTER CARE; 4) A WILL; AND 5) DO NOTHING.

SITUATION 1:

Gloria moved here from the South six years ago. She has no family and few friends in New York. Her children are 3, 5, and 14. The oldest daughter's father lives somewhere in Alabama, but exactly where is not known. The younger children's father comes around sometimes, and he helps out with money on occasion. He does not think he is able to take care of the children.

SITUATION 2:

Ruby has a 16 year old daughter who may be HIV positive. Ruth, the daughter is close friends with Ruby sister's daughter - Arlene. Ruth is very fond of her aunt also. Ruby's ex-husband says Ruth could live with him, if nothing else works out. He is a fairly gentle man who would have trouble being firm with Ruth, and he is an IV drug user. Ruby's sister would be willing to have Ruth stay there if she protected herself better from HIV infection.

SITUATION 3:

Angelino has a 2 year old son, a 3 year old daughter, and a 17 year old son who will turn 18 in three months. Her main concern is for her little ones. The father of the little ones was killed a year ago. Angelino has four brothers and five sisters. All of them want to help in one way or another. They are very big on keeping the family together.

THE END

AFTER TEN MINUTES BRING THE GROUPS BACK TOGETHER AGAIN AND HAVE THEM INDICATE WHAT THEY CHOSE. HOPEFULLY THE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL EMPHASIZE FOSTER CARE FOR THE FIRST SITUATION; GUARDIANSHIP FOR THE SECOND SITUATION; AND ADOPTION FOR THE THIRD SITUATION.

Let's hear your recommendations.

HAVE THE GROUP MAKE BRIEF PRESENTATIONS. DISCUSS. HELP SHAPE CHOICES ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES EXERCISE.

Thank you for your ideas.

They were very good.

Exercise 6: How Can I Improve My Skills in Choosing?
(25 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase the mother's skills in making a decision on which option best fits her situation. Role playing and personal consideration are employed to reach the goal.]

Now let's try using what we learned.

First, I will divide the group into trios.

DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO TRIOS.

In each small group I need two volunteers.

SELECT THE VOLUNTEERS.

In each group there will be a "Grace" and a "Marsha."

For those of you who are playing Grace, here are your instructions.

You are mother living with AIDS.

You have a 5 year old son and a 14 year old daughter.

You want to do something to provide care for your children in the future, but you don't know what your choices are.

Ask your friend, Marsha, to help you.

You want to make a decision.

Here are the instructions for Marsha.

Marsha, you are a mother living with AIDS.

You have a 13 year old son and a 3 year old daughter.

Your older sister and her husband agreed to adopt your children.

You thought that was the best thing to do.

Your friend, Grace, has questions about what she should do.

Help her think it through.

You can tell her that you are no expert.

Use the handouts which explained the options and the advantages and disadvantages as much as you wish.

The other person in the small group will be the observer who will give feedback.

Remember, in making a good decision you list the options, check out their pluses and minuses, select one, and figure out what has to be done to put the plan into effect.

Let's get into the small groups and start the role play.

HAVE THE SMALL GROUPS DO THE ROLE PLAY FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES. FACILITATORS GO FROM GROUP TO GROUP. WHEN THE ROLE PLAY FINISHES, THE FACILITATOR GIVES INSTRUCTIONS ON PROVIDING FEEDBACK. GIVE OUT STROKES TO THE ROLE PLAYERS.

That was great!

Now, Marsha, tell the others in your group how you feel.

Also tell them what one thing you did that you liked and one thing you would have done differently.

AFTER MARSHA RESPONDS, SPEAK TO GRACE.

Grace, how do you feel and what is one thing you liked about the way Marsha tried to help you and one thing you would have done differently?

AFTER GRACE HAS RESPONDED, SPEAK TO THE OBSERVERS.

What is one thing you liked about how Marsha tried to help Grace, and what is one thing you would have done differently?

OBTAIN FEEDBACK AND DISCUSS IN THE TRIOS.

Now I want each member of the trio to share what you think you are going to do and discuss it.

HAVE THE WOMEN DISCUSS THEIR OWN PLANS AT THIS POINT. ALLOW TEN MINUTES. THEN BRING THE ENTIRE GROUP BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

What did you learn in your small groups?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

Using the Feeling Thermometer where 100 is very uncomfortable and 0 is totally comfortable, how do you feel after having worked on a formal custody plan?

ENCOURAGE SHARING OF READINGS.

Exercise 7: How Can We Feel More Comfortable Ending?
(10 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to reduce tension, increase group cohesion, and introduce the next session. Relaxation, giving appreciation, and listing the topics covered next are used.]

We are near the end of today's session.

Let's do a little relaxation together.

To find a comfortable place in your chair, let your body sway back and forth until you feel like your body is settling into just the right position.

Now let your eyes close if you wish.

Breathe in slowly and deeply, PAUSE

And breathe out. PAUSE

Follow your breath

In and out. PAUSE

In and out. PAUSE

Feel the cool air coming in PAUSE

And the warm air flowing out. PAUSE

The cool air coming in PAUSE

And the warm air flowing out. PAUSE

With the air flowing out let all the tension disappear. PAUSE

Imagine that you are standing at the top of a flight of ten stairs.

At the bottom the stairs open up into soft, warm light.

The closer you come to that light the more you feel at peace,

The more you feel in harmony.

Take a deep breath PAUSE

And let's go slowly down the stairs.

One PAUSE

Two PAUSE

Three - down, down PAUSE

Four PAUSE

Five - half way there. PAUSE

Can you feel the peace and harmony beginning to come into your body? PAUSE

Six - deeper PAUSE

Seven - deeper and deeper PAUSE

Eight - almost there. PAUSE

Nine PAUSE

Ten - feel the peace and harmony. LONG PAUSE

Say softly, "I am at peace." PAUSE

Let yourself feel that total harmony somewhere in your body.

Be quiet and feel it. LONG PAUSE

Now yawn and stretch. PAUSE

Yawn and stretch. PAUSE

I hope you feel really good.

In the next session we will get into implementing a custody decision.

Should you involve your teenager in the various decisions and how would you explain it?

How would you ask someone to serve as a guardian?

What happens if the person backs out?

Those are the kinds of things we will cover.

Before we stop this morning's session does anyone have something they want to share with the group?

We have saved some time for you to bring up whatever you want to talk about.

SET ASIDE 5 MINUTES FOR SHARING OR BRINGING UP SOME FEELINGS AND ISSUES.

To end this morning's session let's show our appreciation to each other.

Remember you can give appreciation for anything that you like.

ENCOURAGE THE GROUP TO GIVE APPRECIATION TO EACH OTHER.

I will see you after lunch.

THE END

MATCHING SITUATIONS TO OPTIONS

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