

MOTHERS' TRAINING - ILLNESS PHASE
(HRA PROJECT)

SESSION 6: HOW CAN I TELL MY CHILDREN WHAT I FEEL?

(Day 3, Afternoon. Two hours in length.)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Mothers will understand the differences between active listening and expressing feelings.
2. Mothers will be able to express their feelings directly through "I" statements.
3. Mothers will increase "I" statements and reduce negative "You" statements.
4. Mothers will be able to identify and overcome problems in using direct expression of feelings.

RATIONALE:

In the previous session active listening was learned to apply in situations where the child started off expressing strong positive or negative feelings. On the other hand there are times when the parent has the problem. The child has done something that annoys or hurts the parent. In this case the parent probably wants to give the child a strong message. Underlying this message are parental feelings.

Parental feelings can be expressed in an accusatory and hostile fashion which will probably perpetuate the problem or in a non-blaming, parent-owned fashion which will lead to joint problem solving. The latter is being called the "direct expression of feeling." This kind of expression represents a learned skill. That skill involves stating how the parent feels and the effect on the parent of the child's behavior - "I" statements. It also involves reducing negative "You" statements which scold the child, reduce the child's self-esteem and try to use power to change the child's behavior.

PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce the participants, review the previous session, give out Strokes, indicate what this session is trying to achieve, and do a lottery. (10 minutes)
2. Use the Feeling Thermometer to connect the direct expression of feelings toward a child to personal experiences of the mothers. (5 minutes)

3. Explain and demonstrate what direct expression of feeling is, when it is appropriate, and why use it. (15 minutes)
4. Learn and practice the basic skills in direct expression of feelings - reducing negative "You" statement and increasing "I" statements. (20 minutes)
5. Identify problems in attitudes, expectations, and skill acquisition and work on them. (20 minutes)
6. Practice the direct expression of feelings through role playing. (30 minutes)
7. End with relaxation, goal setting, free time, and group appreciation. (20 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Strokes
Lottery Tickets
Lottery Prize
Feeling Thermometer on Expressing Feelings
Script: "The Dishes"
"I" and "You" message Cards
Possible Role Plays Situations for "I" Messages

Exercise 1: Where Do We Go From Here?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to create group cohesion and to create expectations for the session. Introductions of the participants and of the goals for today are employed to achieve those ends.]

Welcome back from lunch.

I hope you are rested and full of good food.

Let's go around and introduce ourselves again.

Please tell us your first name and complete this sentence, "I feel happy when....."

For example, "My name is Irene, and I feel happy when my kids are in a good mood."

I'll start.

My name is, and I feel happy when.....

Thank you.

Here are your Strokes for this afternoon's session.

GIVE OUT TWENTY STROKES TO EACH MOTHER.

Give out Strokes to other mothers for anything that you like.

I hope that by the end of the afternoon you don't have a Stroke left.

I appreciate your being back from lunch on time and ready to start.

So, let's do another lottery.

PASS OUT LOTTERY TICKETS. HAVE THEM PUT THEIR NAMES ON THEM AND DROP THEM IN THE BOWL. MIX UP THE TICKETS. DRAW ONE AND GIVE OUT THE PRIZE.

In the last session we worked on active listening with our children.

That meant reflect feelings, put what the child said into your own words, and summarize.

We did active listening mostly when your child was upset.

Active listening helped us build a trusting relationship with the child.

But what about when you are upset with the child?

Then what do you do?

I recommend that you express your feelings directly.

But there is a way to express your feelings that helps build trust and ways that don't.

This afternoon we are going to learn how to express feelings directly as a parent.

Exercise 2: How Do I Feel About Expressing My Feelings?
(5 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to link the concept of direct expression of feelings to personal experiences and meaning. The Feeling Thermometer is used as the method to achieve that end.]

Each of us has different ideas about expressing our feelings.

I want to take a minute and get us in touch with our own reactions.

We will use the Feeling Thermometer to do that.

I will read a couple of situations and you mark down what your temperature reading would be - 100 means totally uncomfortable and 0 means completely cool.

Then I want you to be thinking of situations with your kids that get you upset.

HAND OUT THE FEELING THERMOMETER AND READ THE SITUATIONS. THE SITUATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Your daughter has not cleaned up the kitchen as she agreed to and you say, "I feel irritated when the kitchen is not cleaned up as you agreed."
2. Your son comes home at three in the morning. You had stayed up waiting. You say, "I feel so relieved to see you home. I was scared to death. I also felt annoyed that you didn't call."

How comfortable and uncomfortable would you have been expressing your feelings like the mother did in the situations we just read?

OBTAIN REACTIONS.

What situations come to mind when you told your child how you felt and how comfortable were you being that open?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

Do you think "good" mothers express their feelings directly?

How does telling your child how you feel fit in with how you want to see yourself?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION. LOOK FOR SELF-IMAGE OBSTACLES TO EXPRESSING FEELINGS DIRECTLY.

Exercise 3: What Is the Direct Expression of Feelings?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase mother's understanding of the direct expression of feelings. Explanations, modeling, and discrimination tasks are the approaches used.]

Can I have two volunteers to do a little scene - one the mother and the other the daughter?

In this scene the mother goes into the kitchen to make dinner and finds that the sink is all full of dirty dishes from breakfast.

Before the mother can make dinner, the dishes must be cleaned up.

SELECT TWO VOLUNTEERS. GIVE THEM THE SCRIPT. HAVE THEM READ THE FIRST VERSION ALOUD TO THE GROUP. STOP AFTER VERSION ONE.

THE DISHES - VERSION ONE

MOTHER: Lydia, you are so irresponsible and lazy! The dishes weren't cleaned up after breakfast. Why not?

DAUGHTER: You don't always do yours right away.

MOTHER: That's different. I often have to go out. I have lots of things to do. When I come back home, I spend half my day picking up after a bunch of messy kids.

DAUGHTER: I haven't been messy.

MOTHER: You are just as bad as the others, and you know it!

DAUGHTER: You expect everyone to be perfect.

MOTHER: Well, you certainly have a long way to go.

DAUGHTER: Why don't you just shut up and leave me alone. I can't stand listening to you.

STOP

THE DISHES - VERSION TWO

MOTHER: Lydia, when I get ready to prepare dinner and see that the breakfast dishes have still not been cleaned up. I feel so discouraged and hurt. Then I start feeling resentful and I can barely force myself to make dinner.

DAUGHTER: I don't always have the time to do my dishes before I go to school. I guess I should try to wake up earlier or maybe we can trade and I'll do some other job around the apartment on days when I'm too late to wash the dishes before school.

THE END

Now let's hear the second version.

Please consider the differences between the two.

HAVE THE SAME VOLUNTEERS READ THE SECOND VERSION. WHEN THEY ARE FINISHED, GIVE OUT STROKES. THEN ASK THE GROUP HOW THEY WOULD HAVE FELT IF THEY HAD BEEN THE DAUGHTER.

If you were the daughter, how would you feel about each of the mother's responses?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. HELP THE GROUP LIST THE EFFECTS OF "YOU" MESSAGES ON A CHILD. IF THE POINTS BELOW ARE NOT MADE, YOU MAKE THEM.

1. Children often withdraw from parents who moralize and preach or who lecture and instruct.
2. "You" messages deny children a chance to change behavior out of consideration for their parent's needs.
3. Critical, blaming messages reduce children's self-esteem.
4. Children feel rejected and even unloved when they hear messages that communicate how "bad" they are - or "stupid" or "inconsiderate" or "thoughtless."
5. "You" messages sometimes cause reactions against the parents - putting down the parent, slamming doors, sullen withdrawal.

So, you can see the advantages of telling the child directly how you feel.

You let the child know the effect his behavior has on you and give him a chance to work out a solution to the problem.

"I" messages are less likely to be seen as hostile and attacking - less likely to provoke attacking in return.

What's the point?

All parents at some time or another have found themselves in situations where their children were doing something which hurt, disturbed, or annoyed them.

When you are being disturbed, you would probably want to communicate a strong message of your own.

You would, in other words, want to express your feelings.

Let's compare what we worked on last time - active listening - to the expression of feelings.

PUT UP THE FOLLOWING CHART AND GO OVER IT BRIEFLY.

DIRECT EXPRESSION OF FEELING

ACTIVE LISTENING

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. parent has the problem | a. child has the problem |
| b. parent starts conversation | b. child starts conversation |
| c. parent tries to influence child | c. parent tries to be a listener |
| d. parent tries to help herself | d. parent tries to be a sounding board |
| e. parent wants to sound off | e. parent tries not to sound off |
| f. parent tries to find her own solution | f. parent tries to help child find own solution |

The purpose of using direct expression of feeling is to express honestly how you feel in a direct yet non-accusative and hostile manner.

Imagine that it is at the end of the day and you are very tired.

You are in your room lying down.

Your child comes in and wants you to do something with her.

You say "no" and five minutes later she comes in and wants something else.

Again you say "no."

A few minutes later she is back.

You think the kid is being a pest.

If you say to her, "Get lost. Stop being such a big pest" what message does the child receive?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. IF NO ONE SAYS IT, MAKE THE POINT THAT THE CHILD IS CRITICIZED, FEELS SHE IS BAD, IS CALLED A NAME.

If you want to tell her how you really feel, you have to know your feelings.

What are you feeling?

Is she really a pest or you tired and don't want to play with her?

If you said to her, "I am very tired now and I don't want to play," it would tell her that there is a reason why you don't want to play.

It wouldn't tell her that she is bad.

So what do you do?

Start with "I feel..." rather than "You are...."

"I feel...." is an "I" message, and "You are..." is a "You" message.

Focus on how you as a parent feel rather than on the child's wrong doing.

This message is less destructive, less likely to lower the child's self-esteem, and less likely to make a bad situation worse - to keep it going.

Has everyone got the idea?

CLARIFY ANY CONFUSION THAT EXISTS AND INDICATE THAT IN THE ROLE PLAYING WHICH FOLLOWS THERE WILL BE A CHANCE TO WORK THINGS OUT.

Exercise 4: How Do I Express My Feelings Directly?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to learn how to make effective "I" messages and avoid "You" messages. Explanation and practice are emphasized.]

The purpose of this exercise is to have you give good "I" messages and avoid "You" messages.

How do you do that?

First, I should note that positive "You" messages such as "you did a good job on fixing the sink" are OK.

We will not work on them.

Another comment on "You" messages is that they can be indirect expressions of feeling.

"You are so cold."

"You are so irresponsible."

All these examples of "you" messages have the effect of putting a person down - giving a hostile, accusatory message.

"I" messages are more direct than "You" messages because they

- a. focus on the effects the child's behavior is having on the parent
- b. express what the parent is feeling
- c. specify why the parent is feeling what she is.

First parents have to know what they feel.

When the teenager walks in at 2 in the morning, the mother probably feels relief first and happiness.

Later comes the feeling of anger at having been kept up and put to such worry.

The parent needs to make sure that the worry and relief are expressed before the anger.

The hard part of expressing feelings directly comes in stating why the parent feels that way without going back to blaming or criticizing the child.

"It makes me angry to find the dishes aren't done" is not the same as "It makes me angry because you didn't do the dishes."

One way to lessen the risk of blaming is to use the formula "I feel... when"

If you want to say, "I feel.... because...." make sure the "because" is not followed by the word "you" - "I feel.... because you...."

Don't hide a "You" message behind an "I" message.

Just because you start with the words, "I feel..." doesn't make it an "I" message.

Listen to these thinly disguised "You" messages.

"I feel you're a slob."

"I feel disappointed because you never do what I ask. You are one of the most disobedient kids I know."

Are any of those true "I" messages?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES.

No!

All of them are very critical, hostile "You" messages.

In this exercise we are going to practice giving "I" messages.

To make sure you are clear on the difference between an "I" message and a "you" message, I want you to make up both kinds of response.

Each person will receive a card with a situation on it.

The card will tell you to pass it to someone.

After you have passed it, the person will read you the situation.

Then you will come up with a "You" message and an "I" message.

Let me show you what I mean.

TAKE THE EXAMPLE CARD.

The card says to pass it to the person who has orange on.

Whose got on orange?

PASS IT TO SOMEONE IN THE GROUP WHO IS WEARING ORANGE.

Now you read me the situation.

THE PERSON READS: "YOUR TEENAGE SON TOLD YOU HE GOT A GIRL PREGNANT."

A "You" message is: "How could you do such a dumb thing! Haven't you ever heard of condoms? Are you going to quit school and support the baby?"

An "I" message is: "I am really frightened of how this can work out. There are so many negative things that can happen. And I'm worried that you might have got the AIDS virus too."

Has everyone got the idea?

PASS OUT THE CARDS ONE AT A TIME. GIVE THE PERSON THE TIME TO PRESENT BOTH A "YOU" MESSAGE AND AN "I" MESSAGE. THEN MOVE TO THE NEXT PERSON. CONTINUE UNTIL EVERYONE HAS HAD A TURN WITH A CARD. COACH. GIVE OUT STROKES LIBERALLY. THE SITUATIONS ON THE CARDS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Your teenager has the TV turned up much too loud for you. You can't hear what your friend who is sitting there is saying to you.

Your teenager did not clean the house as had been promised.

Your teenager promised to be at the dentist office by 3:00 p.m. and arrived at 4:30 p.m., missing the appointment.

Your teenage daughter borrowed a pair of your favorite earrings and then lost them somewhere.

Your teenager left a wrench out on the fire escape, and it got all rusted.

Your teenage son and his friend are playing hockey in the living room with a broom and a wad of paper. They are knocking chairs over and getting close to your good lamp.

Your teenager was throwing a ball up against the side of the building, and it went through a neighbor's window.

Your teenager smokes and smokes all day in the apartment.

Your teenage son came home with a black eye, a small cut on his face, and swollen lip.

Your teenager came home two hours late for the nice dinner you had prepared.

You overhear your 15 year old daughter asking her older brother to borrow a few condoms.

Your teenage son told you he got a girl pregnant.

WHEN EVERYONE HAS HAD A TURN, ASK HOW THE GROUP EXPERIENCED RESPONDING TO THE SITUATIONS.

What did you find hard to do and what worked out easily?

DISCUSS REACTIONS.

Exercise 5: What Are Some Typical Problems?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to identify difficulties that parents have when starting to give "I" messages and to find ways to overcome them. Examples and problem solving are employed.]

Do parents sometimes have problems giving "I" messages?

Let's find out by doing a brief scene.

I need three volunteers to play Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Martinez, and Mrs. Jones - all mothers of teenagers.

SELECT THE VOLUNTEERS. DECIDE ON WHO WILL PLAY EACH ROLE. GIVE THEM THE SCRIPT AND HAVE THEM READ IT ALOUD. (IF THE FACILITATOR THINKS THAT MOTHERS CANNOT READ THE SCRIPT, THE TWO FACILITATORS AND ONE MOTHER COULD READ THE PARTS. THE SCRIPT FOLLOWS:

GIVING "I" MESSAGES

MRS. SMITH: I think giving "I" messages is a pile of crap!

MRS. MARTINEZ: Mrs. Smith! How can you say a thing like that?

MRS. SMITH: Easy. I'm the boss. I tell my kids what to do, and they better do it. How I feel is my business. You got to be tough with kids nowadays. You can't give them an inch. Giving them "I" messages is too easy on them.

MRS. BROWN: I don't agree with you, but I got a problem with "I" messages too.

MRS. MARTINEZ: What's that, Mrs. Brown?

MRS. BROWN: I don't like fights. If I tell my kids I'm angry at them, we are going to get into a big fight. I just be quiet. That's the best way. What about you, Mrs. Martinez?

MRS. MARTINEZ: I think a mother is supposed to give to her children.

MRS. SMITH: Give to her children?

MRS. MARTINEZ: Yes, sacrifice for them. The children's life comes first.

MRS. SMITH: Knock them into line.

MRS. BROWN: Let them go their own way. Specially if they are teenagers.

MRS. MARTINEZ: If I let them know my feelings, it is being selfish.

MRS. BROWN: Selfish?

MRS. MARTINEZ: Yes. I would be making them feel sorry for me and they would feel guilty. My feelings don't count.

THE END

Thank you, that was great!

GIVE OUT STROKES TO THE PLAYERS.

As you can see from this scene, parents' attitudes can put up barriers to using "I" messages.

Most parents, when bothered by a child, want to tell him what to do.

Mrs. Smith fears she won't be tough enough if she uses "I" messages.

What would you say to her?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. IF NO ONE MAKES THE FOLLOWING POINTS, BRING THEM UP.
GIVING AN "I" MESSAGES LETS THE CHILD HAVE A CHANCE TO TRY TO CHANGE HIS
BEHAVIOR.

IF A CHILD IGNORES THE PARENT AND CHOOSES NOT TO CHANGE, THE PARENT CAN
STILL TELL THE CHILD WHAT TO DO.

Mrs. Martinez believes that a "good" parent must sacrifice for the child.

She thinks that stating her feelings is behaving selfishly.

What would you say to her?

ENCOURAGE ADVICE TO MRS. MARTINEZ.

Mrs. Jones doesn't like conflict.

She prefers to avoid confrontation.

For her giving an "I" message would be like starting a fight.

She is afraid that her children would not like to receive an "I" message.

What would you tell Mrs. Jones?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES TO MRS. JONES.

Is it wrong for a child to feel guilty?

Shouldn't a child be given a chance to correct undesirable behavior?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. IF NO ONE BRINGS IT UP, POINT OUT THAT "YOU" MESSAGES PRODUCE A DIFFERENT KIND OF GUILT - NOT RELATED TO BEHAVIOR BUT TO BEING A "BAD" PERSON. "I" MESSAGES MAKE A CHILD FEEL HE NEEDS TO IMPROVE, BUT THEY DO NOT CREATE "BAD" PERSON GUILT.

From what you know now and how you see things, what are the advantages and disadvantages of giving "I" messages which tell your kids how you feel about their behavior and why you feel that way.

ENCOURAGE BUILDING A GROUP LIST OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES. PUT THE RESPONSES UP ON NEWSPRINT.

That's a good list.

Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

Some times "I" messages don't work.

Everyone should know that.

Whether or not "I" messages work depends on other factors.

Listen to this conversation and see if you can figure out why the "I" message didn't work.

THE TWO FACILITATORS ACT OUT THE FOLLOWING SCENE.

THE BROKEN WINDOW

MOTHER: I feel very uncomfortable having to go next door and talk with Mr. Preston about his broken window. I feel embarrassed. Mr. Preston is no fun to deal with. He'll start yelling at me, saying I can't control my kids.

JAMES: It was an accident. Besides the only time you care is if it puts you in a bad light.

MOTHER: This is the second time it has happened. I don't want to have to go over there. I'm nervous about doing it. You should go apologize and pay for it.

JAMES: Well, I'm not doing it.

MOTHER: If you don't, you can't go out for a week.

JAMES: Who says so?

MOTHER: I say so. I'm in charge here.

JAMES: It's funny to see you all pissed off. Maybe it will happen a third time. I can't always control where the ball goes.

MOTHER: You had better do what I tell you.

JAMES: This is the first time I've gotten a rise out of you in two months.

MOTHER: James, I don't know what I'm going to do with you.

JAMES: Why don't you put me out on the street. I know that's what you would like to do.

THE END

What are some reasons that the "I" message did not work?

Take a few minutes and discuss with the person next to you what happened in this scene to make it hard for the "I" message to work.

ALLOW A FEW MINUTES TO DEVELOP THE LIST AND THEN BRING EVERYONE BACK TOGETHER TO REPORT. MAKE SURE THAT SOME OF THE POINTS LISTED BELOW ARE MENTIONED.

FACTORS THAT MAY BE INVOLVED IN THE SUCCESS
OR FAILURE OF "I" MESSAGES

1. Whether the child feels that the parent generally listens when the child expresses his or her feelings.
2. How the parent responds to the child's resistance - punishment, power, command, anger.
3. Whether the "I" message sends a solution. (Solution messages are not true "I" messages.)
4. Whether or not the desire of the child to engage in disturbing behavior is stronger than his concerns for the parent's feelings.
5. Whether the disturbing behavior was originally designed to hurt the parent or attract attention.
6. When the child refuses to accept the right of the parent to feel hurt or some other emotion.
7. If the parents generally resort to threats and punishment, the child will pay attention to the punishment, not to the parent's feelings.

Those were very good ideas.

You can see that there are other things involved in the success or failure of an "I" message.

We have covered attitude problems, difficulties in doing "I" messages correctly, and other factors that contribute to success.

What do you see as your own obstacles to giving "I" message?

DISCUSS THE OBSTACLES AND ASK FOR IDEAS OF HOW TO GET AROUND THEM. GIVE OUT STROKES.

Exercise 6: How Can I Get Better at Giving Messages?
(30 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to improve message skills through role playing.]

Now we are going to give you a chance to practice in a role play conversation with a teenager.

I am going to divide the group in half.

In each small group you will work with a partner.

The partner will play the teenager.

Keep the conversation going, then get some feedback, and switch roles.

In the small group you will receive a list of possible situations.

Pick one or make up your own.

Tell your partner what the situation is.

Also tell your partner what her name is, whether she is playing a son or daughter, and how old the teenager is.

The mother always starts.

If at some point in the role play it seems appropriate to the mother to try active listening also, that is fine.

The rest of us will be observers when not doing the role play.

Look to make sure the role players are giving complete "I" messages, saying how they feel and why they feel that way.

Why is it important to let the child know how the parent is feeling?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. LOOK FOR THE CHILD NEEDS TO KNOW WHAT BEHAVIOR IS TROUBLESOME TO THE PARENT. THE FEELINGS AND REASONS OF THE PARENT PROVIDE A REASON FOR THE CHILD TO CHANGE.

That's right.

The feelings and reasons of the parent give the child a reason to change.

FIRST DIVIDE THE GROUP IN HALF AND THEN IN PAIRS. ONE PAIR STARTS WHILE THE OTHER PAIR OBSERVES. AFTER EACH ROLE PLAY GIVE FEEDBACK. THE FEEDBACK INSTRUCTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. ASK THE MOTHER AND TEENAGER HOW THEY FELT.
2. ASK THE MOTHER WHAT ONE THING SHE LIKED THAT SHE DID AND WHAT ONE THING SHE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY.
3. ASK THE TEENAGER WHAT WAS ONE THING THE MOTHER DID THAT SHE LIKED AND WHAT ONE THING WOULD SHE HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY IF SHE HAD BEEN THE MOTHER.
4. ASK THE OBSERVERS WHAT ONE THING THEY LIKED ABOUT WHAT THE MOTHER DID AND WHAT ONE THING WOULD THEY HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY.

WHEN THE FIRST PAIR IS FINISHED WITH ONE ROLE PLAY, HAVE THE SECOND PAIR DO ONE ROLE PLAY. THEN, IF THERE IS TIME, RETURN TO THE FIRST PAIR AND HAVE THEM SWITCH ROLE AND FINISH. FINALLY RETURN TO THE SECOND PAIR, HAVING THEM SWITCH ROLES AND FINISH. GIVE OUT LOTS OF STROKES.

HAVE THE MOTHERS TRY TO THINK OF A REAL LIFE SITUATION TO USE FOR THE ROLE PLAY. IF THEY CANNOT, SELECT ONE FROM THE LIST. THE LIST OF POSSIBLE ROLE PLAY SITUATIONS IS AS FOLLOWS:

POSSIBLE ROLE PLAY SITUATIONS FOR "I" MESSAGES

1. Your teenager rarely does homework and is having trouble in school.
2. Your teenager never is around just to have a pleasant talk with you.
3. You just finished mopping the kitchen floor when your teenager walks all over it with dirty shoes.
4. Your teenager just lies around and watches TV all day.

5. You are talking on the phone and your teenager keeps interrupting you with questions that could wait until you are finished.
6. Early in the morning your teenager has the radio blaring and wakes everyone up.
7. Your teenager had promised to take the dog out to do his business, but he "forgot" to do it. There are puddles of urine on the floor.
8. Your teenager said that he/she would take the laundry down and do it. Six hours later nothing has happened.
9. Your 15 year old daughter is going out with a man who is 29 and who seems to you like a real predator.
10. You found out that your 16 year old son is sleeping with a 30 year old woman who uses drugs and has three kids.

BRING THE GROUP BACK TOGETHER AND ASK THEM HOW THEY EXPERIENCED THE ROLE PLAY.

How do you feel after the role play?

OBTAIN FEELING LEVELS.

What did you learn from doing the role play?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

Exercise 7: What Is Next?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to build group cohesion and self esteem and to create future oriented expectations. Setting goals, showing appreciation and relaxation are three of the methods used.]

We are near the end of today's session.

Let's take a minute to release some of the tension that may have built up during the session.

Let your head fall forward so that your chin almost touches your chest.

Now slowly rotate your head and neck. PAUSE

Can you hear the cracking in your neck as your muscles loosen up? PAUSE

Now take a deep breath in, PAUSE

And let it out slowly. PAUSE

Can you feel the cool air coming in,

And the warm air flowing out? PAUSE

Breathe out slowly. PAUSE

Breathe out slowly. PAUSE

Make a circle with your thumb and forefinger. PAUSE

Leave a space of about one quarter inch between your two fingers, so that the circle is not completely closed.
PAUSE

Focus on your fingers, the space, the circle. LONG PAUSE

The magic circle.

As you become more relaxed, the fingers will close. PAUSE

Becoming a complete magic circle.

Focus on the circle. PAUSE

Feel your finger and thumb closing the circle. PAUSE

They are getting closer and closer. PAUSE

Closer and closer. PAUSE

As the circle closes feel your state of relaxation becoming deeper and deeper. PAUSE

Feel the magic circle close. LONG PAUSE

Deeper and deeper. PAUSE

With your eyes closed, experience the space in the middle of the circle. PAUSE

Feel the magic. PAUSE

Feel the peace. PAUSE

Breathe out. PAUSE

Breathe out. PAUSE

Keep the magic circle with you wherever you go.

Now yawn and stretch.

Yawn and stretch.

I hope you feel better.

I would like you to pick a step you will take between now and the next session.

One step should be related to custody.

The other step should be related to this morning's or this afternoon's session - active listening or direct expression of feeling.

When you select a goal make sure it is realistic, clear, not too much or too little, and easy to tell if completed.

Examples of goals related to custody might be...

HAVE EACH WOMAN SAY WHAT CUSTODY RELATED STEP SHE WILL TAKE BETWEEN SESSIONS. MAKE SURE THE GOALS FIT THE CRITERIA MENTIONED ABOVE.

Examples of goals for this week might be "I will set up one time and listen to my child using the active listening skills" or "I will make one positive 'You' statement and one 'I' statement about something that bothers me."

Maybe you already know something that is upsetting to you.

So, your goal could be to "talk my daughter about..... (whatever it is)."

Think for a moment about your goal - what step will you take.

HAVE EACH WOMAN SAY WHAT STEP SHE WILL TAKE BETWEEN SESSIONS. MAKE SURE THE GOALS FIT THE CRITERIA MENTIONED ABOVE.

We always save 10 minutes at the end of the session for group members to bring up whatever they feel like.

Now is that time.

Who has something to she wants to talk about?

HAVE 10 MINUTES OF FREE TIME FOR ANY TOPIC OR SHARING.
To end we will show our appreciation to each other.

Everyone here has made a contribution no matter how much she talked.

It is great to have people here learning and participating in whatever style is best for them.

ENCOURAGE SHOWING APPRECIATION AMONG THE MEMBERS.

I will see you next time at ... (date, day, time, location) when the mothers and teenagers meet together on the topic of creating a positive atmosphere at home.

THE END OF THE SESSION ON THE DIRECT EXPRESSION OF FEELING

FEELING THERMOMETER ON EXPRESSING FEELINGS

100	VERY COMFORTABLE
90	
80	
70	
60	
50	
40	
30	
20	
10	
0	COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE

SITUATIONS

TEMPERATURE
READING

1. Your daughter has not cleaned up the kitchen as she agreed to and you say, "I feel irritated when the kitchen is not cleaned up as you agreed."
2. Your son comes home at three in the morning. You had stayed up waiting. You say, "I feel so relieved to see you home. I was scared to death. I also felt annoyed that you didn't call."

THE DISHES - VERSION ONE

MOTHER: Lydia, you are so irresponsible and lazy! The dishes weren't cleaned up after breakfast. Why not?

DAUGHTER: You don't always do yours right away.

MOTHER: That's different. I often have to go out. I have lots of things to do. When I come back home, I spend half my day picking up after a bunch of messy kids.

DAUGHTER: I haven't been messy.

MOTHER: You are just as bad as the others, and you know it!

DAUGHTER: You expect everyone to be perfect.

MOTHER: Well, you certainly have a long way to go.

DAUGHTER: Why don't you just shut up and leave me alone. I can't stand listening to you.

STOP

THE DISHES - VERSION TWO

MOTHER: Lydia, when I get ready to prepare dinner and see that the breakfast dishes have still not been cleaned up. I feel so discouraged and hurt. Then I start feeling resentful and I can barely force myself to make dinner.

DAUGHTER: I don't always have the time to do my dishes before I go to school. I guess I should try to wake up earlier or maybe we can trade and I'll do some other job around the apartment on days when I'm too late to wash the dishes before school.

THE END

CARD 1

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS BLACK ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenager has the TV turned up much too loud for you. You can't hear what your friend who is sitting there is saying to you.

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

CARD 2

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS WHITE ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenager did not clean the house as had been promised.

August 1995

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

August 1995

CARD 3

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS RED ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenager promised to be at the dentist office by 3:00 p.m. and arrived at 4:30 p.m., missing the appointment.

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

CARD 4

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS GREEN ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenage daughter borrowed a pair of your favorite earrings and then lost them somewhere.

August 1995

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

August 1995

CARD 5

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS YELLOW ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenager left a wrench out on the fire escape, and it got all rusted.

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

CARD 6

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS BLUE ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenage son and his friend are playing hockey in the living room with a broom and a wad of paper. They are knocking chairs over and getting close to your good lamp.

August 1995

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

August 1995

CARD 7

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS BROWN ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenager was throwing a ball up against the side of the building, and it went through a neighbor's window.

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

CARD 8

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS PURPLE ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenager smokes and smokes all day in the apartment.

August 1995

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

August 1995

CARD 9

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS PINK ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenage son came home with a black eye, a small cut on his face, and swollen lip.

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

CARD 10

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS VIOLET ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenager came home two hours late for the nice dinner you had prepared.

August 1995

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

August 1995

CARD 11

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS GREY ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

You overhear your 15 year old daughter asking her older brother to borrow a few condoms.

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

CARD EXAMPLE

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO HAS ORANGE ON

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION.

Your teenage son told you he got a girl pregnant.

August 1995

FIRST GIVE A "YOU" MESSAGE AND THEN AN "I" MESSAGE TO YOUR TEENAGER

August 1995

POSSIBLE ROLE PLAY SITUATIONS FOR "I" MESSAGES

1. Your teenager rarely does homework and is having trouble in school.
2. Your teenager never is around just to have a pleasant talk with you.
3. You just finished mopping the kitchen floor when your teenager walks all over it with dirty shoes.
4. Your teenager just lies around and watches TV all day.
5. You are talking on the phone and your teenager keeps interrupting you with questions that could wait until you are finished.
6. Early in the morning your teenager has the radio blaring and wakes everyone up.
7. Your teenager had promised to take the dog out to do his business, but he "forgot" to do it. There are puddles of urine on the floor.
8. Your teenager said that he/she would take the laundry down and do it. Six hours later nothing has happened.
9. Your 15 year old daughter is going out with a man who is 29 and who seems to you like a real predator.
10. You found out that your 16 year old son is sleeping with a 30 year old woman who uses drugs and has three kids.

GIVING "I" MESSAGES

MRS. SMITH: I think giving "I" messages is a pile of crap!

MRS. MARTINEZ: Mrs. Smith! How can you say a thing like that?

MRS. SMITH: Easy. I'm the boss. I tell my kids what to do, and they better do it. How I feel is my business. You got to be tough with kids nowadays. You can't give them an inch. Giving them "I" messages is too easy on them.

MRS. BROWN: I don't agree with you, but I got a problem with "I" messages too.

MRS. MARTINEZ: What's that, Mrs. Brown?

MRS. BROWN: I don't like fights. If I tell my kids I'm angry at them, we are going to get into a big fight. I just be quiet. That's the best way. What about you, Mrs. Martinez?

MRS. MARTINEZ: I think a mother is supposed to give to her children.

MRS. SMITH: Give to her children?

MRS. MARTINEZ: Yes, sacrifice for them. The children's life comes first.

MRS. SMITH: Knock them into line.

MRS. BROWN: Let them go their own way. Specially if they are teenagers.

MRS. MARTINEZ: If I let them know my feelings, it is being selfish.

MRS. BROWN: Selfish?

MRS. MARTINEZ: Yes. I would be making them feel sorry for me and they would feel guilty. My feelings don't count.

THE END