

ADJUSTMENT PHASE FOR YOUNG ADULTS (PHASE III)
PROJECT TALC (TEENS AND PARENTS LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE)

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SESSION 1: HOW ARE THINGS GOING?

OBJECTIVES:

1. Youth will experience less strain from their new situations through expressing feelings and gaining support from the group.
2. Youth will identify the positive aspects of living on their own.
3. Youth will identify the needs of bereaved adolescents living on their own.
4. Youth will identify successful strategies they have used for accessing resources available to independent young adults, as well as barriers to accessing them.
5. Youth will experience increased comfort in the group and increased group cohesion.

RATIONALE:

This session begins a new phase: the adjustment phase. The parent with AIDS is ill or deceased, and the youth has gone to live on his/her own or with family members. The adjustment phase will be difficult for the youth, consequently they must be supported and have some of their needs met. The primary goal is to strengthen the youth's coping abilities. This includes coping with grief, learning new coping methods, becoming able to address inevitable future conflicts and hard times, as well as planning for the future. The overall strategy is to build on youth's existing strengths and successes.

The first session is devoted to taking stock through sharing. Where are the youth right now? What is going on? How are they reacting to the new arrangements? Answering these questions in a group setting places them in a supportive environment where they can learn through others. The first session focuses primarily on youth's strengths, including the positive aspects of living on their own as opposed to with a caregiver and strategies they have found to be successful for accessing resources. In addition, barriers to accessing resources are addressed. Youth are also asked to report on things they have learned about themselves since the death of their parents, in order to identify positive aspects of living independently after bereavement.

These youth face special situations: having lived with a person who had AIDS, death, a new caregiver or new family situation, a variety of losses, and so on. These unusual circumstances come on top of adjusting to the changes of adolescence. However, despite the difficulties they have experienced, youth still must meet their developmentally-appropriate challenges, such as finishing school, settling into a job, finding support, living healthily, having successful relationships with peers, romantic partners and family members, making decisions about pregnancy and/or parenting competently. The first session emphasizes non-threatening sharing and getting acquainted, supporting each other, openness, respect, a safe environment, and the positive qualities of the participants.

SUMMARY OF EXERCISES:

1. Welcome the group and explain what sessions are all about. Introduce the facilitators; have the participants briefly introduce themselves; give out "Thanks;" and do a lottery. (25 minutes)
2. Have youth go around the room and introduce themselves to the group, including stating something positive that has come out of their parents' illness and death. (25 minutes)
3. Have the group make a list of the positive aspects of living independently rather than with a caregiver. (15 minutes)
4. Have the group make a list of needs of youth living independently whose parents have died of HIV/AIDS (15 minutes)
5. Have the group discuss the needs, including brainstorming how to address some of them and listing some barriers they may have encountered. (20 minutes)
6. End with group appreciation, goal setting and a reminder about the next group. (20 minutes)

MATERIALS:

News pads and pencils
Lottery tickets
"Thanks"
Lottery prize
Feeling Thermometer
Goal setting chart
Goal summary sheet
Goal cards (blank or decorated index cards)
Course Outline

NOTES TO THE FACILITATORS: Text in **bold** letters tells you what the purpose of each exercise is. Text in CAPITAL letters tells you what to do. Text in small letters tells you what to say. Once you become familiar with what to say, please put it in your own words. Do not read aloud the text in small letters - make it natural.

The times listed under the headings of each exercise are to help you keep on target and move the session along. Exercises may be lengthened or shortened at your discretion, as long as all the material is covered.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES - REMINDERS AND POINTS TO MAKE

Exercise 1: What Is Going To Happen Here?
(25 Minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to create a comfortable environment through positive introductions and explaining what the workshop's goals are and what will be covered.]

#THE FACILITATOR SAYS

Welcome to the Project Talk workshops for young adults who have lost a parent to HIV or AIDS.

In these sixteen sessions we are going to focus on having a new life.

First, let us find out who is here.

I want everyone to introduce themselves.

Tell us what your name is and a positive quality that you have.

If I were a young person, I might say, "My name is Yvette and one thing about me is that I'm a good friend."

#HAVE THE YOUTH INTRODUCE THEMSELVES, GIVING A NAME AND POSITIVE QUALITY.

Thank you. That was great.

When someone does or says something that we like in here, we let them know by giving them a "Thanks."

#HOLD UP A "THANKS."

"Thanks" are like little thank-you-notes.

At the end of a session I hope you have given your "Thanks" away to other people in this room.

I like the way you did the introductions.

#GIVE EVERYONE A "THANKS."

Here is your stack of "Thanks" to give away when you catch someone doing something good.

#GIVE EACH PERSON 20 "THANKS."

I want to make two other comments about how the group runs.

First, the sessions are active, and you are asked to participate.

The activities won't put you on the spot or embarrass you.

We try to make this a safe place.

Second, there are some ground rules that were developed by the group members in the sessions before these.

Some of the those ground rules are:

#WRITE THE UNDERLINED WORDS ON NEWSPRINT AS YOU SAY THEM.

1. Keep confidentiality - What is said in here stays in here. We want to build trust.
2. No put-downs - Support other people.
3. Express yourself without hurting others - Be open about how you feel but don't blame others for those feelings.
4. Respect others - Make each other feel good.
5. Don't come high on drugs or alcohol - To heal from our loss we have to get in touch with and work with our truest feelings. Getting high is an escape from these feelings.

It gets in the way of finding peace and real joy.

Besides some people may be trying to fight drugs alcohol. You can help them by coming clean.

Are there any changes you would make or anything you would like to add?

#ENCOURAGE REACTIONS AND MAKE CHANGES IF A
CONSENSUS EXISTS. DON'T SPEND A LOT OF TIME ON THE
GROUND RULES.

A lot has happened in your lives recently.

For some of you: a new place to live, new school, new friends.

Every youth has had a parent get sick or die from HIV/AIDS.

Some young people have lost two parents.

Some people have or had new caregivers, and everybody has had lots of other changes.

Others have had children, and are trying to make it without their parent's support.

Our goal in this workshop is to help young people adjust successfully to a new life.

As young adults you need to set goals for yourself - like about school, work or family.

You need to grieve for the person you lost, but you also need to build a life for yourself.

There are positive things about living on your own without a caregiver.

There are also difficult things.

For example, you might need to improve relationships with remaining family members.

Here is what we are going to be covering in the 16 weeks.

#HAND OUT COPIES OF THE COURSE OUTLINE TO EVERYONE
OR REFER TO HANDBOOKS. GO OVER IT BRIEFLY.

**Project TALK
YOUNG ADULT
Group Workshops
TOPICS**

- (S1): How Have Things Been Going?
- (S2): Planning for my future - Part I
- (S3): Dealing with loss and grief - Part I
- (S4): Where and how can young adults get help and support?
- (S5): Dealing with loss and grief - Part II
- (S6): Ways of coping with and helping others cope with loss and grief
- (S7): Planning for my future - Part II
- (S8): Getting heard, Communicating effectively
- (S9): How can I deal with anger
- (S10): Relationships and sex - 1
- (S11): Relationships and sex - 2
- (S12): How can I cope with sadness
- (S13): Making decisions about pregnancy and parenthood
- (S14): How can I deal with fear
- (S15): How do I reduce substance use?
- (S16): Looking to the future

Does anyone have questions?

#ANSWER QUESTIONS.

Before we start getting more into today's session, I want to do a lottery.

At the beginning of every session we have a lottery gift as our way of saying thank you to you for getting here on time and being ready to go.

Write your name on the lottery ticket and drop it in the basket.

Then we will mix them up, draw one, and pass out a winner's prize.

#PASS OUT A LOTTERY TICKET TO EACH PERSON. HAVE THEM
WRITE THEIR NAME ON IT. MIX THEM UP, DRAW ONE, AND
GIVE OUT THE PRIZE.

Today we will find out how things have been going for you.

Exercise 2: How Do I Feel about What's Happening?
(25 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to continue to release feelings in a safe environment and to build support from others with similar feelings. The focus is on a positive outcome of losing a parent and living independently; namely, what youth have learned about themselves or what good has occurred since their parents died. The Feeling Thermometer and lists are employed.]

Let's learn a little more about each other.

Let's go around the room. Repeat your name. Then say which of your parents died, how long ago he or she died, who you live with and what you are doing, for example, parenting, going to school, working or looking for work.

WRITE THE TOPICS THAT THE YOUTH SHOULD COVER ON
NEWSPRINT: "1. NAME," "2. WHO DIED," "3. HOW LONG AGO,"
"4. WHO I LIVE WITH," 5. WHAT I AM DOING." TO HELP YOUTH
REMEMBER WHAT THEY SHOULD SAY.

For example, you could say:

"My name is Duane."

"My mother died about a year ago."

"I'm living with my two brothers in our old apartment where we lived with our mother."

"I'm looking for a job in computers."

Who would like to start?

SELECT A VOLUNTEER TO START. GO AROUND THE ROOM
AND HAVE EACH YOUTH SAY HOW THINGS HAVE BEEN
GOING.

That was great!

Now let's find out about your emotional experiences.

Here is a Feeling Thermometer.

#HAND OUT A FEELING THERMOMETER TO EVERYONE.

100 degrees means that you are really, very uncomfortable.

You could feel uncomfortable because you are angry, irritated, hurt, guilty, and upset. Or have some other negative feeling.

0 degrees means that you are completely at ease.

Where are you usually on the feeling thermometer? What's a normal reading for you?

In what situations did you feel uncomfortable recently?

#HAVE GROUP MEMBERS IDENTIFY SITUATIONS IN WHICH THEY FELT UNCOMFORTABLE.

What about a situation in which you felt about 50 degrees.

#ENCOURAGE A CONTRASTING SITUATION.

That's very good.

When people face a crisis, they always recognize the negative things that happen.

Those negative things are real.

No one should have to lose a parent.

However, there also can be positive aspects to a crisis.

Think about how you have changed since your mother or father got sick and passed away.

Think about everything you learned.

Think about how you have grown.

Let's see what good things have come out of all the difficult times you have gone through.

It could be something positive you have learned about yourself.

Or it could be something good that has happened as a result of your parent passing away.

For example, I could say, "I learned that I can be responsible, I pay the bills. I didn't know how to do that before."

Now let's hear something good that has happened since your parent died. I will make a list.

GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE YOUTH STATE SOMETHING GOOD THAT HAS HAPPENED AS A RESULT OF THEIR PARENT DYING - EITHER WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THEMSELVES AND/OR SOMETHING GOOD THAT HAS HAPPENED. WRITE A SUMMARY OF WHAT YOUTH SAY ON THE BOARD. PROMPT YOUTH IF NECESSARY. ELICIT POSITIVE EXPERIENCES.

EXAMPLES COULD INCLUDE:

GOT CLOSER TO SIBLINGS
LEARNED HOW TO GET AN APARTMENT
LEARNED HOW TO COOK
LEARNED CAN MAKE IT ON HIS/HER OWN
HAD OWN CHILD
GREW UP FASTER
FINISHED SCHOOL TO SUPPORT FAMILY
GOT LEGAL CUSTODY OF SIBLINGS
FEEL BETTER ABOUT SELF BECAUSE INDEPENDENT
ENJOY ADULTHOOD
KNOW SELF BETTER

That was great!

That's an impressive list. There are a lot of strengths in this room.

In Project Talk we are going to help you to continue to identify strengths and build on them, as well as to work on areas that aren't so strong.

Using the Feeling Thermometer, where are you right now after talking about how things have been going for you?

#SHOW FEELING THERMOMETER. ELICIT REACTIONS

Now we're going to focus on the positive aspects of not having a caregiver.

Exercise 3: What's Good About Living Independently?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to identify the positive aspects of living independently as opposed to with a caregiver. Creating lists is the approach used.]

When a parent dies, some young people go to live with other family members.

Some of these family members are pretty involved in the youth's life, and other times they are not.

Maybe your younger sisters and brothers went to live with a caregiver, but you could not or did not.

Maybe you live with family members but they don't really watch out for you.

Being on your own can be pretty rough at times.

But there are also positive aspects of being on your own, in terms of your development as a young adult.

Let's see what's positive so far about being independent.

If you have some thoughts about what's not so good about being on your own, hold your thought, because we are going to talk about that next.

#ASK THE YOUTH TO DEVELOP A LIST OF WHAT IS POSITIVE ABOUT LIVING ALONE, INCLUDING: MORE INDEPENDENCE, FEWER HASSLES FROM FAMILY MEMBERS WHO AREN'T SUPPORTIVE, DON'T HAVE TO BE TREATED LIKE A CHILD OR STIGMATIZED BECAUSE PARENT DIED, CAN CREATE OWN FAMILY IN THE WAY HE/SHE WANTS, MORE FUN, CAN RAISE SIBLINGS ACCORDING TO PARENT'S WISHES

That's a good list.

Now we are going to discuss things that young adults who have lost a parent need.

Exercise 4: What Do We Need?
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to identify what bereaved youth need to be successful.
Creating lists is the approach used.]**

To make a successful life as a young adult, youth must know what they need from their family, social services, friends and the world.

So, we will work on coming up with a list of needs of youth who have lost a parent to HIV/AIDS.

#ASK THE YOUTH TO DEVELOP A LIST OF WHAT THEY NEED FROM
FAMILY MEMBERS, SOCIAL SERVICES, FRIENDS, ETC. PUT THE IDEAS
ON NEWSPRINT. NEEDS COULD INCLUDE: SUPPORT,
UNDERSTANDING, PATIENCE, JOB TRAINING, HELP WITH CHILD CARE,
INFORMATION ON GED CLASSES, MONEY, AN APARTMENT, LEGAL
HELP, COUNSELING, ETC

That's a good list.

Now we are going to discuss things people have done to get some of what they need, and barriers that people have experienced.

Exercise 5: What works and what doesn't?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of the exercise is to make youth aware of successful strategies they have used to obtain or access what they need, as well as barriers they have encountered. Brainstorming and making lists are the approaches used.]

We have our list of needs of young people whose parents have died of HIV or AIDS.

What are some things you have done to obtain some help or access services?

What are some ideas you have about ways to overcome some of these problems?

We are going to brainstorm solutions.

When you "brainstorm," you don't think about whether the solution is good or bad, you just put it out there.

What has worked?

#WRITE TWO COLUMNS ON NEWSPRINT: "SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES" AND "BARRIERS." HAVE THE YOUTH GENERATE IDEAS FOR SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FIRST.

What barriers have you encountered?

HAVE THE YOUTH GENERATE IDEAS BARRIERS.

What do you make of these suggestions?

#ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION. EMPHASIZE POSITIVE COPING ABILITY WHERE YOU SEE IT

Everyone has some good ideas about how to get what you need.

In the workshops we are going to help you do it even better.

These are some of the things we are going to be working on together over the next sixteen workshop sessions.

Exercise 6: What Is Next?
(20 minutes)

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

At the end of a session we like to make sure that everyone knows how much we appreciate their presence and contributions.

We want them to know that we liked what they said and did or that we were pleased just because they showed up.

Take some time and show your appreciation to the other members of the group.

#ENCOURAGE SHARING. MODEL GIVING OUT "THANKS" AND
SHOWING APPRECIATION. MAKE SURE NO ONE IS OMITTED.

That was very good.

At the end of every session we also set a goal. When we meet next time we're going to ask you how you did on your goal.

#SHOW THE GOAL SETTING CHART.

A good goal is realistic, clear, not too much or too little, and easy to see if it was completed.

If someone said that he was going to buy a \$50,000 statue to put at his mother's grave, that might be unrealistic.

To feel better next week is unclear.

If someone's goal was to express their feelings it would be hard to know whether or not they had done it successfully.

On the other hand to look at all the pictures in two family photo albums between sessions would be a goal that met the guidelines.

Today we talked about how things have been going and what you can do about problems that you face.

As your goal for the week you might want to do something to help you address one of the problems.

For example, you might contact a family members who might be supportive to you.

Or you might ask a friend to babysit your children for two hours so you could take a walk and have some time by yourself.

What is your goal?

#ALLOW A FEW MINUTES TO SELECT GOALS.

Now let's go around the room and hear what you have chosen.

#ASK EACH PERSON FOR GOAL. HELP THEM MEET THE GUIDELINES BY CONSULTING AND PROMPTING. ENGAGE OTHER GROUP MEMBERS TO ENCOURAGE WORKING TOGETHER. WRITE THE GOALS ON THE GOAL SUMMARY SHEET (IN HANDOUTS)

You should write your goal on the "Goal Summary Sheet" so you can keep track of it.

To help you remember and work on your goal, I would like you to write your goals on a goal card and keep it with you during the week.

#PASS OUT GOAL CARDS - BLANK INDEX CARDS.

Each week you can add a new goal to the goal card.

Bring your goal card next week.

We will begin next week's session with a review of the goals.

Also, the group works best when you all attend regularly.

We will call you next week to remind you of the place and time.

If any of you see each other or talk to each other during the week, remind your group member about our next meeting.

Don't forget about our confidentiality rule. You can talk about what we did here, but don't mention another group member by name.

The next meeting is this afternoon at _____ (time) in this room number _____.

THE END OF SESSION 1

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FEELING THERMOMETER

100 VERY UNCOMFORTABLE

90

80

70

60

50

40

30

20

10

0 COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE

GOAL SETTING CHART

GOALS SHOULD BE

REALISTIC

CLEAR

NOT TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE

EASY TO SEE IF COMPLETED

GOAL SUMMARY SHEETS

SESSIONS 1-16

DATE: _____

MY GOAL FOR THIS WEEK IS: _____

DATE: _____

LONG-TERM GOAL: _____

DATE: _____

MY GOAL FOR THIS WEEK IS: _____

DATE: _____

MY GOAL FOR THIS WEEK IS: _____

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