



# Teen Workbook

King County Step-Up Program  
Seattle, Washington

Step-Up: A Curriculum for Teens Who Are Violent at Home  
was developed and written by Greg Routt and Lily Anderson  
with the Step-Up Program, a group counseling program for  
teens who are violent with parents or family members.

Step-Up is a program of King County Judicial Administration

Edited by Sakson and Taylor Consulting

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Seattle, Washington

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# Welcome to Step-Up!

We are pleased you are here, and look forward to having you and your family in Step-Up group.

This is your own personal Step-Up Workbook.

Please put your name in it and bring it to group every week.

**Name**

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# Table of Contents

Session 1: Introducing the Program <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	5
Session 2: My Family Relationships <i>Teen Session</i> .....	15
Session 3: Goal Planning <i>Teen Session</i> .....	19
Session 4: Understanding Violence <i>Teen Session</i> .....	25
Session 5: Taking a Time-Out <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	31
Session 6: Understanding Warning Signs <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	39
Session 7: Understanding Power <i>Teen Session</i> .....	51
Session 8: Understanding Feelings <i>Teen Session</i> .....	60
Session 9: Understanding Self-Talk <i>Teen Session</i> .....	72
Session 10: Understanding Beliefs <i>Teen Session</i> .....	78
Session 11: Hurtful Moves/Helpful Moves <i>Teen Session</i> .....	82
Session 12: Accountability <i>Teen Session</i> .....	86
Session 13: Making Amends <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	100
Session 14: Responsibility <i>Teen Session</i> .....	106
Session 15: Assertive Communication <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	120
Session 16: Using "I" Statements <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	130
Session 17: Understanding Empathy <i>Teen Session</i> .....	138
Session 18: Guidelines for Respectful Communication <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	144
Session 19: Problem Solving Together <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	148
Session 20: Healthy Dating Relationships <i>Teen Session</i> .....	158
Session 21: Moving Forward <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	168
Session 22: How We Change <i>Parent / Teen Session</i> .....	167



# Session 1: Introducing the Program

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### **Background**

The purpose of this session is to introduce you to the program and to other group members, and explain the goals and ground rules of the group. You will learn about the check-in process and do your first check-in.

### **Goals**

To explain the purpose of the program

To tell you about the requirements to complete the program

To explain check-in

### **Important Messages**

Group sessions can be a positive experience.

Even though things seem difficult between you and your parent, you can probably find positive parts of your relationship.

## Introductions

Introduce yourself to the group by answering the following questions:

What is your name?

What behavior brought you here?

What would you like to learn in this group that might help you in your relationship with your family members?

On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your personal commitment to change? (1 is none, 10 means you want to put a lot of effort into changing your behavior.)

## Warm-Up Exercise

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

1. A time I couldn't have made it through something difficult without my mom/dad/teen was:

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2. A time when I appreciated my mom/dad/teen was:

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3. Something I like about my mom/dad/teen is:

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## Goals for Teens

After you complete the program, you will be able to:

Be accountable for your behavior. This means you can talk about your abusive or violent behavior without denying, justifying, or minimizing it, or blaming others.

Understand the effects of your behavior on others and on yourself.

Know how to actively take responsibility for your behavior when you have been abusive or violent.

Know how to take a break (a time-out) from a heated situation.

Understand the difference between abusive communication and respectful communication.

Know how to use respectful communication, even when you are upset or angry.

Know how to resolve conflict without abuse and violence.

Understand that you have choices about your behavior and be able to choose to stay nonviolent.

## **Ground Rules for the Group**

To make this program successful for everybody, we should all strive to:

Be on time.

Allow others to finish speaking before you start.

Not engage in side conversations while class is in session.

Keep information shared in the group confidential. Everything that is discussed in the group stays in the group. Do not identify group members to anyone outside the group.

Use respectful language.

Follow the issue; focus on the problem being discussed.

Come to each session sober, not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **Rules for Attendance**

To successfully complete this program, each participant must:

Attend and be on time for all group sessions unless excused due to illness or emergency.

Attend the full number of sessions required by court in order to complete the program.

Call the Step-Up office to explain an absence.

Make up excused absences.

Attend an extra session to make up an unexcused absence. An absence without a legitimate reason (determined by the parent) is an unexcused absence. In other words, when a teen has an unexcused absence, he or she will be required to do two additional sessions.

Attend additional sessions to make up for chronic tardiness.

## **Communication Contract**

Speak respectfully. This means no blaming, no criticizing, and no put-downs.

Think before speaking.

Speak in a non-threatening way.

Use "I" statements. (You will learn more about "I" statements in Session 16.)

Try to understand each other's feelings and opinions, even when you disagree with them.

Listen to each other.

Do not interrupt each other.

## **Requirements for Completion of the Program**

Identify behaviors you have used each week on the abuse and respect wheels.

Describe a time when you took a time-out.

Write a responsibility letter and read it to the group.

Write an empathy letter and read it to the group.

Demonstrate problem-solving skills during the group session.

Demonstrate respectful communication.

## **Abuse and Respect Wheels**

The two wheels show two different kinds of behavior used in relationships with family members. The behaviors on the abuse wheel are behaviors that emotionally or physically hurt family members and are used to gain power over them. The behaviors on the respect wheel are ones that acknowledge other people's value and that consider other people's concerns.

The purpose of Step-Up is to help you move from the abuse wheel to the respect wheel in your relationships with family members. All of the skills we teach in the program will help you replace behaviors on the abuse wheel with behaviors on the respect wheel.

### **Check-in**

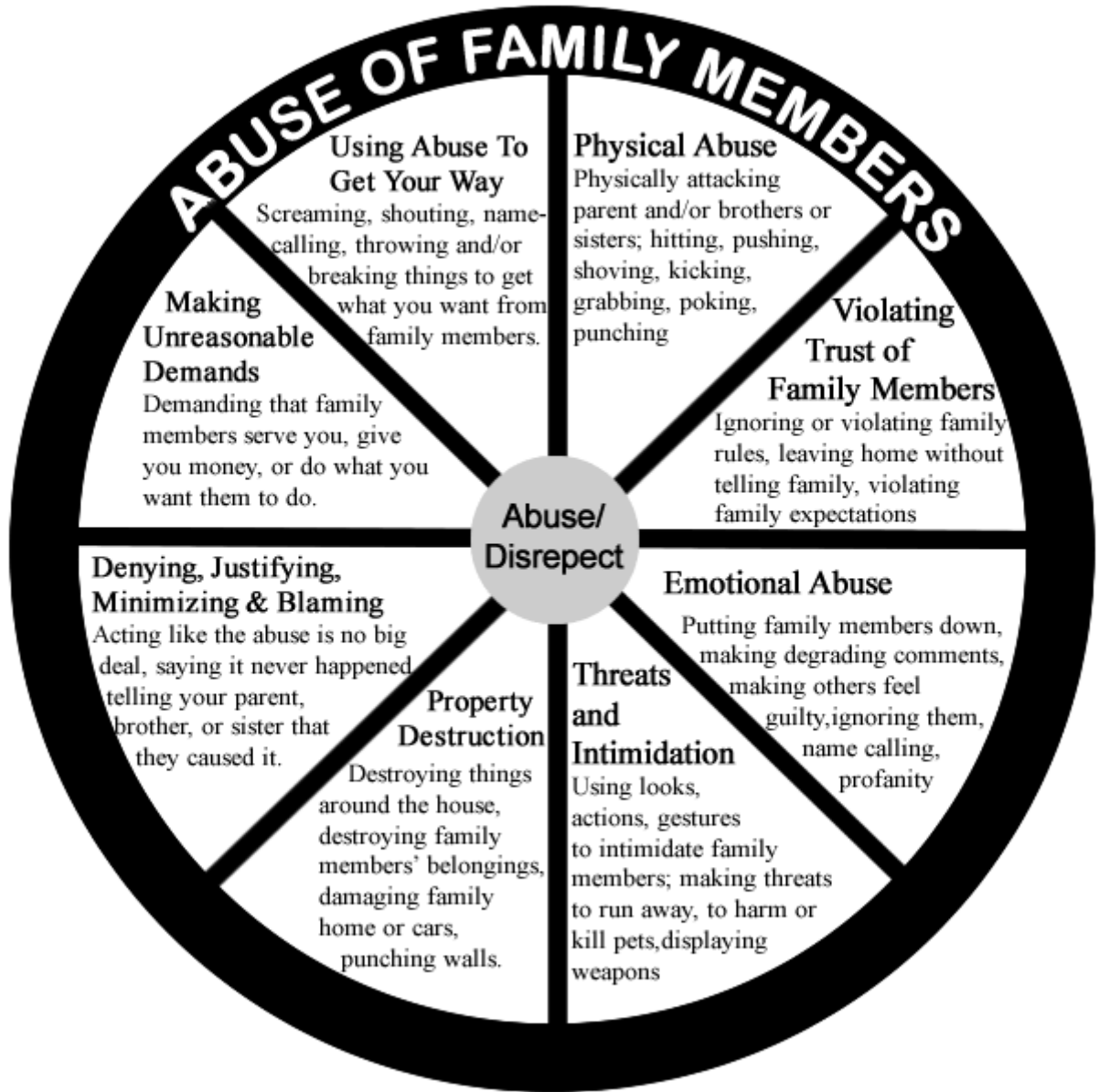
We will use the abuse and respect wheels for check-in each week. We will begin every session by looking at the wheels in your workbook and have you pick out behaviors you have used during the week. After everyone in the group has talked about the behaviors he or she has used on the wheels, the teen's parent looks at the wheels and identifies behaviors the teen has used during the week.

## **Taking Responsibility for Your Abusive Behavior**

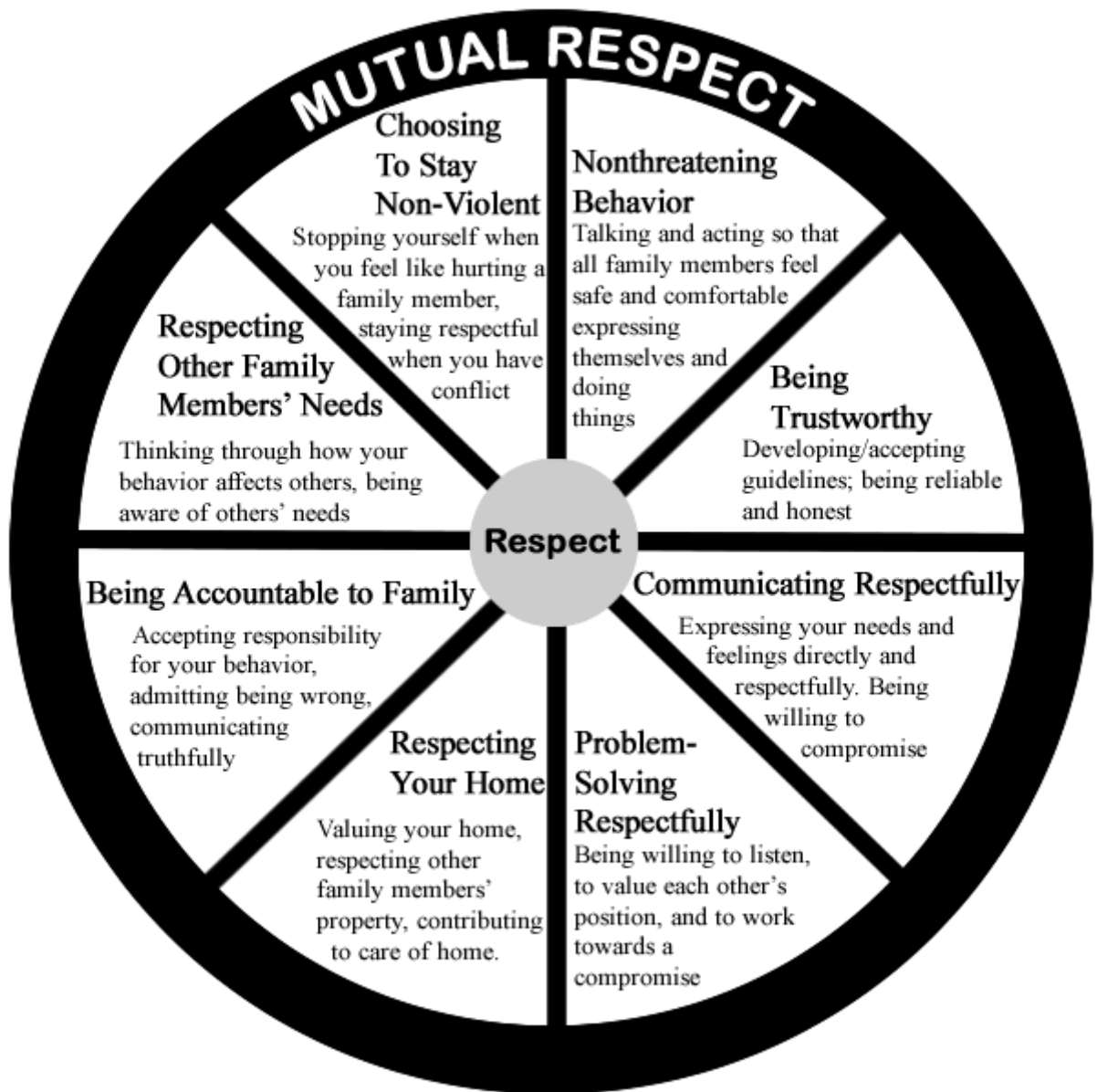
If you have been physically abusive to a family member, made serious threats of physical abuse, or destroyed property during the previous week, you will be asked to answer the following questions:

1. Who was harmed by your behavior?
2. What was the harm, damage or loss that was done (to yourself, others, and your relationship)?
3. What could you have done differently?
4. How did your behavior affect you?
5. What have you done, or what do you need to do, to repair that harm, damage or loss to "make it right"?

# Abuse Wheel



# Respect Wheel



## **Take Home Activity**

Think of three of your personal strengths that will help you make positive changes.

My Personal Strengths:

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# Session 2: My Family Relationships

## *Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

This session gives you a chance to think about positive qualities and strengths of people in your family. It also provides an opportunity for you to get to know other group members and learn about each other's families. You will learn that other families also have conflict.

### **Goals**

To identify the strengths of each family

To learn about the families of the other participants and see that all have conflict

To identify behaviors that strengthen family relationships and behaviors that destroy family relationships

To identify ways group participants can impact family relationships in a positive way

To build relationships among the members of the group

### **Important Messages**

Every family has strengths and every individual has positive qualities.

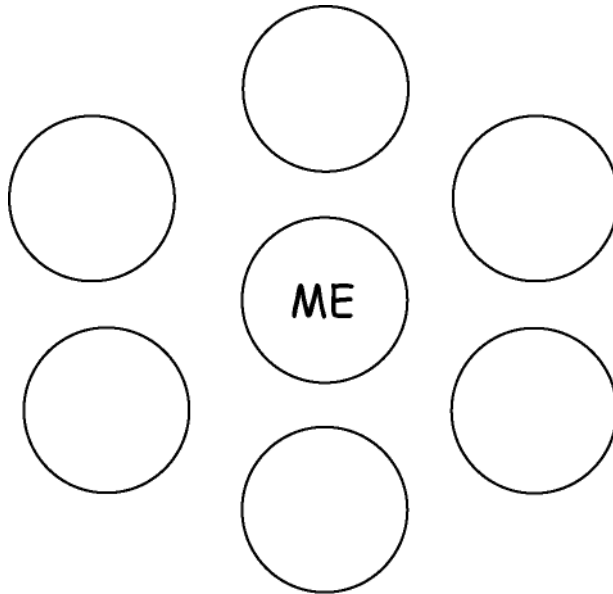
Conflict is a normal part of family life and can strengthen family relationships.

Violence and abuse destroy family relationships.

# Worksheets

## My Family Relationships

Write the names of each of your immediate family members in the circles. Write your name in the circle in the middle. You can include any other family members you are close to and see regularly. Add circles if there are not enough.



Now,

Draw a circle around the family member you feel closest to

What does this person do that helps you feel close to him or her?

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Draw a square around the family member you have the most conflict with. What is the conflict usually about?

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Draw a triangle around the family member you admire the most.  
What does this person do that you admire?

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Draw a diamond around the family member you respect the most.  
What does this person do that earns your respect?

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Think of one thing that you can change about your behavior that  
will help you have a better relationship with people in your family.

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# Session 3: Goal Planning

## *Teen Session*

### **Background**

The goal planning exercise teaches you how to set a goal for behavior change and takes you through the steps for making it work. You will pick a behavior to work on during the following week. Each week at check-in you will report on how your goal went and then choose a goal for the next week. This will become a routine part of the check-in process.

Goals should be related to changing abusive behaviors into more respectful behaviors. Picking a behavior from the abuse wheel or respect wheel will help keep the focus on these behaviors. Think about the exact behavior you currently use. For example, when you say "fighting with my brother," what do you do (yell, hit, push, get in his face?), and when do you usually do it? Make a plan for a new behavior to replace the old behavior. Using the Steps for Changing My Behavior (listed below) helps with this process.

Choose small realistic goals, rather than big goals that will be hard to accomplish.

### **Goals**

To identify personal weekly goals that reduce abuse and violence with family members

To identify behaviors that can support family relationships

To identify steps for each behavior change

## **Important Messages**

You have choices about how to behave.

Changing a behavior takes thought and planning.

Being clear and specific about the behavior you want to change is important to success.

Be proud of small steps toward behavior change.

# Worksheets

## Goal Planning

Pick one behavior from the abuse wheel or respect wheel you want to work on during the following week.

(Be specific; for example, stop name calling, take a time-out when I get angry, talk to my mom without yelling.)

The behavior I will work on is:

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## Steps for Changing My Behavior

Have a plan for a new behavior to replace the old behavior. My new behavior is:

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Recognize when you are about to use the behavior you want to change.

When do I usually use the behavior I want to change?

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Say something to yourself that will help you change your behavior.

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*(Examples: "I'm not going to let this get to me," "I can talk without yelling," "I can stay calm," "Take a time-out.")*

I will say to myself: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do the new behavior.



## My Goal for the Week

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal:** Write down a specific behavior

**How I Did:** Rate on a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

**How I Changed:** What did you do that helped you change?

Date	My Goal for the Week	How I Did	How I Changed

Date	My Goal for the Week	How I Did	How I Changed

Date	My Goal for the Week	How I Did	How I Changed



# Session 4: Understanding Violence

## *Teen Session*

### **Background**

The goal of the Step-Up program is for you to choose nonviolent and non-abusive behavior in family relationships. The purpose of this session is to define abuse and violence and to help you think about how your choice of violent and abusive behavior has affected your life. When you are violent and abusive you are usually acting without thinking about the outcomes and consequences of the behavior you use. An important step toward choosing nonviolent and non-abusive behavior is to recognize the consequences of violent and abusive behavior.

Some teens don't regard some of the emotionally abusive behaviors they use as "abusive." Many have come to view name calling, yelling, and put-downs as "normal" behavior when they are angry. In general, we consider emotional abuse to be any behaviors that verbally attack, put down, humiliate, or are intentionally hurtful to a person (this includes yelling and name calling). Violence is any behavior that physically harms, scares or threatens a person (this includes property destruction, getting in someone's face, and threats to hurt).

### **Goals**

To define violent and abusive behaviors

To identify payoffs, outcomes, and consequences of violence and abuse

## **Important Messages**

Violent and abusive behavior hurts people even if they aren't physically hurt.

Violent and abusive behavior has negative consequences for the abuser, as well as for the person who is the target of the behavior.

Violent and abusive behavior is learned.

People have choices about how they respond to a situation. Violent and abusive behavior is not a "reaction" over which an individual has no control.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are violent and abusive behaviors?

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2. Where/how do people learn to use violence and abuse?

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3. How do violence and abuse affect:

- Relationships

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- The abusive person

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- The victim

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# Worksheets

## Payoffs, Outcomes and Consequences

**Payoffs:** The immediate results of being violent or abusive. This is what you get out of being violent or abusive that makes you more likely to do it again.

**Outcomes:** How being violent or abusive affects a situation. You don't always get what you want.

**Consequences:** The long-term results of being violent or abusive. What will happen to you if you keep being violent or abusive? How violent or abusive behavior will affect your life.

Give some examples of payoffs, outcomes and consequences below.

Payoffs	Outcomes	Consequences



# Session 5: Taking a Time-Out

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

In this session you will learn how to use time-outs to stop yourself from becoming abusive or violent. The goal is for you to be able to take a time-out before you become abusive or violent.

### **Goals**

To discuss time-outs as a strategy for de-escalating difficult situations

To complete a family time-out / safety plan

To learn how to disengage from power struggles

### **Important Messages**

A time-out is a step toward better family relationships.

A time-out may prevent a teen from hurting family members.

Taking a time-out means you care about the other person.

A time-out gives you a chance to calm down and think before you act.

## Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever used time-outs before? How did you use them?

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2. How could taking a time-out help keep you from getting violent?

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3. How could taking a time-out help you be more respectful?

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4. How could taking a time-out help you make better decisions?

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5. What can make it difficult to take a time-out?

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# Worksheets

## How to Take a Time-Out

When you are feeling upset, pay attention to your warning signs.

Make a decision to take a time-out to prevent yourself from being abusive to another family member.

A time-out can take anywhere from 5 minutes to an hour.

Tell the other person that you are taking a time-out. You can then take a short walk or go into another part of the house where you can be alone.

Think of something to help you calm down. You can make better decisions when you are calm.

Recognize your negative thoughts. Try to identify what it is that makes you feel angry, frustrated, or irritated.

Try to stop your negative thoughts. Thinking negative things won't help you get what you want. For example, if you keep thinking about how "mean" your mom is, you will just keep getting angrier, and the argument will get worse.

Before you return to the conversation, look at what your choices are, and decide what you're going to do.

Return to the conversation and try to work out the problem calmly.

When you are calm, explain time-outs to any members of the household who aren't already familiar with them.

## **Time-Out Rules**

**A time-out should not be used as an excuse to leave the house.**

It is not a time-out if you go to a friend's house, or if you take off and don't say where you are going. If you leave the house to take a walk, let your parent know where you are walking and for how long.

**A time-out is a time to be alone, to calm down and to think about how to deal with the problem without being abusive.**

When you are in a time-out, do something to calm down (by thinking, taking deep breaths, walking, etc.). Once you have calmed down, think about how to talk about the conflict with your parent.

**You are responsible for taking your own time-out. Do not tell your parent when to take a time-out.**

Parents will make their own decisions about when to take a time-out. Sometimes your parent may need to tell you to take a time-out if you are being abusive and are not taking a time-out.

**Let your parent know how long you will be in a time-out. A time-out should not be more than an hour.**

It is best to have an agreed-upon amount of time for all time-outs so that you don't have to talk about it when you take a time-out. 20-30 minutes is usually enough time to calm down and think things through.

## **What to Do After a Time-Out**

### **Let it go**

While you are cooling down, you may realize that whatever you were arguing about doesn't really matter that much. For example, it may not be worth your energy to continue a discussion about small problems, so just let it go.

### **Put it on hold**

You may recognize that some circumstance prevents you from being respectful while you talk about the issue. For example, you may be too upset, too tired, or too hungry to talk through the problem effectively. So, you can agree to put it on hold for a while until both people feel calm and ready to talk. Putting it on hold should not be a way to avoid the issue. It should be a way to make sure that the conversation can be respectful. If you decide to put the discussion on hold, make sure to set a specific time (for example, after dinner, or Saturday morning) when you are going to discuss it.

### **Discuss it**

If you feel calm after the time-out, you may decide that you are ready to talk about the issue with the other person. You must be ready to listen to the other person, use problem-solving skills, and communicate respectfully. If the conversation becomes disrespectful, you can always take another time-out.

## Time-Out / Safety Plan

I agree to the following plan to prevent abuse or violence:

1. I will take a time-out when:

- I start to feel angry or upset and might become hurtful.
- I start to use any hurtful behaviors including the following:
  - Screaming/yelling
  - Name-calling/profanity
  - Threats/intimidating behavior
  - Unwanted physical contact
  - Property damage

2. I will let the other person know I am separating by saying:

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3. I will separate from the other person and go to one of the following places:

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4. While I am separated I will do something to calm myself down, such as:

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5. I will stay away from others for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes, or until I can be respectful to everyone in the house.
6. I agree to follow the rules of the time-out:
- I will not use this plan as an excuse to leave the house, get out of chores or things I'm supposed to do.
  - I will use this plan as a time to be alone, calm down, and think about how to deal with the problem.
  - If the other person separates from me, I will respect their time alone and not bother them.
  - After my separation time I will return and make a plan with the other person about what to do next: finish the discussion, plan a time later to talk about it or let it go.

I agree to be non-violent at home.

Youth Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Agreement:**

I also agree to be non-violent and to respect his/her time alone while in time-out.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Time-Out Log

During the following week, use a time-out whenever you are starting to feel upset or angry during a conflict. Try to take a time-out before you become abusive. After your time-out, write down how it went in the log below.

Situation:

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When did you decide to take a time-out?

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Where did you go and what did you do during your time-out?

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What did you do after your time-out—let it go, put it on hold, or discuss it?

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Did taking a time-out help you stay non-abusive? How?

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# Session 6: Understanding Warning Signs

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

In this session you will identify times when you need to take a time-out and how to use self-calming thoughts. Self-calming thoughts are used to help de-escalate one's emotions and separate from a potentially difficult situation.

You will identify your red flags—that is, the signs that a time-out is necessary or a situation may get abusive.

### **Goals**

To identify personal red flags

To identify self-calming thoughts

### **Important Messages**

The sooner you take a time-out when you start to feel upset, the better. It is more difficult to take a time-out when you are angry or agitated.

Identify the first red flag that indicates you may get abusive. The goal is to recognize that you need a time-out, and then to take it, before you become abusive.

# Worksheets

## Red Flags

If we pay close attention to our bodies, thoughts and feelings, we can find some warning signs that we are getting angry or upset and may become abusive to our family members.

Paying attention to these warning signs in ourselves is the first step in taking a time-out. Time-outs help us to control our bad feelings and have more respectful relationships with others.

Everyone has his or her own red flags. Here are some examples:

**Negative thoughts:** "She treats me like an infant!" "She never lets me do anything!" "He's an idiot!"

**Difficult feelings:** Angry, frustrated, hurt, jealous, anxious, impatient, unappreciated, neglected, abandoned.

**Body signs:** Tight muscles in the neck, back or jaw; clenched teeth; upset stomach; flushed face; feeling short of breath.

**Actions:** Raising of the voice, shouting, saying bad words.

When you recognize these red flags in yourself, it's time to take a time-out.

## My Red Flags

Describe a situation in the recent past when you were upset, and write down what your red flags were.

Situation:

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*What were your red flags?*

Negative thoughts:

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Difficult feelings:

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---

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Body signs:

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Actions:

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## **Self-Calming Thoughts**

Self-calming thoughts are things you think about or say to yourself to help you calm down.

You should use self-calming thoughts when:

You feel yourself starting to get upset or angry.

You start to use abusive behavior (yelling, name calling, put-downs, or anything physical).

You are taking a time-out.

Self-calming thoughts help you not get abusive.

### **Here are some examples of Self-Calming Thoughts:**

I'm not going to let this get to me.

I can stay calm.

Stop. Let it go.

I'm going to take a time-out now.

If I stay calm, things will work out better.

I can take charge of how I act.

I don't have to get mad.

Step away. Stay calm.

I'm going to go chill out. We can talk later.

It's okay. I can deal with this.

I'm not going to yell.

I can talk calmly about this.

Go take a walk around the block.

I'm not a little kid. I don't have to throw a temper tantrum.

This is no big deal.

I can handle this.

I can talk without yelling.

I can talk about how I feel without being abusive.

I will take three deep breaths and sit down quietly.

You can also think about positive things that make you feel better (something you are looking forward to, something relaxing, a place you enjoy, any image that calms you and feels positive).

## **My Self Calming Thoughts**

In the space below, write down some things you can think about or say to yourself that will calm you down.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The next time you start feeling upset or angry, think one of these things.

## Time-Out Role Plays

### Scene One

Jack told his mother he would be home at 11:00 p.m., but instead he arrives home at 1:30 a.m. Jack knows his mother will be upset when he gets in. He starts thinking about what he's going to say to her.

When Jack walks in the door, he can feel himself get tense. He's worried.

**Mom:** "Where you were and why are you so late?"

Jack can feel himself starting to get heated, but wants to avoid an argument.

**Jack:** "I don't want to talk about it. I just want to go to bed."

**Mom:** "Have you been smoking pot or drinking?"

Jack feels accused and misunderstood. He hasn't used in a month and he thinks his mom should trust him by now.

**Jack:** "That's such a stupid question. You're being paranoid."

Jack wants to get away from his mom and brushes her aside as he walks down the hall.

**Mom:** "I want to talk to you." She follows him to his room.

**Jack:** "Why don't you get the hell out of here?"

**Mom:** "I'm tired of you talking like that."

Jack pushes her into the hall and closes the door.

## Scene Two

Tanisha is on the phone with her friend. Tanisha's younger sister, Vanessa, is listening in on her conversation on another phone, which makes Tanisha mad. Tanisha feels herself getting upset.

**Tanisha:** "Vanessa, get off the phone. Why don't you mind your own business? Mom, tell Vanessa to go to her room."

Tanisha grabs the phone tightly in her fist. She's really frustrated.

**Mom:** "Tanisha, you've been on the phone too long anyway, so you need to hang up."

**Tanisha:** "Vanessa, you're a little punk. Mom, you let her get away with everything."

Tanisha stands up and pounds her fist against the wall.

**Mom:** "Tanisha, you shouldn't call your sister names. You should apologize to her."

Tanisha feels a surge of heat in her body. She feels like screaming.

**Tanisha yells:** "You never listen to a thing I say. You're crazy if you think I'm going to apologize to her. She's the one who listened in on my phone call. She should apologize to me."

At that moment, Tanisha hates her sister and mother. She walks over to her sister and slaps her.

## Scene Three

Maria's mother is planning to go out with her friend to have dinner and to see a movie. Maria is supposed to stay home and watch her 11-year-old brother, Max. Maria's mom always makes a point of telling Maria that she can't have any friends over unless she asks her first. After her mother leaves, Maria decides to

ask some of her girlfriends over to hang out in her room while Max watches a movie in the living room.

Maria's mom comes home early.

When she hears her mother coming in the door, Maria feels panicked. She swears under her breath.

**Mom:** "What's going on in here?"

Maria's friends run out the back door. Maria feels embarrassed in front of her friends.

Maria stands up and gets a few inches from her mother.

**Maria:** "You can knock before you come in? It isn't right that you just barge in without knocking."

Maria pushes her mom out of the room and slams the door in her face.

**Mom:** "You're supposed to be watching your brother. I can't trust you anymore and I don't like your friends here without me knowing about it. I'm going to call their parents."

**Maria:** "You're really going ballistic. None of my friends are going to talk to me again if you call their parents. We weren't doing anything wrong."

## **Scene Four**

Raul is supposed to take out the garbage on Tuesday mornings. On this Tuesday, he forgets to take it out on time and his mother gets upset.

**Mom:** "Why can't you take out the garbage on time?"

Raul grits his teeth and pounds his fist on the table. He's frustrated with himself for forgetting.

**Raul:** "I just forgot."



**Mom:** "It's important to remember details. You don't seem to think that remembering days and times is very important. They're really important. You have to remember things like this if you want to make it in the real world."

Raul stands up and his voice gets louder.

**Raul:** "Stop talking to me like I'm a little kid. Do you think I'm stupid? This isn't a big deal. Why do you have to go on and on and on about it?"

**Mom:** "I don't think you understand how important details are and not forgetting about them. How are you going to remember more important things if you can't remember the little stuff like taking out the garbage?"

**Raul:** "Just shut up. I'm sick of you going on and on. All you do is nag me."

**Mom:** "Maybe if you had to stay home on Saturday night, you might remember."

**Raul:** "You're crazy."

Raul slams the door.

## **Scene Five**

Edgar wants to use the car on Saturday night, and his mother agrees if he promises to mow the lawn before he goes out. Edgar does not mow the lawn by Saturday afternoon.

**Mom:** "If you don't mow the lawn today, you can't use the car."

**Edgar:** "Can I do it on Sunday?"

**Mom:** "No."

Edgar can feel himself tense up. He feels frustrated.

**Edgar:** "That's not fair. There's no reason I can't do it tomorrow. You're making a big deal about nothing. Why are you always like this?"

Edgar's voice gets louder.

**Mom:** "You agreed to mow the lawn before you use the car."

**Edgar:** "You're stupid. I'm not doing it until Sunday."

**Mom:** "Edgar, just mow the lawn, like you agreed."

**Edgar:** "Forget it. I'm not going to do it at all."

**Mom:** "If you don't do it today, you're not going to go out at all."

**Edgar:** "You're an idiot."

Edgar goes into his bedroom and punches a hole in the wall.

## **Scene Six**

Robin and Devon were good friends when they were in school last year, but Robin's mother doesn't want Robin hanging around with Devon anymore. Devon got arrested over the summer and he isn't going to school anymore. Robin hangs out with Devon anyway and his mother hears Robin on the phone with Devon.

**Mom:** "I thought we already talked about Devon. You know I don't want you seeing him."

Robin is irritated with her mother and thinks to herself, "I'm not going to let my mom keep me from seeing Devon".

Robin stands up and points her finger at her mother.

**Robin:** "That's what you decided, not me. Anyway, I was just talking to him. What's the big deal with that?"

**Mom:** "We've already been through this. When you were going out with him last year, you started to miss a lot of school. We're not

going through that again. I don't want to start getting calls from school telling me that you're not there."

Robin walks closer to her mother and has an edge to her voice.

**Robin:** "That was last year and I haven't missed any school this year. You don't even know anything about Devon. You think he's some kind of criminal. Well, he's not. I'm not a little girl anymore and I can think for myself. You need to open your eyes and look around to see what's going on."

### Discussion Questions for Role Plays

1. In the situation you just witnessed, what were some of the red flags?

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2. What was the first red flag?

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3. At what point do you think it might have been a good idea to stop the conversation?

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4. At what point do you think it might have been a good idea to take a time-out?

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What self-calming thought could the teen have used to help him or her take a time-out?

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# Session 7: Understanding Power

## *Teen Session*

### **Background**

Power in personal relationships is often defined negatively, such as getting other people to do things that you want them to do, and this kind of power means having power over people. Violent and abusive behavior is one way to achieve this negative kind of power.

But there are nonviolent and non-abusive ways to achieve a positive kind of power. One source of positive power is found in your personal strengths that allow you to achieve your goals. Another source of positive power is found in skills like negotiation and compromise that can strengthen your relationships. You can use your skills, knowledge and strengths to have positive personal power.

### **Goals**

To identify personal power

To identify negative and positive uses of power

To examine how teens can use their personal power in positive ways

### **Important Messages**

Power in itself is not a problem. It is how we *use* our power with others that can sometimes be a problem.

Our personal strengths and skills can give us power in positive ways

## Discussion Questions

1. What is power?

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2. What are some different ways that people have power?

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3. What are some things people do to have power?

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4. What are some destructive ways to show power?

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5. What are some respectful ways to have power?

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Think of someone you know who has a lot of power. In which of the above ways does he or she have power? How does the person use his or her power?

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# Worksheets

## Personal Strengths and Skills

One source of personal power comes from your personal strengths and skills. All of us have personal strengths that give us the power to make changes in our lives. These strengths also allow us to build close personal relationships with others and achieve our personal goals.

### Personal Strengths

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Courage ____    | 1. To have sympathy and feelings for people with problems.  |
| 2. Open-Mindedness | 2. Being able to wait; taking your time to do things.   |
| 3. Endurance ____  | 3. To face danger or difficulties in spite of fear.   |
| 4. Dedication ____ | 4. Being accountable; following through; acknowledging when you are wrong.                                  |
| 5. Patience ____   | 5. To have the ability to work well with others; taking others into consideration when speaking and acting. |

6. Reliable \_\_\_\_

6. To push yourself to meet a goal.

7. Cooperative \_\_\_\_

7. To stand behind friends and family no matter what happens.

8. Accountability \_\_\_\_

8. Ability or strength to continue on even though you are tired, stressed or have a long way to go.

9. Loyalty \_\_\_\_

9. Being dependable and consistent

10. Compassion \_\_\_\_

10. Being interested in the opinions and ideas of others; being willing to consider new ideas.

### **Personal Skills**

Another source of power comes from personal skills that allow you to assertively communicate your point of view in a respectful way. These skills will get you what you need for yourself and build stronger relationships with your family. Match each personal skill with the definition of the skill.

1. Listening \_\_\_\_

1. To put yourself in someone else's shoes.



2. Compromise/Negotiation \_\_\_

3. Respectful communication \_\_\_

4. Empathy \_\_\_

5.

6. Coping with difficult emotions \_\_\_

3. To take action to deal with feelings calmly.

4. To come to an agreement with someone you are having a conflict with

5. To express your thoughts and feelings using language that acknowledges other people's dignity.

6. Paying attention to what someone is saying.

## Ways We Have Personal Power

The following scenarios provide examples of personal power. What personal strengths and personal skills could the people in these scenarios use?

1. Neko is failing her math class and her mother is upset. Neko is grounded until she brings her grade up. She agreed to stay after school to get some extra help and she made a list of special assignments that she can do to improve her grade. Neko knows it will take time before her grade gets better and doesn't think she should be grounded. What should Neko do? What skills and strengths will she use to resolve this issue?

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2. Jason is baby-sitting his little brother, who is watching a show on TV. Jason wants to watch a baseball game on a different channel. What can Jason do? What skills and strengths will he use with his brother?

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3. Linda has a 10:00 p.m. curfew. She has had problems with keeping to her curfew and forgetting to call when she will be late. She wants a later curfew because most of her friends can stay out until 11:00 p.m.

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4. Larry just had an argument with his girlfriend, Lindsey, about their plans for the weekend. Larry wants them to

go to a friend's party and Lindsey wants to see a band at a club. They keep arguing about it.

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5. Lisa's parents have been checking on her a lot lately because she was going places she wasn't supposed to go. Her mom wants to know the phone numbers where Lisa is all the time and she calls to check on her. Lisa is getting really annoyed by this. She wishes her mom would trust her. What could she do?

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## What Personal Power Do You Have?

### Strengths

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### Skills

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## Take-Home Activities

During the following week, think of ways you use your personal power and let us know about it next week during check-in.



# Session 8 Understanding Feelings

## *Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

Anger is an emotion that everyone feels, and it often motivates people to make changes in their lives. We feel angry when we feel that we have been wronged or have been treated unjustly. Anger is also used as a justification for abusive or violent behavior. This session can help you make nonviolent and non-abusive choices in two ways. The first is by separating feelings of anger from the behavior you choose, and the second is by recognizing you have other feelings when you feel anger.

### **Goals**

To identify the relationship between power and anger

To separate feelings of anger from the behavior a teen chooses

To recognize feelings, in addition to anger, experienced by a teen

To examine the relationship between anger and other feelings

### **Important Messages**

Anger itself is not a bad thing. Anger is a feeling that lets us know that things are not right for us. When we feel anger we know that we need to do something—to figure out a problem, make a change, talk to someone about our feelings, or make a decision to try to let it go. Anger can be a motivator to take respectful action toward a positive change. Anger has been the force that changed many injustices in our country's history, and has brought communities together to create positive change.

It is OK to feel angry; it is how we behave when we are angry that can be a problem. More specifically, anger should not be used to justify violence and abuse, or to intimidate or make other people feel powerless. There are ways to express anger without violence and abuse.

Anytime you are angry, you also have other feelings.

When you express feelings other than anger, people are more likely to listen to you and understand you.

You have a choice about what to do with your anger, and you are responsible for the way you choose to respond.

You are *not* responsible for someone else who chooses to respond to his or her anger with violence. If you are the victim of someone else's violence, *you are not to blame*.

## Discussion Questions

1. How is anger used to justify violent or abusive behavior?

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2. How do people use anger to have power over others?

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3. Can you be angry and respectful at the same time? How?

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4. What can you do to help control your anger so you can stay respectful?

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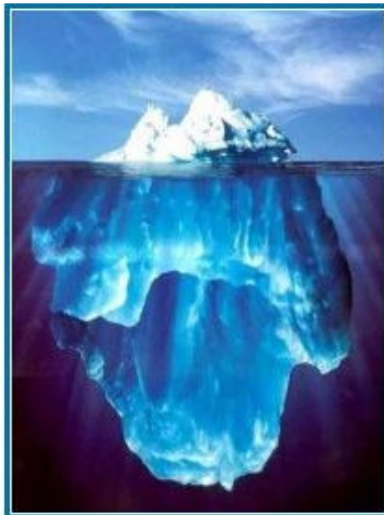
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## **Iceberg of Feelings**

For a lot of people, anger is used to mask other feelings and the iceberg is a way of showing how this works. Anger is the tip of the iceberg. The part of the iceberg under the water is where all the other feelings are. People often show only anger to the people around them. But just as a captain must know what lies beneath the water in order for a ship to successfully navigate around an iceberg, people need to understand what lies beneath their anger and other people's anger in order to cope effectively with their feelings. Talking about the feelings, instead of showing the anger, makes it much easier to understand each other and resolve conflicts.

**Anger**  
**Submerged**  
**Feelings**



# Worksheets

## Identifying and Talking About Feelings

Why does putting our feelings into words help?

In addition to anger, we have feelings that range in many different directions. When we communicate these other feelings to people, they understand us better and it's easier to work out problems with them. So talking about feelings can make our relationships stronger.

Talking about feelings can also help us stay calm. Brain researchers have found that simply identifying feelings of sadness and anger makes them less intense. Studies at UCLA in 2007\* showed that when people labeled a negative feeling, like sadness or anger, it activated a part of the brain responsible for processing emotions and impulse control. At the same time it calmed down activity in the part of the brain that triggers negative feelings like fear and panic. So, when you say what you are feeling, it calms you down. It also works this way when you identify a feeling in someone else. For example, if your brother looks at you in an angry way and you think to yourself, "he is angry", you will activate the part of your brain that calms down your own negative feelings and prevents your impulse to react to him.

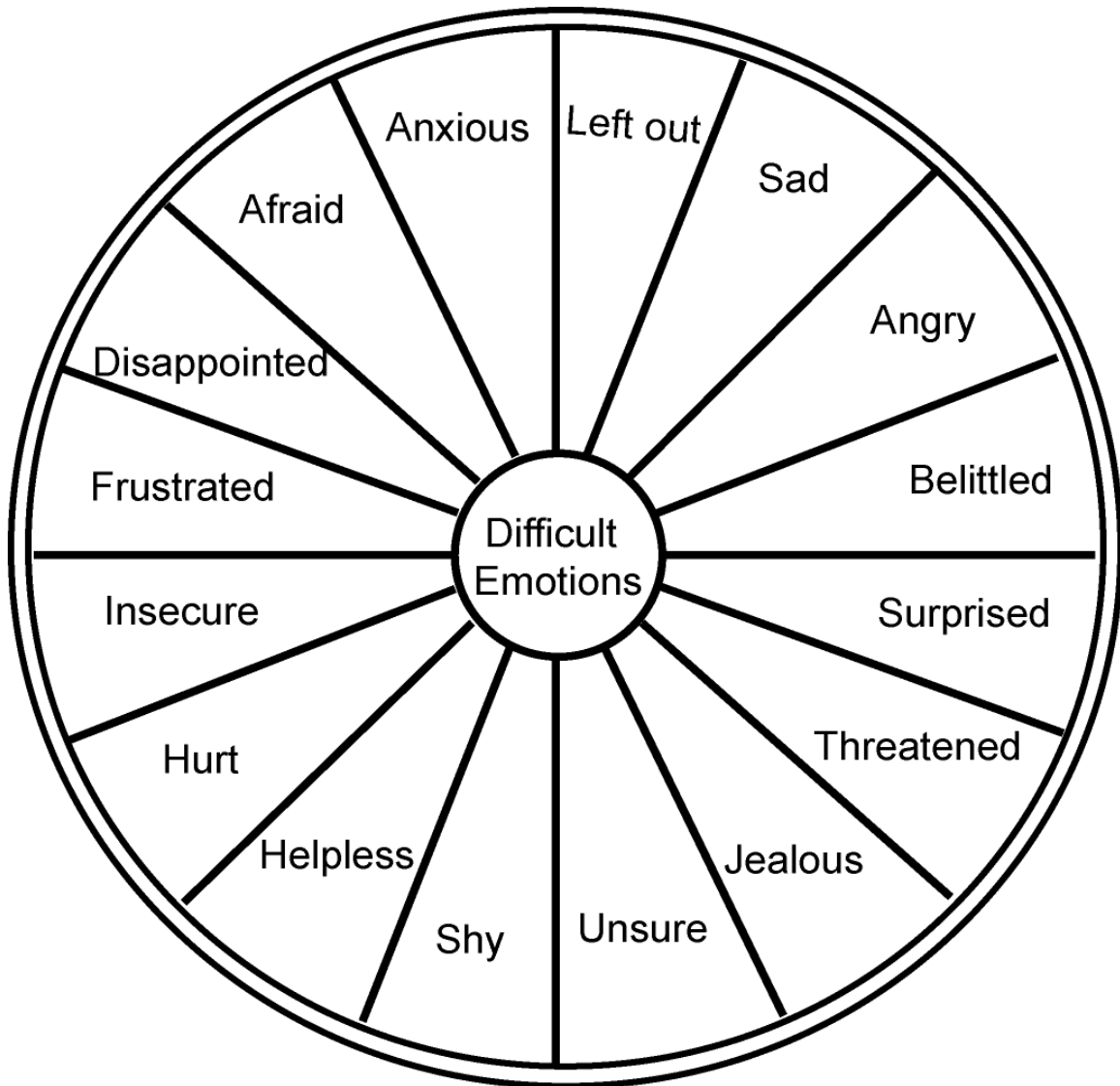
The next time you are getting angry or upset about something, try thinking about what you are feeling and say it to yourself. You can say it out loud, think it or write it. This is a good thing to do during a time-out.

\* Lieberman, Matthew D. (2007) *Putting Feeling Into Words: Affect Labeling Disrupts Amygdala Activity in Response to Affective Stimuli*, *Psychological Science* 18 (5), 421-428.

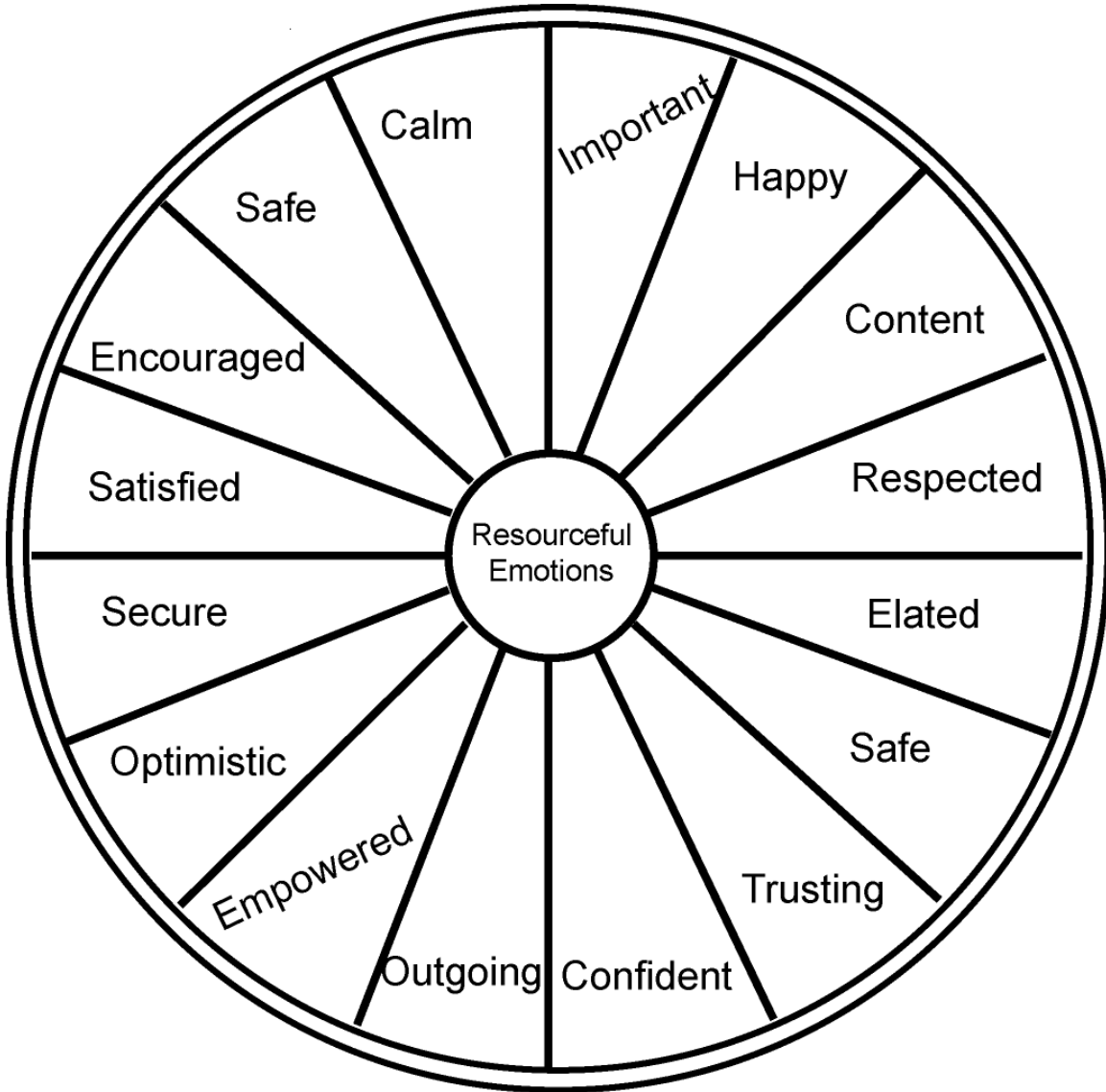
On the next two pages, you will see two wheels with feelings. One has difficult feelings that are common when people are having conflict with each other. The other has helpful feelings that describe how you feel when you are able to stay calm and solve problems.

For this exercise, you will look at the two wheels and think about a situation when you felt one of the feelings on the wheel. We will go around the group and share until we have talked about all of the feelings on each wheel.

# Difficult Feelings



# Helpful Feelings



## Identifying Feelings

Read each scenario below and write down the feelings, besides anger, the person might be having.

1. Barb gets kicked out of math class for arguing with the teacher again. She is sent to the vice principal, who tells her that she'll be suspended for a week because this is the third time she's been kicked out of class. Barb knows that her basketball team has a major game that she's going to miss.

She says to the vice principal, "Well that's just great! THANKS!" She walks out and slams the door behind her.

Barb is angry. What else might she be feeling?

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2. Jake has been seeing Monica for five weeks. One afternoon he asks her if she wants to go get pizza after school. She says, "No, I don't want pizza, and I really don't want to hang out with you anymore." Jake yells at her, calls her a name and walks off.

Jake is angry. What else might he be feeling?

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3. Alex spent all the money he saved fixing up his car. He got a new CD player, a new muffler, new rims and a detail job. One morning he goes out to the car and finds his rims gone. He screams and goes into his house to call his friend and tell him about it. His sister is on the phone. He

shouts at her to get off the phone. She ignores him. He grabs the phone out of her hand.

Alex is angry. What else might he be feeling?

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4. Katie just came back from a weekend visit with her dad. When she was at his house, he talked about how he thinks the divorce was all her mom's fault. When Katie gets home, her mom says, "Did you get your homework done this weekend?" Katie screams at her mom, "Why can't you just leave me alone?"

Katie is angry. What else might she be feeling?

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Think of a situation when you were really angry and got abusive to another person. Write down the situation and then write down the feelings you were having besides anger.

What happened?

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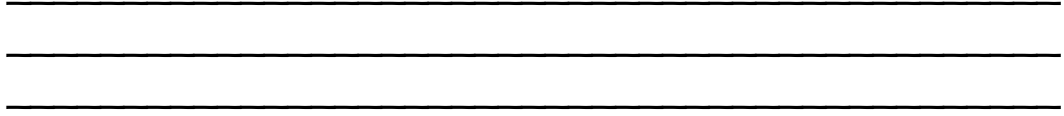
What did you say and do?

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Besides anger, what feelings did you have?







# Session 9: Understanding Self-Talk

## *Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

Self-talk is another word for thinking. In difficult situations, your thinking will determine how you behave and what choices you make. We begin by asking you to be aware of the things you say to yourself or things you are thinking in difficult situations. When you can identify what thoughts you are having, you can then decide if your thoughts are helping you resolve problems or are making problems worse. If you are successful at examining your thinking, you can change your thoughts during difficult situations so you can resolve conflicts without abuse and violence.

### **Goals**

To identify self-talk

To learn how to use self-talk to control behavior

To learn how to use self-talk to make better choices

### **Important Messages**

When I control the way I think, I have more control over the way I act.

When I can change my thinking, I make better choices.

My own thinking is the best tool I have to control myself.

## What Is Self-Talk?

We can decide how we are going to think about every situation. We may explain things to ourselves in a way that makes us more and more angry, or we may explain things to ourselves in a way that helps us stay calm and figure things out. Explaining things to ourselves is called self-talk.

For example:

Sally's sister, Ramona, comes home a half hour late. Sally is mad because Ramona was supposed to give her a ride somewhere, and now Sally is late. Sally starts yelling at Ramona and Ramona argues with her, and they both end up yelling and screaming at each other.

Sally calls Ramona a name and storms off to her room. Ramona says she will never give her a ride anywhere again.

1. What kinds of negative things might Sally be thinking?

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2. How do those thoughts make her feel?

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3. How does Sally's behavior affect her sister?

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4. What could Sally think instead that would help her calm down and deal with the situation?

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## Changing Negative Self-Talk into Helpful Self-Talk

Below are some different situations that can be difficult. Read each one and write down:

**Negative self-talk** that you might have.

**Helpful self-talk** that will help you calm down and deal with the situation or be able to let it go and walk away.

1. Your little brother keeps coming into your room and getting into your stuff.

**Negative self-talk**

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**Helpful self-talk**

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2. Your mom says you have to clean your room before you go out. You had planned to leave right away to meet your friends at the mall.

**Negative self-talk**

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**Helpful self-talk**

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3. Your friend said she would go out with you, and then she changed her plans. Later you find out she is going somewhere with another friend of yours and they didn't invite you.

**Negative self-talk**

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**Helpful self-talk**

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4. A girl who doesn't like you is whispering things to her friend in your class.

**Negative Self-talk**

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**Helpful self-talk**

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5. You come home an hour late and your dad says you are grounded.

**Negative self-talk**

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**Helpful self-talk**

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6. A girl/boy you have been in an ongoing conflict with is getting into your face and acting like she/he wants to fight.

**Negative self-talk**

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**Helpful self-talk**

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7. Your younger brother keeps pestering you. He is poking you and calling you stupid.

**Negative self-talk**

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**Helpful self-talk**

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8. Think of a situation in your life where you usually get angry. Write it below, and then write negative self-talk and helpful self-talk.

Situation

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**Negative self-talk**

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**Helpful self-talk**

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# Session 10: Understanding Beliefs

## *Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

In this session, we will look at beliefs that support the use of violence or that place the blame or responsibility for violence on another person. In particular, you will address the common belief that anger causes people to be violent. Remember, people can be angry without becoming violent, and we all have choices about how we handle difficult emotions.

### **Goals**

To assess how our beliefs about anger affect our actions

To learn strategies for changing unhelpful beliefs and behaviors

### **Important Messages**

Our beliefs influence how we think and act.

Beliefs can change with our personal experiences.

Beliefs are rules we give ourselves about our behavior.

Beliefs are often at work below the surface of our awareness, so we don't often think about them.



## Discussion Questions

1. What are some beliefs people have about friendships?

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2. What are some beliefs people have about school?

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3. What are some beliefs people have about intimate relationships?

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4. What are some beliefs people have about mothers?

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5. What are some beliefs people have about fathers?

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6. What are some beliefs people have about money?

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# Worksheets

## Beliefs People Have About Anger and Abuse

Belief	Agree	Disagree
When I get angry I can't control what I do.		
When I get really angry I have the right to yell.		
If someone hits me, I have the right to hit back.		
If someone makes me really mad it's okay to hit him or her.		
Sometimes I get so angry, I just can't think.		
It's okay to be angry if someone hurts someone in my family.		
It's okay to hurt someone if he or she hurts someone in my family.		
No matter how angry I am I should never hit another person.		
When I get angry, I can make a choice to be respectful.		
I am responsible for how I act when I get angry.		
Sometimes getting angry is the only way to get my point across.		
Sometimes yelling and screaming is the only way to get my point across.		
I can get my point across when I'm angry without being abusive.		

After you have finished completing the worksheet, the group will discuss the following questions:

1. How would each belief affect how you choose to behave?
2. How would each belief affect your ability to take responsibility for your behavior (that is, how much you blame others or how you justify your behavior)?
3. If someone has a belief system that supports abusive and violent behavior (for example, the person has always believed it is okay to abuse someone who makes him or her mad), do you think that the person can change his or her beliefs?
4. What do you think it would take to make someone decide he or she wants to change his or her unhelpful beliefs?

# Session 11: Hurtful Moves/Helpful Moves

## *Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

An important part of changing behavior is to think about the choices we make. In earlier sessions we discussed feelings, self-talk and beliefs. In this session you will learn how these work together to impact how you choose to respond to an event. You will identify the feelings, self-talk and beliefs you have in a difficult situation and how to change them so you can make a better choice about your behavior.

### **Goals**

To learn to identify feelings, self-talk and beliefs experienced during difficult situations

To learn how to change negative/unhelpful feelings, self-talk and beliefs to positive/helpful ones and make behavior changes

### **Important Messages**

Feelings, thinking and beliefs all influence how we choose to respond to a situation.

When we change how we think about a situation, our feelings change.

Changing our feelings can help us make different choices about our behavior.

Our beliefs support our thinking, feelings and behavior.

# Worksheets

## Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves (Part A)

Scenario: Jason gets up one hour late and misses his bus. He asks his mom for a ride. She is going to work and doesn't have time.

Hurtful Moves	Helpful Moves
<p><b>I Think/Self-Talk</b></p> <p><i>You Should</i> "You should give me a ride."</p> <p><i>Blamers/Put-Downs</i> If you got me up on time, I wouldn't have missed the bus."</p>	<p><b>I Think/Self-Talk</b></p> <p><i>I Can</i> "I messed up but I can figure it out."</p> <p><i>Tamers</i> "Mom isn't responsible for my being late; she needs to get to work on time."</p>
<p><b>I Feel</b></p> <p>Resentful, helpless, controlled</p>	<p><b>I Feel</b></p> <p>Frustrated, anxious, worried, motivated, competent, able</p>
<p><b>Behavior</b></p> <p>Jason yells at her and calls her a name.</p>	<p><b>Behavior</b></p> <p>Jason takes the city bus to school.</p>
<p><b>I Believe</b></p> <p>Other people are responsible when things go wrong. I have the right to yell and call names when someone doesn't do what I want.</p>	<p><b>I Believe</b></p> <p>I am responsible for figuring out solutions to my own problems. I don't have the right to yell and call names when I don't get what I want. Other people's needs are important.</p>

## Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves (Part B)

Scenario: It's 11:30 p.m. and Terry is 30 minutes late for his curfew. He was at a party and didn't want to leave. Terry is mad at his mom because he thinks 11:00 p.m. is too early for a curfew. Complete the following worksheet as if you were Terry.

<b>Hurtful Moves</b>	<b>Helpful Moves</b>
<p><b>I Think/Self-Talk</b></p> <p><i>You Should</i></p> <p><i>Blamers/Put-Downs</i></p>	<p><b>I Think/Self-Talk</b></p> <p><i>I Can</i></p> <p>Tamers</p>
<p><b>I Feel</b></p>	<p><b>I Feel</b></p>
<p><b>Behavior</b></p>	<p><b>Behavior</b></p>
<p><b>I Believe</b></p>	<p><b>I Believe</b></p>

## Turning Your Own Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves

Think of a difficult situation in your life and describe it below, then fill out the worksheet for your situation.

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<b>Hurtful Moves</b>	<b>Helpful Moves</b>
<p><b>I Think/Self-Talk</b></p> <p><i>You Should</i></p> <p><i>Blamers/Put-Downs</i></p>	<p><b>I Think/Self-Talk</b></p> <p><i>I Can</i></p> <p>Tamers</p>
<p><b>I Feel</b></p>	<p><b>I Feel</b></p>
<p><b>Behavior</b></p>	<p><b>Behavior</b></p>
<p><b>I Believe</b></p>	<p><b>I Believe</b></p>

# Session 12: Accountability

## *Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

In this session you will learn how to be accountable for your abusive and violent behavior. In the Step-Up program we define accountability as acknowledging one's own abusive/violent behavior and how the behavior has had a harmful effect on others.

It is important to practice talking about your abusive/violent behavior without denying, justifying, or minimizing it, and without blaming the other person. You should also talk about how your behavior affects others and your relationships.

You may notice when other group members are not being accountable, and you can teach them—in a respectful way—how to be accountable.

### **Goals**

To define accountability

To recognize how we avoid accountability

To learn ways to show accountability by making amends

To learn how to take responsibility for our behavior

### **Important Messages**

The first steps in changing an abusive/violent behavior are to acknowledge that you are using the behavior and to recognize how it is a problem.



You are responsible for your own abusive/violent behavior,  
regardless of what the other person said or did that upset you.

# Worksheets

## What is Accountability?

1. What does it mean to be accountable? What do people do to be accountable about something they did?

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Think of a time when you saw someone be accountable when that person did something wrong. The person could be a friend, a parent, a teacher, or anyone you know. What did you feel about this person?

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3. What are some of the ways our society holds people accountable?

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4. What is the difference between being accountable for yourself and having accountability imposed on you?

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5. Who are you accountable to?

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6. What makes it hard to be accountable when you've done something wrong?

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7. What feelings do you have when you've decided you've done something wrong?

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8. What do people sometimes do instead of being accountable?

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How does being accountable help someone change his or her abusive/violent behavior?

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### **What People Do Instead of Being Accountable:**

Denying:

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Justifying:

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Minimizing:

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Blaming:

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## Accountability Scenarios

Read the following scenarios and answer the questions after each one:

Jeff is 14 years old. He has tryouts for the basketball team at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday morning. He asks his Mom, Rita, to wake him up at 6:30 a.m. so he can get ready. Rita says, "I will try to wake you up but I have to leave for work at 6:45, so you better set your alarm." Jeff says, "OK." He stays up until 11:00 p.m. surfing the Web and forgets to set his alarm. Rita wakes him up at 6:30 a.m. She leaves for work. Jeff goes back to sleep and wakes up at 9:00 a.m. Then he calls Rita at work and says, "You didn't wake me up. You made me miss tryouts. You're so selfish. You care about your job more than you care about me."

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Pete likes to play computer games on the Internet. His mother gets upset sometimes because Pete ties up the telephone line. One time after his mother told him to get off the Internet, Pete grabbed a hockey stick he had in his room and said that if she didn't leave him alone he was going to hit her with it. He waved the stick at her like he was going to hit her. She ran out of the room. Later, Pete said what he did wasn't so bad because he didn't actually hit her like he had done one other time.

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Randy hates to vacuum the living room floor. His mother said he has to do certain chores each week since he's a member of the household. Randy spends a lot of time in his room and doesn't think he should have to clean the living room. After his mother asked him to do housework, Randy told her to "shut up." His mother got upset and started to cry. Then Randy said she was always whining and had no backbone. Randy said he was just expressing his anger and didn't see why his mother always acted so "wimpy."

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Jeremy asks to borrow his friend Tim's mountain bike. Tim says, "OK, but be sure to lock it. Here's the lock." Jeremy rides to his girlfriend's house and leaves the bike leaning against the porch. He spends two hours with her and when he comes out, the bike is gone. He tells Tim, "Hey some jerk stole the bike. The house is in a bad neighborhood." Tim is upset. He asks Jeremy, "What are you going to do about the bike?" Jeremy says, "Oh come on, it's just a bike. My brother's friend Ted had his Harley stolen!"

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?
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Paul and Christie are seeing each other, and tonight, they are going to a party together. Christie shows up at Paul's house wearing a short, tight skirt and a clingy top. Paul looks at her for a while, and then he calls her a slut and tells her she must be trying to get with other guys. She says she wore it because she likes the way it looks and she thought he'd like it. He says, "Don't

lie to me." He slaps her. She starts to cry. He says, "If you didn't show up dressed like a slut this wouldn't have happened."

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Amy has been on the phone with her friend for an hour. Her mom has to make a call and tells Amy to get off the phone. Amy ignores her. After asking Amy five different times, Amy's mom disconnects the phone. Amy and her mom start to argue. Amy pushes her mom and her mom falls onto the coffee table, cutting her head. Her head is bleeding. Amy's mom says, "You really hurt me this time! This has to stop." Amy says, "Why are you making such a big fuss? You should be careful not to trip over things."

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Mr. Franklin is a high school science teacher who doesn't like teaching. He thinks the kids are stupid and badly behaved. Every morning he writes the whole lesson the board, and he spends the entire class reading it out loud. One day, all the kids in the class start laughing and talking and throwing things. Mr. Franklin says, "You are all a bunch of idiots! I'm going to fail everyone in this class."

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Randy thinks of himself as a "good guy." He never gets into fights and is generally good-natured. Randy and his friends are walking by the school and they see Jim, who everyone says is gay. Jim is walking by himself. Bob (one of Randy's friends) says, "Hey, let's get the faggot!" They surround Jim and taunt him for a while. Randy joins in. Then someone pushes Jim, and Randy and all of his friends stand over him and threaten him. Someone spits on him. Bob kicks him in the stomach. When they walk away, Randy says, "That little queer. He deserved it."

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Dennis has a two-year-old son, Jeff. One night, Dennis's wife goes out with her friends and leaves Dennis alone to take care of Jeff. Jeff is cranky and he keeps whining. When Jeff refuses to eat his dinner, Dennis smacks him hard across the face. When Dennis's wife gets home, she notices that Jeff has a red handprint on his face. She asks Dennis what happened. Dennis says, "He wouldn't eat his dinner. I had to make him behave."

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Ron works in a company mailroom. Mr. Swenson, a sales manager, brings a package down to the mailroom when Ron is at lunch. He leaves a note on it that says, "Please mail this out soon." Ron gets back from lunch and has a lot of work to do. He goes home without mailing the package. The next morning, Mr. Swenson calls Ron and asks if he mailed the package. Ron says, "No." Mr. Swenson yells at Ron and curses him out. "I told you it needed to

go out yesterday," he says. "Are you just too stupid to do your job?"

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Josh and his mom are arguing about the fact that Josh comes home late every night. Josh punches his mom. She calls the police and when the police come, Josh says, "I never punched her. She bumped into a wall and hurt herself."

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Lisa has a tank full of tropical fish. She is going away for three weeks at Christmas and she asks her friend Nora to feed the fish every other day. Nora promises she'll do that. Nora feeds the fish every other day for two weeks, but then she goes to stay with her boyfriend, who lives on the other side of town. When

Lisa gets back from her trip, all the fish are dead. She is upset. She calls Nora and says that Nora really let her down and should get her some new fish. Nora says, "Stop tripping. If you were so worried about your fish, you shouldn't have gone away."

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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Stephanie and Rob have been seeing each other for a year. Then Rob starts seeing Tonya too. One night Stephanie drives past Rob's house and she sees Rob and Tonya out on the porch, kissing. The next day, Stephanie finds Rob's car in the parking lot at school and slashes his tires. Rob asks her why she did it. "You asked for it," Stephanie says.

1. Is the abusive/violent person denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming? How?

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2. What could the abusive/violent person in this situation do to be accountable?

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## **Accountability for My Behavior**

Without denying, justifying, minimizing or blaming, describe an abusive/violent behavior you used with someone in your family.

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# Session 13: Making Amends

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

The second part of being accountable for abusive or violent behavior is to repair the harm or damage caused by the behavior. In this session you will learn specific things you can do to make amends for your behavior when you have been abusive and violent.

### **Goals**

To learn to show accountability by identifying specific things that can be done to make amends for abusive/violent behavior

To identify ways to repair relationships

### **Important Messages**

Making amends is a way to take responsibility for your behavior by repairing damage caused by your behavior.

Making amends is different from saying "I'm sorry."

The best way to make amends is to stop using abusive and violent behavior.

Repairing damage in a relationship is a long-term process.

# Worksheets

## Discussion Questions

What are some of the kinds of damage or harm that can be caused by abuse and violence?

Physical: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

## Making Amends

When you hurt someone (physically or emotionally), or you do something that causes a problem for another person, you can take responsibility for your behavior by doing something to make amends.

There are a lot of different ways to make amends:

Acknowledge that you were wrong.

Help fix the problem that was created by your actions.

Repair something that has been damaged or pay to have it fixed.

Help the person in some way.

Do something special for the person that shows you care about him or her.

Ask the person what you can do to make amends.

## What are other ways?

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**Here are some things to remember when you are making amends:**

Saying "I'm sorry" is not the same as making amends.

When you do something to make amends for an abusive or violent incident, it doesn't mean everything will be just fine and go back to the way it was before the incident.

It is not always clear what to do to make amends.

You should ask the person affected by the abuse what you can do to make amends.



## Making Amends Scenarios

How could the people in the following scenarios make amends?

1. Terry was hurrying through the grocery store and he accidentally rammed his grocery cart into a woman who was holding an armful of groceries. The groceries fell to the floor.

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2. Alice spilled soda all over her brother's paper that he had just completed for homework.

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3. Tom was supposed to be home at 4:00 to baby-sit so his mom could go to the doctor. He came home at 5:00 and his mom missed the appointment.

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4. Shelley and her little brother were arguing because they each wanted to watch a different show on TV at the same time. Shelley got mad at her brother and pushed him down so hard he bumped his head on the table.

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5. Larry's mom was upset with him because he had not been home very much over the last three days and had not

done his chores or any homework. As Larry's mom was telling him what he needed to do, he started yelling at her, called her names and pushed her

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6. Kate asked her mom for a ride to a friend's house. Her mom said she was too busy and couldn't do it. Kate said, "Fine, I'll just walk!" As she was getting her coat out of the closet she slammed the door really hard and then kicked it, leaving a dent in the door.

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## Making Amends Worksheet

Think of a time when you were abusive or violent to a family member. Write down three things you could do to make amends. (Remember that saying you are sorry is not making amends.)

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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

# Session 14: Responsibility

## *Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

The goal of this session is for you to write a responsibility letter to the person who was a victim of your abuse or violence. The most important thing is for you to write the letter without denying, justifying, or minimizing the behavior, or blaming your behavior on the person you harmed.

### **Goals**

To write a responsibility letter to the victim of your abuse/violence, talking about the abusive/violent behavior without denying, justifying, minimizing or blaming

To learn how to take responsibility for your behavior.

### **Important Messages**

Taking responsibility for abusive and violent behavior is a sign of personal strength.

Taking responsibility for abusive and violent behavior is a first step toward changing behavior.

Taking responsibility is a way to start repairing a relationship.

# Worksheets

## What Is a Responsibility Letter?

An important part of changing your abusive or violent behavior is looking at the choices you made during conflicts in the past. You are going to write a letter to a family member, describing an incident when you were abusive or violent toward him or her. This letter will not actually be sent to the person, but it will be written as if he or she were going to read it. In it, you will describe the behaviors you used without denying that you used these behaviors, minimizing the impact the behaviors had, or blaming the person for your choice of behaviors.

Here's how you do it:

1. You decide what incident you are going to write about and let your counselor know about it. You may do this during group session time when everyone will talk about what they are going to write about, or you may talk about it to your counselor apart from the group.
2. After your counselor approves the incident you will write about, use the blank letter in the worksheet and answer the questions.

The responsibility letter is not meant to be a writing assignment. If you have any problems with spelling or grammar, don't worry.

4. Give your letter to your counselor. He or she will read it and may ask you to make changes to it.
5. After you make all the changes, you will read the letter to the group.

## Sample Responsibility Letter

Dear Mom,

***Describe what happened when you were arrested or had an abusive/violent incident. Be clear about what you did on the abuse wheel.***

*I'm writing to you about what I did on May 5. The argument was about me coming home late. I came home at 11:00 p.m. and went to my room. You came into my room a couple of minutes later. You asked me where I had been. I told you before I left that I'd be home at 10:00 p.m. I got loud and told you it was none of your business where I was. I told you to "get out of my room." You said you were sick of me talking to you that way and you wanted more respect.*

*Tommy (my 7-year-old brother) came out of his room and told me not to call you names. I told him to shut up. Then he said, "I hate you." I kicked my foot toward him and said, "You better get out of here." He left crying. Then I started pushing you toward the door and I raised my hand like I was going to hit you. You screamed and I said, "Just shut up and get out." You were in the doorway and I pushed you down into the hallway. I slammed the door and locked it so you couldn't get back in. Then I turned on my stereo so loud that the windows were rattling. About ten minutes later the police came to my door.*

***What negative thoughts were you having that may have led to your abusive behavior?***

*I thought you were overreacting. I thought I could make you leave me alone by yelling at you and scaring you.*

***What were you feeling?***

*When you ask me where I've been or what I've been doing, I feel like a little kid. I get angry and I feel humiliated.*

***What did you want your family member to do or stop doing?***

*I wanted you to say it was okay that I was late. I wanted you to let me do whatever I wanted without having to answer to you. I wanted you to leave me alone.*

***How could you have expressed your feelings in a respectful way?***

*I could have told you that I feel like a little kid when you question me and worry about me when I'm late. I could have called you to say that I was OK and told you that I'd be home at 11:00 p.m. I could have asked you if we could take a time out and talk about it tomorrow.*

***How did your abusive/violent actions affect other people in your family?***

*I hurt your back when I pushed you down. I know I scared you when I yelled at you, called you names and threatened to hit you. I also think you must be sad that your own son would do these things to you. After Dad left, we were so close for a while, but in the last couple of years, we've had more and more arguments. I know you have a lot of hopes and dreams for me and you must feel disappointed that I'm acting this way.*

*I also know Tommy is scared of me sometimes. When we were playing together the other day, he flinched when I raised my hand. I was just reaching up to get something. I never realized he was so afraid of me until he did that. When you and I argue, I've seen him in his room crying. One time he said, "You're just like Dad." That really pissed me off, but I realized later he was right.*

***What were the consequences to you?***

*I got arrested. I spent 3 days in detention. I went to court. I have to go to this program and do community service. When I was in detention, I was really pissed off at you. I thought it was all your fault. Now I realize I did some stupid things and might end up living in some foster home somewhere if I don't watch out. I don't feel good about what I'm doing to you and Tommy. I don't want to end up like Dad. He's all alone now.*

***What could you have done differently?***

*Most of all, I need to think about what I'm going to say before I say it. When I'm upset, I say the first thing that comes to my head. That means I get loud, swear and start ordering people around. That's not right. You have to give people respect to get it. I'm trying to watch what I say and how I say it. I could have done all this on May 5.*

*I could have admitted to you that I was an hour late. I could have acknowledged that you had a right to worry about me and want me home on time. I didn't have to turn on the stereo so loud like I did. That was just to piss you off. Just not yelling can make a big difference.*

***What would be a way to take responsibility for your behavior and make amends?***

*I know you will want me to do certain things because of what I did. I should be a man and do what you ask. I'll probably be grounded for a while and have extra chores around the house. I have to show that you can trust me again.*

*I'd like to make a plan with you about how to handle this kind of situation in the future.*



*I should also tell my brother that what I did was wrong. I should do something with him or just spend time with him so he can respect me again. I don't want him to do the things I did to you.*

*Most of all, I need to show both of you that when we disagree, you don't have to be afraid that I'll yell or swear or break something. I don't want you to be afraid of me.*

## Two Versions of Describing What Happened

### Version 1

*I'm writing to you about what happened on May 5. I can't remember what we argued about except that when I came home you started nagging me about something. I didn't want to listen to it and just wanted to go to bed so I went into my room. I was really getting fed up with your complaining. I had to raise my voice so you would listen to me.*

*I went to my room and you followed me there. I asked you to leave my room and let me sleep. You just kept going on and on. Then Tommy got up and he started whining about something. I told him to go back to bed. He started crying like a baby for some reason. I don't know why. He finally went back to bed.*

*If you would have left, there wouldn't have been any problem. I shoved you a little to get you out so I could go to bed. I asked you to leave again. You didn't look where you were going and you fell in the hallway. Then you blamed it on me. I couldn't believe it. I turned on my radio to try to calm down and you called the police. You blew the whole thing out of proportion.*

### Version 2

*I'm writing to you about what I did on May 5. The argument was about me coming home late. I came home at 11:00 p.m. and went to my room. You came into my room a couple of minutes later. You asked me where I had been. I told you before I left that I'd be home at 10:00 p.m. I got loud and told you it was none of your business where I was. I told you to "get out of my room." You said you were sick of me*

*talking to you that way and you wanted more respect. Tommy (my 7-year-old brother) came out of his room and told me not to call you names. I told him to shut up. Then he said, "I hate you." I kicked my foot toward him and said, "You better get out of here." He left crying. Then I started pushing you toward the door and I raised my hand like I was going to hit you. You screamed and I said, "Just shut up and get out." You were in the doorway and I pushed you down into the hallway. I slammed the door and locked it so you couldn't get back in. Then I turned on my stereo so loud that the windows were rattling. About ten minutes later the police came to my door.*

Answer the following questions:

1. How are these two descriptions different?

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2. In the first version, which statements in the first paragraph are denying, justifying, minimizing, and blaming? In the second paragraph? In the third paragraph?

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3. How does the second version show accountability?

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4. How would the parent respond to the two different versions?

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5. How would the parent feel about each version?

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6. Which version requires more thought?

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7. Which version would be more difficult to write?

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8. Which version shows more consideration for others?

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## Practice Responsibility Letter

Read the scenario below and answer the questions as if you are Chris in the story.

Chris comes home and his mom says she just got a call from school saying he wasn't in school that day. Chris' mom says, "Where were you all day? I thought you were in school." Chris says, "I was in school. The people in the attendance office are a bunch of crackheads." Chris' mom says, "So I'm going to call your teachers to make sure you were in school." Chris says, "What, you don't believe me?" Chris' mom starts walking toward the telephone and says, "I'm just going to make sure." Chris' mom picks up the telephone. Chris grabs the telephone out of her hand and throws it against the wall. Mom walks toward him, saying, "Chris, stop!" He pushes her away, saying, "You stupid b\_\_\_\_\_. Stay out of my business." Chris' mom leaves the house and calls the police.

*Dear Mom,*

*Describe what happened when you were arrested or had an abusive/violent incident. Be clear about what you did on the abuse wheel.*

*What negative thoughts were you having that may have led to your abusive behavior?*

*What were you feeling?*

*What did you want your family member to do or stop doing?*

*How could you have expressed your feelings in a respectful way?*

*How did your abusive/violent actions affect other people in your family?*

*What were the consequences to you?*

*What could you have done differently?*

*What would be a way to take responsibility for your behavior and make amends?*

## Your Responsibility Letter

*Dear Mom,*

*Describe what happened when you were arrested or had an abusive/violent incident. Be clear about what you did on the abuse wheel.*

*What negative thoughts were you having that may have led to your abusive behavior?*

*What were you feeling?*

*What did you want your family member to do or stop doing?*

*How could you have expressed your feelings in a respectful way?*

*How did your abusive/violent actions affect other people in your family?*

*What were the consequences to you?*

*What could you have done differently?*

*What would be a way to take responsibility for your behavior and make amends?*





# Session 15: Assertive Communication

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

The purpose of this session is to help you learn how to communicate your feelings and thoughts in a way that is respectful to yourself and to others. Most people have only three ways they communicate negative feelings and thoughts: They become aggressive and disrespectful when they try to get their point across, or they become passive and don't say anything at all in order to avoid conflict, or they become passive-aggressive. In any case, they do not feel anyone has heard them. Assertive communication is a way that you can communicate what you think and feel in a way you are more easily heard, and that is respectful.

Many people believe that the only alternative to aggressive communication is to be passive. Often, when someone responds passively to a situation in which he or she has strong feelings, he or she can stay passive only for so long and ends up getting passive-aggressive, or aggressive. Most teens have not learned how to communicate negative feelings or disagreements in an assertive way.

### **Goals**

To examine different styles of communication

To learn skills for assertive communication

## **Important Messages**

Assertive communication is a way to express your feelings and thoughts respectfully.

You can respond to a difficult situation without being aggressive or passive.

Assertive communication helps others hear your point of view, but it is not necessarily going to get you what you want.

# Worksheets

## Styles of Communication

### **Aggressive Style**

A person communicating in an aggressive style expresses his or her feelings in a way that violates the rights of another person. The aggressive person uses humiliation, criticism, sarcasm, insults or threats to get his or her point across.

The goal of aggressive communication is to dominate the situation and win at the other person's expense.

The aggressive person is giving the message: I'm right and you're wrong. Your feelings are not important. I don't need to listen to what you have to say. My view is the only one that matters.

### **Passive Style**

A person communicating in a passive style does not say what he or she is feeling or thinking. The passive person gives in to other people's requests, demands or feelings and does not acknowledge his or her own feelings, concerns or wants. When the person does express his or her feelings, it is usually in an apologetic or timid way so that it's easy for other people to ignore him or her.

The goal of passive communication is to play it safe, not rock the boat, put everyone else's needs first, and avoid conflict at all costs.

The passive person is communicating the message: I don't count. What I need is not important. You don't have to take my feelings into account.

## **Passive-Aggressive Style**

A person communicating in a passive-aggressive style uses more hidden forms of aggression to express his or her feelings. The goal is to give the other person the message without having to say it directly.

## **Assertive Style**

A person communicating in an assertive style stands up for his or her personal rights and expresses thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways. The person conveys his or her message without dominating, criticizing or degrading the other person.

The goal of assertive communication is to honestly state your feelings, and show respect for the other person's position as well. The assertive person is communicating the message: The feelings and needs of both of us are important. I am telling you what I need, and I also want to know what you need so that we can both be satisfied.

## Styles of Communication Scenarios

Read each scenario and identify which of the responses is passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive. Write Pa, Ag, Pa-Ag, or As next to each response.

*1) Nancy's 15-year-old son, Jeff, is supposed to be home by 9:00 p.m. He shows up at 11:30. Nancy has been waiting up for him and she is upset and worried. She could:*

- a) Greet him and ask him how he's doing.\_\_\_\_
- b) Start shouting at him when he comes in and telling him he's irresponsible and worthless.\_\_\_\_
- c) Not say anything, but the next morning leave for work without giving him a ride to school as she usually does.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d) Say, "I've been really worried about you. I need you to come home on time, and if you're not going to do that, I need you to call me and tell me what you're doing." \_\_\_\_\_

*2) Ron is getting ready to go out with his girlfriend. His dad comes in and tells him to mow the lawn. Ron could:*

- a) Say, "I already told you I'm going out with Denise. Why are you always trying to mess with my life?" \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Change into his work clothes and get the lawnmower.\_\_\_\_
- c) Say, "I guess you don't remember that you told me I could go out with Denise today. How about if I mow the lawn at 10 a.m. tomorrow?" \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Go out to mow the lawn and run the mower over a rock, ruining the blade.\_\_\_\_

*3) Rita is getting ready for work one morning. She picks out her favorite white silk blouse, which her daughter, Lucy, borrowed over the weekend. She notices a big brown stain on the front of the blouse. Rita could:*

- a) Put on something else, and send the blouse to the cleaner without saying anything about it. \_\_\_\_
- b) Wake Lucy up and say, "I can't trust you with anything! Get out of bed right now and take this to the cleaner!" \_\_\_\_
- c) Say, "When you borrow my clothes, I need you to return them clean." \_\_\_\_
- d) Not say anything and refuse to give Lucy five dollars that she promised to give her. \_\_\_\_

*4) Your friend has borrowed money for lunch from you three times without repaying it, and now he asks you for another loan. You could:*

- a) Say, "I don't want to lend you anything now because you haven't paid me back from the last three times." \_\_\_\_
- b) Just hand the money over without saying anything. \_\_\_\_
- c) Say, "I'll never help you out with anything again! I don't care if you starve!" \_\_\_\_
- d) Lend him the money, and then tell all your mutual friends what an idiot he is. \_\_\_\_

*5) Olivia and her friend are sitting and talking in the living room. Olivia's son, Jim, is playing a computer game. Jim shouts the "f" word very loudly. Olivia is embarrassed. She could:*

- a) Tell Jim, "Shut up!" \_\_\_\_

- b) Keep talking to her friend, like nothing happened.\_\_\_\_
- c) Say, "Jim, I need you to speak respectfully in our house."\_\_\_\_
- d) Walk over and unplug Jim's computer.\_\_\_\_



## Practicing Assertive Communication

Read each situation below and think of an assertive statement that the person could make.

1. John's son Dave, who is 17, borrowed John's car. When Dave took the car, it was clean and had a full tank of gas. John gets in the car and finds hamburger wrappers and soda cups on the floor, and an empty gas tank. What assertive statement could John make?

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2. Lisa just got on the phone with her friend. She has been doing her laundry and her clothes are in the dryer. Her mom comes in and tells her to get off the phone and get her clothes out of the dryer right away. What assertive statement could Lisa make?

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3. Pat's son, Frank, left a big pile of dirty dishes in the sink. He is in his room, watching TV. What assertive statement could Pat make?

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4. Jay made plans with his friends to meet at the mall Friday night. Friday morning, Jay's mom asks him if he will help that night with preparing for a garage sale she was planning for Sunday. What assertive statement could Jay make?

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5. Loretta was planning on going to an early movie and dinner with a friend. Her 14-year-old son, Neil, asks her to give him a ride to a friend's house at about the same time the movie will start. There is no way she can make it to the movie on time if she takes Neil at the time he wants to be at his friend's house. What assertive statement could Loretta make?

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6. Greg has had a really rough day at school. Things didn't go well at his afternoon job, either. He is exhausted and feeling stressed. He comes home, looking forward to just relaxing in his room and listening to music. His mom tells him she wants him to help her clean the basement. What assertive statement could Greg make?

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7. Craig asked his mom if he could have some friends over for the evening on a night when she is planning to be out. The last time she let Craig have friends over when she was not there, they left a huge mess in the kitchen and living room. What assertive statement could Craig's mom make?

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## **My Assertive Communication:**

Think of a situation when you responded aggressively, passively, or passive-aggressively. Think about how you could have responded assertively. Below, write an assertive statement.

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# Session 16: Using "I" Statements

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

Most teens and parents don't think about how they communicate when they are arguing with each other. Both teens and parents are often more interested in getting their point across to the other person and are not thinking about how they are doing it. Sometimes their frustration results in abusive language and behavior. Learning some basic communication skills can help teens and parents resolve conflict.

### **Goals**

To learn how to use an "I" statement

To recognize how "I" statements help people understand each other

### **Important Messages**

"I" statements help you focus on your own experience of a situation.

"I" statements help you avoid blaming and criticizing other people.

Other people usually respond less defensively when they hear "I" statements.

# Worksheets

## What Is an "I" Statement?

An "I" statement:

Describes the behavior or situation that is a problem clearly and specifically, with as few words as possible.

Describes how a person feels or how the situation affects him or her, through "I" sentences.

Does not blame, accuse, criticize, or put down the other person in the conversation.

## What Is the Purpose of an "I" Statement?

The purpose of an "I" statement is to give factual information about how an event or situation affects you. When you use "I" statements, people usually respond more positively because they are able to hear you and understand you better. When you use "you" statements that blame and accuse, people feel defensive and don't want to listen to you.

## How Do I Make an "I" Statement?

**I feel** (feeling)

**when** (behavior or situation)

**because** (how it is a problem for you).

-or-

**When** (behavior or situation) **happens**, I (what you experience or how it is a problem).

## **"You" Statements versus "I" Statements**

The following are examples of "you" statements and "I" statements. Consider how you would feel listening to each of these statements. How might you respond to both?

"You" statement:

*"Why do you always lock the door before I get home? You know I'm not home yet. You make me have to knock and knock and you take forever to open it."*

"I" statement:

*"I feel frustrated when I come home and the door is locked. I don't like knocking and knocking because I start to think no one is home and I won't be able to get in."*

1. "You always pick me up late from school. You're never on time. Don't you know I have to be at practice by 3:00? You always make me late."

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"I feel frustrated when I don't get picked up by 2:30 because I worry about being late for practice."

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2. "You never listen to me. You are constantly interrupting and being rude. You really have no clue about how to have a conversation."

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- . "When you talk while I'm talking, I get really annoyed because I feel like you aren't hearing anything I'm saying. I'd like to take turns talking so you can listen to me and I can listen to you."
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## Changing "You" Statements into "I" Statements

Change the following "you" statements into "I" statements:

"You are always late. You are so slow in the morning. I'm going to be late again, thanks to you."

**"I" statement:**

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"You pig. You ate all the chips."

**"I" statement:**

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"You always come barging into my room. Have you ever heard of the word 'privacy' before?"

**"I" statement:**

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## "I" Statement Practice

Now, write an "I" statement to respond to each of the following situations:

1. Craig agreed to clean out the garage before going to the mall. Cynthia, his mom, comes home and finds the garage is still a mess. When Craig comes home, Cynthia says:

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2. Gregory is watching his two younger sisters while his mother is at a meeting after work. She said she would be home at 4:00 p.m. He made plans to go to a 4:30 p.m. movie with his friend. His mom comes in the door at 5:00 p.m. Gregory says:

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3. Bridgett comes home and asks her brother if there are any phone messages because she was expecting a call about when and where to meet a friend. Her brother says that her friend called and said something about where to meet but he can't remember where, and that she left a phone number but he forgot to write it down. Bridgett says to her brother:

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4. Lisa walks in the front door with an armful of groceries and starts to trip over a pile of stuff (shoes, a backpack, and a coat) that her son, Mike, had dropped on the floor.

Lisa says to Mike:

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# Session 17: Understanding Empathy

## *Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

The goal of this session is for you to write an empathy letter to the person who was the victim of your abuse/violence. Understanding another person's thinking, feelings, and experience of a situation can be the most important part of responding to a conflict with respect, and without abuse and violence.

### **Goals**

To define empathy

To discuss how empathy can have a positive impact on relationships

To practice empathy through letter-writing

### **Important Messages**

When two people try to resolve a conflict, they will be much more successful if they try to understand each other's feelings and perspectives.

When you try to think about how another person experiences a situation, you may feel less angry at him or her and you are less likely to use abuse/violence against him or her.

Having empathy can help you be more respectful.

## Discussion Questions

1. What is empathy?

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2. How does empathy affect your relationship with another person?

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3. What difference would understanding the feelings and experience of another person make when you are responding to something he or she did or said to you?

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4. What situations make it hard to have empathy?

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5. Can you have empathy for someone even when you don't agree with his or her point of view?

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6. What situations make it easy to have empathy?

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7. Think of a time when someone had empathy for you. When he or she tried to understand how you felt or how you experienced a situation, how did it make you feel?

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8. What does empathy have to do with mutual respect?

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9. If a person didn't have empathy, what would he or she be like?

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# Worksheets

## Empathy Letter Example

Think of a situation when you were abusive or violent to a family member. It might be the event that brought you to the program.

Put yourself in the place of the person you were abusive or violent to. You will write a letter as if you are that person. In the letter, describe each abusive or violent behavior you used and how it made your parent or family member feel when you did those things.

In your letter you can also add comments that other family members might have made as they watched or heard what happened.

Below is an example of an empathy letter.

*Dear \_\_\_\_\_,*

*I am writing you about what happened to me on May 5. The argument began because you came home late. You said you were going to be home at 10:00 p.m. but you didn't get home until 11:00 p.m. I was worried because I didn't know where you were. Then when you got home and I asked you where you were, you started yelling at me and started swearing. You also called me names. That really upset me, because I just wanted to know that you were OK. I feel degraded when you call me names. I can't believe my own son would call me those names. I was also upset because Tommy heard what you said and I think he'll start using that language if he hears you use it.*

*When you kicked your foot at Tommy, I was afraid for him. Tommy looks up to you and wants to be like you. I don't want*

*him to think of you as someone who yells and hits people. I don't want him to start doing those things.*

*Then you came after me. The first time you pushed me, I was really surprised. You had never done that before. I wasn't sure what you were going to do next. You kept pushing me until I was near the door. I remember being so scared because you raised your hand at me like you were going to hit me. I thought for sure you were going to do it. Then you pushed me down on the floor in the hallway. After you slammed the door, I didn't know what to do. I was in shock. I wasn't sure this was really happening to me. My own son. I sat there trying to imagine what I was going to say to somebody if they asked me what happened. I was sure they'd think it was my fault.*

*I didn't want to call the police, but I didn't know what else to do to make you stop. I didn't want you arrested, I just wanted them to talk to you. I'm sorry this happened, but I can't live like this anymore. If getting arrested means you will stop being violent with me, calling me names and threatening me, then I think it was worth it.*

*Love,*

*Mom*





# Session 18: Guidelines for Respectful Communication

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

The skills covered in this session are critical to successful problem solving. You and your parents will learn the first two steps of the 10-step problem-solving process: talking about the problem and listening. The purpose of this session is to learn the skill of talking about how a problem affects a person, and then listening and saying back to that person what he or she said. Listening and repeating back what was said is hard for most people, particularly when they disagree with what was said.

### **Goals**

To learn and practice talking about a problem by using the *Guidelines for Respectful Communication*

To learn and practice how to listen and say back what you heard by using the *Guidelines for Respectful Communication*

### **Important Messages**

To resolve conflicts successfully, you must use respectful communication skills. This involves:

Talking about a problem without blaming or criticizing.

Listening to the other person's feelings and view of a problem.

# Worksheets

## Guidelines for Respectful Communication When You Have a Conflict

### When you are speaking:

Talk only about the specific behavior of the other person.

Talk about what the person said or did that upset you.

Describe how you feel.

### Do not:

Blame

Criticize

Put down

Bring up the past or other things that bother you (stick to one behavior or problem)

Talk about the other person's personality, attitude or motives

### When you are listening:

Don't talk.

Listen carefully.

Do not interrupt.

Listen for the feelings of the other person.

Don't think about how you are going to respond (this interferes with listening).

### When you respond to the speaker:

Describe what the other person said.

Describe what you think the other person was feeling.

**Do not:**

Correct what the other person said

Argue about what happened

Deny the other person's feelings

Bring up the past or things that the other person does that bother you

Criticize

Put down

Justify your behavior

If you think there is genuine misunderstanding about the behavior or problem, ask if you can take time to explain it. Use the *Guidelines for Respectful Communication* to talk about your own behavior. If there is conflict that cannot be resolved, the next step is to move on to problem solving together.



# Session 19: Problem Solving Together

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

In this session you will practice the 10-step process of problem solving with your parent. Negotiation and compromise are the most important parts of the process. You will use the guidelines that you learned in the previous session to solve a problem.

### **Goals**

To apply respectful communication skills learned in the previous session to solve a problem

To learn and practice a 10-step process of problem solving

To understand how problem solving together can improve relationships

### **Important Messages**

Negotiating a resolution to a problem involves listening to the other person. You don't necessarily have to agree with the other person to listen to him or her.

Problem solving is most successful when both people want to come up with a solution.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are some things that people do that get in the way of problem solving?

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2. If two people were problem solving and one of them started to threaten, criticize or put down the other person, could they continue to work out a solution? Why?

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3. If you were watching two people "working out a problem," what would they look like?

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4. How would they talk to each other?

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# Worksheets

## Important Tips for Problem Solving

Don't try to solve the problem when either person is angry or upset. Being calm is most important.

If either person becomes angry or upset during problem solving, take a time out and try it again when you are both calm.

Follow the *Guidelines for Respectful Communication* (see Session 18 for review).

Both people must be willing to try to solve the problem and have a cooperative attitude. If either person is resistant, stop and try it again later.

The problem you are working on must be negotiable. It needs to be something that both people are able to compromise on.



## Problem Solving (Teen Starts the Process)

Step	How to do it	Example
1. Describe the problem.	Use "I" messages. Don't accuse, blame or criticize.	<b>Teen:</b> "I don't like it when you tell me I have to come home before midnight. When I leave early, I feel like I'm missing the best part of the party."
2. The other person listens and then reflects back what he or she heard.	Listen quietly without interrupting, and then summarize the other person's thoughts and feelings without advising, criticizing or judging.	<b>Parent:</b> "You don't like it when I tell you to be home by midnight. When you have to leave early, you feel like you are missing the best part of the party."
3. Ask the other person for his or her thoughts and feelings about the problem.	Listen quietly without interrupting, asking questions or commenting.	<b>Teen:</b> "What do you think about the problem?" <b>Parent:</b> "I get upset when you stay out after midnight because I worry that you won't get enough sleep or that something bad might happen."
4. Reflect back what you hear.	Summarize the other person's thoughts and feelings without advising, criticizing or judging.	<b>Teen:</b> "You get upset when I stay out after midnight because you worry that I won't get enough sleep or that something bad might happen."
5. Summarize the problem, including both people's needs and feelings.	Avoid judging, criticizing and blaming.	<b>Teen:</b> "Seems like the problem is that you want me to come home before midnight, and I don't like to leave parties before my friends leave."

6. Invite the other person to problem solve with you.	Each person comes up with several possible solutions. Some will be workable, some won't.	<b>Teen:</b> "Let's each try to come up with some ideas to work this out."
7. Take turns listing ideas.	Be respectful of each other's ideas, even if you don't agree with them.	<b>Teen:</b> "Well, just don't worry about me." <b>Parent:</b> "Come home before midnight." <b>Teen:</b> "How about if I call you if I'm going to be late?" <b>Parent:</b> "On weeknights come home by 10:00. On weekends, you can come home by 1:00 if you call me and tell me exactly where you are, and come home on time."
8. Take turns commenting on each idea.	Avoid judging or criticizing.	<b>Parent:</b> "Until you're grown, I will keep worrying about you." <b>Teen:</b> "Sometimes I want to hang with my friends and not be at home so early." <b>Parent:</b> "I like it when you call me, but when you call to say you're staying out all night, it doesn't solve the problem." <b>Teen:</b> "OK, I can try that. But 10 seems kind of early."
9. Make a plan for how the solution will work.	Include details and what each person needs to do.	<b>Parent:</b> "Let's try this for a week. You'll come home by 10 on weeknights and by 1 on the weekends. If it works well we can stay with it." <b>Teen:</b> "So if I come home on time for a week, you won't ask me when I'm coming home every time I go out."

<p>10. Write the plan down and put it someplace where you both can see it every day.</p>		<p><b>Parent:</b> "Let's write out our agreement and put it on the refrigerator so we both can see it."</p>
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## Problem Solving (Parent Starts the Process)

Step	How to do it	Example
1. Describe the problem.	Use "I" messages. Don't accuse, blame or criticize.	<b>Parent:</b> "I feel frustrated when I ask you to do the dishes, and 20 minutes later they aren't done."
2. The other person listens and then reflects back what he or she heard.	Listen quietly without interrupting, and then summarize the other person's thoughts and feelings without advising, criticizing or judging.	<b>Teen:</b> "You feel frustrated when you ask me to do the dishes, and 20 minutes later I haven't done them."
3. Ask the other person for his or her thoughts and feelings about the problem.	Listen quietly without interrupting, asking questions or commenting.	<b>Parent:</b> "What do you think about the problem?" <b>Teen:</b> "It seems you always ask me to do the dishes when I'm in the middle of something, like a good TV show or a video game."
4. Reflect back what you hear.	Summarize the other person's thoughts and feelings without advising, criticizing or judging.	<b>Parent:</b> "You don't like being interrupted and you'd like to finish your TV show or video game before you do the dishes."
5. Summarize the problem, including both people's needs and feelings.	Avoid judging, criticizing and blaming.	<b>Parent:</b> "Seems like the problem is that I need you to do the dishes and you don't like being interrupted to do them."
6. Invite the other person to problem solve with you.	Each person comes up with several possible solutions. Some will be workable, some won't.	<b>Parent:</b> "Let's try to work this out."

<p>7. Take turns listing ideas.</p>	<p>Be respectful of each other's ideas, even if you don't agree with them.</p>	<p><b>Teen:</b> "I'll do the dishes when I'm done watching TV."  <b>Parent:</b> "When I ask you to do the dishes, give me a time that you'll do them."  <b>Teen:</b> "Let's eat off paper plates."  <b>Parent:</b> "Let's set up a time every day when you'll do the dishes."</p>
<p>8. Take turns commenting on each idea.</p>	<p>Avoid judging or criticizing.</p>	<p><b>Parent:</b> "I need to know more specifically when the dishes will get done."  <b>Parent:</b> "Paper plates are too expensive and I prefer real plates."  <b>Teen:</b> "It depends on when my favorite shows are on. Some nights I'll have them done by 6 o'clock and other nights by seven."  <b>Parent:</b> "I like your idea that you'll let me know each night what time the dishes will be done."  <b>Teen:</b> "All right, I can do that."</p>
<p>9. Make a plan for how the solution will work.</p>	<p>Include details and what each person needs to do.</p>	<p><b>Parent:</b> "I'd like you to make a schedule each week, because I don't want to have to ask you every night when you'll do the dishes."  <b>Teen:</b> "I'll get the TV guide and write down the time for each night."</p>

10. Write the plan down and put it someplace where you both can see it every day.		<b>Parent:</b> "Let's put your schedule up in the kitchen where we both can see it."
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# Session 20: Healthy Dating Relationships

## *Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

You learn about relationships and how to resolve conflicts in your family. As you move on to new intimate relationships outside of your family, you take the beliefs about relationships you learned in your family to these new relationships. Sometimes when you have been abusive toward family members, you use these same behaviors toward your dating partners.

During this session you will consider how the use of abusive behavior in family relationships can influence behavior in dating relationships. You will discuss the differences and similarities between a family relationship and a dating relationship and think about what would motivate you to stay respectful in a dating relationship. We want you to think about the characteristics of a healthy dating relationship and an unhealthy dating relationship.

### **Goals**

To identify characteristics of a healthy and unhealthy dating relationship

To identify ways to respectfully respond to difficult situations involving intimate dating relationships



## **Important Messages**

People often learn how to respond to conflicts in intimate relationships from the ways they responded to conflicts with family members.

Abuse and violence toward a dating partner is a choice.

Even when a person has been abusive or violent toward a family member, he or she can choose to be respectful toward a dating partner.

## Discussion Questions

1. When someone grows up seeing people in his or her family use abuse and violence, how might it affect his or her behavior in dating relationships?

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2. When someone has used abuse and violence during conflicts with family members, how might that person deal with conflicts with boyfriends/girlfriends?

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3. Some people think they would never use abuse or violence with their boyfriends or girlfriends, and then they do. Why would this happen?

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4. How is a dating relationship different from a family relationship?

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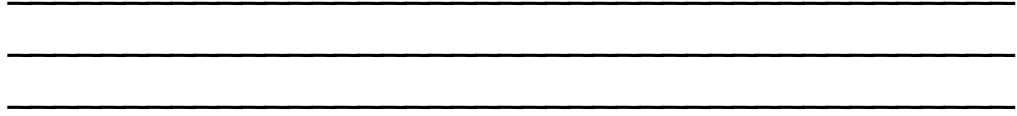
5. How are they the same?

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6. What would motivate you to stay respectful in a dating relationship?



# Worksheets

## Characteristics of Healthy Dating Relationships

### **Honesty and accountability:**

Accepting responsibility for yourself

Admitting when you are wrong

### **Non-threatening behavior:**

Making your partner feel safe through words and actions

### **Negotiation and fairness:**

Trying to find solutions that you both agree on when there is a problem

Being willing to compromise

### **Respectful communication:**

Not putting each other down, blaming, ridiculing, name calling

Talking to each other in a respectful way

Listening to each other

### **Shared responsibility:**

Making decisions together

Working out problems together

### **Respect**

Listening non-judgmentally

Valuing opinions even if you disagree

Accepting each other's feelings

Treating each other with thoughtfulness and consideration

### **Trust and support:**

Supporting each other's goals

Respecting each other's rights to individual feelings, friends, activities and opinions

Allowing each other to make mistakes

**Independence and autonomy:**

Accepting each other's "separateness"

Having your own life

**Characteristics of Unhealthy Dating Relationships**

**Emotional abuse:**

Putting the other person down

Making the other person feel bad about himself or herself

Making the other person think he or she is crazy

Humiliating the other person

Making the other person feel guilty

Discounting the other person's feelings, words or behavior

**Using social status:**

Treating the other person like a servant

Making all the decisions

**Intimidation and threats:**

Making someone afraid by using looks, actions, gestures, smashing things, destroying property

Making someone feel like he or she is "walking on eggshells"

Becoming angry over small things

Threatening to hurt the other person

Threatening to leave or commit suicide

### **Denying, justifying, minimizing, blaming:**

Saying abuse didn't happen

Saying the other person caused it

Making light of abuse

Blaming the other person for problems in the relationship

### **Physical abuse:**

Hitting, pushing, shoving, slapping, kicking, punching

Physically hurting the person in any way

### **Sexual coercion:**

Manipulating or making threats to get sex

Getting someone drunk or drugged to get sex

Pressuring the other person to have sex

### **Isolation/exclusion:**

Controlling what the other person does, who he or she talks to, where he or she goes

Pressuring the other person not to be involved in other activities

Using jealousy to justify actions

Wanting to be with the other person all the time

### **Using peer pressure:**

Threatening to tell others personal information

Spreading rumors

## **Healthy and Unhealthy Responses to Difficult Situations**

1. John has been going out with Sally for three months. Sally is good in math and tutors other students who are having a hard

time with math. She has been helping Steve with his homework for a couple of weeks. John sees Steve and Sally talking in the hall and they are laughing. John is starting to feel jealous.

- a. What would be an unhealthy or disrespectful way the person might respond to this situation?

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- b. What would be a healthy or respectful way the person might respond to this situation?

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2. Greg and Linda have been going out for two months. Greg told Linda he was going to go over to his friend's house for the evening to watch a game with the guys. Linda asked if she could go and Greg said he didn't want her to go because he wanted time to just be with his friends. Linda feels like Greg hasn't been spending enough time with her lately and is wondering if he really cares about her.

- a. What would be an unhealthy or disrespectful way the person might respond to this situation?

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- b. What would be a healthy or respectful way the person might respond to this situation?

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3. Jordan has been trying to call Gretchen on her cell phone for 3 hours and she hasn't answered. He knows she is with her girlfriends and he wants to find her to see if she wants to go out. He is getting frustrated because she said she would have her cell phone on so he could call her to make plans for the evening.

a. What would be an unhealthy or disrespectful way the person might respond to this situation?

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b. What would be a healthy or respectful way the person might respond to this situation?

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4. Haley and Royce were at a party and Haley said she needed to go home because she had to get up early the next morning to study for a test. Royce kept trying to talk her into staying longer and Haley finally agreed to stay until 11:00. At 11:00 Haley said she had to go. Royce didn't want to leave. He felt like Haley was making excuses to go home early because she didn't like the party.



a. What would be an unhealthy or disrespectful way the person might respond to this situation?

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b. What would be a healthy or respectful way the person might respond to this situation?

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# Session 21: Moving Forward

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

You have taken steps toward using respectful behavior. This last session is a way to assess the progress you have made in the group toward using more respectful behavior and to look at goals that you can continue to work on after you leave the group. This last session is also an opportunity for you to give feedback to each other and to make statements about how particular group members have impacted you.

### **Goals**

For teens to identify how they have changed their behavior

For parents to identify how their teens have made positive changes and how their relationships have improved

For teens to recognize how their behavior changes have affected their relationships with their parents

For teens and parents to identify how they can continue working on having positive and respectful relationships

### **Important Messages**

Changes in behavior can have a positive impact on other people.

Learning how to change is empowering.

Both teens and parents have worked hard to learn how to have mutually respectful relationships.

You can continue to work together to have positive and healthy relationships with each other.

# Worksheet

## Changes I Have Made

1. How has your relationship with your parent changed since you started the program?

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2. Rate your relationship on a scale from 1 to 10.

Beginning of Program	Worst										Best
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Now	Worst										Best
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

3. What have you changed in your behavior to contribute to the improvement in your relationship? (Look at the abuse and respect wheels as you think about behaviors you have changed.)

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4. What did you do to change your behavior?

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5. If you hadn't made these changes, what would your relationship with your family members be like today?

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6. What behavior do you need to continue working on?

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7. What do you need to do to work on changing that behavior?

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8. What skills have you learned in Step-Up that will help you in relationships in the future?

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9. What have you learned about yourself since you have been in the program (your strengths, ability to change, etc.)?

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10. How do you feel about yourself now?

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# Appendix

## Session 22: How We Change

### *Parent and Teen Session*

#### **Background Information**

We rarely make changes overnight. Often a long period of time passes between the time when we first decide to change and when the change is complete. Understanding what steps we take to make change can help motivate us to move to the next step in making real change in our life. This session will help you understand the stages of change and what you have to do to get to the next step.

#### **Goals**

To identify the stages of change

For each teen to know their current stage

To understand how the stages of change apply to different personal issues

#### **Important Messages**

Personal change takes place in stages or steps

You do not have to change all at once to be successful

Small steps are important to making important changes

## Discussion Questions

If we look at positive changes we have made in our lives, we can divide them into two categories:

### Category 1

Someone tells us we have to change and if we don't, something bad is going to happen. Your parents say you have to come home by 10:00 PM or you'll be grounded for a week. Your teacher tells you have to complete your writing assignment by tomorrow or you will fail the class. A judge says you have to go to counseling or you will go to detention. In these cases, we change in order to avoid the bad thing that could happen if we don't change.

### Category 2

At other times, we change because we want to change. We make the decision to change. We decide to change on our own. No one tells us something bad is going to happen if we don't change. We weigh the pros and cons of changing or not changing in our minds and decide for ourselves what we will do.

What are the feelings connected with these two kinds of change?

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What is the difference between the two ways of changing?

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Which kind of change will last longer?

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Which kind of change is more difficult?

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Is it possible for one kind of change to crossover into the other?  
For instance, maybe someone told you that you had to change and your first reaction was to resist any change. Then along the way you decided it was a good idea. The change you made started when someone told you to change and later you decided it was a good idea.

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Think of a change you made in your life. When did you first decide there was a problem that had to be fixed? Did you realize it gradually or did it happen all at once?

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Do you remember when you didn't think you had a problem? Do you remember if other people tried to tell you that you had a problem and you didn't believe them or you thought they were exaggerating the problem? Do you think you were even aware you had a problem? What feelings do you have to overcome to recognize a problem? How do they get in the way of really seeing a problem?



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People who have studied change created five stages of change that we all go through when we decide to make a positive change in our lives. These are the 5 stages:

**Denial:** not thinking about change; it doesn't apply to me; I have no control over the problem; other people or circumstances beyond my control are the cause of the problem; not facing serious consequences;

John was arrested for hitting his mother. After he was arrested, he said he doesn't think it was his fault and doesn't think he needs to do anything different. He said he wants his mom to stay off his back and quit nagging him.

**Thinking:** weighing the benefits and costs of change; deciding whether it is worth the effort to change;

When John was in detention, he felt bad about what he did. He doesn't want to get arrested again and he is tired of all the arguing between him and his mother.

**Preparation:** experimenting with small changes

John is going to try not to argue with his mother so much. After he got out of detention, John and his mother have had fewer arguments. For the most part, John has been able to stop arguing after he has made his point.

**Action:** taking a definitive action to change with small steps

John has not been abusive towards his mother in any way since his arrest. John agreed to go to counseling. John and his mother decided to eat dinner together at least 3 nights a week so they can spend more time together. John is using the skills he's

learned in counseling to problem solve respectfully with his mother.

**Maintenance:** maintaining new behavior over time

John and his mother have continued to eat dinner together 3 nights a week for six months. They have also done some counseling sessions together. John and his mother make time each week to talk through any problems that come up.

**Relapse:** normal part of change; feels demoralizing to return to old behaviors

John yelled at his mother when she asked him to do something at home. John realized how hard he had to work to stop being abusive towards his mother. John tells his mother he was wrong for yelling at her and asks her what he should do to make things right between them.

# Worksheet

Read each scenario. Identify the stage for each person and what steps they need to do to get to the next stage.

## Scenario 1:

Latisha smokes marijuana 3 or 4 times a week. Her grades are dropping, she and her mother are arguing more and Latisha's best friend doesn't want to hang out with Latisha anymore. Latisha thinks everyone is making a big deal out of nothing and doesn't want to quit.

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## Scenario 2:

James has been thinking about his grades over the summer break. He wants to go to a four year college, but unless he gets better grades, he won't be able to attend one. He thinks if he stays after school to study during the coming year, he may get better grades. If he stays after school to study, he won't see his friends as often as he did last year. James hasn't decided for sure what he'll do.

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## Scenario 3:

George's mother works full time and wants him to cook dinner one night a week. At first he gives her lots of reasons why he can't do it, and finally agrees to try it. He looked at cookbook for the first time today to see if there is something easy to make.

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Scenario 4:

Jennifer likes to tease her sister, but her mother gets upset when she hears it. Jennifer said she won't do it as much just to please her mother and has teased her less in the last couple of weeks. Her mother still thought it was too much. For Jennifer, teasing is like a bad habit and she realizes the teasing will be more difficult to stop than she first expected. She tells her mother she'll really try to stop doing it completely.

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Scenario 5:

A few nights a week, John is on the computer past midnight. When he is up late these nights, it's hard for him to get up the next morning for school and he is often late for his first class. John thinks his first class is boring so he really doesn't care if he's late. His mother is worried about his grades and wants him to go to college.

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Scenario 6:

Ryan often yells and swears at his mom when she wakes him up for school in the morning. When he finally gets up, his mom is upset with him and when he leaves for school there's a lot of tension between him and his mom. He decides he doesn't like starting his days this way. He decides he's going to try not to

swear and yell when his mom wakes him up. The next morning when his mom wakes him up, he starts to swear at his mom and then stops himself.

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Where Am I in the Stages of Change?

Think about the five stages of change we have discussed. When you think about changing your abusive behavior to respectful behavior, what stage are you in now?

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What do you need to do to move to the next stage?

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