



# Parent 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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# Session 1: Introducing the Program

## *Parent and Teen Session*

### **Background**

The purpose of this session is to introduce parents and teens 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 go over the goals, ground rules and requirements for completion for teens

To explain check-in

### **Important Messages**

Group sessions can be a positive experience.

Most teens don't really want to come to Step-Up at first and don't want to participate.

Group members can learn new skills even though the court is telling them to attend.



## **Introductions**

Parents will introduce themselves to the group by saying their names and what they would like to accomplish in the program.

## **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 teen was:
2. A time when I appreciated my teen was:
3. Something I like about my teen is:

## **Goals for the Teens**

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 are 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.

## **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.

## **Rules for Attendance**

To successfully complete this program, each teen 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.

## **Teen 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

## **Check-In**

The two wheels show two different kinds of behavior used by teens in their 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 teens move from the abuse wheel to the respect wheel in relationships with family members. All of the skills

we teach in the program help teens replace behaviors on the abuse wheel with behaviors on the respect wheel.

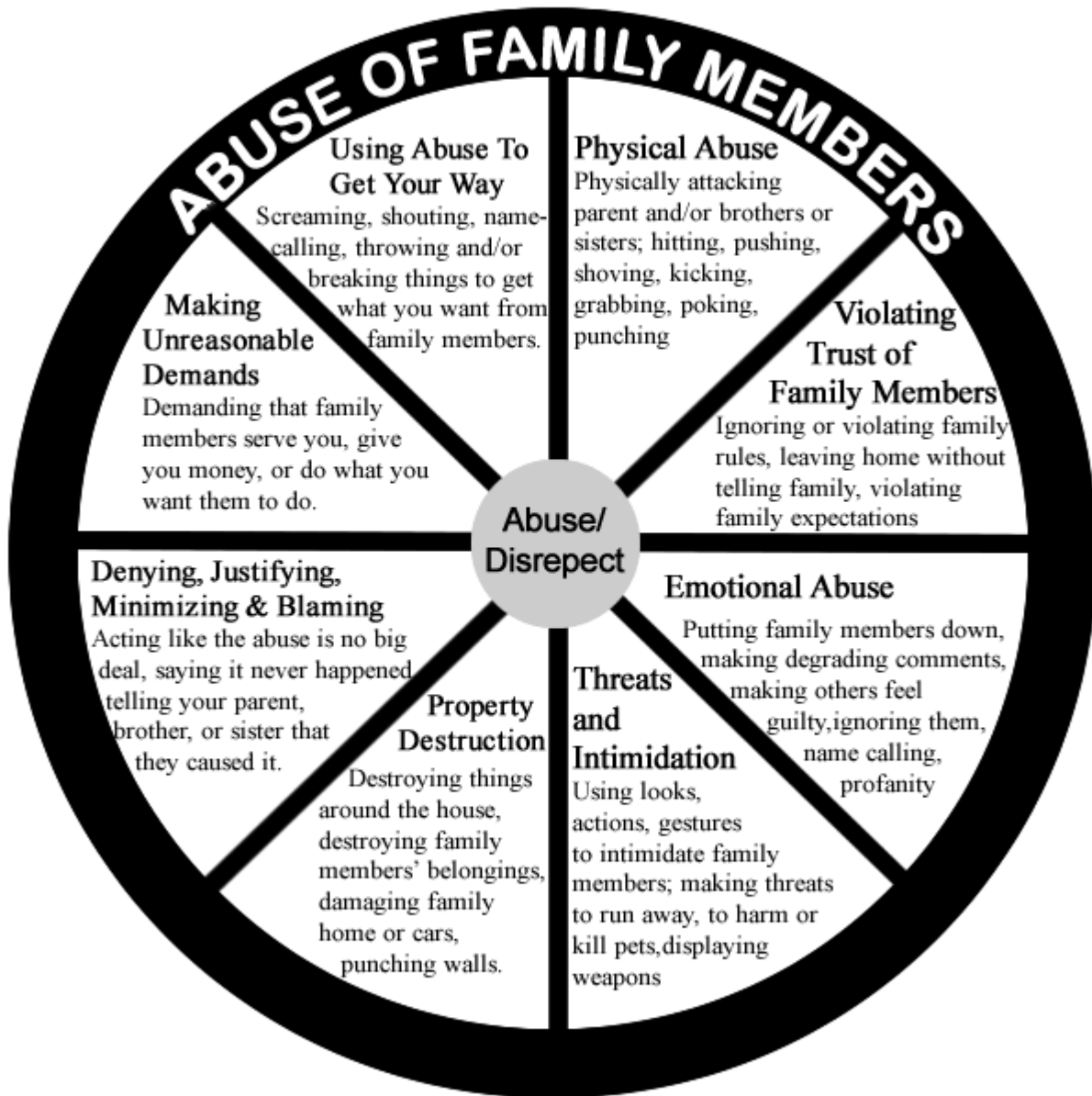
We will use the abuse and respect wheels for check-in each week. We will begin every session by passing the wheels around the group and having each teen look at the wheels and pick out behaviors he or she has used during the week. After the teen talks about the behaviors he or she has used on the wheels, 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



## Closing

Think of personal strengths in your teen that will help him or her make positive changes.

My teen's personal strengths are:

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

# Session 2: Introduction to the Parent Group: Strengths, Challenges, Changes

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

An important part of the parent group is to get support from other parents and know that you are not alone in your struggles with your teen. Many parents come into the program feeling isolated and alone in their experiences with their abusive teenagers. Many believe that no one else has teens like theirs, and that they are to blame for their difficult situations. It can be helpful to learn that others are facing similar challenges. In the parent group you will give each other support and work together to find workable solutions to difficult problems.

During this session you will begin the process of getting to know each other and building supportive relationships. You will talk about your strengths, challenges you face with your teen, and changes you would like to make in your own behavior.

Teens are coming to Step-Up to change violent and abusive behavior. You are here to support your teen in making positive changes.

### **Goals**

To be introduced to the parent group and begin to get to know other parents

To begin the process of building supportive relationships in the group

To understand the goals and ground rules of the parent group

To identify strengths and challenges as a parent



## **Important Messages**

You are not alone.

You can talk about your challenges safely in this group.

The group is here to listen and support you.

The members of the group can help each other make positive changes.

You have strengths as a parent.

You are not to blame for your child's abusive behavior.

You are not powerless; there are things you can do.

# Worksheets

## Goals for Parent Group

To learn skills for safety when your teen is violent.

To learn how to support your teen in using skills learned in Step-Up.

To learn how to respond when your teen is violent or abusive.

To learn ways to build a more positive relationship with your teen.

To understand the importance of modeling respectful behavior for your teen.

To learn parenting skills that promote cooperation and responsible behavior in teens.

To support each other as parents.

## Ground Rules for Parent Group

**Maintain confidentiality:** Information that parents share about themselves and their families needs to stay in the group. Staff may need to make exceptions to this if there are risks to a person's physical safety, or if it is necessary to report an incident to a probation counselor (parents will be informed of this).

**Show respect for each other:** This includes: not interrupting or talking while someone else is talking, respecting each other's feelings and opinions, and acknowledging that our comments are our own opinions.

**Show respect for your child:** This includes: not labeling the child, putting him or her down, or calling him or her names. When discussing difficulties with your child, talk about the behavior, not the person.

**Stay on topic as much as possible:** If you take the discussion in another direction, make a connection with the topic at hand.

## Strengths, Challenges, and Changes

1. One of my **strengths** as a parent is:

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2. The biggest **challenge** for me as a parent is:

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3. One positive **change** I would like to make is:

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# Session 3: Making Changes

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

Most parents who have been dealing with difficult behaviors in their children for a period of time have tried many things to get their children to change. They have often been given all kinds of advice by friends and family. They usually feel like they have tried everything. During this session parents will look at how they have tried to make their teens change their behavior, how those methods have been working, and how it has affected their relationships with their teens. This exercise is not intended to be judgmental about parenting methods. Many parents have probably been using very appropriate strategies; those strategies just are not working. It is easy for parents to keep doing the same thing over and over because they don't know what else to do.

### **Goals**

- To recognize that personal change is a choice for yourself and your teen
- To identify how your behavior can influence your child's behavior
- To identify behaviors you can change that will influence your teen's behavior

### **Important Messages**

You don't have control over another person's behavior.

The most effective way to influence another person's behavior is by your own behavior.

When you try to make another person change—especially a teen—it can have the opposite effect because the more you try, the more he or she resists.

It can be helpful to look at how you have been trying to get your teen to change, and ask: Is it working?

One way to try to help a person change a behavior is by changing how you respond to the behavior.

Changing behavior is easier said than done. It takes planning and practice.

# Worksheets

## What Happens When We Try to Make Our Teens Change?

1. What are two things you really like or appreciate about your teen?

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2. What are two things you would like to see him or her change?

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3. What are some ways that you've tried to make him or her change?

*(Example: I grounded him for a month.)*

4. Do these ways work for you?

Yes       No       Sometimes

5. How do your efforts to make your teen change affect your relationship with him or her?

## Goal Planning

Think of some things you would like to do or change that might help your relationship with your child. List some ideas below.

(Examples: take a time-out when a conflict starts to escalate; spend some positive, relaxing time with my son each week.)

Pick one behavior from your list and write it below. Be specific. State your goal in a positive, present-tense form. (Example: When my son starts to be verbally abusive with me, I will separate from him.)

Break your goal into steps. These steps should be specific. For example:

1. Tell her about my plan to separate from her when she is abusive.
2. When she starts to say something abusive to me, I will say: "I am going to separate from you. I will talk with you about it when you are calm and not putting me down."
3. I will go to another room and do something relaxing.
4. I will tell myself something that will help me feel calmer, such as, "It is her responsibility to change her behavior. I am only responsible for how I behave. I can stay calm."

### Steps for achieving my goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2.

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3.

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# Session 4: How to Respond When Your Teen Is Violent

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

When a teen becomes violent in the home, whether it is hitting someone, punching a hole in a wall, throwing things or making threats, the parent can react in a many different ways. Sometimes a parent will try to stop the behavior, physically or verbally. Other times a parent will try to calm the teen down. Another will leave or call the police.

The most effective response to violent behavior depends upon many variables: the teen's reaction to different approaches, past incidents of violence, and the parent's view of the situation. The most important consideration is safety of everyone in the home.

During this session you will learn specific steps to follow when your teen starts to use violent behavior. These steps are based on what we consider to be the safest thing to do when someone is being violent.

Calling the police is a way to hold teens accountable for their use of violent behavior. Violence is illegal and a crime. When parents do not call the police after repeated incidents of violence, teens get a strong message that the violence is tolerated.

Calling the police is not easy, particularly when it is about your own child. We want to support you in making your own decision about how to respond. We will provide information to help you think through and discuss the possible outcomes of the choices you make. Parents will help each other by sharing their ideas and experiences in responding to their teens' violence.

## **Goals**

To help parents think about their priorities when their teens are becoming violent

To understand that safety is the first concern when anyone is using violent behavior

To know how to stay safe and address the use of violent behavior

To know what steps to take when there is violence in the home

To make a safety plan for the home

## **Important Messages**

Safety is the most important thing to think about when your teen starts to use violent behavior.

There are steps you can take to stay safe during the violent episode.

It is more effective, and safe, to address the problem of the violent behavior with your teen after he or she has calmed down.

There are things you can do to make your home more safe, and to reduce the risk of serious harm.

Writing down a safety plan will help you think through the details of risk and safety in your home and take action to reduce the risks and make your home a safer place.

# Worksheets

## How to Respond When Your Teen Becomes Violent

When your teen starts to threaten you, to break things or to do anything physically violent, accept that you can't stop him or her at this point. The most important thing is to keep yourself and your other children safe.

### Steps to take when your teen becomes violent:

1. Do not continue the argument or discussion. Don't argue or yell.
2. Separate yourself and your other children from the teen. Go to another room, or if necessary, bring your other children with you and leave the house.
3. Call 911, if it seems appropriate.\*
4. Do what you can to help yourself stay calm (take a walk, call a friend).
5. Don't talk to your teen again until he or she is calm.
6. When you do talk to the teen again, give him or her the following messages:
  - When you are violent I will separate from you.
  - What you are doing is dangerous, and it is a crime.
  - I won't let your brother(s) and sister(s) be around you when you do this.
  - Your behavior is not safe and it is not acceptable.
  - We need to discuss consequences for your behavior. (See Discussion: Consequences for Violent Behavior in Session 10 of the parent curriculum.)

7. Don't get pulled into arguing about why he or she was violent, or who is to blame. When the teen starts to deny his or her actions, justify his or her actions, minimize his or her actions, or blame you, don't respond. The only message your teen needs to hear is that the violence is not acceptable, no matter what. Don't say anything more.

## **\*Calling 911**

Calling 911 sends an important message to the teen that violence is not acceptable and that it is a crime. If the teen is charged with domestic violence he or she will probably be required to attend counseling, which can be helpful. The court's response can be the most effective consequence for a teen who is violent. The parent receives support from the court in enforcing the rule of nonviolence in the home.

It is not easy to call the police on your child. You may feel guilty and worried about what will happen to him or her. You may be afraid of how he or she will respond. However, safety is the most important consideration when deciding to call 911.

In many states, including Washington, domestic violence is a crime that requires officers to arrest the violent person. Unfortunately, many officers lack training in teen domestic violence, and do not arrest the teen. Instead, the officers may try to give the parent advice about parenting, or give the teen a lecture. If that happens, you can respectfully remind the officers that in Washington, domestic violence is a crime that requires officers to make an arrest when there is "probable cause." There is probable cause to make a domestic-violence-related arrest when all of the following factors are in place:

1. The suspect is 16 years or older.
2. Within the preceding four hours, the suspect has assaulted a family member or household member.

3. The suspect is alleged to have committed any one of the following:
- An assault that resulted in bodily injury to the victim (physical pain, or impairment of physical condition), whether or not the injury is observable by the responding officer.
  - Any physical action intended to cause another person to reasonably fear serious bodily injury or death.
  - A felony-level assault.

When their teens are arrested, some parents feel extremely upset and guilty. But they often report that their teens' abusive behavior decreased after the arrest.

## Safety Plan for Our Home

The following is a safety plan for your home. When someone has been violent in the home, there are things you can do to plan ahead for safety. Think about what you can do to prevent harm to people in the event of another violent incident.

This plan is about how to increase safety in your home. If your teen becomes violent, always follow the guidelines listed earlier as Steps to take when your teen becomes violent.

I will do the following things to prevent the use of weapons in our home:

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I will do the following to provide a safe place to go when there is violence in our home:

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Other things I can do to prepare for safety in our home include:

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# Session 5: Taking a Time-Out

## *Parent and Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

In this session teens will learn how to use time-outs to prevent the use of abusive or violent behavior. The goal is for teens to be able to take a time-out before they become abusive. Parents are included so that they can support their teens in using time-outs. Parents can help teens by letting them know if they see that the teens need a time-out. Parents will learn about taking their own time-outs in Session 7 of the parent group.

### **Goals**

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

To complete a family time-out 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 or getting arrested.

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

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



# Worksheets

## 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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## 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

## *Parent and Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

In this session teens will identify times when they 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.

Teens will identify their red flags—that is, the signs that a time-out is necessary or a situation may get out of control. Parents will think about red flags that they notice in their teens when an argument is starting to escalate. Sometimes parents notice cues that the teens are unaware of. Parents will share their observations with their teens and discuss how they can let their teens know when they see red flags.

### **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.

## Identifying Red Flags in Your Teen

Paying attention to warning signs that your teen is headed toward abusive behavior will help you know when to separate and avoid the escalation of his or her behavior.

The earlier you detect behaviors that indicate your teen is going in the direction of becoming abusive, the easier it is to separate from the situation (for you and your teen).

**How do you know when your teen is headed toward becoming abusive (verbally abusive, physically violent, destroying property)?**

Some examples are:

**Body signs:** facial expressions, moving closer to you, pacing, agitated movements, red face.

**Verbal signs:** raised voice; pressured voice; starting to put you down, criticize, swear, name call.

**Actions:** slamming doors, cupboards.

When you see warning signs in your teen, make the decision to separate. You can give your teen a signal that he or she needs a time-out, or you can take your own time-out (you will be learning about time-outs for parents in Session 7 of the parent group). If you are going to take your own time-out, let your teen know and follow the guidelines in How to Take a Time-Out.

What are signs you notice in your teen that let you know he or she may become abusive?

Situation:

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What were their red flags?

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Negative thoughts:

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Difficult feelings:

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Body signs:

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**Actions:**

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## My Red Flags (Teen Exercise)

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

## My Red Flags (Teen Exercise)

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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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).



## Time Out Scenarios

### 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.

When Jack walks in the door, his mother asks, "Where were you and why are you so late?"

**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 gets upset.

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

Jack decides to go to his room and brushes his mother 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. You're a lunatic."

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

Jack pushes her into the hall and closes the door.

**Jack:** "You better leave me alone or you're really going to be sorry."

### Scene Two

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

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

**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."

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

**Tanisha:** "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 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.

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

**Maria:** "Hey mom, 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've been drinking beer. You're supposed to be watching your brother. I can't trust you anymore and I don't like your friends. I think your friends' parents should know what's going on. I'm going to call them."

**Maria:** "You're really going ballistic. Why don't you call the FBI while you're at it? You're really a nutcase. None of my friends are going to talk to me again if you call their parents. You're a creep and a narc."

## 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:** "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 starts to get upset and says: "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."

**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:** "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?"

**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. And a really stupid one."

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 because he got arrested over the summer and he isn't going to school anymore.

One day, after Robin finishes talking to Devon on the phone, her mom says, "I thought we already talked about Devon. You know I don't want you seeing him."

**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:** "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."

# Session 7: Time-Out for Parents

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

You have learned about time-outs with your teen so you can support him or her in using this important skill. During this session we will talk about how you can take your own time-out when either you or your teen is starting to escalate during a conflict.

When you take a time-out, you accomplish two goals: 1) calming yourself down so you can make better parenting decisions, and 2) teaching your teen that you will stop interacting when either person becomes abusive. When parents can model time-outs for their teens, a time-out isn't seen as a punishment, but as a sign of strength and maturity.

Parents who complete the Step-Up program often say that a time-out is the most useful and effective tool they have learned in the program.

### **Goals**

To learn how parents can take their own time-outs from escalating situations with their teens

To understand how time-outs benefit teens and parents

To learn that parents' self-calming thoughts can help them de-escalate

To identify personal red flags

### **Important Messages**

Taking a time-out will help you deal more constructively with conflict with your teen.

Taking a time-out does not mean you are “losing” or not in control; taking a time-out is a way of taking control of the situation.

# Worksheets

## Time-Out for Parents

A time-out is a short break that people can take to prevent difficult situations from becoming abusive. You can think of it like a time-out in a basketball or football game. The game stops. The teams separate to regroup and figure out a plan. The game starts again when the team members have a plan.

Each person in the family has to call a time-out for himself or herself. It is not a way to discipline or punish your child. A time-out is a constructive way to try to solve problems in your family. It is a way each family member can take responsibility for his or her actions.

When your teen is starting to use abusive behaviors (name calling, yelling, put-downs, or anything physical), taking your own time-out lets your teen know that you refuse to engage in abusive behavior and that abuse will not be tolerated.

If you do it right, a time-out can:

- Help you stay calm.
- Help you make good decisions.
- Help you find better ways to set limits with your kids.
- Help to reduce conflict in your family.
- Increase the understanding in your family.



## How to Take a Time-Out

When you are calm, explain time-outs to the other people in your home.

A time-out can take anywhere from 5 minutes to an hour. Talk to your family about how long you will usually take a time-out.

When you notice warning signs that either you or the other person is escalating toward abusive or hurtful behavior, make a decision to take a time-out.

Tell the other person that you are taking a time-out. Separate from the person right away. Do not talk anymore, other than letting him or her know where you will be and for how long.

If the other person tries to keep talking or arguing, ignore him or her and walk away.

Go to a place where you can be alone and calm down.

Do something to actively calm down, such as deep breathing, exercising, walking, taking a hot bath, calling a friend.

Try to stop your negative thoughts (thinking bad things about the person, how awful the situation is, etc.). Think of something to help you calm down (see *Self-Calming Thoughts*).

When you have calmed down, think about what your choices are and how you can talk to the person about the problem in a respectful and productive way.

Go back to the person and make a plan about when to finish the discussion. (See *What to Do After a Time-Out* in Session 5.)

## **Tips to Help Disengage from a Power Struggle with Your Teen**

### **Learn to know when it is becoming a power struggle.**

It is a power struggle when you are feeling controlled or the need to control; when either of you is arguing, blaming, demanding, or being disrespectful; when you feel the need to win.

### **Don't argue.**

When your child starts to argue about the facts—when, why, where, etc.—don't get pulled in. Refuse to argue.

### **Be clear and specific about what needs to happen, and then stop talking.**

Say exactly what needs to happen in a short and clear way; for example, "You need to complete all of your homework before you use the car."

### **Don't take your child's resistance or anger personally.**

Remember, your child is just trying to change your mind so he or she can have/do what he or she wants. The child is using tactics that have probably worked in the past (or that he or she has seen work for others).

### **Ignore attempts to get you engaged.**

Let your child know, "I am not going to talk about it anymore. I am going to ignore you if you continue to argue about it." Engage yourself in another activity.

**Separate physically from your child.**

If your child continues to try to engage you in an argument, leave the room. Let your child know: "I am finished talking about it for now."

**Talk about the problem later, when you are both calm.**

Bring up the discussion again later when you have some relaxed time together. Use skills you have learned to talk about the problem, such as problem solving, listening, and acknowledging feelings.

**Ask yourself: Is this something I am willing to negotiate about?**

If the situation is something you are willing to negotiate about, and then let your child know: "Let's talk about how we can meet halfway on this."

## Self-Calming Thoughts for Parents

- He is responsible for his behavior.
- Let it go for now. I can talk about it later when we are both calm.
- I am calm and in control.
- I will go in another room and take some deep breaths.
- I cannot control his behavior, but I can control my behavior.
- I don't have to deal with this right now; it will only make it worse.
- He is responsible for his feelings.
- She is upset and mad and she can deal with that on her own.
- I can't "make" him do anything. I can provide choices and consequences, and then it is his decision.
- I don't have to engage in this battle. I can take a time-out, calm down and think about how I want to communicate.
- I don't have to "win."
- The strongest influence I can have with my child is to model the behavior I want her to learn.
- I will disengage now and go do something relaxing.
- She can figure this out on her own. I will let her be.
- My behavior is not helping the situation. I will stop and be quiet for a while. Later I will talk about it calmly with her.

## Identifying Your Own Red Flags

How do you know when you need to take a time-out?

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**Body signs:** (Examples: *feeling tense, stomach ache, headache, shoulder tension*)

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**Feelings:** (Examples: *anger, frustration, revenge*)

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**Thoughts:** (Examples: *"he's not going to get away with this," "she's a selfish brat"*)

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**Verbal signs:** (Examples: *saying hurtful things, put-downs, criticism*)

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**Actions:** (Examples: *pointing your finger, getting too close to the person, slamming your fist*)

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# Session 8: When Your Teen Is Abusive: Effects on Parenting

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

Many parents believe they are at fault for their teens' behavior. During this session you will hear that other parents have similar feelings and experiences, learn that the violence is not your fault, and think about how your parenting has been affected by your teen's behavior.

You will learn how your negative thoughts influence how you respond to your teen's behavior and how you can change your thinking to help you respond more effectively.

### **Goals**

To understand how living with an abusive teen can impact parenting

To discuss challenges of parenting an abusive teen

To give and receive support regarding the difficulties of parenting an abusive teen

To understand how feelings and thoughts affect behaviors

To learn how to change negative thinking into thinking that supports more effective responses to the teen's behavior

### **Important Messages**

Your teen is responsible for his or her behavior.

Your thoughts and feelings can affect your parenting.



Changing the way you think about a situation can help you respond in more effective ways.

# Worksheets

## Feelings, Thoughts and Responses to My Teen's Behavior

Think of some times when your teen was abusive to you. Describe how you felt, what you thought, and how you responded to your teen.

My Teen's Abusive Behavior	What I Felt/Thought	How I Responded

## Changing Your Own Thinking

The way you think about a situation influences how you respond to it. You can change the way you respond to a situation by changing the way you think about it.

Negative thinking is often in one of the following categories:

Negative thoughts about the other person (criticism, put-downs)

Negative thoughts about yourself (self-blame, "shoulds," self-criticism)

Here are some examples:

<b>Negative Thinking</b>	<b>Realistic Thinking</b>
This is my fault. I am not a good parent	My teen is responsible for her own behavior. I am doing everything I can.
There is nothing I can do. I've tried everything	There are some things I can do. I can separate from him when he is abusive, and I can get help.
He's lazy and self-centered.	He's not motivated to do things he doesn't care about (like a lot of teens). An incentive or consequence might motivate him.
I have to make her change her behavior.	I can try to help her make good choices, but it is up to her to make the decision.
He's trying to manipulate me into doing what he wants.	He is using behaviors he knows to get his way. I can teach him other ways to communicate with me about what he wants
I should be able to control her.	I can influence her decisions about her behavior with rules, incentives and consequences. She is in charge of her behavior.

## Changing My Thinking

Below, write down negative thoughts you have when you are in conflict with your teen. Then change your negative thinking into more realistic thoughts that will help you handle the situation in a more effective way.

Negative Thinking	Realistic Thinking



# Session 9: Adolescent Development

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

Parenting adolescents can be challenging. Even when children have made relatively smooth transitions at earlier ages, adolescent years can stretch the limits of parents. Few parents are prepared for teens who are violent and abusive and often feel devastated when faced with teens who have used any form of violence against them. Violence and abuse are not a part of “normal” adolescent development. However, it is not unusual for adolescents to use challenging behaviors, such as arguing, complaining, and getting angry, as they struggle through the transitions of the teen years. It is important for parents to distinguish between what are abusive behaviors and what are just difficult teen behaviors.

When parents recall their own teen years and remember how they were treated by their parents and other adults, they are able to feel more empathetic toward their teens and remember what responses from their parents were effective and what responses were not. Reviewing the characteristics and developmental changes of adolescents helps parents understand the significant physical, mental and emotional changes their teens are experiencing. Parents need to make significant changes in their parenting to meet the challenges of the teen years.

### **Goals**

To understand developmental stages and tasks of teenagers

To learn how developmental changes can influence behavior in teenagers

To understand the difference between “normal” adolescent behavior that is challenging and abusive behavior

## **Important Messages**

Teens sometimes go through developmental phases that make parents uncomfortable and irritated.

Trying on different roles is a way for teens to learn more about themselves.

Teens are more likely to take their parents' opinions into account if they feel respected.

# Worksheets

## My Teen Years

Close your eyes and let your mind wander back to your own teen years. Remember yourself with your friends, at school, with your parents, sitting in your room, or whatever comes to mind. Take a few moments to be a teenager again and remember some of your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Then answer the following questions.

1. What was important to you?

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2. What did you enjoy doing?

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3. What was difficult or stressful for you?

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4. What were some of your behaviors that concerned your parents?

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5. How did your parents respond to these behaviors?

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6. Were these responses helpful? If not, what would have been more helpful to you?

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7. What were some of your feelings as a teenager?

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8. What was one wish or goal you had as a teen?

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9. What similarities do you see between your child and yourself as a teenager?

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# Adolescent Development

The following is a brief overview of some of the developmental characteristics and tasks of adolescence, and some ways you can effectively guide and discipline your teen.

## Physical, Emotional and Social Change

Aside from the period from birth to age two, more changes occur during early adolescence than at any other stage of development. There are hormonal, physical and social changes going on that can result in defensive, temperamental, or ultra-sensitive behavior. It is easy for parents to mistake this behavior for defiance and respond in ways that escalate the difficult behavior.

### What you can do to help:

Remember that the outbursts\* are normal and not about you.

The more calm you can stay, the better.

Wait until your teen calms down to discuss things like rules and expectations.

Rules, limits and structure are important. Your teens needs to know boundaries, such as curfews, letting you know where he or she is, and having structured time for homework and chores.

\*Outbursts that include violence or abuse are not normal. See *How to Respond When Your Teen Is Violent*.

## **Independence**

One of the most important tasks of adolescence is to become more independent and to start separating from parents. This means teens don't like being told what to do. So, the most effective way to establish rules and consequences is to include teens in making them.

### **How to include your teen in establishing rules and consequences:**

Use the problem-solving skills you have learned in this group.

Ask the teen what he or she thinks the rules and consequences should be.

Listen to the teen. (This does not mean you have to agree, or that you will necessarily change rules or consequences that you feel are important.)

Ask the questions: What's the problem? What's the plan?

Try to have a win-win attitude; use negotiation when possible.

The resistance that is so typical of adolescence can be lessened by listening and showing interest and respect for teens' ideas. When adolescents feel they are listened to and their opinions and ideas are respected, they are more willing to cooperate.

## **Exploring Identity**

Another task of adolescence is to try on different roles and identities.

They are trying to explore who they are, and with this they may have strong opinions and ideas that may change drastically from day to day.

They will grow out of this phase. Sometimes parents worry that their teens will always think this way, and jump into trying to change the teens' ideas and beliefs. If you remember that it is normal, and even healthy, to go through this phase, you can relax and listen with interest.

## Expressing Individuality and “Fitting In”

Battles about clothes and hairstyles are frequent during adolescence. For teens, how they look is very important. It is part of how they express themselves, and how they fit in with their peers. Belonging is very important. Teens express themselves with clothes, music, hairstyles and language. Parents often find all of these very distasteful. The question to ask is: Is it dangerous or harmful in any way, or is it just that I don't like it? If it is the latter, try to let it go. Remember, it is only a phase. He or she probably won't look like this in another three years, and probably not in one year. Try to remember your own teen years and how your parents felt about the way you looked.

## Relationships with Friends / Peer Pressure

Part of separating from parents means spending more time with friends. Friendships become the most important thing in a teen's life. A major concern of parents of adolescents is that their teenagers will be led astray by the wrong crowd. This is a big issue today, with growing use of drugs, alcohol, and violent behavior. Sexuality and pregnancy are also a concern.

Deciding how much to regulate friendships is difficult. Teens don't like being told who to be friends with (or not be friends with). Parents worry. The best way to confront this is to do three things:

1. **Know your teen's friends and parents:** By having the friends spend some time at your home, you can get to know them.
2. **Establish boundaries:** Have a curfew, have a rule that you always know where your teen is, and establish consequences for rules broken. As your teen gets older (ages 16-18), you will be able to allow increasing freedom and responsibility for making his or her own decisions.

3. **Talk and listen:** Talk about what your teen's activities are. Keep the lines of communication open. Discuss your concerns about drugs, alcohol, driving, and sex in a way that invites the teen to share his or her ideas. When parents are critical and controlling, teens shut down and don't want to talk. Be open, but honest about your concerns. Try not to preach. Use the listening, communicating and problem-solving skills you have learned in this group. Let your teen know she/he can come to you if in trouble.

## Sexuality

Sexual urges can be very strong during mid-adolescence. Statistics indicate that by the time they graduate from high school, half of today's teenagers will have had intercourse. Many teens don't see anything wrong with having sex with the people they are going with. There is no longer a negative stigma attached to early sexual activity, and in fact there is strong pressure among some groups to become sexually active. As a parent, you might want to believe this isn't true for your child, because it is a difficult issue to talk about. Rather than hoping it isn't true for your child, it is more important than ever that you take an active role in helping your teenager be sexually responsible.

Teenagers need accurate information about the responsibilities of a sexual relationship and guidance on avoiding pressure to be sexually active. They need to know the facts about pregnancy, birth control, and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. This is not to say that you must condone your teenager's sexual behavior; however, it is important for him or her to have access to good information about sexuality.

If it is difficult to talk to your teen about sexuality, you can give him/her some books to read (see the book list at the end of the workbook) and find someone he/she trusts to talk to. The person might be an aunt, uncle, nurse, teacher, family friend, etc.

Although you cannot control your teenager's ultimate decision regarding sexual activity, you can influence the quality of the information he/she receives. That, in turn, can have a positive impact on your adolescent's behavior.

## **Guiding Your Adolescent: A Balancing Act**

The two biggest mistakes in parenting a teen are: overcontrol and no control.

**Overcontrol**—too many restrictions; not allowing the teen to make any decisions; always telling the teen what to do. Invites resistance and conflict.

**No Control**—not enough rules, limits or supervision. Invites trouble for the teen.

## **Find a Balance**

Provide structure, set limits, and have rules, but with the teen involved. Problem solve together. Allow the teen to show he or she can be responsible. Invite the teen to be involved in decision making when possible. The amount of supervision and freedom to make his or her own decisions will depend upon his or her individual personality and capability.

Giving your teen increased freedom and independence is a step-by-step process. As the teen gets older and demonstrates responsibility, rules can change and less supervision is needed.

## **Encourage and Support**

Look for opportunities to point out strengths in your teen.

Let your teen know when he or she shows responsibility and makes good decisions.

Make a connection between your teen's behavior and the amount of freedom allowed.

Give your teen the following messages whenever possible:

"You are capable."

"You can be responsible."

"You can make good decisions."

Keep a positive connection with your teen—talk, listen, show interest in her/him.

# Session 10: Consequences for Behavior

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

Consequences can be one of the most effective ways to help teens change their behavior. Parents will often say that they have tried all sorts of consequences and they don't work. It is easy to give up on consequences. While it is true that some teens respond better to consequences than others, it is important to not eliminate consequences. When there are no consequences for behaviors, particularly abusive or violent behaviors, teens get the message that they do not have to be responsible for their behavior.

When you think that consequences don't work for your teen, it is important to look at the consequences you have been using. It may be that the consequences you have been using are not effective. Parents often use the same kinds of consequences over and over, such as grounding and removal of privileges. This session will help you learn about a variety of consequences that help teens take responsibility for their behavior. We emphasize consequences that engage teens in being actively accountable for their behavior by doing something to repair damage, harm or problems caused by the behavior.

### **Goals**

To learn how to make effective consequences for a teen's behavior

To use guidelines for delivering consequences

To plan a consequence before using it

To change consequences when they are not effective



## **Important Messages**

Consequences are a way for teens to take responsibility for their behavior.

Consequences are a way for teens to learn to make other choices.

The way consequences are communicated to teens is just as important as the consequences themselves.

When choosing a consequence, focus on ways your teen can make amends for his or her behavior.

Consequences that are related to fixing the problem caused by the behavior are most effective.

# Worksheets

## *How to Deliver a Consequence*

- **Communicate calmly and directly.**  
Take a time-out if you need to so that you can speak calmly. A loud voice, warnings, threats, blaming, or a hostile attitude will invite conflict.
- **Use as few words as possible.**  
State the consequence briefly, without explaining and lecturing.

For example: "The consequence for skipping school is to stay home all weekend and do schoolwork."

- **Be both caring and firm when communicating consequences.**  
Firmness means establishing a consequence and staying with it. Caring means talking to your teen respectfully and calmly without putting him or her down.
- **What's the problem? What's the plan?**  
Always ask yourself these questions to keep yourself focused on how your child can solve/fix the problem.
- **Present the consequence as a choice that has been made by the teen.**  
For example, "You have made a choice to stay home next weekend by coming home an hour past your curfew."

If you are not sure what a consequence for a behavior should be, wait and think about it before talking to your teen. It is better to take time to think about it than to come up with a consequence quickly when you are in the middle of the conflict. In the latter situation, you are likely to give consequences that are unrealistic and difficult to follow through on. Let your teen know that you need time to think about an appropriate consequence. You can have your teen think about it as well.

## **Logical Consequences**

When you are deciding on a consequence for a problem-causing behavior, think:

### **What's the Problem?**

How did the behavior cause a problem?

### **What's the Plan?**

What can be done to deal with the problem?

What can your teen do to help deal with the problem?

### **Tips for Success:**

Work together on figuring out what the problem is and making a plan.

Have a positive attitude ("I know you can do it," "Let's work this out").

If anger gets in the way, talk about it later.

## Practice Using Consequences

Read each of the scenarios below and write down a logical consequence for the behavior. Write down how you would say the consequence to the teen.

1. Beverly brought the car home with trash all over the inside and no gas.

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2. Steve yelled at his little brother and pushed him down.

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3. Marion came home two hours late from a party.

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4. Marsha was angry with her mom and yelled at her and kicked a hole in the wall.

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5. Shawn yelled at his mom and called her names.

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6. Rob smashed in the front door when he was locked out.

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## Take-Home Activity

### Consequences for My Teen

Below, write down 3 difficult behaviors your teen uses and a consequence for each. Think of consequences that are related to the problem-causing behavior (as much as possible), and that help your teen take responsibility for the problem caused by the behavior.

Keep in mind—What's the Problem? What's the Plan?

1. Behavior \_\_\_\_\_  
Consequence \_\_\_\_\_
2. Behavior \_\_\_\_\_  
Consequence \_\_\_\_\_
3. Behavior \_\_\_\_\_  
Consequence \_\_\_\_\_

# Session 11: Encouraging Your Teen

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

An important part of helping teens change abusive behaviors is to provide encouragement and support when teens are using non-abusive and respectful behaviors. Check-in on the respect wheel is as important as check-in on the abuse wheel. Teens need to hear how they are behaving positively and that it is appreciated by family members. Teens also need encouragement for who they are as people, separate from behavior. During this session you will learn how to provide encouragement and positive messages that help teens have confidence and improved self-esteem.

When there has been ongoing abuse by a teen, it can be understandably difficult for the parent to feel like being encouraging or positive with the teen. Some parents feel like they are rewarding the negative behavior if they provide any kind of encouragement. The relationship can deteriorate into constant negative interactions and the parent can lose sight of positive qualities about the teen. Both parent and teen lose hope that the teen can change or the relationship can improve. If the parent can find things about the teen to support and encourage, it can improve their relationship and the teen's sense of confidence that he or she can behave cooperatively and respectfully.

### **Goals**

Understand how self-esteem is an important part of a teen's development

Learn different ways to help a teen develop self-esteem and confidence

Learn how to express encouragement

Identify positive qualities and strengths in your teen

## **Important Messages**

The way you communicate with your teen influences self-esteem and confidence.

You can help your teen make behavior changes by paying attention to his/her efforts and giving encouragement.

All teens should be encouraged for who they are as people, regardless of behavior.

It is important to separate encouragement for behavior and encouragement of the person.

# Worksheets

## Helping Your Teen Develop Self-Esteem and Confidence

### 1. Encourage your teen.

Notice your teen's positive qualities and let him/her know that you appreciate these. These qualities include behaviors you like, and things you enjoy about his/her personality.

### 2. Listen to your teen.

Listen without giving your opinion, giving advice, or making judgments. Don't talk, other than acknowledging you hear him or her and are interested. Listen with a desire to understand your teen's world and perspective.

### 3. Be affectionate.

Hug, pat, smile. If your teen doesn't like to be physical, you can show affection in many other ways. Use words to express love and affection. Humor sometimes works better than serious words with teenagers.

### 4. Spend time with your teen.

A lot of parents stop trying to spend time with their teens because of the belief that teens don't want to be with their parents. While teens do want to spend more time with friends, they still enjoy time with parents (although they might not admit it) when it is relaxed, positive time without criticism, lectures, advice, questions, etc.



Find time to do things with your teen that he/she enjoys, invite him/her to join in on some of your activities, or just hang out and do nothing together (you don't even have to talk very much). Take ten minutes each day to just be in the vicinity of your teen and chat about little things (the cat, his or her new shoes, movies; not school, homework or chores). The idea is to have a positive connection on a regular basis that has nothing to do with problems or behavior. This is a way to give your teen the message "I like you, you are important to me, I enjoy you."

**5. Show respect for your teen's ideas and opinions.**

Even when you don't agree with your teen, you can let him or her know that you have a different opinion and that you respect his or her opinion. This respect gives teens a sense of independence, and that they can think on their own. When your teen expresses an opinion that is completely contrary to one he or she shared the day before, resist the temptation to point this out. A normal process of self-development for teens is to try on many different ways of thinking. Adolescents are like chameleons as they change opinions and ideas, sometimes many times in a day.

**6. Involve your teen in establishing rules and consequences.**

An important task of adolescence is to become more independent and to develop skills in making decisions. This also means teens don't like being told what to do. The most effective way to establish rules and consequences is to include teens in making them. This gives teens the message that they are mature enough to be involved with setting rules, and are responsible for making decisions about their behavior.

**7. Problem solve with your teen.**

Take time to sit down and use the problem-solving steps (see Session 19) when there is a problem. Listen to your teen's view of the problem and involve your teen in coming up with solutions.

**8. Communicate respectfully.**

Share your feelings, expectations and needs with your teen in a way that is respectful. Take a time-out and separate from your teen when either of you becomes disrespectful. This gives a clear message that you will not be disrespectful and you will not be with your teen when he or she is disrespectful.

**9. Allow your teen to solve some of his/her own problems.**

Avoid rescuing your teen from problems that he/she is capable of dealing with. It is surprising what a teen is capable of when the parent doesn't get involved. If you have the attitude "he can handle this" or "she can figure this out," your teen will know this and feel confident.

**10. Encourage special interests.**

Support your teen in developing interests and hobbies, such as sports, art, music, mountain climbing. Encourage his or her involvement in groups, clubs, community activities and other extracurricular activities.

**11. Let your teen know he/she is capable.**

Tell your teen that you have confidence in him or her. Say: "You can figure that out," "You're really smart about things like that," or "That's a tough situation. I think you can handle it, but if you want some help, let me know."

**12. Let your teen know he or she is worthy of love just for who he or she is, not related to his or her behavior.**

Give your teen spontaneous words of love, not related to his or her behavior. Tell your teen you love him/her, enjoy him/her, like him/her, missed him/her today, are glad to see him/her, enjoy laughing with him/her.

**13. When there is a problem-causing behavior, focus on the behavior, not the person.**

Talk about the specific behavior that is causing a problem. Focus on the facts of the situation, how it is a problem, and the behavior you would like to see. Use as few words as possible. Use the *Guidelines for Respectful Communication* in Session 18.

**Always avoid:**

Criticism

Put-downs

Name calling

Comparing

Humiliating

Making fun of them

Negative forecasts (for example, "you'll never make it to college," "you'll never get a job," "you'll end up on the streets").

**Encouraging Your Teen**

There are two kinds of encouragement:

Encouragement for behavior

Encouragement of the person

**Encouragement for behavior** is giving your child positive feedback about behaviors you like to see. It is easy to get in the habit of only giving negative feedback about behaviors you don't like. Giving a positive response to the behaviors you appreciate is much more effective in helping your teen change.

**Here are some ways you can encourage positive change in your teen's behavior:**

**Notice your teen's effort.**

Pay attention to when your teen is trying to do better. Notice the small steps and talk about it. For example, if the teen stopped yelling and tried to calm down sooner than he or she usually does, tell him or her you noticed. Let your teen know when you see any small improvements in behavior.

**Talk about the specific behavior you are encouraging in your teen.**

Avoid general expressions like "You were good today." Instead, say, "You haven't yelled or said any swear words all day" or "You didn't let your little brother get you mad, you stayed calm and left the room when he was pestering you."

**Help your teen recognize and express his or her own feelings of accomplishment.**

Acknowledge when your teen feels pleased or proud of something he/she did. For example, say, "It must feel good to have made it through the day without a single fight" or "You must feel proud of making it to school every day this week."

**Recognize your teen's efforts and improvements during the group at check-in.**

Talk about any improvements in behavior, no matter how small. Try to find something on the respect wheel to talk about, or think of something positive to say about your teen every week.

### **Encouragement of the person is:**

Giving your child positive messages about who he or she is as a person, separate from his or her behavior.

Communicating love, appreciation, humor, and that you care about your child. It is a smile, a pat, a hug, or doing something you both enjoy together.

Letting your child know what you like about his or her personality.

Not contingent on the teen's behavior or about his or her behavior.

### **Teens should be given encouragement as people on a regular basis, regardless of their behavior.**

Find times when your teen is not being abusive or difficult to give encouragement of him or her as a person. Some parents withdraw this kind of communication as a punishment for their teens' behavior. This does not help teens change, and can actually escalate their negative behavior. Receiving love and encouragement as people is a basic human need of all children. When encouragement is taken away, kids often act out more. They feel more justified in using negative behaviors when they feel no sense of encouragement as people.

## Take-Home Activity

### A. Encouraging My Teen

During the following week, pay attention to your teen and notice the following things:

1. One quality I like about my teen is:

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2. One of my teen's strengths is:

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3. A behavior I appreciate in my teen is:

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Find a way to let your teen know about what you have noticed.

### B. Helping My Teen Develop Self-Esteem and Confidence

Choose one thing from the list from the *Helping Your Teen Develop Self-Esteem and Confidence* worksheet to do with your teen this week. Write it in the space below. During the group next week, you can describe how it went.

This week I will:

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# Session 12: Empowering Teens to Be Responsible for Their Behavior

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

During this session you will discuss your responsibilities as a parent and your teen's responsibilities, and how taking on too much responsibility for your teen affects the teen's ability to face challenges. Many parents take too much responsibility for their teens and become frustrated when their teens seem incapable of being responsible. The exercises in this session help you identify how you have been either "rescuing" or trying to control your teen in ways that take away the teen's ability to be responsible for his or her own behavior. When teens take responsibility for themselves, they begin to feel confident and capable.

### **Goals**

To identify parent responsibilities and teen responsibilities

To learn ways to help teens take responsibility for their behavior

To identify ways that teens are affected when parents take responsibility for them

To identify ways teens feel when they take responsibility for themselves

### **Important Messages**

Teens will take more responsibility for their behavior when they are given the opportunity to make some decisions and face consequences of their choices.

Giving teens responsibility is a gradual process as they mature.



It is not always easy to let go and let teens make their own decisions and face consequences.

# Worksheets

## Empowering Teens to Be Responsible for Their Behavior

When we take responsibility for other people's behavior, we typically do one of two things:

### Try to control them—

Try to make them do something by using threats, manipulation, force, or emotional coercion (guilt).

### Try to rescue them—

Do things for them to save them from facing consequences of their behavior; fixing problems that are a result of their behavior.

It is common for parents to vacillate between trying to control and trying to rescue their children. Neither practice gives teens responsibility.

When we feel like we are responsible for another person's negative behavior, it is natural to want to try to do something about it (especially when you are a parent). And, as we discussed earlier, it is hard to change another person's behavior. So, we resort to trying to control the person so he or she won't behave that way, or cleaning up the mess that results from his or her behavior.

Instead of controlling or rescuing, it is more helpful to **empower** the person to be responsible for his or her own behavior.

## How Do You Empower Your Teen?

Invite the person to think for himself or herself about how to solve a problem.

Allow the person to take action to solve the problem.

Allow the person to make the choice to not take action.

Allow the person to experience the consequences of his or her choice.

The most important part is how you communicate to the person. If you talk with the person in a way that is both caring and firm, he or she will feel more accepting of the responsibility.

## **Caring and firm means:**

### **Caring**

Letting the person know that you care about him or her and love him or her, regardless of the problem or the choice he or she makes.

Talking in a way that is not demeaning, sarcastic, or critical.

Telling the person you believe he or she is capable of solving the problem.

Letting the person know that he or she can ask for help in making his or her plan to solve the problem.

### **Firm**

Letting the person know that you are giving him or her the responsibility to take action to solve the problem. You will not do it for him or her.

Letting the person know that he or she is in charge of the choice and the consequence.

Allowing the person to face consequences without rescuing him or her.

Being clear about your expectations. Holding to what you say.

Instead of being caring and firm, parents are often caring and rescuing, angry and firm, or angry and rescuing.

## Here are examples of each:

Brian takes the bus to school every morning. He has been getting in the habit of oversleeping and missing the bus. The school is within biking or skateboarding distance and there is a city bus. This morning Brian woke up late again and had five minutes to get to school. He asked his mom to call school to tell them he would be late and then give him a ride to school. His mom said:

**Caring and rescuing:** "All right honey. Hurry up. I really need to start waking you up in the morning. You go right back to sleep after you turn off your alarm and before you know it you're late."

**Angry and firm:** "Forget it! I've had it with you, Brian! You are so lazy and irresponsible. It is not my problem if you get up too late. You're on your own. You expect everyone else to save you from your stupid mistakes. Well I'm through. I'm not doing it anymore. Figure out your own way to school."

**Angry and rescuing:** "You're late again! This is the third time this week! Do you know what an alarm is for? You are unbelievable. You're not going to make it past the ninth grade. Now get out to the car, and step on it, while I call the school, again!"

**Caring and firm:** "Brian, you're going to need to solve this problem on your own. I know you have options for how to get to school on your own, and you can figure it out. You are also capable of calling the school to let them know you overslept. If you want help making a plan so this doesn't keep happening, let me know. Have a good day at school. See you this afternoon."

The second part to caring and firm is how the parent responds when Brian makes a choice about his behavior. If he acts on solving the problem himself—calls school and gets himself there—Mom can later say, "I like the way you took care of that yourself." Or, if he goes back to

bed, Mom can decide to not say or do anything and let him face the consequence of an unexcused absence from school.

## Giving My Teen Responsibility

1. What is my teen able to do without my help?

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2. In what ways does my teen show responsibility?

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3. In what areas does my teen still need support and guidance?

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4. In what ways am I continuing to take on more responsibility for my teen than he/she needs?

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5. How does this affect my teen?

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6. How does this affect our relationship?

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7. What are some ways I can give my teen more responsibility?

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# Session 13: Making Amends

## *Parent and Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

An important part of being accountable for abusive or violent behavior is to repair the harm or damage caused by the behavior. In this session teens will learn specific things they can do to make amends for their behavior when they have been abusive or 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 abusive or violent 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 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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# Session 14: What Kind of Message Am I Giving My Teen?

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

Parents usually don't think about how they are communicating with their children, especially when they are upset or irritated with them.

Whenever parents talk to their children, they are giving underlying messages about their confidence in the children, along with the children's abilities and strengths.

This session gives you a chance to think about the messages you have been giving your teen when you talk to him or her. Through scenarios and practice, you will learn how to communicate in ways that give your teen the message that he or she is capable.

### **Goals**

To recognize how you give underlying messages whenever you talk to your teen

To realize how these messages affect your teen's view of himself or herself

To learn how to communicate in a way that helps your teen feel responsible and capable

### **Important Messages**

Whenever you talk to your teen, it is as if you are holding a mirror in front of him or her.

Everything you say to your teen gives an underlying message about who she/he is and how capable she/he is.

You can give your teen a positive view of herself/himself by the words you use.

You can help your teen feel more responsible and capable through your communication.

# Worksheets

## Messages We Give Our Teens

Read each of the following responses. What message is the teen getting in the first response? What message is the teen getting in the second response?

1. a. "You put a dent in the car? Well, you can forget about driving for a long time. It's going to cost me my deductible to get it fixed, which I'll probably never get from you, considering you still owe me money from all the other damage you've done around here. I'm sure not going to trust you with my car again for a long time."

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- b. "You put a dent in the car? I'm sure you can make a plan to get it repaired and pay the deductible for insurance. Figure out a plan with a timeline and let me know. Then we can talk about when you can use the car again."

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2. a. "You said you would be home on time tonight. It's two hours past curfew! You are so irresponsible. I can't trust a thing you say. You're grounded for the weekend."

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b. "I expected you home at 10:00, because you said you would be. I know you are capable of coming home on time. You lost your privilege to go out this weekend in the evening. Next weekend you will have the chance to be responsible and come home on time."

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3. a. "You call this kitchen clean? It looks like you flew through here on a 2-minute commercial break from your TV. I give up. I can't get any help from you. A simple request to clean up a few dishes, and you can't even do that."

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b. "Jake, I'd like you to come finish cleaning the kitchen now."

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4. a. "You punched a hole in the wall! You are out of control. You're going to totally destroy this house. You ruined my chair, now the wall."

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b. "You need to make a plan about how you are going to repair that hole in the wall. Let me know by bedtime tonight how and when you plan to fix it."

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5. a. "You can't even get to school on time. How do you figure you can hold down a job?"

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b. "I'm glad to hear you're going to take on the responsibility of a job. It sounds like a lot of work, but I think you'll be good at it. Plus, you'll get experience being punctual."

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## **Giving Our Teens the Message That They Are Capable**

Read each response below, and then think of a different response for each that gives the teen a message that he or she is capable.

1. "How did you manage to get orange juice everywhere? You can't even make juice without getting the whole floor sticky."

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2. "You lost your homework again? You'll never make it through this school year, let alone high school. You are so unorganized."

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3. "You have no tolerance with your little brother. All you do is criticize him. You don't know how to be a big brother."

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4. "I can't reason with you. All you do is blame and argue. You're impossible to talk to. I'm not even going to try."

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# Take-Home Activity

Pay attention to the messages you give your teen this week. Listen to the words you use and think about what kind of messages your teen is hearing.

Below, write down one thing you say to your teen this week that you would like to phrase differently.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

On the next line, rephrase your words in way that gives your teen the message he or she is capable.

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



# Session 15: Assertive Communication

## *Parent and Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

The purpose of this session is to help parents and teens learn how to communicate feelings and thoughts in a way that is respectful to themselves and each other. 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

To learn how to use "I" statements

## **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." \_\_\_\_\_  
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: "I" Statements

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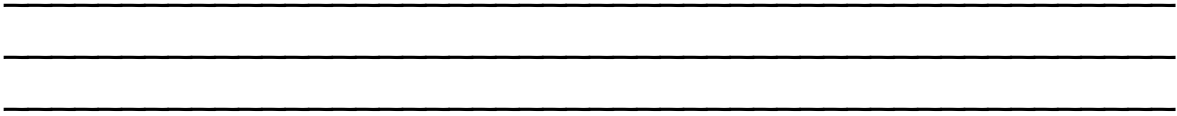
3. Bridgett comes home and asks her brother if there are any phone messages because she was expecting a call about when and where to meet a friend. Her brother says that her friend called and said something about where to meet but he can't remember where, and that she left a phone number but he forgot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





# Session 17: Listening to Your Teen

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

During this session you will learn how listening can strengthen your relationship with your teen. Parents who have experienced abuse by their teens understandably have a difficult time listening to them. The time for listening is not when your teen is being abusive. There are appropriate times for listening, and times when it is best to disengage from conversations.

Parents sometimes feel that if they listen to their teens and acknowledge the teens' feelings, they are agreeing with what the teens are saying. You can listen and acknowledge another person's feelings and experience without necessarily agreeing with him or her. This is difficult to do, but can be helpful to the relationship. When teens feel listened to and acknowledged, they tend to be more open and honest, and more willing to listen to other people's ideas. Parents often say that when they started really listening to their teens and acknowledging their feelings, the relationship improved.

### **Goals**

To understand what listening is and is not

To learn how to listen and acknowledge feelings

To understand how listening and acknowledging feelings strengthens relationships

To practice the skills of listening for feelings and acknowledging them

## **Important Messages**

Listening to your teen doesn't mean you agree with what he or she is saying.

Listening builds trust with your teen.

Listening gives you important information about your teen's emotional life.

When teens feel listened to, they feel less defensive and resistant.

When teens feel listened to, they usually will share more with their parents.

Listening and acknowledging feelings is not easy; it takes practice.

# Worksheets

## Listening

### How to Listen

Don't interrupt.

Look at the person who is talking.

Give him or her your full attention, if possible.

Answer in a way that lets him or her know you are listening.

Don't express an opinion or say that the other person is right or wrong.

Let the person know you heard his or her point of view.

Try to hear what the person is saying, even if you don't agree. Being a good listener takes effort and practice.

### How to Not Listen

Don't look at the person speaking.

Interrupt him or her.

Give advice.

Tell the person he or she is wrong.

Tell the person not to feel what he or she is feeling.

Change the subject.

Ask a lot of questions.

### Acknowledging Feelings

One way to let your child know you are really listening is to pay attention to the feeling he or she is expressing and let the child know you hear it.



You can acknowledge feelings by saying things like: "you seem really disappointed," "you were really excited about that concert," "you really like that music," "you feel really let down." This lets the person know you are listening. It also lets the person know that you accept how he or she feels. You can accept someone's feelings without necessarily agreeing with him or her. You are just letting the person know you hear how he or she feels without giving any judgment or opinion about it.

When you acknowledge and accept your child's feelings about something, it does not mean you will change rules or consequences. You can stand your ground and remain firm and communicate that you understand how he or she feels. For example: "You must be really disappointed. But, our agreement was broken and this is the consequence we discussed. I know you were really looking forward to that concert."

Showing your child that you understand how he or she feels, and that it is okay to have those feelings, can help him or her feel less defensive and resistant. A lot of the struggle between parents and teens is about the teens trying to defend how they feel and what they want, while parents try to tell teens how they should feel and what they should want.

Acknowledging your teen's feelings isn't going to end all of the conflict, but when your teen feels you are listening and trying to understand, it can help him or her calm down and want to talk about it.

When teens are asked what is the biggest problem they have with their parents, most say "my parents don't understand me" and "my parents don't listen to me."

## Acknowledging Feelings Scenarios

### Scenario # 1: Not Acknowledging Feelings

**Teen:** "Mom, I can't take it anymore! Casey keeps barging into my room and taking my CDs. I'm going to barge into her room and steal her stuff!"

**Mom:** "Don't you dare! That won't solve anything. Why don't you just put your CDs away someplace. The way you leave everything lying around all over your room, you're asking for losing things. Are you sure she took it? It's probably under all the heaps of clothes on your floor."

**Teen:** "My room is a mess? Casey's is worse. I can't believe you're siding with her about this! She steals things from me and you try to say it's my fault? I can't believe this!" He storms off to his room and slams the door.

### Scenario #2: Acknowledging Feelings

**Teen:** "Mom, I can't take it anymore! Casey keeps barging into my room and taking my CDs. I'm going to barge into her room and steal her stuff!"

**Mom:** "You must be mad about that. I wouldn't like it if someone came into my room and took things."

**Teen:** "Yeah, it pisses me off. She could at least ask. I would probably say yes. But she just takes them."

**Mom:** "Hmmm."

**Teen:** "I'm gonna hide them so she won't know where they are. Then she'll have to ask if she wants to use one."

**Mom:** "Good idea."

## More Acknowledging Feelings Scenarios

### Scenario #1: Not Listening and Acknowledging Feelings

**Teen:** "Mom, I really, really want that jacket."

**Mom:** "Anne, there is no way on heaven or earth that I am going to spend that kind of money on a jacket. When I was your age I was happy to have a jacket that was a quarter of that price."

**Teen:** "Mom, it's not that much money for a jacket. You should see what some jackets cost these days. This one's a pretty good deal."

**Mom:** "Eighty dollars is a good deal? I can't believe you're even saying that. Do you have any idea what eighty dollars would buy a family in need? Eighty dollars would buy a whole wardrobe for a family in some parts of the world. You kids have no concept about the value of money. You just want, want, want."

**Teen:** "All I'm asking for is one good jacket. It's expensive, but it's really well made and will last me a long time."

**Mom:** "Until you see the next one you want, and just have to have. It was the same story with your shoes, that you just had to have. I spent a fortune on them and the next thing I knew you wanted another pair. It just doesn't end."

**Teen:** "God, Mom, you are such a \_\_\_\_\_! Just forget it! I don't care about the stupid jacket! I'll wear the same piece-of-crap, worn-out thing I always wear!" Anne runs to the car, gets in and slams the door.

### Scenario #2: Listening and Acknowledging Feelings

**Teen:** "Mom, I really, really want that jacket."

**Mom:** "You really like that jacket. It's a nice one."

**Teen:** "Yeah, I love it. It looks so great on me. Can I get it?"

**Mom:** "It looks really good on you. I can see why you want it. I can't spend that much money on a jacket, though. It's not in our budget."

**Teen:** "What do you mean 'it's not in our budget'? We have enough money for it."

**Mom:** "Anne, I know you really, really want that jacket. It's a really great jacket. But right now I can't afford it. I am willing to pay for half of it if you can pay for the other half."

**Teen:** "I don't have that much money, Mom. You should just get it for me."

**Mom:** "I'm willing to pay for half."

**Teen:** "How about if you pay for it all today and I'll pay you back."

**Mom:** "Anne, I know it's hard to wait for something you really, really want. But, I'm only willing to pay for half if you can have the patience to save your half of the money and we'll buy it then."

**Teen:** "It'll take me forever to get that much money."

**Mom:** "I know it seems like a lot of money to come up with—it is a lot of money. But, if you really want that jacket, I bet you can figure out a way to do it. There is always baby-sitting and extra chores. I'm happy to help you make a plan for how to make the money in the next two weeks."

**Teen:** "All right."

## **Scenario #1: Not Listening and Acknowledging Feelings**

**Teen:** "Mom, Why can't I stay out until 3:00? All my friends do."

**Mom:** "3:00 a.m.? I can't believe their parents let them stay out that late."

**Teen:** "Everyone stays out that late—3:00 is not that late for a 15-year-old."

**Mom:** "3:00 is the middle of the night! You would only end up in trouble being out during those hours of the night. I'd end up having to bail you out of jail."

**Teen:** "Right Mom, all my friends who stay out till 3:00 end up in jail."

**Mom:** "Rick sure did."

**Teen:** "That had nothing to do with being out until 3:00 in the morning. God, Mom, you don't have a clue."

**Mom:** "I know that I'm not having you out in the middle of the night. And I know that the friends you have who are out during those hours are bad news. I'm not arguing about it anymore."

**Teen:** "I'm out of here." Walks out, slamming the door behind him.

## **Scenario #2: Listening and Acknowledging Feelings**

**Teen:** "Mom, why can't I stay out until 3:00? All my friends do."

**Mom:** "I can imagine that it must be hard to have to come home earlier than your friends do."

**Teen:** "It's embarrassing. No one else has to get home by 1:00."

**Mom:** "I remember hating it when I had to be home earlier than the other kids when I was your age. It seemed like I always had to be home the earliest."

**Teen:** "Yeah, so why don't you let me stay out later since you know how it feels?"

**Mom:** "Stan, I know you would really like to be able to stay out until 3:00. And I know it's hard to have to come home earlier than everyone else. I am not comfortable with having you out past 1:00 a.m. for now. When you are 16 we'll consider a later curfew."

**Teen:** "1:00 is so early. A lot of concerts don't get out until 1:00. I'd have to leave the concert early to make it home by 1:00, and if I ride with people they have to leave early, too."

**Mom:** "Well, I can see how that would be a problem. It makes sense to let you stay out until the concert ends. I'm willing to let you stay out past 1:00 when it is an event that ends at a particular time and you come straight home. I just don't want you out past 1:00 when you're just hanging around with your friends. I can make exceptions for some events. Does that sound fair?"

**Teen:** "I think I should be able to stay out until 3:00 all the time."

**Mom:** "We've discussed what the rule is for now."

## Tips for Acknowledging Feelings

Listen for the feeling you hear.

Let the person know you hear him or her. Say: "It seems like you feel \_\_\_\_\_."

Don't say anything else. Allow some time for the person to respond.

Don't tell the person what to do, how to feel better, or why the person feels the way he or she does.

After the person has had time to respond, you can let him or her know you understand by saying things like:

That sounds frustrating (or hard, or whatever is appropriate to the feeling).

Sometimes I feel that way, too.

I understand.

I'm here for you if you want to talk about it now or later.

# Session 18: Guidelines for Respectful Communication

## *Parent and Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

The skills covered in this session are critical to successful problem solving. You and your teen 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:

1. Talk only about the specific behavior of the other person.
2. Talk about what the person said or did that upset you.
3. Describe how you feel.

### Do not:

1. Blame
2. Criticize
3. Put down
4. Bring up the past or other things that bother you (stick to one behavior or problem)
5. Talk about the other person's personality, attitude or motives

### When you are listening:

1. Don't talk.
2. Listen carefully.
3. Do not interrupt.
4. Listen for the feelings of the other person.
5. Don't think about how you are going to respond (this interferes with listening).

**When you respond to the speaker:**

1. Describe what the other person said.
2. Describe what you think the other person was feeling.

**Do not:**

1. Correct what the other person said
2. Argue about what happened
3. Deny the other person's feelings
4. Bring up the past or things that the other person does that bother you
5. Criticize
6. Put down
7. 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

## *Parent and Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

In this session you will practice the 10-step process of problem solving with your teen. 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?

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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



		<p>by 1 on the weekends. If it works well we can stay with it."</p> <p><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>
<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>

## 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."
7. Take turns listing ideas.	Be respectful of each other's ideas, even if you don't agree with them.	<b>Teen:</b> "I'll do the dishes when I'm done watching TV." <b>Parent:</b> "When I ask you to

		<p>do the dishes, give me a time that you'll do them."</p> <p><b>Teen:</b> "Let's eat off paper plates."</p> <p><b>Parent:</b> "Let's set up a time every day when you'll do the dishes."</p>
8. Take turns commenting on each idea.	<p>Avoid judging or criticizing. <b>Parent:</b> "I need to know more specifically when the dishes will get done."</p>	<p><b>Parent:</b> "I need to know more specifically when the dishes will get done."</p> <p><b>Parent:</b> "Paper plates are too expensive and I prefer real plates."</p> <p><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."</p> <p><b>Parent:</b> "I like your idea that you'll let me know each night what time the dishes will be done."</p> <p><b>Teen:</b> "All right, I can do that."</p>
9. Make a plan for how the solution will work.	<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."</p> <p><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.		<p><b>Parent:</b> "Let's put your schedule up in the kitchen where we both can see it."</p>

# Session 20: Closing Parent Session: Acknowledging Positive Changes

## *Parent Session*

### **Background Information**

In this session, you will think about how your relationship with your teen has improved since the beginning of the program and how you have contributed to positive changes. The progress your teen has made in the Step-Up program is a combination of effort by both you and your teen. You will make a plan for continuing to work on challenges in your relationship with your teen.

As a parent support group you have all helped each other learn, grow and make positive changes. In this last session you will acknowledge the help you have given each other and say good-bye by giving each other positive messages.

### **Goals**

To recognize how you have contributed to positive changes in your relationship with your teen

To talk about what you have learned in the program

To identify what you need to continue working on in your relationship with your teen

To say good-bye to other parents in the group by sharing positive messages

### **Important Messages**

You have worked hard to improve your relationship with your teen.

You have helped other parents with the challenges of parenting teens.  
You can get support from others when you are struggling—you don't have to be alone.

# Worksheets

## Positive Changes

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

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2. What have you done that has contributed to the change?

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3. What do you need to keep working on in your relationship with your teen?

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4. What have you learned in the program?

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5. What have you learned about yourself?

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## Supporting Positive Changes in My Teen

1. List some ways you can support the positive changes your teen has made.

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2. Choose one behavior that is the most difficult for you to do and write it below. Be specific. State your behavior in a positive, present-tense form. *(Example: When my son is harassing me to try to get me to change my mind about something, I will stay calm and disengage from arguing.)*

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3. Break your behavior into steps. These steps should be specific.

**For example:**

1. *When Tim starts arguing after I have said "no," I will calmly tell him why and then stop talking about it.*
2. *I will think self-calming thoughts, like, "I am calm. I don't need to argue."*
3. *I will tell him I am finished talking about it and will separate from him.*
4. *If he handles it well (without getting abusive), I will give him positive encouragement.*

## My Steps to Support Positive Changes in My Teen:

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2. 

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3. 

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4. 

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# Session 21: Moving Forward

## *Parent and Teen Session*

### **Background Information**

Your teen has been working on learning new behaviors and improving his or her relationship with you. During this final session you and your teen will assess the progress he or she has made in the Step-Up program. You have the opportunity to acknowledge your teen's strengths and efforts and let him or her know that you will continue to work together to have a respectful and healthy relationship.

### **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 behavioral 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 My Teen Has Made

1. How has your relationship with your teen 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 has your teen changed in his/her behavior to contribute to the improvement?

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4. How have you changed to contribute to the improvement in the relationship?

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5. If you and your teen hadn't made these changes, what would your relationship be like today?

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6. What behavior does your teen need to continue working on?

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7. What do you need to continue working on to support your teen's positive behavior?

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8. What strengths does your teen have that will help him or her have positive relationships with family members and others?

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