

1983

# Fostering the Adolescent: Trainer's Manual

Diana Kraus

*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

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**FOSTERING  
THE  
ADOLESCENT**

**TRAINERS' MANUAL**

**FOSTERING THE ADOLESCENT**

by

**Diana Kraus**

**1983**



**The University of Nebraska at Omaha  
and  
Nebraska Department of Social Services**

## Meet Diana



Diana Kraus, a native Nebraskan, has recently moved back to Grant, Nebraska from Wyoming. During her 18 years as a foster parent she and her husband, Lou, had over 165 foster children of all ages in their home. They established and maintained the only home based child care institution in Wyoming. Among other things, Diana helped organize the Wyoming State Foster Parent Association and helped start a parenting program for the Department of Public Assistance and Social Services. Since returning to Nebraska, she has been instrumental in getting a foster parent association started in the Ogallala area. She also worked with the DSS-UNO Foster Parent Training Project in 1982-83 and was asked to develop the 1983 edition of *Fostering the Adolescent*. She sees the need to prepare case workers as well as foster parents in order to reach the goal of effective foster care.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people provided input and suggestions that led to the development of this curriculum. The authors cited provided major contributions. Three curriculum guides were examined and critiqued before the present work was undertaken: *Fostering the Teenager* (Eastern Michigan University, Donald M. Loppnow, 1978), *Fostering the Adolescent* (University of Nebraska at Omaha and Nebraska Department of Public Welfare, Carol Ertl, 1980), and *Foster Parenting an Adolescent* (Child Welfare League of America, Helen Stone, *et al.*, 1977).

In addition, we sought input and suggestions from a number of trainers, both in the development of the curriculum and, in some cases, review and critique of the first drafts. We take great risk in attempting to identify them here for fear that we will have overlooked someone. Nevertheless, we wish to acknowledge as many as possible and hope that those who made contributions but may have been overlooked will forgive us. Thanks to: Nancy Bare, Claudia L. Jewett, Karen Singasaas, John Benigas, Frank DeCosta, Marilyn Fox, Betty Rodenbour, Carole Mueting, Debbie Nicholson, Maggie Miranda, Amy Franklin, and Lou Staroski. Bev Piper and Gloria Shattler-Mueller, project monitors from Nebraska Department of Social Services, participated in planning meetings, critiqued manuscripts, and reviewed materials. Carole Davis critiqued and reviewed materials as well as coordinated all administrative and support services. Floyd Waterman worked with the writer and the editor, reviewed materials, and supervised the writing and production.

The following people were part of the original training group for this edition: Teresa Hawk, Lou Staroski, Marilyn Schultz, Kaye Long, Darlene Pennington, Nancy Bare, Brenda Coonrod, Judy Riddle, Judi Pedersen, Karen Singasaas, Carole Mueting, Marilyn Fox, Maggie Miranda, Forrest Lein, Marquita Wilcher, Florence Davis, Gloria Shattler-Mueller, Bev Piper, Thomas Plith, Carole Davis, Kathleen Sorensen, Sherry Hall, Shirley Calta, Tim Ryberg, Jean Illsley Clarke, and Floyd Waterman.

Thanks to Lou Staroski for section six on human sexuality. Particularly appreciated are the editorial skills of Marian Meier and the excellent composing work of Joyce Carson, both of the Center for Applied Urban Research. Vincent Webb, CAUR director, gave administrative support and encouragement. David Fifer did the illustrations.

To each of the above-named persons, I am most appreciative, but one person deserves special recognition and thanks—my husband, Lou Kraus. Without his constant encouragement, the project could not have been completed in so short a time. He critiqued sessions, made suggestions, and “kept the home fires burning” while I was pounding the typewriter or off in Omaha in meetings.

We all build upon the ideas and thoughts of others, and this curriculum is no exception. It was undertaken with the hope that it will help the many foster parents who give of themselves and share their homes and families so that foster teens in Nebraska may learn of another family pattern and progress on the way toward meaningful and purposeful lives. Thanks to each of you for your assistance.

Diana Kraus

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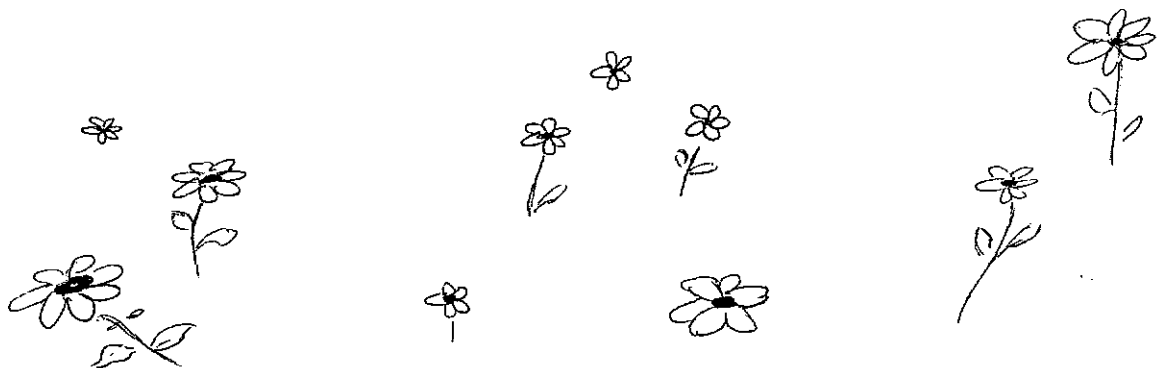
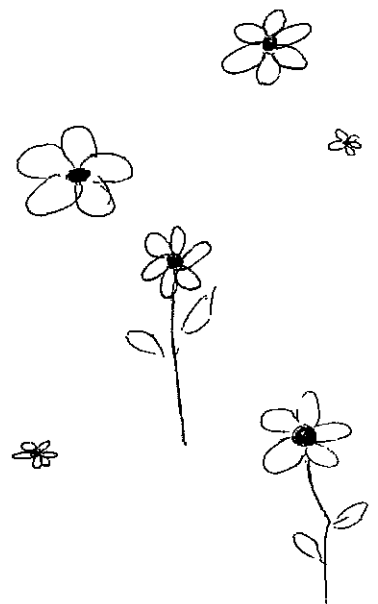
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I am me  
and you  
are you.

Our relationship  
can exceed all  
barriers when

I can see you, hear you,  
touch and understand  
you . . . and  
You me.

*D. Kraus*

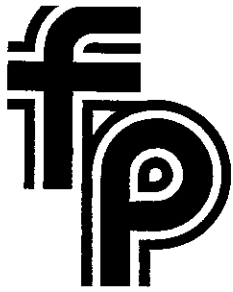




## NOTE TO TRAINERS

*Fostering the Adolescent* is designed as a curriculum to meet the needs of foster parents who have (or soon will have) adolescent foster children in their homes. Trainers will get to know the parents in their groups and use some flexibility in meeting the needs of those parents. The commitment made by the Foster Parent Training Project is one of providing parents with materials and training that will be helpful to them in fostering their adolescents. The curriculum is designed in ten separate segments, and those segments or sessions may be delivered in any sequence helpful to both the parents and the trainer. Sessions One, Two, and Three should first be presented in that order, and the other sessions may be presented in any order the trainer desires. Some groups may meet for a compressed "week-end" session while others may opt to meet weekly for anywhere from one to ten different meetings. Regardless of the training format utilized, the trainer will need to know the parents and his or her own needs and schedule the sequence accordingly.

# Session One



## Introduction

### What is a Foster Teen All About?

## Getting Started

# 1

Participants will have a working knowledge of “normal” adolescent characteristics.

Greet participants as they arrive and have them sign the attendance sheet.

Do introductions.

Discuss logistics (refreshments, restrooms, schedules, course requirements, etc.)

We are all here today because we are concerned with adolescents in foster care.

Before we can objectively look at some of the situations specifically dealing with foster teens, we need to have a very sound background of concepts and qualities of adolescents.

The following five qualities are unique to adolescents:

1. Experience of physical sexual maturity
2. Experience of withdrawal of and from adult benevolent protection
3. Consciousness of self in interaction
4. Re-evaluation of values
5. Experimentation.

These are listed and explained in your manual on page P-1.

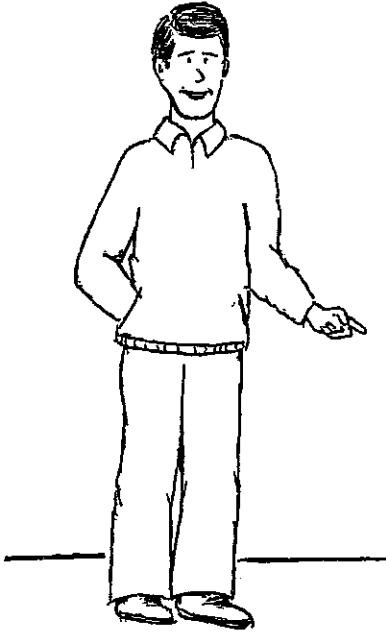
Discuss these qualities and talk about the group's reactions to each.

We also need to know how adolescents develop. This process is discussed on page P-2.

Play the 30 minute audio cassette tape “On Adolescence” by Claudia Jewett.

Note: This tape begins with conversation about younger children, then launches into the four stages of adolescence. You may want to listen to it ahead of time so you can start at exactly the correct spot.

# WHAT IS A FOSTER TEEN ALL ABOUT?



## OBJECTIVE 1

Participants will have a working knowledge of "normal" adolescent behavior.

**A**DOLESCENCE is not just a phase between childhood and adulthood. It is a passage of life in which we all participate, with or without the understanding, guidance, love, and skills necessary to do so comfortably.

Adolescence is a time for expanding concepts and growth. Five of these experiences are:

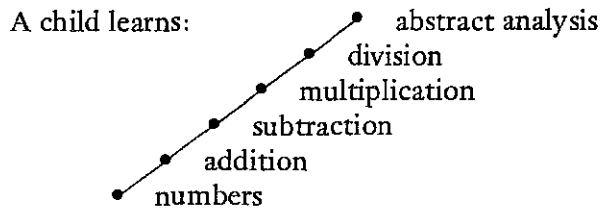
1. **Experience of physical sexual maturity.** Biologically this is a unique time of involvement in that it only happens once. Teen sexuality and how they display it permeates their entire beings. It causes them to be very aware of themselves and their relationships to other humans and peer culture in general.
2. **Experience of withdrawal of and from adult benevolent protection.** Adults begin to expect more mentally, physically, and socially from their children as they mature. Along with that expectancy comes a gradual withdrawal of the nurturing and guidance given. As children mature they begin to withdraw gradually from the protection and guidance given by adults, to stand on their own two feet and become their own persons. They become interdependent. This interdependence comes in three areas: a) their own peer group, b) their relationship with adults, c) with younger children on a nurturing level.
3. **Consciousness of self in interaction.** Throughout childhood people search for their own roles regarding their relationships with others. During adolescence they start to see themselves as individuals capable of causing a difference in the outcome of relationships with others.
4. **Re-evaluation of values.** This is a time when teens are involved in making their own judgments. They no longer take someone else's ideas at face value. Those opinions and values accepted up to now may no longer be valid to them, and they seek to establish their own. Value clarification is a time consuming part of adolescence.
5. **Experimentation.** We learn from experience is a statement we have all heard. Adolescents experiment with all of the concepts thus far mentioned and then some. They need to experiment with their own relationships, discover their own strengths and weaknesses, their own likes and dislikes. This experimentation involves risk taking and can be a very dangerous time or a time of positive, healthy development.

## How Adolescents Develop

One way to understand teens better is to become aware of the developmental processes that have gone on to bring them to the point where they are now and that will take them on through life.

Educators have spent a great deal of time writing what they call behavioral objectives and placing them in order on a continuum. This process helps educators to recognize what a student knows or doesn't know.

Example:



All aspects of life are on a continuum of sorts. Some of the continuum areas of importance to a teen are:

1. Changing body size, shape, and functions
2. Masculine or feminine roles
3. Changing roles in peer (both sexes) relationships
4. Developing person to person relationships with adults (parents)
5. Career plans
6. Family living skills in an adult role
7. Citizenship and leadership
8. Value clarification
9. Self identity: "who I am" vs. "who others think I am."

These areas of development all have their own "continuum." Each individual has his or her own rate of progress in every area.

If we can look at our teens' development in this manner, we can judge approximately where they are in these areas. By doing this we can rapidly spot strengths and weaknesses and even some areas that may have been skipped over completely.

Our job as parents becomes one of building on strengths, developing weak areas, and filling in the gaps and spaces. This is not easy, but it is far easier if we have identified what area or areas are needing work.

Let's look a little closer at the areas of development we talked about earlier. As we go through these areas, rate a teen you are familiar with as to how far along the continuum toward adulthood he or she is.

Use a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 being areas not touched on and 5 being areas that are well developed where the teen is comfortable with his or her role.

### 1. Changing body size, shape, and function

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. The body is changing in both size and shape. The teen must learn to deal with these outward signs of growth. Example: Girls who wear baggy shirts so their breasts don't show or boys who won't talk because their voices are changing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Teens need to learn that the differences in their new bodies and those of others the same sex and age are to be expected and can be accepted. Example: "Why do I have to be the only 'pizza faced' kid in school?"
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Teens need to know what puberty is and to look forward to being a man or a woman. Example: "Yuck! I'm never going to have hair under my arms."
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Teenagers need to learn good health habits to help them grow and develop as much as possible. Example: "I'm not going to that doctor again. He's just kinky."
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. With the new growth and shape of the body the teenager needs to learn new physical skills. Legs and arms may grow so quickly that the teen has to learn to walk all over again. Example: Teen is clumsy and uncoordinated.

## 2. Masculine or feminine roles

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Teens often have a strong identification with persons of the same sex
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. They develop strong identification with an "ideal," copying appearance and mannerisms of a person of the same sex or developing "crushes" on an opposite sex ideal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Teens need to learn what it means to be a boy or a girl in our society.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. They need to develop a realistic anticipation of what will be involved in becoming a man or woman.

## 3. Changing role in peer (both sexes) relationships

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Friends of both sexes are needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Learning to be comfortable on a date is important.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Teenagers need to learn how to get along with a wide variety of age groups.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Skills should be developed in problem solving and decision making.

## 4. Developing person to person relationships with adults (parents)

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Teens need to learn to like parents as persons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. They need to learn to run their own lives.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Teens must learn the independence of adolescence, overcome the dependence of childhood, and reach the interdependence of adulthood.

## 5. Career plans

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. This is the time to learn about different types of jobs that the teen could have as an adult.

- \_\_\_\_\_ b. At this time a future career is usually chosen, even though the job choice or the job itself may change later.

- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Teenagers need to get any education and training that is necessary for a future job.

- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Part-time jobs or an apprenticeship will help in making a future career choice.

## 6. Family living skills in an adult role

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Teenagers learn that being part of a family includes work and caring for others as well as gains and benefits.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Teenagers need to work toward a responsible attitude about marriage and having a family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Teenagers need to learn about the selection of a husband or wife, marriage, homemaking, and childrearing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Teenagers need to learn to tell the difference between puppy love and lasting love.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Teenagers date, may go steady, and may take part in courtship to work toward a pleasing personal relationship with a possible mate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Older teenagers need to decide when to marry and when to complete their educations.

## 7. Citizenship and leadership

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Teenagers need to learn about law, government, politics, economics, geography, and human nature in the modern world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Teenagers must learn about human needs and want to help others reach their goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Teenagers need to become involved in projects outside themselves and become socially responsible persons.

## 8. Value clarification

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. They need to set up mature values.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. They need to want and work toward socially responsible behavior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. They need to select ideals and standards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. They need to practice and question religion.

## 9. Self identity: "who I am" vs. "who others think I am."

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Teens need to know who they are.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. They need to realize that they are individuals separate from others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Awareness of the past and the present can give the individual control of the future.

Jewett identifies four tasks that adolescents are facing that most of us continue to work on throughout adulthood.

The first task is **Who Am I?**

Parts of this task are knowing ourselves, what we think, what makes us happy, what motivates us, how to set self goals, and what our potential is and how to develop it. The answers to **Who Am I?** change as we grow and develop. Also closely tied to this task is our feeling of roots. Where did I come from? Who can I be? Can I build on my past? Are the labels others attach to me something I can rise above if they are negative, or live up to if they are positive?

Foster teens may have more trouble with this task than other teens because many of their answers to these questions may be negative. Other people as well as the teens themselves tend to label foster teens as losers, teens without a chance, teens bound to fail, and coming from bad roots, etc. Some foster teens tend to accept these labels as correct and seemingly never even try to do anything but live up to that label.

The next task is **What Do People Notice or Value About Me?**

Who are they and what do they notice or value

about me? The ways vary in which teens relate to their peer groups, to children, to adults, to parents, teachers, and senior citizens. Teens who are dealing with this task, particularly with peer relationships, want to fulfill the expectations of others. Daring to be different from peers to any great degree takes more courage than most teens have. Teens feel more secure looking almost like clones of their peers. How teens evaluate what adults (parents, teachers, etc.) notice and value about them may be quite different. Many foster teens are tuned into the negatives of adults and decide that the negatives about themselves are all that adults notice. They may build on their negative traits because that makes them even more noticeable in adult eyes.

The physical and psychological changes adolescents go through make them very conscious and uncertain of self in their interactions with others.

The third task is **What Can I Do or Be?**

How am I going to spend the rest of my life? How do I compare with others? Can I meet the competition? What is in the future for me?

This task is one that is particularly difficult for most teens in foster care due to the feeling that today is so shaky and beyond their control. How can they possibly deal with tomorrow, let alone 10 years from tomorrow? Many foster teens look at today with an attitude of "this is it" and make no plans for the future, almost ignoring this task completely.

The last task is **What Do I Believe in and Value?**

What's important, most important, and least important to me? How do my values and beliefs compare with others? Can I defend them if they are in conflict with others or do I feel strongly enough about them to care? What are my religious beliefs? What ethics do I choose to live by?

This task requires self-evaluation and soul searching thought. Pre-adolescents usually accept their parents' beliefs and values as their own. Adolescents begin making their own judgments as their experience and knowledge grows. Many teens seemingly reject all values and beliefs and have to experiment and "learn the hard way" what they really believe in and value.

**2** Participants will understand why and how adolescents come into the foster care system.

Approximately 2,600 children were in foster care in Nebraska as of January 1, 1983. Of these 1,500 were state wards, and 75 percent of the 1,500 were 13 and over.

Why are they in foster care?

1. They may have run away from home.
2. They may have engaged in promiscuous sex.
3. Their parents cannot control them.
4. They may be truant from school.
5. They may have been convicted of stealing.
6. They may be the victims of neglect or abuse.
7. Other reasons.

Most cases can be placed in three general categories:

1. The parent has a problem.
2. The child has a problem.
3. Circumstances are beyond control.  
(death, illness, etc.)

Sometimes it is a combination of all of them.

When the problem is the parents, the role of the foster parents must include helping the teen understand why some people have more trouble than others coping with problems.

When the problem is the teens themselves (stealing, truancy, promiscuous sex, etc.), then the foster parents' role must include correction as one of its functions. The foster parents may need to be familiar with legal authorities and terms.

Discuss list of legal definitions on pages P-5 and 6.

When the problem is circumstances, the foster parents must help the teen adjust to the situation.



## OBJECTIVE 2

Participants will understand why and how adolescents come into the foster care system.

## LEGAL DEFINITIONS

*Adjudication*—A formal proceeding or hearing in which the allegations contained in the petition are resolved (e.g., in a child abuse case, the issue to be resolved is whether the child's injuries or the parent's behavior can be classified as abuse under state law).

*Appeal*—An application to a court of superior jurisdiction complaining of an error committed by an inferior court for the purpose of obtaining a review or retrial.

*Custody*—The detention, care, or possession of a child. The usual guardian and custodian is the natural parent. When the state intervenes in the parent-child relationship, legal custody may be transferred to an agency. The legal rights of this custodian are not as extensive as the parents' (unless parent rights have been terminated). A legal guardian may not have physical custody which would be with a foster parent who would be responsible for the daily care and education of the child. The legal guardian or custodian retains the authority to make major decisions as to the child (e.g., removal from the foster home).

*Defense Attorney*—An attorney engaged or appointed to represent the parent who has been brought into juvenile court or represent the child who has been charged with being delinquent or in need of supervision. In Nebraska, juveniles have the right to an attorney. See Compendium 43-205.06. If a child cannot afford counsel, one will be appointed for him or her. Parents have the right to an attorney (by case law) where there can be a termination of parental rights.

In criminal court, any person has the constitutional right to an attorney if a prison sentence is possible.

The role of the defense attorney is to defend the client to the best of his or her ability. Defense attorneys also represent parents and children at disposition or at sentencing in criminal court.

*Disposition*—A form proceeding in which the court makes its findings, pronounces judgment, and orders the same to be carried out (e.g., in child abuse, the issues to be decided are who will have custody of the child, what treatment will be offered the family, and whether parental rights will be terminated).

*Due Process*—Legal proceedings conducted in accord with the rules and principles established for the enforcement and protection of individual rights. The essential elements of procedural due process are notice and opportunity to be heard and to defend in an orderly proceeding. Simply stated, due process is the right to have fair play in all aspects of the proceedings.

*Guardian ad litem*—Usually a lawyer who may be appointed for children in need of assistance and must be appointed where the parent is mentally incompetent. This person is not an adversary as is the defense counsel but represents the client as an advocate for his or her legal rights.

*Judge*—Is primarily involved in hearing the cases and making the final disposition as to "what is in the best interest of the child." The judge makes rulings on motions, accepts or rejects offered evidence, and insures that procedural rules will be followed. In juvenile court, where there is no jury, the judge is responsible for determining the facts and applying the law.

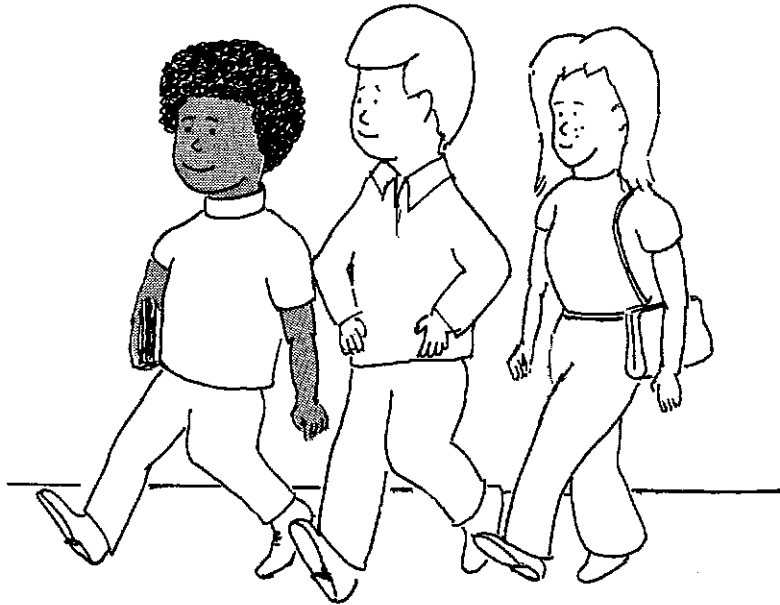
In the criminal court, there may be a jury. The judge applies the law, and the jury will decide the facts. The judge has great discretion within the statutory limits of deciding what the punishment will be.

*Probation Officer*—May be a court or a state employee in Nebraska. Supervises the youth in the community. The court has set out conditions of probation which the youth must follow. Failure to do so could lead to a revocation of probation.

*Status Offender*—Defined in Nebraska Statutes under Sec. 43-247(3) as any child under the age of 18 who is wayward or habitually disobedient; uncontrolled by his parent, guardian, or custodian; habitually truant from school or home; or who departs himself so as to injure

or endanger seriously the morals or health of himself or others.

*Termination of Parental Rights*—Defined in Nebraska Statutes under Sec. 43-292 as to the conditions that can result in termination of parental rights such as abandonment, wilful neglect or unfitness, or where the parents because of mental illness or deficiency are unable to discharge parental responsibilities, and reasonable grounds exist for believing that the condition will continue for an indefinite period. An order terminating parental rights shall divest the parent and child of all legal rights, privileges, duties, and obligations with respect to each other, and the parents shall have no rights of inheritance with respect to the child.



*Adolescents are not just children in adult clothing.*

### 3

Participants will know some of the common characteristics displayed by foster adolescents.

Discuss partial list of common characteristics of foster teens on page P-7 and why foster teens would feel or behave that way.

Add to the list.

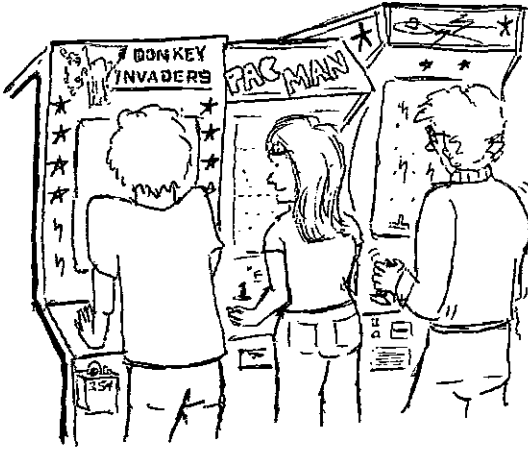
Discuss the list of positive characteristics of teens on page P-8.

Example: A teen needs to be assertive toward a bad situation in the home in order to get help and protection.

Looking at a teen's characteristics in this light may help us to be more positive about these young persons in our care.

Study the list on problems that teens might have on page P-9 and add to it if you'd like.

When we are done with these classes, we hope to have given you the skills necessary for handling a teen with these problems.



**OBJECTIVE 3**

Participants will know some of the common characteristics displayed by foster teens.

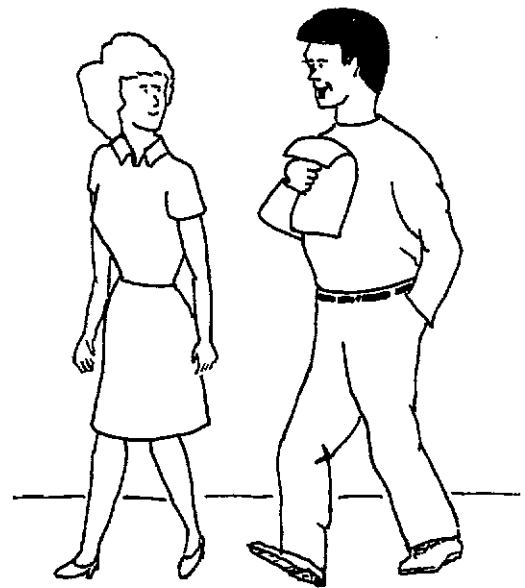
Partial list of common characteristics of foster teens.

1. Poor self-image: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Uncertain, confused: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Resentful of circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Need to try the boundaries: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Poor physical condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Bonded to the past: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS

- |                  |                   |                 |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. accepting     | 26. free          | 51. reasonable  |
| 2. affectionate  | 27. friendly      | 52. reassuring  |
| 3. assertive     | 28. fun           | 53. refreshing  |
| 4. astute        | 29. helpful       | 54. reliable    |
| 5. attentive     | 30. honest        | 55. resourceful |
| 6. aware         | 31. inclusive     | 56. responsible |
| 7. careful       | 32. influential   | 57. sensitive   |
| 8. clever        | 33. insightful    | 58. steadfast   |
| 9. comforting    | 34. inspiring     | 59. stimulating |
| 10. considerate  | 35. intuitive     | 60. supportive  |
| 11. consistent   | 36. kind          | 61. sympathetic |
| 12. cool         | 37. knowledgeable | 62. tactful     |
| 13. cooperative  | 38. leader        | 63. tender      |
| 14. creative     | 39. loving        | 64. thorough    |
| 15. curious      | 40. loyal         | 65. thoughtful  |
| 16. cute         | 41. moral         | 66. trusting    |
| 17. deferential  | 42. neat          | 67. trustworthy |
| 18. delightful   | 43. nurturing     | 68. uplifting   |
| 19. dependable   | 44. observant     | 69. useful      |
| 20. direct       | 45. open          | 70. valuable    |
| 21. empathetic   | 46. optimistic    | 71. vital       |
| 22. encouraging  | 47. organized     | 72. warm        |
| 23. energetic    | 48. perceptive    | 73. wise        |
| 24. enthusiastic | 49. persistent    | 74. zealous     |
| 25. forthright   | 50. positive      | 75. zestful     |

Your teenagers may cause you to think of additions to this list.



*I got an A on this theme. Maybe I'll write a book some day.*

## SOME PROBLEMS FOSTER TEENS MAY HAVE

poor self-image  
 over sensitivity  
 poor control of emotions  
 communication problems  
 masturbation  
 homosexuality  
 poor grades  
 poor eating habits  
 undesirable peer group  
 aggressiveness, violence  
 lying  
 immaturity  
 failure to bond to foster family  
 bad manners  
 bullying other children  
 resentment  
 lack of respect for authority  
 laziness  
 uses of tobacco, alcohol, and/or drugs  
 destructiveness  
 lack of respect for the law  
 dissatisfaction  
 running away

restlessness  
 promiscuity  
 self-pity . . . poor me  
 pregnancy  
 lack of foresight  
 playing one parent (adult) against the other  
 truancy  
 selfishness  
 sarcasm  
 sulkiness  
 lack of respect for valuables, clothes, money  
 poor judgment  
 poor personal hygiene  
 poor self-control  
 lack of neatness  
 lack of direction  
 hypochondria  
 deceitfulness  
 medical problems  
 thrives on trauma  
 jealousy  
 loudness  
 inappropriate language

## JUMP AND RESCUE



*Mom, I need my books from behind the deep freeze—hurry, the bus is coming!*

**4** Participants will learn several concepts in dealing more positively with teens.

Discuss "Building a Positive Relationship with Your Teen" on page P-10.

**OBJECTIVE 4**

Participants will learn several concepts in dealing more positively with teens.

**Building a Positive Relationship with Your Teen**

1. Praise and encouragement show your teens acceptance for who they are, not who they become if only. . .
2. Let your teens know you are aware of their past but are more interested in what they do from this date forward.
3. Establish and respect a private space for each family member to go think, ponder, dream, and be away from others.
4. Limits and rules should be established and understood. This is not to say they cannot be discussed, negotiated, and revised at a later time when conflict is not present.
5. *Primum no nocere* is a motto physicians have which means above all do no damage. Parents need a similar rule. Do not deny the perceptions of teens. Do not argue with their experiences. Do not disown their feelings, and above all do not try to convince them that what they see or hear or feel is not so.
6. Find a common interest with your teens and spend time sharing ideas and skills.
7. Use positive reinforcements for good behavior. Be creative and receptive to what your teen would like.
8. Natural consequences are usually one of life's best teachers. Only in moments of real danger should you protect teenagers from the natural consequences of their disturbing behavior.
9. Don't jump and rescue. If you allow teens to resolve their own conflicts, they learn to get along in society. Often adult interference only complicates the situation.
10. Withdrawal from the provocation, not the teen, is an effective technique in a power struggle. Teens get no satisfaction in being annoying if nobody pays attention.
11. Take time for training. Teaching basic skills and habits is very time consuming. However, correcting the untrained teen takes more time.
12. Never do for teens what they can do for themselves. A dependent person is a demanding one. All you are doing is selling the kids short.
13. Think before you take action. Often the first impulse may not be the best reaction.
14. Minimize mistakes. "To err is human." Build on strengths, not on weaknesses.
15. Beware of the pity party. Many of our teens come from bad situations. Don't dwell on these. Deal with today and tomorrow.
16. Family councils allow everyone to help make the family stronger. Stress the positive and how to make a situation better.
17. Spend time as a family. No matter how busy your family is, save a special time for each other.



**5** Participants will be aware of the need of a good working relationship between foster parents, social workers, and the biological family.

Discuss circles on page P-11 and how they affect the child.

Point out that the people involved can either work together or pull apart the teen.

Discuss how some teens “work” the system to get their own way.

Mention some ways foster parents can strengthen the relationship between themselves and the social worker.

Discuss some ways to build a positive relationship between foster parent and biological parent.

i.e., after careful planning with the case worker, and if the case worker approves, you might make a telephone call to the biological parent. “Hi! I’m John’s new foster parent, and I wanted to let you know he is doing fine. I was wondering if you could tell me. . .”

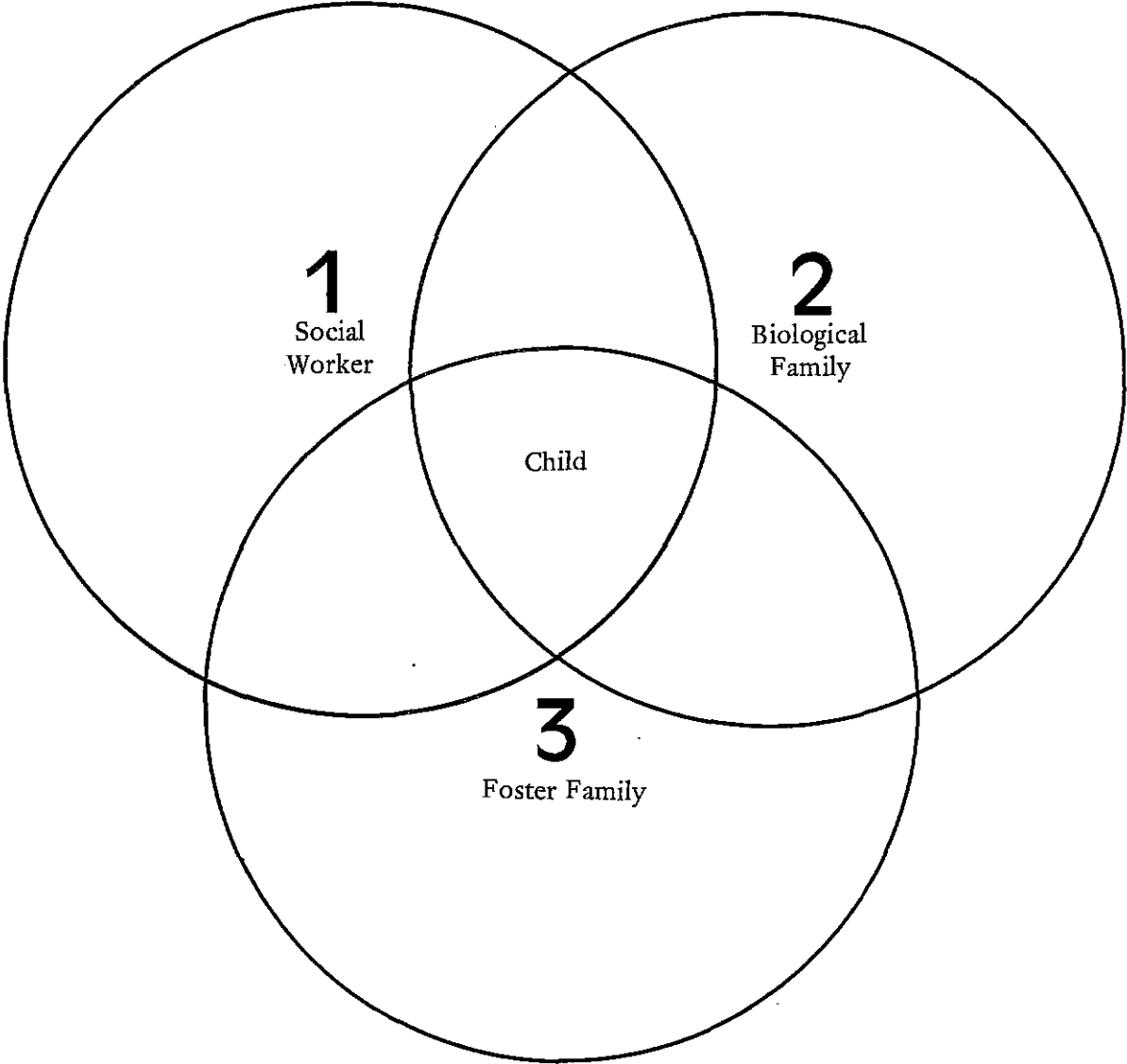
This not only gives the foster parent needed information but gives the biological parent a sense of self-worth and involvement.

Show movie “Teenagers Talk.” (See synopsis, page T-18.)

Discuss reactions.

**OBJECTIVE 5**

Participants will be aware of the need of a good working relationship between foster parents, social workers, and the biological family.



TEENAGERS TALK:  
GETTING THROUGH ADOLESCENCE

Sam Weiss Productions

grade levels: intermediate, junior-senior high  
subject areas: guidance, contemporary American studies  
11½ minutes, color

Synopsis

Adolescence is confusing, exciting, difficult, creative. Above all, it is a time of extreme self-consciousness. For these reasons, this film creates an entirely new approach which brings insight but not embarrassment. We condensed the best thoughts from many hours of interviews with kids who had just been through various stages of adolescence and we “interpreted” them with exciting visual metaphors in animation. The results are magical. The pressures and joys of relationships with parents and friends, of decisions about freedom, sex, and drugs are treated with tact and humor. The controlling theme is that adolescence is a period of finding one’s identity, and kids will be challenged to have faith in their own integrity and worth.

Objectives

After viewing and discussing this film, viewers should—

- understand that finding one’s identity is the major goal of getting through adolescence;
- understand that this search takes time and compromise as well as individual decisions;
- understand that peer pressure to conform is at least as big a problem as parental pressure;
- feel that teenagers are responsible for their own actions and have the ability to make the right choices.

Before Viewing the Film

For preadolescents in upper elementary and early junior high: briefly discuss their expectations of the major events or changes in their lives at 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. For adolescents: discuss the major problems and joys they have experienced as teenagers.

After Viewing the Film

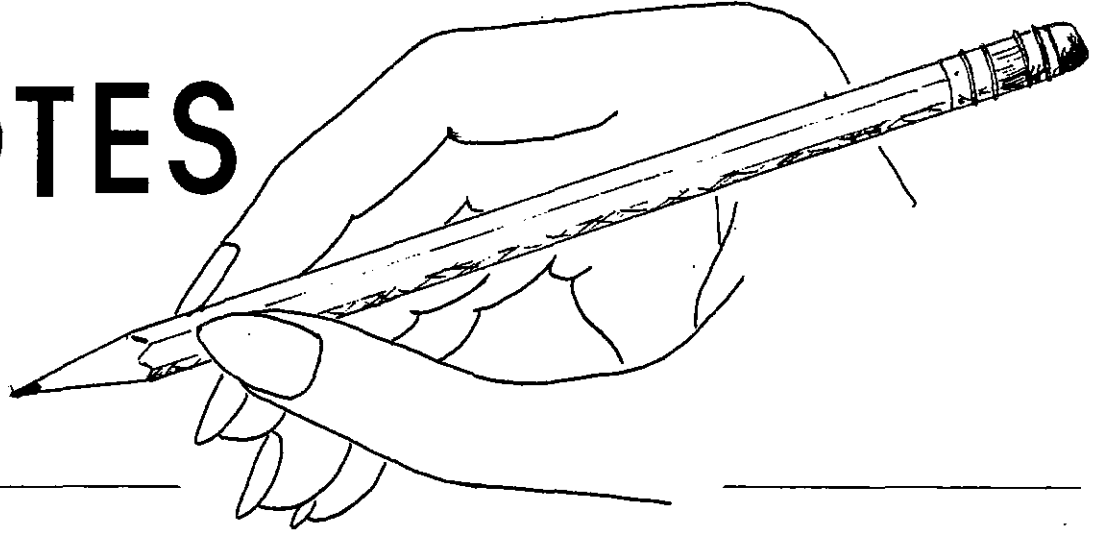
1. Get immediate subjective reactions: Which episodes were most memorable to each viewer? Was this a result of the subject matter or the way it was treated? Viewers may not want to discuss personal reactions or parallels right away; if so, this discussion can be kept general and light.
2. How do they feel about the following statement? “We didn’t realize till we were older that being big here, or slim there, wasn’t really what made you beautiful.” What things or events make kids (or older people, for that matter) think that physical appearance and beauty are the same? Ask for specific examples where standards of physical beauty

have changed with time or new situations. Can they relate examples (from real life, films, or literature) of people finding out that they really are beautiful even though they may not meet our cultural images of physical beauty?

3. How do they feel about the following statement? "Give a little, get a little. Maybe that was growing up, in itself." Discuss the difference between compromise and giving in. How do we know the difference in real life? Ask for specific examples where they used compromise with friends, family, or school. How did they feel about it? Are there ever times when compromise is not appropriate? When and why?
4. Why do kids (and older people, too!) join groups like "the gang"? What good things do we get from them? How have viewers solved conflicts between their family's needs and their desire to be with friends? How have they solved problems of personal needs contrasting with their friends' desires?
5. Why do we develop close friendships? What do we get out of them? What do we give to a friendship? Ask for specific examples, if possible.
6. What does it mean to know who you are? Why is it important to find one's own identity? What part do our values play in the process of finding identity? Can you imagine situations where people already have their identity without having to find it? Why is adolescence a time that most young people need to find their identity? Ask for suggestions about how they, or people they know, have found their identity while being in a group.

Permission is hereby granted to  
duplicate this study guide,  
but not the film itself.

# NOTES

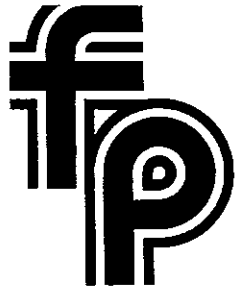


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# Session Two



# Effective Communication

# Trainer's Guide

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

### MAIN IDEA:

Effective communication is necessary to build a working relationship between parents and teens.

### OBJECTIVES:

	Page
1. Participants will understand the process of communication. Film transcript – “Can’t You Understand What I Am Trying to Say?”	T-23 T-24
2. Participants will learn the skills needed to use reflective listening. Worksheet #1 Worksheet #2	T-32 T-35 T-37
3. Participants will practice using reflective listening skills.	T-38
4. Participants will learn the skills needed to use “parent” or “I” messages. Worksheet #3	T-40 T-42
5. Participants will practice using “parent” or “I” messages.	T-43

*“Communication is the largest single factor determining what kinds of relationships a person makes with others and what happens to them in the world about them.”—Virginia Satir.*



# 1 Participants will understand the process of communication.

Communication is necessary to build a working relationship between parents and teens.

Communication is the process of giving and getting information.

All communication is learned. Some of us have learned to communicate better than others; however, most of us have trouble from time to time saying what we want to say or what we really mean.

We may also have trouble hearing what was really said or meant and not just what we wanted to hear.

Teens and adults alike share in communication problems.

Understanding the communication process is a good beginning in solving this problem.

Discuss the six components everyone brings into the communication process listed on page P-14.

Discuss some of the roles we play when listening to teens on page P-14.

Here you have two options with accompanying resources. You could either use the video cassette (¾" Umatic format) of an interview with a woman who was a foster child herself or the "Marie" film. The video is available in each Nebraska DSS training region. It has a running time of 24 minutes and is entitled, "Foster Care Remembered: A Personal Story. Penny Britton."

If you do not want to use the "Penny Britton" story, you may elect to use the "Marie" film which is on 16 mm format (22 minutes) and is titled, "Can't You Understand What I Am Trying to Say?"

As the discussion leader, you will want to preview the film and read the transcript of "Can't You Understand What I Am Trying to Say?" before you show it.

During discussion of the film, the transcript might be helpful as a reference. The youth in the film are very hard to understand due to their "Eastern" accents and speech patterns.

# Can't You Understand What I'm Trying to Say? (TRANSCRIPT)

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Running Time: 22 minutes

*Arlaine:* Marie has been living with us for about eleven months now. Prior to that, she was on the streets for three weeks just staying with friends, and came to us on an emergency basis. And at the end of a month, she asked her social worker if she couldn't stay living with us. And so she stayed permanently.

*Brad:* Father, we thank you for this meal and for this fellowship and most of all for Christmas Day. We thank you for the food and we thank you for our extended family and the love we all feel for one another. Amen.

*Arlaine:* And Marie and I fixed the whole tree last night. And filled the stockings with care, right? And then I had a surprise because I got up this morning and outside my door was a big stocking with my name on it and I got a stocking I didn't know about. Thanks to some friends. . .

*Arlaine:* Marie and I have already developed a relationship which I had with most of my foster teenage daughters where we are more like friends. And we spend many, many hours talking about all of the different situations that she faces from day to day, trying to work things out for herself and her life and what direction she is going to go in. We talk particularly while I am preparing dinner and also late in the evening, after the children have gone to bed.

*Marie:* So you have this and then you have the A.M. radio too. So you have the Morse code here and you got things here that, look, a T.V.! I don't believe it! Oh, my God! Oh, hey, do I love you. (laughter)

*Marie:* If you want to know the truth, I'm not too hot on getting married. All you need is something. It's too hard to get divorced, and it's too hard to get married too.

*Brad:* It's tough enough being married.

*Marie:* Then you can't worry about it anymore. But if you've got a guy that likes to take on responsibility without being married, that's good.

*Brad:* You know, it's very insecure too. Because you never know, you can walk out any time.

*Marie:* I'm not talking about having kids either, so they can walk out.

*Brad:* I'm not talking about having kids, but I'm just saying if you don't have any commitment except that you're just living together, if he walks out, that's it.

*Marie:* That's all right.

*Brad:* And what does that do to you?

*Marie:* As long as we don't have any kids. . .

*Brad:* You never know, any time you get angry at him, he's liable to walk out and say the heck with that.

*Marie:* I know.

*Brad:* It's all over.

*Marie:* He can do that when he's married, though.

*Brad:* No, he's not going to walk out. He's made a commitment. He can't just walk out.

*Marie:* He can walk out and say, "See my lawyer next week."

*Brad:* Sure. But you're going to fight a lot before you get to that point.

*Marie:* That's all right.

*Brad:* And you don't have any commitment.

*Marie:* I wouldn't live with a guy unless I knew that he loved me.

*Brad:* How would you know that?

*Marie:* How would you know if we were going to get married, if he loved ya? Cause you're going to get married?

*Brad:* No, that wasn't the question. The question was. . . "How would you know if he loved you?"

*Marie:* What do you mean how would I know?

*Brad:* Because he'd want to marry you. No?

*Marie:* So, if he wanted to marry me, I'd say no and I'd still go with him.

*Brad:* What if he just wants to take and he doesn't want to give?

*Marie:* What do you mean?

*Brad:* He just wants what he wants.

*Marie:* He just wants to take me and marry me and not. . .

*Brad:* Maybe he doesn't want to marry you, he just wants to live with you so he can get what he wants from you.

*Marie:* That's just what I want to do.

*Brad:* You mean, that's all you want out of life?

*Marie:* Both ways.

*Marie:* What are you talking about? I've been drinking since I was a kid.

*Mary:* Well, it's not so great, is it?

*Marie:* Yes, it is. Do you see me smoking or popping any pills to get a high once in a while?

*Mary:* No. But you're complaining about Holly's drinking.

*Marie:* I don't drink like her, do I?

*Mary:* I hope not.

*Marie:* Oh God, do you drink when you go out?

*Mary:* Sure.

*Marie:* I don't care. You don't have to be eighteen. Do you?

*Mary:* To what?

*Marie:* It affects you the same way if you're eighteen or if you're thirty-four or fifty-four. So what's the difference? Do you drink? I don't drink. I drink socially too. When I drink, I drink, When I don't, I don't. Eighteen has got nothing to do with it. Going to a party. There's no young kids there. Jesus. It makes me mad when you say that. And here I have been drinking all of my life, when I want. And then you know, it kills me, you remind me of Kevin because Kevin says to me, "What, are you becoming a lush now?" Because I drank one night at the party. What do you think I am? You're getting me mad. Seventeen years old and I've lived days where I've been older than. . . enough of this. I feel like I've got no life left to go.

*Mary:* You were sixteen then.

*Marie:* Yeah. When I was thirteen, I was eighteen, and when I was fourteen, I was nineteen; when I was eighteen I was old, and now I'm going down a level. It must be the people around me that are pushing me down there.

*Mary:* How old are you now?

*Marie:* How old am I supposed to be?

*Mary:* Seventeen and a half.

*Marie:* Oh. I guess that's how old I am.

*Arlaine:* You know, she tried to give me the mandate that she was going to begin acting like a star boarder, and she just wanted to be a boarder here. She didn't want to be involved with the family anymore. And she would just come and go. And she wouldn't bother anyone. So I just very quietly and calmly told her that she would have to make a choice. That if she stayed with us, and did live with us, that she would have to continue to be a part of our family setting. That this is the way we were. That's how we functioned.

*Phone conversation with Mary:*

*Marie:* Well, I don't know. Well, you know what I want to do? I'm moving out. And on to my own. . . Linda's going to set up an apartment downstairs for me. She's got it set up so I'm a boarder. It's my own, you know, my own.

*Arlaine:* Tell her how you want to stay connected with BCS (Boston Children's Services) though.

*Marie:* But I still want to see you though. I do get to see you.

*Marie:* Yeah. She still thinks it's a good idea.

*Arlaine:* Marvelous.

*Marie:* Really.

*Arlaine:* See, I told you not to worry.

*Marie:* I'm not worried. It's just that I wanted to know if I could still talk to her. She goes, "Oh you're not going to get rid of me. You're stuck with me." (laughter) I go, "Well, the reason I want to do this is because I don't have to answer to no one, can come and go as I please, you know, certain things." She goes, "Well, that's good too, you know, that you want to feel like that." And everything's going to happen, because I got good people behind me. It's just that I don't have to listen to her (Linda) if I don't want to come up. You know, it's nothing. It's my thing. And as long as I have these kitchen things to work with.

*Arlaine:* Right.

*Marie:* All you need is a place to sleep.

*Arlaine:* And they're not going to come down and wake you up to go to work each morning and that kind of thing.

*Marie:* Oh, no.

*Arlaine:* You're going to go on your own? With your own alarm?

*Marie:* Yep. I've still got to get up. Oh, Jesus. Unless someone calls me. Will you call me in the morning or something. (laughter)

*Arlaine:* You mean when I get up and go to work?

*Marie:* When I get my phone.

*Arlaine:* "Hey, Marie, it's time to go."

*Marie:* I know. Maybe we could do it like that. (laughter)

*Arlaine:* That might be hard until you get used to it. But the sooner you get over to your own. . .

*Marie:* Who said I won't get late or something?

*Arlaine:* system, so that you get used to getting up to your alarm clock. You ought to start setting one here. Try it a few times. See if you would get up yourself.

*Marie:* Yeah, but you know I panic when I hear nothing, but it's just those sleeps that I get into. But the minute I move in I'm getting my own phone. It's my own line. There's a phone down there now with my own line.

*Arlaine:* There is a phone down there?

*Marie:* Yeah. But her phone, it's connected like down in Becky's room. I'm not going to use that.

*Arlaine:* You're going to have your own number?

*Marie:* My own number. Yes, my own thing.

*Arlaine:* You know how expensive a phone is for metropolitan service?

*Marie:* I'm not asking for metropolitan.

*Arlaine:* Just the basic rate.

*Brad:* Time to pay the bills.

*Marie:* You know what I did today?

*Brad:* What?

*Marie:* I went downstairs and bought thirty dollars worth of towels. A set of towels.

*Brad:* On what? You got paid? You didn't get paid?

*Marie:* No. But I'm going to get paid. Friday, I think.

*Brad:* You mean you charged them?

*Marie:* No. I didn't charge them. I ordered them.

*Brad:* You mean you ordered them? You'll pay for them. It's the same thing.

*Marie:* They come in by Thursday, they said, or Friday. . . That's when I'll have to pay for them.

*Brad:* On Thursday? Oh, you have to pay for them Friday. Thirty dollars worth of towels?

*Marie:* Yeah.

*Brad:* How much do you get paid?

*Marie:* Fifty bucks.

*Brad:* Fifty dollars?

*Marie:* But it isn't that.

*Brad:* If you're spending every week's pay, how are you going to have? . . .

*Marie:* Yeah, but I'm spending on all the things so I won't have to spend more when I get in there. Then when I get in I'll just have to live comfortably. Unless I. . .

*Brad:* Yeah, but when do you start economizing? You've got to start economizing before you move in, not after.

*Marie:* Now if I just spend thirty dollars this week, put ten away, and keep five for carfare.

*Brad:* Are you going to put ten away?

*Marie:* Yeah.

*Brad:* Have you put anything into your checking account lately?

*Marie:* Five. That's something.

*Brad:* That's important. Because what Arlaine and I have to do is. . .

*Marie:* I haven't put anything in yet, but I was gonna.

*Brad:* We take and list all our bills for the month, you see. And then, I know how much is going to get paid on the fifteenth.

*Marie:* Anyway, but I'm going to get down to that bank, so I don't want to send it in.

*Brad:* You can mail it in.

*Marie:* I only have a dollar left in my bank account. I better put some more money in there to keep it. I think I'm going to close it out and put it in the one in the Hancock though.

*Brad:* I bank by mail a lot of the time so you can if you want. . .

*Marie:* I know, but I don't know how to bank by mail.

*Brad:* If you want to you can just. . . fill out the deposit slip and send it in one of their envelopes and they pay the postage both ways.

*Marie:* Um.

*Brad:* They will automatically put it in your account and you have that. Because I think you have to start saving regularly so you get into the habit, or you get into the feel of it.

*Marie:* Um.

*Brad:* You know what I mean?

*Marie:* I want to move. Make my move, right? But really deep down inside, I don't want to move from here. I suppose if I were somewhere else I really wouldn't have no feelings. I don't like leaving in a good way.

*Mary:* You don't like leaving in a good way?

*Marie:* Don't you understand why?

*Mary:* No.

*Marie:* Sure. Before, when I'd leave, I'd say "you asshole" stuff. I don't think about them no more. And when I go on, I can go on. Because this is something deep here. . . with Arlaine.

*Mary:* There's no sense in getting rid of a friend.

*Marie:* Yeah. I know. You don't see what I mean. Leaving, I'm saying. You know what I mean?

*Mary:* It's hard.

*Marie:* It's that I don't want to. And I'm gonna. But I have to anyways and it's gonna get worse and worse because come summer, you know, I'm gone and it's just that when I do leave, you know, it will be worse.

*Mary:* But you're not going to leave permanently. You can always come back to visit.

*Marie:* Yeah.

*Mary:* Stay over.

*Marie:* But that's what I mean. I've never done that before. And if I did it with someone else I wouldn't care. But now where I do care and stuff I just feel bad to leave.

*Mary:* It's hard.

*Marie:* It's the best place not to leave. You know what I mean?

*Mary:* Yeah.

*Marie:* It's hard. I don't know what to do.

*Arlaine:* You're going to have to find another job. That's never going to work out. Fifteen hours a week. My heavens. That's not even spending money. What's going to happen if you get impatient with Laura again?

*Marie:* I've been through hell for five or four months. I don't know what, I want it just for now. . .

*Arlaine:* I was just wondering if another job and another situation and another opportunity might be a better atmosphere. Something you'd be more content with, and enjoy doing more on a regular basis, than going back into the same pit of fire. I think you've been away from her so long you forget how riled up and mad she would get you every single day. Remember? She really gets you pretty upset most of the time.

*Marie:* No, she didn't.

*Arlaine:* Yes, she did. You couldn't stand her.

*Marie:* But listen, I can take care of her. I'm not worried about her. I aggravate her so she stays away from me, you know.

*Arlaine:* You aggravate her so she stays away. (laughter)

*Marie:* Yes. When I go in there, if I say, "Get out. . ." she won't come near me all day. And when she says to me, "Will you do this?" I say, "Do it yourself." Unless I'm supposed to know what I'm doing. And if she does that other stuff, I'll tell her.

*Arlaine:* And you don't think some other job might be more pleasant and maybe not quite so much beating your tail all day long.

*Marie:* I don't want to beat my tail all day.

*Arlaine:* I know. That's why I am wondering whether you really want to go back into this hot-food servicing.

*Marie:* Let me see how she is tomorrow. I've got to really feel my way through it.

*Arlaine:* I was just thinking before you commit yourself to an absolute "have to" and... turn around and quit again, it might be better to check out a few things.

*Marie:* I don't know.

*Arlaine:* I'm just not sure that that's the kind of work you want to do for six and a half months. You've got a long time. Then maybe you would even get into something where you would get even better training and you wouldn't want to necessarily leave. Maybe you'd fall into something else that was going to be better. You don't want to do fast-food service for the rest of your life.

*Marie:* I know, I know.

*Arlaine:* But some of these other jobs do have training programs along with them.

*Marie:* No, I want to go to New Careers. I want to get trained in medical research. I want to. I don't know.

*Mary:* Is Arlaine's a good house?

*Marie:* Yes, really. I give her credit. Yeah, it's been the best... I got along with her up until I go through something. Like she wouldn't say nothing to me. We'd go on for two weeks not saying nothing to each other. All right. Live in the same house. Then she said it was me... "Well, gee, Marie." The kids see it and everything. But I see her a lot of times so we'd have to avoid it. Then I'd come home, I'm going out. Then they asked why or where or nothing so I didn't say nothing.

*Mary:* Did you want her to ask you?

*Marie:* No. She wants to know, she'll find out. She'll ask me. But then a week later she'll say, "Well, why didn't you tell me this?" or "Why didn't you tell me that?" She didn't ask me. She says usually I tell her. But if we're not talking, how can you let her know without her knowing? Anything she asks me, I guess, I don't know. I think she knows that I'm definitely moving out and just we're not close. That's all.

*Mary:* Do you think that that has something to do with your moving out?

*Marie:* You think so?

*Mary:* I'm asking you.

*Marie:* I don't know.

*Mary:* Do you think so?

*Marie:* It could.

*Marie:* It's making her mad, so I want to move out tonight, you know.

*Filmmaker:* Does Arlaine know that you are leaving today?

*Marie:* Nope, I don't know. She knows where I live. She kicked me out. She called the social worker and told her. She told my social worker that she wanted me out by the end of the week. That I am miserable to live with, which is the other way around. Still, I told her that we haven't been saying nothing to each other, but she's got an awful attitude so she just kicked me out, I guess. She's just a jerk. She can't even face me. Even when I come home, like last night, she was in bed real early and she just wants me out. She can't even face me. Wow, I'm going to say something to her tonight. She can't do nothing for me. No one can do nothing for me except me. It seems like... I can't live with anybody, anyways. I really can't. God forbid if a guy ever gets married to me—that's what the social worker says to me. I think that maybe it is me, though. What I think is that when you're living with someone, it has to go fifty-fifty.

*Filmmaker:* Yeah.

*Marie:* And that's not what it was here. That's not what it's been all my life, I'm telling you. I've been always thrown around or something because I've been a foster kid, I'm not no foster kid no more, I'm just, I'm me. And it's too bad for them. I really don't care.

*Arlaine:* Maybe this is only something that experience itself can teach you. As to when to say let go of the reins and let this child go. You've done all you can for them. But I think you have to be on top of it and constantly aware that these things could happen, and it's no reflection on you and what you've done as a foster parent. You could have done the most super job that's ever been done for that child and still have what seems to be a tragedy happen. But really, it was just part of the process. You know, she's going to do her darndest to get you to reject her because she's done this constantly. Managed to stay three months in one place, and then she gets uptight and so she'll do everything she can to make you reject her.

*Mary:* Maybe it's time to sit down and have a talk?

*Marie:* I talked to her too many times. That's why I says it's not going to do no good and I can't stand her. If this ain't the feeling in me... I don't know what it is, but God, it's like the devil. I hate her.

*Mary:* But it can help, though.

*Marie:* Really, I have had talking... The day I started learning to talk to people is when things began to trouble me more. Have you said anything to her? Have you asked her what's wrong with her?

*Mary:* I think what she's saying, Marie, is that when you get so angry and start fighting, it's difficult to talk, and that since you seem to want to be silent, she would agree to the silence too. I don't think that's the way she wanted it.

*Marie:* She's full of shit. Because she started it. She was doing it to me for a while. About everything I'd say to her she'd act like she didn't care. She wouldn't even talk. "I'm too tired to think," she'd say. And then when I shut my mouth, no one did the talking. So it was up to me to come out with it. And she's been going on and going on and on. And she's been doing it since the first day I went there. She'd give me the silent treatment when I was mad, and then I went along with it and she didn't like it, and she keeps on doing it now and so that's just the way it's going to happen.

*Mary:* You think it happened that way?

*Marie:* Yeah. And so she started the stupid thing. You're playing games. I don't know what's going on.

*Mary:* You were rude.

*Marie:* How was I rude?

*Mary:* When you're moving out of somebody's house you ordinarily tell them.

*Marie:* And she knew. She knew through you. Do you think it was rude not to tell me?

*Mary:* Not through me, baby.

*Marie:* She hadn't told me.

*Mary:* She didn't know through me.

*Marie:* Yes.

*Mary:* You said Saturday.

*Marie:* Don't call me "baby."

*Mary:* You said Saturday.

*Marie:* Yeah. I didn't say nothing to her.

*Mary:* You told me Saturday.

*Marie:* Why couldn't she come out and tell me then? All right? Do you think it was rude that she couldn't come out and tell me to leave, to move from her house? She had to go through you. Wasn't that rude, Mary? She hasn't said a word to me for three weeks. And I haven't said a word to her since three weeks. I was going to say something to her last night. And I didn't know she was going out. You think she could come out and tell me. It works both ways. I'm sure you didn't say nothing to her though because she's a foster mother, and you didn't want to hurt her feelings.

*Mary:* Didn't say anything like what?

*Marie:* You haven't asked her why she didn't come out and tell me to move out of the house? Why do you have to tell me? It's her house.

*Mary:* That's my job.

*Marie:* Oh, come off it. It's her house. Because that wasn't all my plans to you. I said to you I don't know what I want to do. I'm so mixed up. I didn't know what I wanted to do. Move to Linda's or what. Get an apartment, move with a roommate. And you're telling me that I was going to move to Linda's? That that's my first move. When I was at Arlaine's, it was off and on. They kept telling me yes, maybe, no. It wasn't just yes, move into Linda's. What does she expect? What do you want me to say to her. . . tell her I'm sorry, get on my knees and beg her or something?

*Mary:* No.

*Marie:* To be friends?

*Mary:* I think she'd be perfectly happy to be friends with you.

*Marie:* Oh, cut it. See, this is where you assume too many things that are wrong. It's just like you said about that other jerk that I used to live with. Oh, I think she liked you and you liked her. And here I am telling you I didn't. Don't you believe anything that I say?

*Mary:* For a while you told me you liked her. For a while you told me you liked Arlaine.

*Marie:* No, no. Yeah, yeah. I told you each day I was starting to hate her. I didn't say all at once. She's got me so, I don't know what to say about her. What is she? Is she my mother, they have to act like she is?

*Mary:* You mean she'd have to act like your mother, why not?

*Marie:* Why not? She's not my mother.

*Mary:* I know.

*Marie:* No one ever will be. And no one is. And never was.

*Mary:* She's taking care of you so. . .

*Marie:* So, that's not a mother. She was taking care of me?

*Mary:* You were living with her.

*Marie:* It's her house. She didn't do nothing for me. If you only knew how I feel, my feelings are so strong when they come out.

*Mary:* I think it's time to sit down and talk.

*Marie:* You think I care' . . . It only happens once in a great while and when it comes out, it comes out. I don't take fits on it all the time. I can't stand it. Just the thought of her, she makes me so friggin' sick, oh boy. It's starting to come out. It's going to start to come out. You can say I'm acting like a baby now, I'm worse, I'm getting worse. How the hell do you think I'm going to work? Maybe that's why I'm dropping everything.

*Mary:* Because you're angry at Arlaine?

*Marie:* No, because things are bothering me, that I'm trying not to let bother me. I don't know what the hell it is. But they're starting to come out. There's so much on my mind, don't you see? What do you think, I'm happy?

*Mary:* No, I don't.

*Marie:* I'm never happy. I told you this since the first day you knew me probably. I've changed in your eyes. In certain ways I'm going back to being, yeah, I want to go back to being a bitch. I can't stand anybody. You know you change and you do something. Foster kids, if you're not brought up a right way. . . you are going to have the wrong way all along. All my problems are just starting. They haven't even begun to start. It seems like the past is nothing compared to what I'm going to have. I'm going to have a lot of problems, I can see.

*Mary:* What kind of problems are you going to have?

*Marie:* Oh Jesus, I'm having a problem in everything. And they just don't seem to go away, do they?



# EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

## OBJECTIVE 1

Participants will understand the process of communication.

**E**VERYONE brings six components into his or her communication process.

1. The body, its shape, form, and movements
2. Values ideas of good/bad, should/shouldn'ts, pretty/ugly, etc.
3. Expectations for the relating process
4. Senses—ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and skin
5. Ability to talk—vocabulary and voice.
6. The brain—knowledge from past experiences, what has been learned and read.

All these components are brought to a conversation by both speaker and the listener. The messages we give to and receive from each other reflect these components.

Example:

Overweight lady says, "This pizza is really good." She portrays the following components:

1. Her body is overweight.
2. She judges the pizza "good."
3. She expects you to agree.
4. She has tasted the pizza she is talking about.
5. She is using language to tell you her opinion.
6. She has eaten pizza before and is comparing it to previous pizzas.

You could be receiving and translating:

1. She's fat.
2. She would obviously eat anything.
3. Her taste buds are probably overworked and tired out.
4. She looks as if she enjoyed the pizza.
5. She says the pizza was good.
6. I have had that brand of pizza before, and I know it is good.

Needless to say, a lot more interaction went on here than a simple conversation about a pizza.

Roles we sometimes play when listening to our teens express their feelings:

Most of us are uncomfortable when others are revealing their feelings and wants to us. This is a very normal reaction. Our society has taught us not to display our emotions. It starts in our childhood when we are told "Big boys don't cry," "Don't be a fraidy cat," "Put your chin up," "Be a good loser," and so on. All this has caused us to stifle our own anger, fear, and disappointments. We have also been taught not to brag and boast, so being proud is an emotion that makes us uneasy.

Adolescents naturally go through a time when their emotions are in a constant state of turmoil. Every area of their lives is developing and expanding. They are constantly trying to update their feelings toward new situations and circumstances and people.

**2** Participants will learn the skills needed to use reflective listening.

Discuss rationale for reflective listening.

Assist participants in learning to listen to what is being said non-verbally as well as verbally.

Discuss and complete Worksheet #1 on page P-17 as a group.

Discuss choosing the correct response.

Ask participants to complete Worksheet #2 on page P-19.

Discuss answers and ask for input and questions.

Explain how to use the formula given on page P-19. Encourage participants to use their own styles as much as possible.

**G**OOD COMMUNICATION is based on mutual respect. That means that teens and parents must allow and encourage each other to express their feelings and beliefs honestly without the fear of being put down or ridiculed.

Good listening requires work. You must concentrate on what is being said. You must establish eye contact and maintain a posture that says, "I'm listening." You must then respond in such a way that your teens know you understand and accept how they feel. At this point in the conversation we are not concerned with how we feel about what was said or if it is right or wrong to our way of thinking. We are concerned only with what our teens have told us.

Listening is the first step in reflective listening.

Listening to our teens also requires letting them know that we recognize the feelings behind what they have told us as well as some of the things they haven't told us.

Remember the components we talked about earlier that everyone brings to a conversation. Take notice of facial expressions, body position, muscle tonus, breathing tempo, and voice tone. All these things are clues to the emotion behind the statement.

Once we identify the emotion behind the statement that our teens have given us, we have completed the second step of reflective listening. Next, we need to give our teens a response that conveys this understanding and acceptance.

Example:

Jennifer, age 15, throws her sewing project in a heap in the corner, saying, "I hate this \_\_\_ blouse.

## OBJECTIVE 2

Participants will learn the skills needed to use reflective listening.

I can't get the cuff on right."

Your response: "You're really angry because you can't sew as well as you would like to." This shows the girl you know and accept how she feels. (It does not mean you approve of throwing it in a heap or the swear words or feel that she can't handle the sewing project. We will deal with your feelings later.)

The response in the example was a reflective listening response because it addressed Jennifer's feelings, not her behavior or your feelings.

Reflective listening helps teens sort out their feelings and learn how to handle them. They will feel more confident in their ability to solve their own problems. They are more apt to follow through with their own solutions to the problems.

Reflective listening will create open and warm relationships. There is a feeling of mutual respect for each other's feelings.

Reflective listening will allow your teens to communicate openly with you and trust you in that you accept what they are feeling as valid. Their needs to act out will decrease if they can verbally express their opinions.

The self-reliant, independent feelings that teens gain from expressing and therefore owning their emotions is a skill that will help them cope with situations throughout life.

Reflective listening has three steps

1. Listen to message
2. Identify feelings
3. Respond to those feelings.

As parents we need to be a sounding board for these feelings. We need to be aware of the turmoil and uncertainty that is going on in their minds. We also need to be aware of the things that are going on in our own minds in relationship to the teenager.

Often when teens express their feelings to us we take on one of the following attitudes:

**BOSS:** "I'm in control. . . You shape up." "Do it this way." "Let me handle it and you do as I say."

**PREACHER:** "You shouldn't feel that way." "That's wrong." "Shame on you." "You know better."

**EXPERT:** "I've been there. . . I know." "Take my word for it." "Here's what you do." "This will solve your problem."

**JUDGE:** "I'm right. . . you're wrong." "You should have done it different." "You messed up."

**THE JOKER:** "You dummy." "Don't be so serious." "Lighten up." "Baby, you think you've got it rough. . . just wait."

**THE SHRINK:** "You feel that way because. . ." "Tell me where you're at." "Have you felt this way long?"

**THE SYMPATHIZER:** "Oh, you poor thing." "It'll be all right." "Things will be better in the morning." "That's too bad."

When we fall into these roles, we are letting our teens down. They need us to be real and honest with them. Remember, they are using us for a sounding board.

So how do we react? What should our role be?

Reflective listening is a way of responding to what your teens tell you that lets them know that you accept and understand how they feel.



*Dad, were you ever in love?*

## Effective Communication

### Worksheet # 1

Identify the feelings.

Example: Your teen is having trouble completing his or her homework. He/she drops his pencil and says, "I hate school. I never want to go there again."

The teen is feeling. . . frustrated, angry, defeated.

Using the list of words on the left, choose the word or words you think best describe(s) the teen's feelings.

#### Feeling Words

frustrated

angry

happy

guilty

proud

frightened

embarrassed

resentful

pleased

sad

affectionate

worried

bothered

tired

bored

Exercise 1: Your teen comes home from school with a good report card. She hands it to you and says, "Hey, look at this!" The teen is feeling \_\_\_\_\_.

Exercise 2: Jerry, 16, is complaining about a chore he has to do. He refers to his sister, Lisa, 9, saying, "Why doesn't that brat ever have to do anything?" He is feeling \_\_\_\_\_.

Exercise 3: Paul misses a basket in the last seconds of a game. His team loses by one point. He's sitting in the living room doing nothing and has been for 45 minutes. He's feeling \_\_\_\_\_.

After we have identified the teen's feelings, we need to identify the best response in each situation.

Example:

Jenny is having a hard time learning her piano lesson. She says, "Oh, I just can't do this right at all."

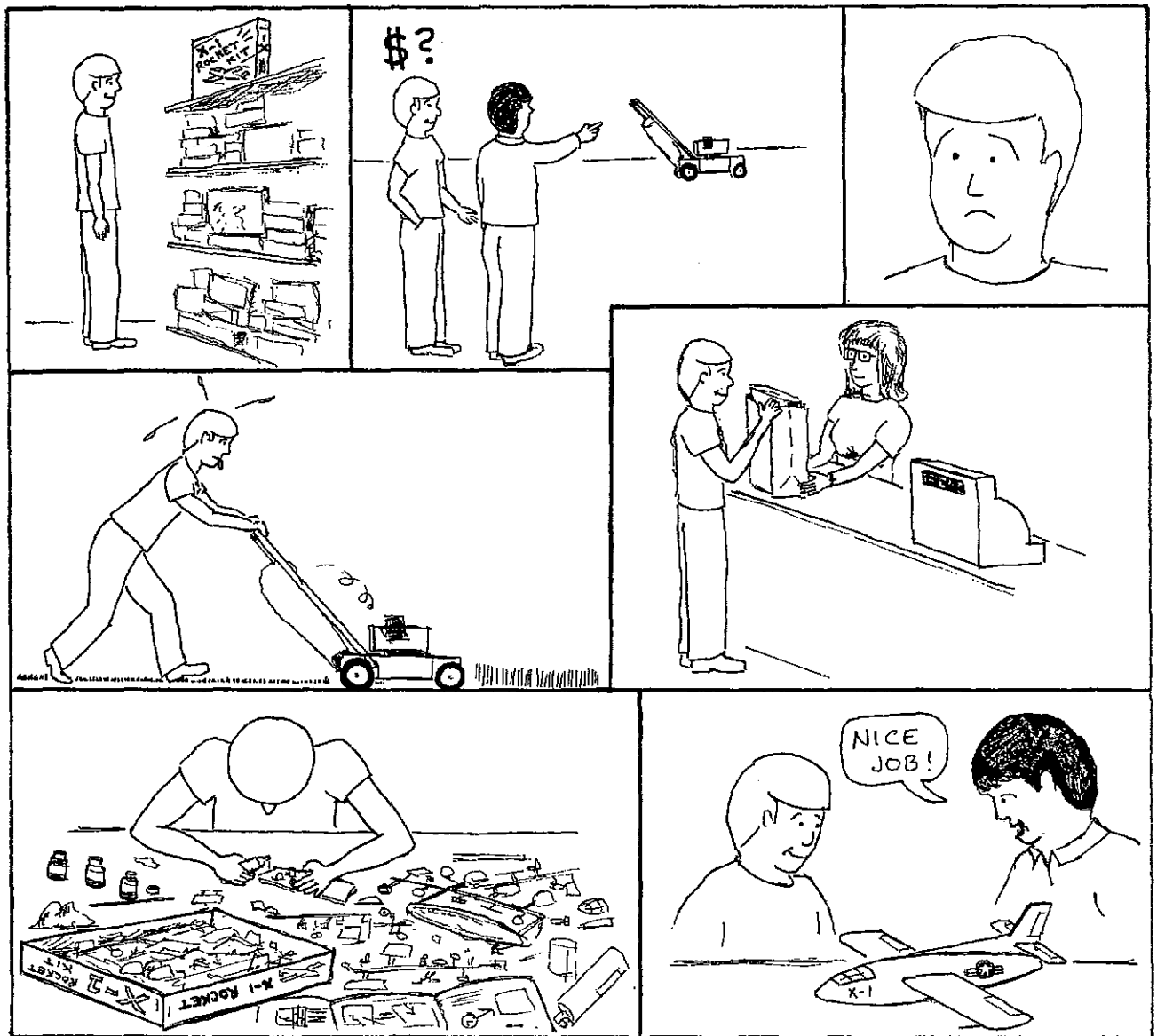
Choose the best response and circle it.

- a) Come on, Jenny, you can't quit now. I spent a fortune on piano lessons.
- b) You're upset because you just can't seem to get it right.
- c) That's o.k., just keep practicing and it'll come to you.

Example:

Tom, age 12, says, "I'm tired of staying here with you. I want to go back home to my real parents. At least they let me go hang out with my friends."

- a) Tom, I don't want to hear that kind of talk.
- b) You'll stay with us until the court says you can go home.
- c) You miss the freedom you had when you lived with your parents.
- d) Hanging out with your "friends" is why you are here in the first place.



Identify the feelings.

## Reflective Listening

### Worksheet #2

Circle the correct response.

Carol, 13, is trying to ride a moped bike. She comes in crying, saying, "I wish I'd never got that bike. I keep falling off and I'll never learn to ride it."

- a) You poor thing, look at that scraped knee!
- b) Get right back out there and try again. I told you when you bought it it was a mistake.
- c) You are really having trouble.

Write your own response to each of the following situations.

Carolyn, age 14, comes home from school beaming. She holds up a certificate saying she won it at the science fair.

---



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Frank comes home from school saying, "That dumb teacher! He really makes me mad. I swear he just gives homework to be mean. He never even looks at what you write, but, boy, you should hear him yell if you don't get it done."

---



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Reflective listening can build the teen's confidence and can increase respect for you. If you enable teens to communicate honestly with you by showing that you understand their feelings, you open the way for building a more satisfying relationship between you and for helping them solve their own problems.

#### FORMULA:

If you are still having trouble in forming a reflective message, here is a formula that might help:

You feel \_\_\_\_\_ (upset) because \_\_\_\_\_ (you'd like to go to the show) and you can't \_\_\_\_\_ (go) and you would like to \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(because your friends are)

After you use this formula a few times, you will want to change the order and the wording to match your own style.

The secret is to keep using it. Reflective listening is a skill that is well worth the effort it takes to learn it.

**3** Participants will practice using reflective listening skills.

Divide group into partners and role play the reflective listening situations on page P-20.



**OBJECTIVE 3**

Participants will practice using reflective listening skills.

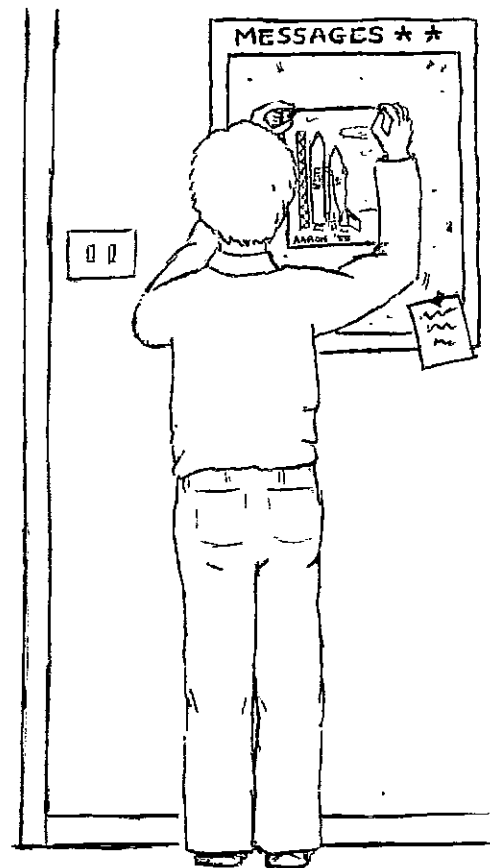
**Reflective Listening Role Play**

**L**ET'S BREAK into partners and have each pair of participants select one of the numbered situations listed below. One person will role play the parent using reflective listening. The second person will role play the teenager. After you have done the first situation, select a second situation and have the person who was parent last time play the teen.

**Role Play Situations**

1. Yuck! What a terrible day! (Ron, 15)
2. Why can't you keep that brat Sandy out of my room? (Kevin, 17)
3. I wish I didn't have to go to school today (Sam, 12)
4. Everyone else gets to drive to school. Why can't I? You are just being mean. (Sharon, 16)
5. Hi, Mom, Are you busy? I need a shirt for the game, and I want to go shoot baskets. (Cindy, 16)
6. How come I get all the dirty jobs around here?
7. Linda (16) is humming a happy tune while baking cookies.
8. I don't want to talk to my Mom when she comes to visit.
9. You treat your own kids better than you do me.
10. Aaron (13) pins his latest drawing to his bulletin board.
11. I'm not going to go to church ever again!
12. That social worker is so dumb! She really thinks she can get my Dad to stop drinking.

13. There's nothing to do around here. All you ever think of for me to do is baby games. I want to hang out with my friends!
14. I hate that dumb teacher! He is really a fag!
15. Kathy (14) is lying on her bed crying.



**4** Participants will learn the skills needed to use “parent” or “I” messages.

Discuss rationale for using “parent” or “I” messages.

Help participants identify their own feelings.

Discuss every person’s need to own and feel responsible for their feelings.

Note particularly the last paragraph on page P-21.

Read through and discuss Worksheet #3 on page P-22.

Claudia Jewett suggests that some adolescents are so impaired that everything becomes the parent’s problem because the impaired teen doesn’t care about the feelings of others. If the teen persists in projecting his or her anger at the parent, special counseling may be required, and foster parents should be advised to discuss this possibility with the case worker.

Depending on how the discussion is progressing at this point, you might want to make participants aware of Jean Illsley Clarke’s “Behavior Chain” which is discussed in the participant’s manual, page P-68. Clarke lists 11 alternative options to communicating with teens.

**OBJECTIVE 4**

Participants will learn the skills needed to use "parent" or "I" messages.

**A**T THIS POINT you are probably thinking "Wait a minute, when do I get my say? We've dealt with the teens' feelings for a long time now. . . What about mine?"

This is where parent messages or I messages come in. Parent messages tell your children how you feel about problems they have or have caused for you and what they can do to help you out. Parent messages are equally useful when you want to tell your children what they have done that you like.

When your teens do things that frustrate, disturb, or annoy you, tell them clearly how their actions affect you rather than suggesting that something is wrong with them because you are upset. Ideally, you would reflect the teens' feelings before stating yours.

Example:

You are busy typing. John comes in and says he's had a fun day. In P.E. class they are bowling. He bowled a 107.

You reply: You are really doing well—107 is a good score. You must be very proud. I'm busy typing, and I have to get it finished. Let's talk more about your day at supper.

That example sounds just fine, but what about when the pressure is on, when you are really mad, and have just plain had it. How do parent messages work then?

Example:

It is 5:30. Your house is a mess, the phone is ringing, the baby is crying, your 5- and 8-year-old sons are alternately fighting and watching T.V. Supper is to be served at 6:00, and the potatoes still aren't peeled. Nancy, 17, who was supposed to be home at 4:00, strolls into the house, tosses her

coat on a chair, throws her books on the table and says, "Yuk! Pork chops again!"

Somehow at this point Nancy's dislike of pork chops is not of the slightest interest to you, nor should you pretend it is. You are mad, darned mad. You are also in no condition to try to handle your feelings toward Nancy's behavior at this time. A good parent message would be:

"I am really angry with you for being an hour and half late, but I don't have time to deal with that now. I have a lot of things that I need to get done before supper. I now expect some help."

Several problems have been avoided by this statement.

1. You are not trying to handle a discipline problem while you are angry and pushed for time.
2. You have conserved what little time you do have before supper.
3. Nancy will probably help you out.
4. You can deal with Nancy's behavior problems at a later time when you have thought things through and cooled off.
5. You did not get suckered into a pointless argument about Nancy's dislike of pork chops.
6. Nancy will have some time to consider the wisdom of having come home late and ponder what the consequences may be.

Using parent messages to communicate your feelings to your teens will make them more willing to behave appropriately. Parent messages let a child know what you expect of him or her with less chance of making him or her feel angry and resentful than a demand or a criticism would. Used along with reflective listening, parent messages help place respect for each other at the core of the family's relationships.

**Parent Messages****Worksheet #3**

Choose the positive parent message.

1. Nancy asks to go to the movie. You tell her yes if she cleans her room first. Later you hear Nancy telling your husband that you said she could go to the show, and she doesn't have time to clean her room.
  - a) Walk in and say, "Nancy, you're lying. You know I said you had to clean your room first."
  - b) Let it go and resolve not to let her go to the movie the next time she asks.
  - c) Walk in and say, "I am upset that you changed what I said. I made the condition that you clean your room before you go to the movies."
  
2. Paul comes home two hours late. You are waiting up for him.
  - a) Where in the world have you been?
  - b) I've been worried about you.
  - c) If you can't get home when you're told, next time you can just stay home.
  
3. Tammie comes home yelling, "Guess what? I made it. I'm a cheerleader!"
  - a) "Can't you tell me about it without yelling?"
  - b) "I'm so proud of you."
  - c) "You are really proud. That's neat, I'm happy for you."
  
4. Ted is sitting at the table drumming his fingers. You are trying to read.
  - a) "I can't concentrate when you drum your fingers on the table."
  - b) "You really are driving me up the wall."
  - c) "If you can't find something better to do, please leave."

**5** Participants will practice using “parent” or “I” messages.

Role play situations on page P-23. Use different partners from before.

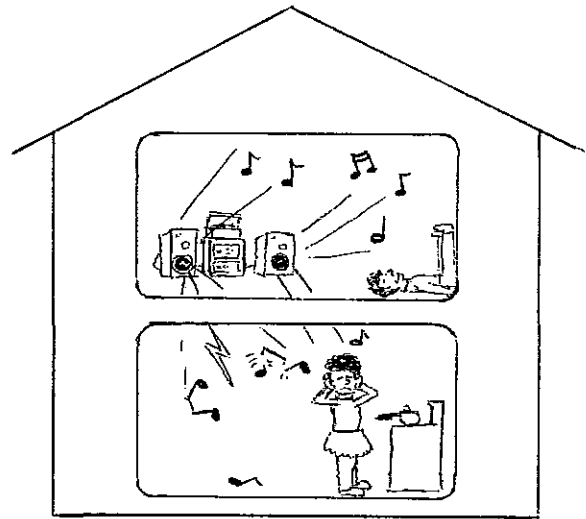
As you role play using “parent” or “I” messages, remind foster parents that both positive and negative messages can be given. Often parents think of using “I” messages only in times of anger or negative situations.

**OBJECTIVE 5**

Participants will practice using "parent" or "I" messages.

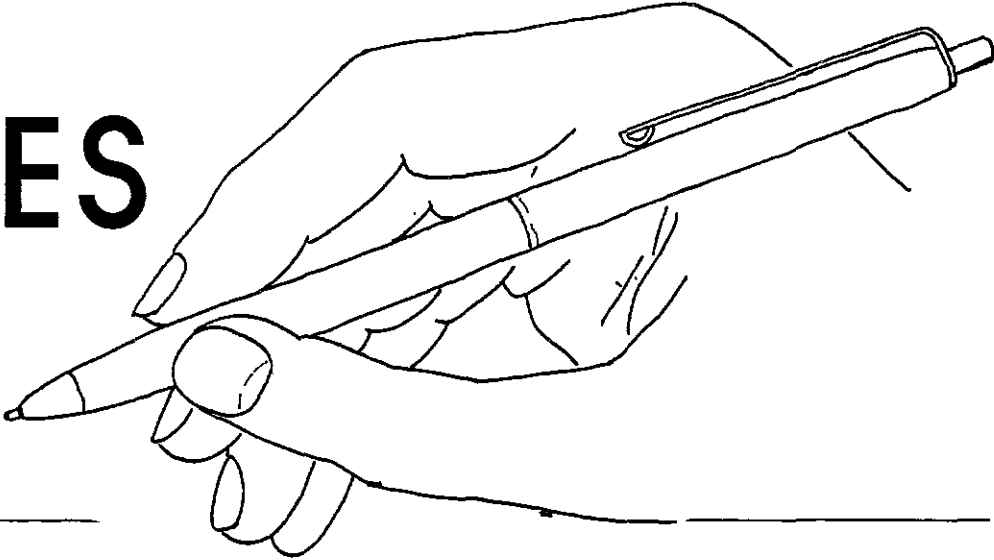
**R**OLE PLAY the following situations.

1. You come home from work. The place is a shambles. Your teenagers are watching T.V. and eating chips in the living room. Their chores are not done. John looks up from the T.V. and states, "I don't feel so good."
2. You wait dinner for 30 minutes because Mike has ball practice after school. You finally give up and eat without him. He and two friends come home two hours later. Mike states, "Hi! What's to eat?"
3. The bathroom sink has make-up and hair smeared all over it. Suzy was the last one in the bathroom.
4. You are on the phone. Diane comes in and asks to go to her friend's house.
5. You and your spouse are busy paying bills. Sam wants help with his homework.
6. You are getting ready for a meeting and can't find your sweater. Sheila comes home as you are leaving, and she's wearing it.
7. Fred calls home for the third day this month and has forgotten his lunch ticket.
8. You have baked a cake for dessert. When you go to serve it, two pieces are missing.
9. Your mother is coming to stay for a few days. Sandy wants to have a slumber party during her visit.



10. You enter the nursery to see why the baby is crying and find Kevin, who is 16, twisting his arm.
11. Your son asked to borrow \$5 to go to the show. You loan it to him. Later you overhear him asking your spouse for a \$5 loan to go to the show.
12. You are soaking in the tub after a long day. Karen is pounding on the door wanting you to trim her hair.
13. You are cooking supper. Gary is listening to tapes and has played the Stray Cat Strut seven times.
14. John is clipping his toenails on the kitchen floor.

# NOTES



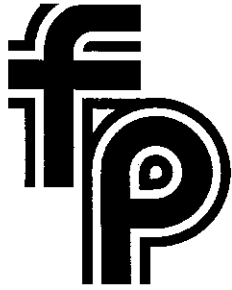
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# Session Three



## Problem Solving and Rules: Limits and Consequences

# Trainer's Guide

## Problem Solving and Rules: Limits and Consequences

### OBJECTIVES:

	Page
1. Participants will objectively look at a situation and identify the problem.	T-48
2. Participants will recognize who owns the problem. Worksheet #4	T-50 T-52
3. Participants will learn to use the loop approach to problem solving.	T-53
4. Participants will learn how and when to set rules, limits, and consequences.	T-55

**1** Participants will look objectively at a situation and identify the problem.

Read rationale.

Discuss looking beyond symptoms to the actual sickness.

# Problem Solving and Rules:

## Limits and Consequences

### OBJECTIVE 1

Participants will look objectively at a situation and identify the problem.

**A**DOLESCENCE is a time for expanding concepts and growth. We talked about five of those concepts in session one. Turn back to page P-1 and read through those concepts again. While you are reading them, think about why problems will probably arise in each of these areas as teens work their way through them.

Not only are teens struggling with their roles as “near adults,” but we are also struggling with our roles as parents to “near adults.”

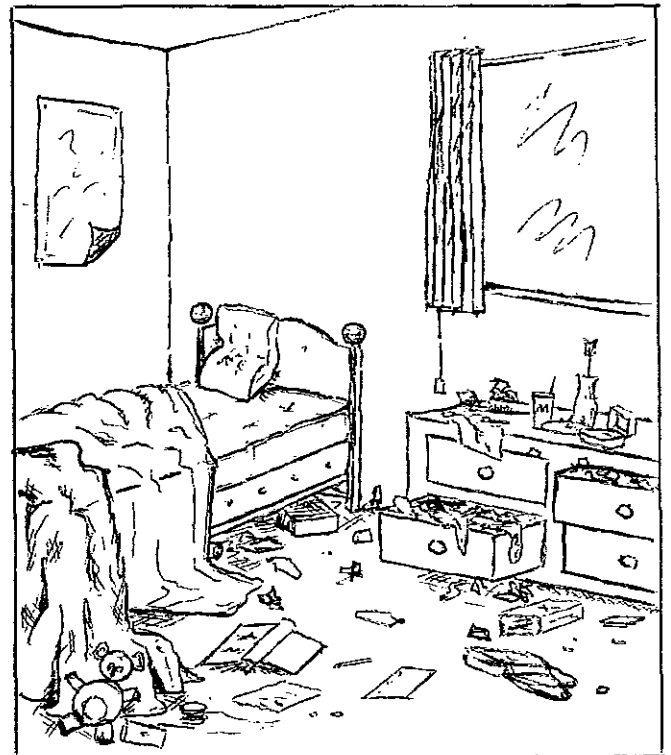
Foster families face all the problems natural families do plus many more. Frequently, we are parenting a teen we know very little about. We don’t know background experiences, likes/dislikes, etc. On the other hand, our teen knows little about us—background experiences, likes/dislikes, etc.

Foster parents need to take extra care in determining what the problem really is because they are lacking in a lot of the information biological parents or people who have known the teen longer might have. Once again, reflective listening and non-judgmental parent messages are very good tools in determining what the teen is feeling and what the problem is.

When problems do arise, we need to determine what the problem is and who owns it.

Example:

Amy’s room is a mess. The bed is never made. Clothes are all over. Dishes from snacks clutter the dresser, etc. The best word to describe it is shambles.



Our first thought is probably that the messy room is the problem. This is right, but let’s look a little deeper. What happens if you go in and clean the room? The room is clean, but the problem is not solved. Chances are in a few days Amy’s room will be back to a shambles. We need to go beyond the messy room and look at Amy’s attitude toward a clean room and your attitude toward the room. Obviously, Amy doesn’t object to a messy room. You do—it is your problem.

**2** Participants will recognize who owns the problem.

Discuss the examples given.

Talk about value judgments and how they sometimes get in the way of deciding who owns the problem.

Complete Worksheet #4 on page P-28 and discuss answers.

Point out to the foster parents that problem identification and ownership of the problem can be the means of helping communications. Again, items on Worksheet #4 could have all three columns checked. These are not "either/or" situations. An issue could be a problem to both the teen and parent or one or the other.

Recognizing problem ownership should be a vehicle for improved discussion and ways of leading to problem solving.

**OBJECTIVE 2**

Participants will recognize who owns the problem.

**W**HEN PARENTS are trying to solve problems with teens, they should recognize that some problems are really the concern of the parent, and therefore the parent owns the problem. Some problems or issues that cause “problems” are really matters of individual preference or value judgment, and they may not be a “problem” for the teen because of his or her particular beliefs.

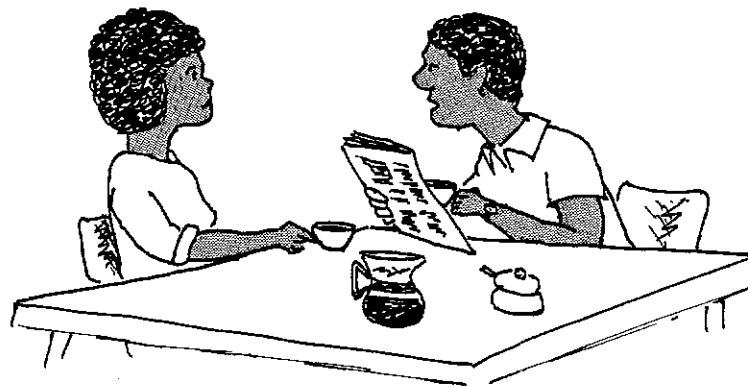
In discussions of sexuality, for example, a “problem” for the parent may be the street vocabulary used by teens, but if the teen sees no harm in the term, getting the teen to recognize or take ownership of a problem will be difficult. Communication can be improved when teens and parents stop to identify who owns a particular problem. That ownership or identification then makes for better discussion.

The first step toward problem solving is to determine the problem and who owns it. Usually

the person who is upset owns the problem.

The following examples show problem ownership.

1. Sam has been working on a model rocket. He is having all kinds of trouble getting it put together. His behavior in no way interferes with you. Sam owns the problem.
2. Linda borrows Mom’s hair dryer. She leaves for school and fails to return the dryer. Linda’s behavior is interfering with Mom. This is Mom’s problem.
3. George doesn’t want to go to 4-H. You feel he should. George’s behavior is all right in his opinion. His failure to attend is not interfering with his parents. This is a value judgment. It becomes the parents’ problem because they consider 4-H important.



*There are two kinds of problems—my problems and your problems.*

## Worksheet #4

## Problem Solving

Check the box of who owns the problem. Also check if it's a value judgment. Some issues may be the problem of both parent and teen, and many of them could also be value judgments as well.

Teen	Parent	Value Judgment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. teen does not do homework
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. teen has feet on new chair
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. teen interrupts your conversation with a friend
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. teen stays out late
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. teen won't feed pet
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. how teen wears hair
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. teen uses your tools and leaves them in driveway
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. teen is in trouble with teacher because of clowning around
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. teen drives your car too fast
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. teen drives his or her car too fast
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. teen smokes pot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. what teen eats
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13. teen doesn't do his share of chores
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14. the age teen starts to date
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15. whether teen is polite to truant officer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16. teen's choice of vocation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17. teen's use of swear words
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18. teen scatters belongings about the house

**3** Participants will learn to use the loop approach to problem solving.

Discuss how a problem solving loop works.

Urge participants to teach this skill to their teens.

Discuss example of teen using problem solving loop.

Discuss how to use pro/con columns.

Stress that the values given to each reason must be the teens and not the parents.

Role play the situations given.  
(See ACTIVITY on page P-29.)

The Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) film by Thomas Gordon, "Bridging the Gap," (30 minutes, 16mm) is an excellent discussion of "parent" or "I" messages.

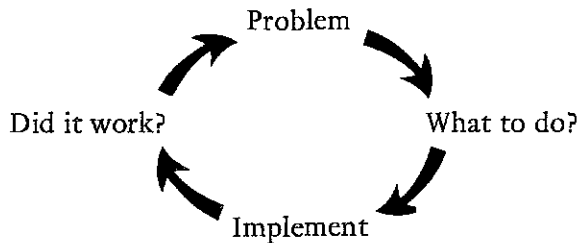


**OBJECTIVE 3**

Participants will learn to use the loop approach to problem solving.

**N**OW THAT WE have identified the problem and determined ownership what is next?

The problem solving loop diagrammed below is an easy, efficient approach. It allows us to look objectively at the problem, determine what action is necessary to correct the problem, try it, and then see if it worked and how well.



Example of teen with problem using problem solving loop:

**Problem:** Karen is reluctant to visit her mother. You could say, "You seem to be having trouble making up your mind whether you want to see your mother tomorrow."

Karen might reply, "Yeh, I kind of want to see her, but she can really put me down."

**What to do?** The options are to go or to stay home. Explore the merits of each. Use pro and con columns. Put a value on each reason, using a 1 to 10 scale.

Pro Visit	Against Visit
6 I'd like to see her.	4 She sometimes hurts my feelings.
2 She'd be hurt if I didn't.	1 I could do my homework instead.
8 Total	5 Total

**Implement:** Karen goes for visit.

**Did it work?** Karen, "It was good to see Mom again. I really felt uncomfortable at first, but then it got better."

**Problem:** Does Karen go visit again?

Using the problem solving loop is a skill you need to share with your teen. In this case, the problem belonged to Karen. The parent's role was helping her explore her own feelings and desires. She reached her own decision, based on her own values.

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**ACTIVITY**

Identify problem ownership and role play the following situations using the problem solving loop:

Lucy is trying out for cheerleader. The tryouts are next week. She doesn't know any cheers.

Allen has terrible table manners. He is really sloppy and unpleasant to be around when he is eating.

Peggy wants her ears pierced twice. You think this is uncalled for and looks trashy.

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**4** Participants will learn how and when to set rules, limits, and consequences.

Read rationale.

Discuss things to ask before making a rule and the guidelines given for making rules.

Discuss typical house rules.

Do ACTIVITY on page P-31.

Discuss outcome.

Discuss consequences.

Talk about punishment.

**T**HERE IS security in knowing what is expected. Rules or limits for your teens set guidelines for their behavior.

How many rules, what kinds of rules, and how we enforce them are going to vary a lot from household to household. Each family has different values and expectations.

Once again, the fact that we are foster families compounds the problem. Our natural children learn our values and expectations from the day they are born. Our foster children have grown up learning values and expectations in other families. The transition from one family to another is bound to be hard. We can smooth this process by being alert for situations that have potential for problems.

We also need to give our teens a clear set of rules to go by.

Here are some guidelines for making rules:

1. State rules as briefly and clearly as possible.
2. State rules in positive terms. (Do, not don't)
3. Be consistent. If you make a rule, always enforce it.
4. Give a reminder if it is appropriate, e.g., "You forgot to make your bed."
5. Give a reason for the rule if your teen questions it.

#### OBJECTIVE 4

**Participants will learn how and when to set rules, limits, and consequences.**

Before you make a rule, ask:

1. Is this rule necessary for good growth and development of the teen?
2. Is this rule necessary for the safety and comfort of the teen?
3. Is the rule necessary for the safety and comfort of others?
4. Is it necessary for the protection of valuable property?
5. Does this rule fit the teen's age and developmental level?
6. Can this rule be enforced?

The following is a list of typical house rules for teens:

1. Perform jobs on duty list.
2. Be home by 10:00 on school nights, 12:00 on weekends.
3. Make bed and clean room daily.
4. Do your own laundry.
5. Clean up after your own snacks. Have snacks before 10:00.
6. Limit phone calls to five minutes. Complete calls before 9:30.
7. Smoking, booze, and drugs are not allowed.

8. Ask permission for overnight or meal time guests.

These are all good rules. They may work very well for the family that made them. They may not work at all for a foster family.

Foster families are unique in that they are always changing. They get bigger and smaller, they go from tomboy girls to dainty little misses. Their boys may be jocks one week and musicians the next. A blanket list of rules is probably not going to work for them.

Let's look at some of the pitfalls in the list above.

**Duty lists:** One of your teens may have no after school commitments, another may be out for sports, have an after school job, or other things going on. The work load will have to take this into consideration.

**Keeping hours:** Hours need to be adjusted to meet the responsibility level of teens because 13-year-olds and 18-year-olds can hardly be treated the same.

By now you are probably saying okay, so we make a rule list for each teen, but how do I explain that to my two 16-year-olds? One of them can do this and one of them can't.

Go back and review what we said on page P-30 under "before you make a rule." We make rules for reasons. When a teen has displayed these rules are no longer fitting his age and developmental level, then we can relax the rule. Until that time it stays the way it is.

When new teenagers come into your home, starting with a fairly tight set of rules and relaxing them as you feel they can handle the situation is far easier. One way of easing the pressure is to save the rule lists that other teens in your home have advanced beyond. This will help them see it is a fair system, a system every teen in your home is working under.

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## ACTIVITY

1. Jenny (13) is new to your home. She has been placed in your home because of her parents' inability to maintain a stable home. Your social worker has told you Jenny is a good student but is very shy and doesn't talk much.

What kinds of rules do you feel are appropriate for Jenny?

Divide into groups of three or four people and discuss them. Don't be afraid to give Jenny more characteristics if you would like.

2. Tim (16) has been with you for a year. He has not had any major behavior problems.

What kinds of rules might be appropriate for Tim?

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## Consequences

Anytime we have rules, we must also have consequences. What happens if a rule gets broken?

There are three kinds of consequences for broken rules:

- Natural consequences
- Logical consequences
- Unrelated consequences.

A **natural consequence** is one that automatically happens as a result of what the teen does.

**Examples:** John leaves his bed unmade. He sleeps in an unmade bed.

Susy leaves her lunch ticket home. She misses lunch.

Sometimes a natural consequence will leave a lasting impression on teens, and they will change their behavior in the future. Of course, if John doesn't really care that he sleeps in an unmade bed or you as a parent have strong feelings about Susy going without lunch, then some other kind of consequence will have to be imposed.

A **logical consequence** has to be imposed, but it is directly related to the broken rule.

Examples: Todd turns on the T.V. video game, plays it for a while, and walks off leaving the game running. He is banned from the game for a week.

Sarah doesn't scrape the plates before putting them in the dishwasher causing Mom to wash most of them over when she does breakfast dishes after Sarah has left for school the next morning. Sarah has to do the dishes by hand the next time it is her turn to wash.

**Unrelated consequences** are those consequences you impose when natural or logical consequences have been exhausted. They have nothing to do with the behavior and will not serve as a reminder of the rule.

Examples: John got a D on his report card. He does not get dessert for a week.

Abby's room is a mess. She cannot go to the dance.

Natural consequences are the best teachers. When these do not work or apply, use logical ones. Only as a last resort should you use unrelated consequences.

We cannot possibly have a rule for every occasion. What happens if your teen misbehaves and you have no rule against that misbehavior?

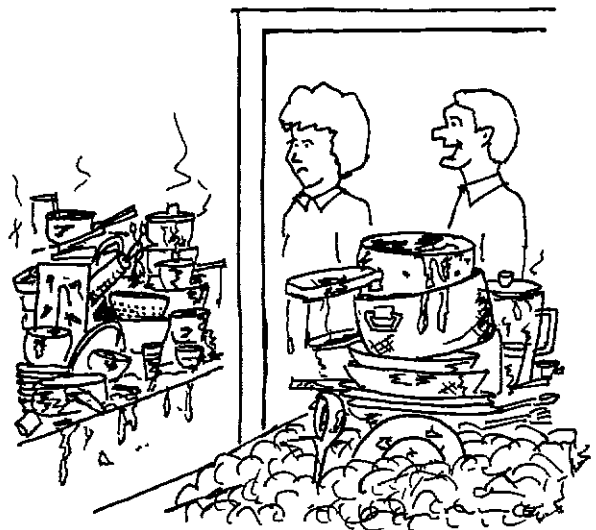
Example: Kevin cuts school and spends the day riding around town with some friends who are out of school.

You probably did not have a rule that specifically said Kevin was to go to school each day. However, Kevin knew he was expected to attend school. This was an understood rule. Kevin chose to break it.

This kind of behavior cannot be allowed to pass without major repercussions. The natural consequences at school will probably be an "F" for the day. Kevin may not really care about his grade, and even if he does it can probably be made up, so it is not a viable consequence. A logical consequence doesn't come to mind right off so we are left with an unrelated consequence or punishment.

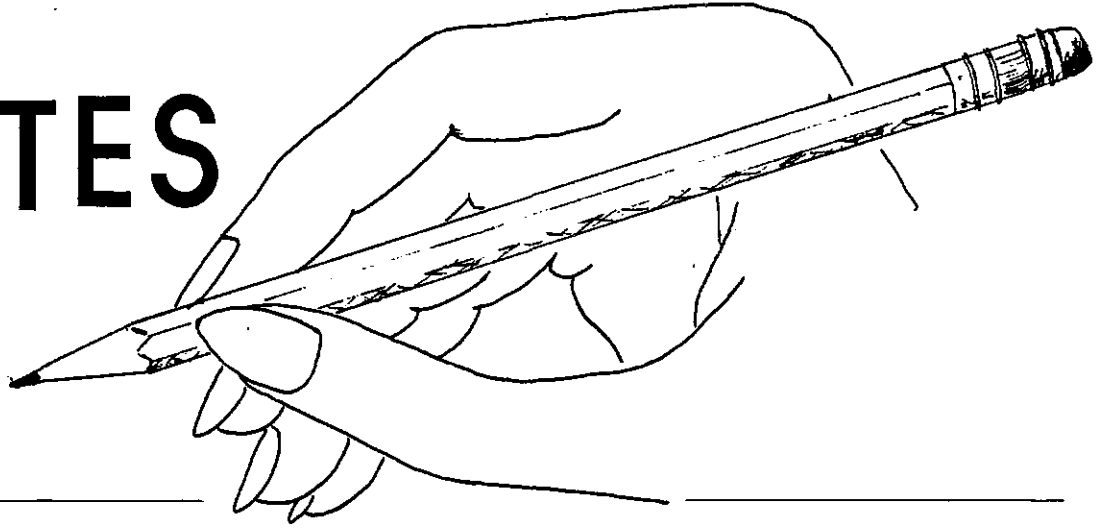
Some things to remember about punishment:

1. Anger and punishment do not mix. Give yourself and your teen a cooling off period if anger is present.
2. Punishment in no way should be threatening to your teens or your self-respect.
3. Punishment can lead to rebellion when over-used.
4. Punishment should be only harsh enough to act as a deterrent or a repetition of the behavior.



*Sharon cooked, it's your turn to wash dishes.*

# NOTES



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## REFERENCES

Eager, James. *Problem Solving Loop*. (Unpublished) Arapahoe, WY: Workshop, Arapahoe School, 1972.

# Session Four



## An Ounce of Prevention



# Trainer's Guide

## AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

### OBJECTIVES:

	Page
1. Participants will be aware of some situations that have potential for problems. Worksheet #5	T-62 T-63
2. Participants will understand what structuring is and how it works.	T-64
3. Participants will use structuring to prevent problems. Worksheet #6	T-66 T-67
4. Participants will understand why and how rewarding and reinforcing good behavior works.	T-69
5. Participants will select rewards and reinforcers that are appropriate for given situations. Worksheet #7	T-72 T-73
6. Participants will understand why and how a family council works. Having a Family Council	T-75 T-78
7. Participants will take part in a mock family council meeting.	T-83
8. Participants will understand contracting and how it works. Worksheet #8	T-85 T-87

*An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure.*

**1** Participants will be aware of some situations that have potential for problems.

In this session, we want to help foster parents focus upon some of the problem areas that have potential for conflict in the home. As a trainer you might want to ask foster parents to give you some, and as they “brainstorm” possible areas, you could list them on newsprint or a chalkboard. Here are just a few ideas to which you could add many more:

1. problems over homework and school
2. problems over chores around the home
3. problems over the way the teen dresses and/or handles clothes in laundry
4. issues of privacy and right to have personal “treasures” so long as they are not dope or dangerous substances
5. dating issues
6. hours at which teen is allowed out of home.

Complete and discuss Worksheet #5 on page P-35.

# AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

## OBJECTIVE 1

Participants will be aware of some situations that have potential for problems.

### Worksheet #5

For examples A and B following, list some possible solutions. Discuss your responses with the group.

Examples:

- A. Your family has been asked out to eat in a fancy restaurant. Troy has lived with you for two weeks. You suspect eating out is a new experience.
  
- B. Karen comes to you with a drinking problem. Your booze cupboard is well stocked and very accessible.

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*In the future I see. . .*

**2** Participants will understand what structuring is and how it works.

Discuss rationale for structuring.

Discuss environmental structuring. Give example and ask for more from participants.

Ask foster parents what methods they use to structure.

Discuss event structuring. Give example and ask for more from participants.

**OBJECTIVE 2**

Participants will understand what structuring is and how it works.

**S**TRUCTURING is planning surroundings and events in your teens' lives so that they will be more comfortable with new situations and more apt to handle them successfully.

Structuring can help avoid problems.

Structuring involves taking positive action to prevent or solve problems before they happen.

Using structuring involves recognition of two principles: (1) people learning new behaviors may not perform correctly without some preparation, and (2) as parents we can and should take steps to see that the desired behaviors occur.

We can structure environment and events.

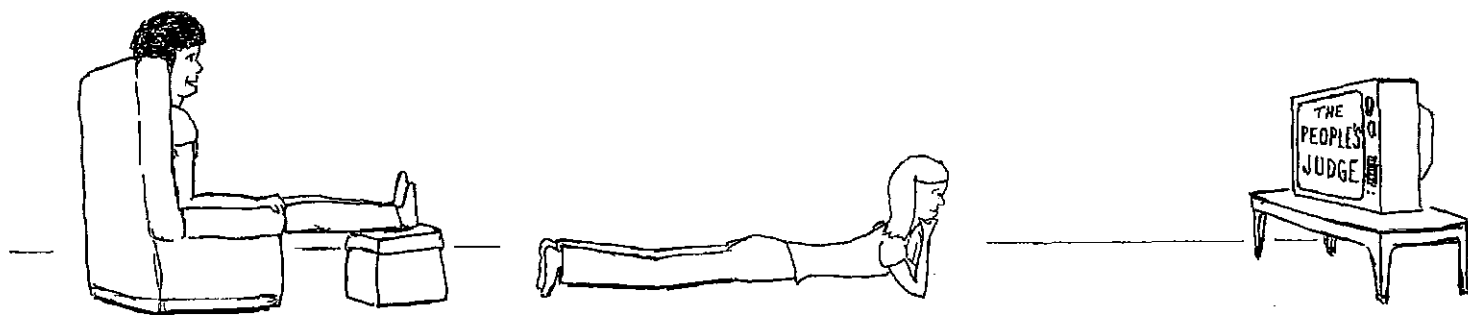
**Environment example:**

While your teen is unpacking his or her clothes, you take a laundry basket to his or her room, place it in its appropriate location, and state, "Here is your laundry basket. You can put your

dirty clothes in here each day and then bring it to the laundry room on Saturday morning."

**Event example:**

Rick has to go to court as part of a custody hearing. He has not been in a courtroom before. You say, "The court hearing is Friday at 10:00. Going to court is kind of scary. You go in and sit down and everything is so quiet. You'll probably sit with us and Mr. Jones, your guardian ad litem. He's a lawyer who will be there to help you. When the judge comes in, the clerk says, 'All rise, presiding will be the Honorable Judge Howard Bates.' Then everybody sits down. Just like you've seen on T.V. You will probably have to take the stand. That means go sit in the chair by the judge and have the lawyers ask you questions. Don't worry if you don't understand the question, just ask them what they mean," and so on. Keep going step by step. If your teen says, "Hey, I know all this," that's fine, but chances are he will want all the information he can get.



*Kathy, going to court will be similar to what you see on T.V.*

**3** Participants will use structuring to prevent problems.

Divide into pairs and work out some plans for structuring on Worksheet #6 on page P-37.

Read through and discuss Points to Remember About Structuring on page P-38.

**OBJECTIVE 3**

**Participants will use structuring to prevent problems.**

**Structuring****Worksheet #6**

Using the following situations, decide on a way of structuring the events or environment to make things work better. Use reflective listening and parent messages, too, if you like.

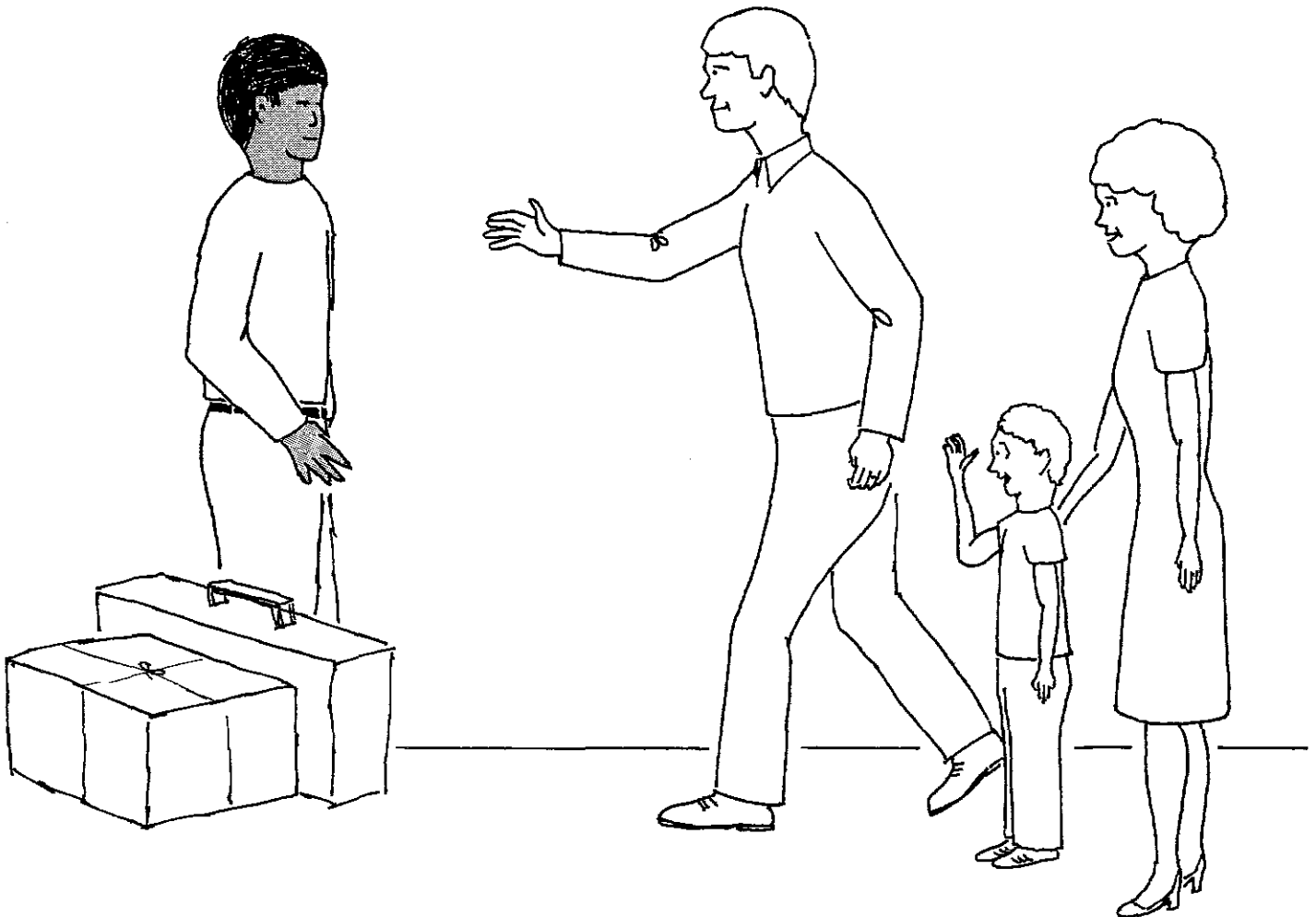
1. Kathy is going to the doctor for her first P.E. physical.
2. Aaron wets the bed. He is 14.
3. John has a history of stealing money.
4. Judy has been sexually assaulted by her father and is afraid of men.
5. Debbie has terrible table manners.
6. Pam wears too much make-up.
7. John's room is shared with his eight-year-old brother.
8. Beth is a good cook. Cindy, who is the same age, can't even make jello.
9. Darcy is a poor student. She hates homework.
10. Peter doesn't care how he looks. He wears the same clothes day after day.
11. Your anglo family is getting a new foster child who is black, or your black family is getting a white foster child.
12. Sharon's social worker, whom she really doesn't like, is coming for a visit.

### Points to Remember about Structuring.

1. Think back over situations where trouble has occurred and look ahead to similar situations where problems may repeat themselves.
2. Decide what behavior you would like to see before you begin to structure the situation.
3. Think of as many different ways as possible to structure the situation. If you are out of ideas, call a fellow foster parent and see if they have any ideas.
4. Choose the procedure that you think is best.
5. Try to cover all the bases.

Have you thought of everything that could go wrong?

Do you need to discuss the plan with your teens? If so give them clear, detailed instructions about what they can expect and what is expected of them. Don't worry! They will tell you if this is a situation they can handle or are not worried about.





**4** Participants will understand why and how rewarding and reinforcing good behavior works.

Discuss rationale for reinforcement.

Discuss positive and negative circles.

**OBJECTIVE 4**

Participants will understand why and how rewarding and reinforcing good behavior works.

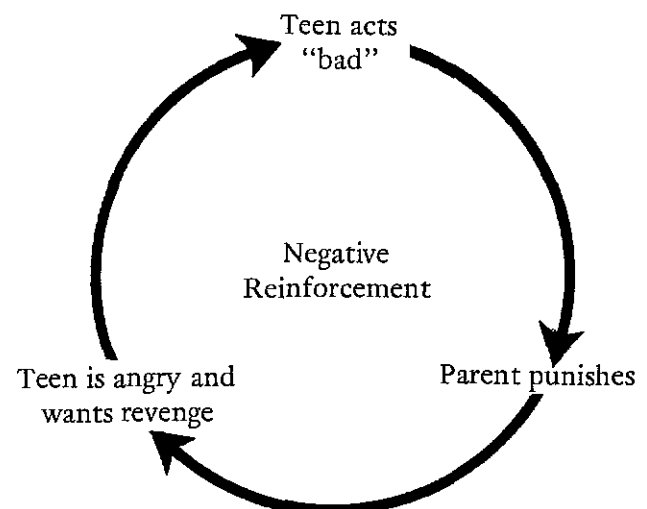
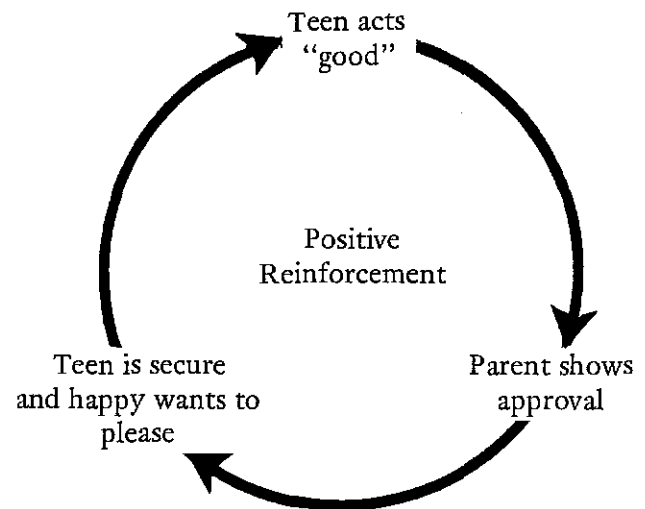
**E**VERYONE likes approval and acceptance. Adolescents are often uncertain of what is expected of them in a new situation. A teen in foster care is facing all the uncertainty any teenager does plus much more.

Praising or rewarding them for good behavior is one way of insuring the continuation of that behavior. If we fail to acknowledge their good behavior they may be uncertain if their behavior was correct and try to change it in order to gain your approval. They may even be so in need for attention that they will deliberately change their behavior to what they know is bad in order to get a reaction from you. Teens need to know where they stand with you.

Our teens' behavior works in circles or chain reactions.

When we are operating with positive reinforcement, we can use some of the following types of reinforcers:

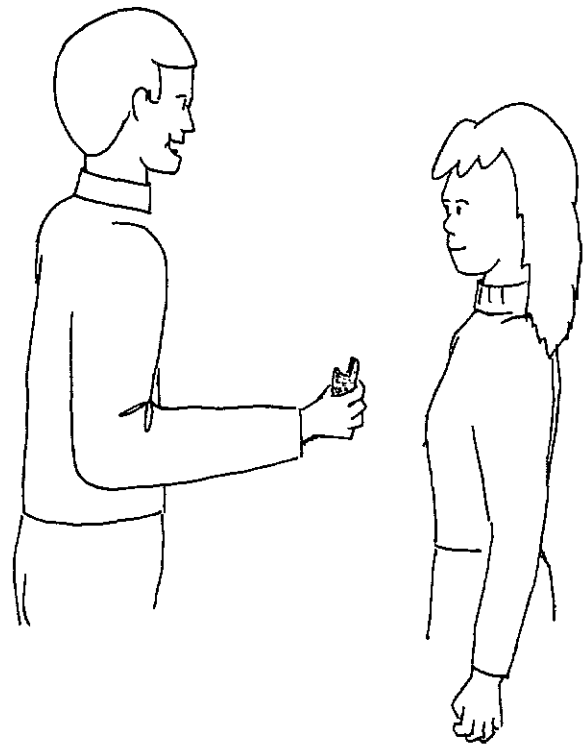
1. Verbal: You really did a good job. I'm really proud.
2. Edible: Let's celebrate with your favorite tacos.
3. Material: I bought you this blouse because you really did well.
4. Social: You studied so hard you can go to the show.
5. Time: You really did well. What would you like for us to do tonight?
6. Affection: That deserves a great big hug.



When we are operating in the negative reinforcement circle, sometimes a real struggle is necessary to break out. We need to be very aware of our own attitudes toward the teens and make sure that we are not labeling the teens bad instead of the behavior.

If we are to the point we are saying, "I can't think of a darn thing the kid has done right," we probably need to take another look. We need to "catch" our teen being good. Maybe a simple, "I like the way your hair looks today," can help you make the switch to the positive circle.

Operating in the positive circle is essential so that a foster teen will feel secure and accepted. We will explore this further in the session on self-concept.



*These cookies you made are really delicious!*

**5** Participants will select rewards and reinforcers that are appropriate for given situations.

Discuss and complete Reinforcing Good Behavior, Worksheet #7 on page P-41.

Read through and discuss Points to Remember about Reinforcing on page P-42.

**OBJECTIVE 5**

**Participants will select rewards and reinforcers that are appropriate for given situations.**

**Reinforcing Good Behavior**

**Worksheet #7**

Think of several different ways of reinforcing the following behaviors.

1. Amy is a poor student. She brings home a B in math.

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2. John has kept his room clean all week.

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3. Annie has lost 10 lbs. She still needs to lose 15.

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4. Karen has won a blue ribbon on her angel cake at the fair.

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5. Lucy had a visit with her truant officer whom she dislikes and made it through with no blow-ups.

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6. Dale has gotten a job mowing lawns. This is the first time he has shown this kind of initiative.

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### Points to Remember about Reinforcing

1. Make praise short and sweet. Don't overdo, or it may become threatening and hard to live up to.
2. Don't attach a "kicker" like, "Now, be sure you always do that well."
3. Reinforce good behavior as soon as possible.
4. Know what your teens would like for a reward. Perhaps give them a choice.
5. You will probably have to reinforce a new behavior several times before it becomes habit.
6. Modify reinforcers as behavior becomes habit.
7. Be consistent. Don't change what you expect.
8. Use verbal, affection, and time reinforcers more often than the others.



*Amy got a B in math so Dad says we get to out for pizza!*

**6** Participants will understand why and how a family council works.

Discuss rationale. Ask if anyone has had any experience with a family council.

Read "Here's How to Start" on page P-44. Ask for more ideas.

**OBJECTIVE 6**

Participants will understand why and how a family council works.

**A** FAMILY COUNCIL is a place for family members to work with and enjoy each other as individuals, not as siblings, parents, or children.

A family council establishes respect for individual needs and opinions on an equal basis.

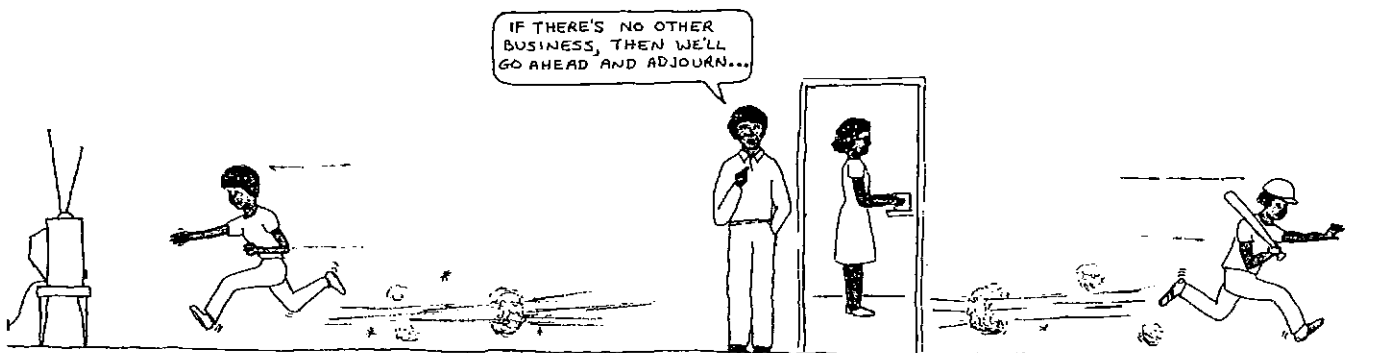
Rudolf Dreikurs defines a family council as:

A group of people who live together, whether or not they are related by blood or marriage. The group shall have regularly scheduled meetings and operate under rules agreed on in advance. The meeting shall be an open forum at which all family members can speak without interruption, with freedom of expression, without fear of consequences, and without regard for age or status. Its deliberations result in decision only when all members

present agree—that is, come to a common understanding.

Some of the gains from having a family council are:

1. **Mutual respect and harmony.** Everybody gets their turn to state their feelings. No decision is made until all are in agreement.
2. **Efficiency.** All family members assume responsibility for the family operations.
3. **Communication.** Sharing of ideas and opinions is the basis of a family council.
4. **Less need for rewards and punishment.** Having all family members sharing in decision making and family responsibilities leads to more cooperation for all members, including both biological kids and foster kids.





### Here's How to Start

1. Set a regular meeting time and date.
2. Invite all family members.
3. Include everyone.
4. Choose a presiding officer (this may rotate).
5. Give information and set ground rules.
  - a) Use parliamentary procedure.
  - b) Keep on a positive ground (avoid a gripe session).
  - c) Stick to decisions made until next meeting even if you can see they are not working too well.
  - d) Share responsibilities and talking time.
  - e) Set an agenda at the beginning of each meeting.

f) Unanimous agreement is more satisfactory than majority rule.

A sample order of business could be:

1. Meeting called to order by chairman
2. Minutes of preceding meeting read and approved
3. Report of treasurer (if you have one)
4. Unfinished business, e.g., How is the new clean bathroom rule working?
  - a) the yard needs work
  - b) plan family fun night
  - c) Dad's going out of town Thursday and Friday and who will cover his jobs?
6. Motion to adjourn



# Having a Family Council Meeting

Adapted from "Setting Up a Family Council"

By Herbert G. Lingren

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A family sitting down together and talking about important thoughts, situations, and issues is certainly not a new idea—it has been practiced for centuries. It is an idea, however, that needs to be put to work in the present day.

- Do you treat your child the same as you treat your best friend?
- Does your child have equal status as a person with the adults in your family?
- Does your child help in planning about chores to be done and times to do them?
- Do you try to make decisions about your child's recreational activities, times to study, and what clothing to buy and wear?
- Do you want to create feelings of trust, competency, and independence in your child?

If you answer any of the first four questions with a "no," and the last question with a "yes," you may want to consider regularly holding a *family council* meeting.

People who live together will naturally have conflicts of interest from time to time. The family council serves as a valuable place to discuss these differences and is one way individuals can understand and cope with the changes, stresses and strains, and the business of living together as a family.

## What Is a Family Council?

The family council can best be described by stating what it isn't. It is *not*:

a discussion meeting around the dinner table

a discussion meeting while driving

a meeting called only when there is a problem within the family.

The family council *is*:

a meeting of everyone in the family at a designated time and place

a meeting that has a chairperson and a secretary (each family member takes a turn as chairperson, but only those who can read and write take turns being secretary)

a meeting with fixed rules of procedures

a cooperative way of making decisions that affect all family members.

A meeting is called, the issues are faced, and all of the members have a chance to say what they think or feel. An attempt is made to foresee the possible outcomes of various solutions. The discussion continues with changes in attitudes, ideas, or opinions until a solution finally emerges that is acceptable to each family member. Being acceptable does not mean that each family member likes it. It only means they will try it for a period of time to see if it works. After the decision is made, each person is expected to abide by it and to work for its success.

Individuals are more willing to follow a policy or work for a solution if they have had a voice in making it instead of having it dictated to them.

## How It Works

*Get Along Without a "Boss."* Parents are usually thought of as being the "bosses," but in the family council they are group leaders. All family members

should feel free to express themselves and to make contributions to the decisions and agreements of the whole family. Every group and activity requires leadership and guidance to reach desired objectives, but the “boss” approach should be avoided.

*Expect Conflict.* Conflict should be expected. The idea is not to begin with agreement but to end with it. Most of the time conflict is thought of as being bad, but think of it here as an important part of the discussion needed to find the best solution to the problem at hand. Realize that sometimes conflict is below the surface—father has a cold, mother had a rough day working, or the children have been fighting. Conflicts and differences are part of life, and accepting this fact can help.

*Listen Carefully.* Good listening is the number one rule of human relations. You must listen not only with your ears but also with your heart in order to get the real meaning of what someone says.

Another factor in listening is an open mind. If individuals have already made up their minds, they can't really hear what others have to say. Everyone should listen for something new, something which no one may have thought of before.

*Seek Agreement.* Even when differences occur, agreement can be reached. Some ways of reaching agreement are:

*Domination*—one or two people determine what is done.

*Compromise*—somebody gives in.

*Majority*—those who disagree are out-numbered.

*Consensus*—the group finds a solution that all feel good about.

*Find Facts.* Weighing and evaluating the facts is sometimes all that is necessary. For example, suppose a family is trying to decide on a house plan. If one plan does not fit the lot they have, and another costs too much, the decision is made through the process of weighing and evaluating the facts.

*Accept Feelings.* Remember that feelings are important in decision making, even when they appear to have no rational basis. The problem need not be choosing between reason and emotion but of keeping a balance between the two.

### Why Should Our Family Have One?

In many families, members are on the verge of declaring war against one another. Negative feelings are so strong in some of the individuals involved that one member may develop alliances with others in order to get his or her own way. Usually each person will see only one viewpoint as correct. Such families might ask, “What's in it for us?” Many positive benefits result where a family uses a family council. The following are some examples.

*Happiness.* Everyone wants to be happy. In daily life, tempers flare, family members shout back at each other, and so on. Everyone needs respect but at times finds giving it to others difficult. For example, a parent expects a child to respect the parent and other elders but doesn't realize that the child is equally worthy of respect. When a parent shows respect to the child, harmony results and, from that, happiness.

*Efficiency.* A positive outcome of the family council is that family business can be done more quickly, simply, and efficiently. Every family has many tasks and rules to observe, both for daily living and for long range goals. A primary function of the family council is for all of the members to discuss who is responsible for specific tasks in the home and how these tasks are to be distributed. The goal is for more equality in responsibility and the assignment of tasks appropriate for the people involved.

When the family council functions well, work gets done without nagging, and family members can enjoy each other. Talk between members is pleasant and complimentary. Probably the biggest payoff is that the family cooperates in the job of keeping the home running smoothly.

*Communication.* Much useless talk disappears when a family council is functioning well. Nagging, complaining, scolding, screaming, and threatening

are not needed because each family member is aware of what will happen if everyone does not perform agreed-upon tasks. Instead, there is friendly conversation and willingness to share ideas or discuss problem situations.

*Less Need for Discipline or Punishment.* As family members become more and more adept at using the family council, the need for disciplining or punishing the children lessens because 1) they discover misbehavior is not necessary in order to get the parent's attention and 2) family members are more trusting and cooperative.

An accurate way to rate the success of the family council is to ask, "Did I decide?" If "I" decided, chances are one or both parents pushed through a decision without general agreement from all of the members. On the other hand, if "we" decided, chances are all of the members joined in reaching agreement.

#### What Are the Concerns?

Typically, a family council meeting is concerned with all of the relationships and business affecting the family. Some examples of the concerns a family council may include are the following.

*Information.* Family council meetings are a time when members can discuss coming events, plans for fun or work, changes in living arrangements, vacation, planned visits, and the progress and achievements of individual members.

*Problem Solving.* The family council provides a chance to discuss and review individual and family problems in a less crisis-oriented setting. It also allows for freedom of discussing problems in a sensible and thought-provoking manner while at the same time allowing family members to be creative thinkers in problem solving.

*Planning and Decision Making.* The old cliché, "A person learns best by experience," applies to the family council. The parent who allows the child to participate in decision making soon learns that the child will cooperate more readily. Discussion can be time-consuming, but the decisions reached are more acceptable to all of the members.

*Family Involvement.* In every family, certain daily, monthly, seasonal, and yearly tasks must be performed in order for it to run smoothly. Frequently these tasks are performed by only one or two members. Through a family council, members can discuss what tasks need to be done, who will do them and how, and how to share responsibilities, make decisions, and cooperate in carrying out the tasks.

*Sounding Off and Airing of Concerns.* Family life can produce anxiety, tension, and disagreement. At a family council, each member can discuss what is dissatisfying within the family, and make desired changes known. This can eliminate bickering. When complaints do arise during the week, they can be deferred for discussion at the next family council, or if the situation is serious enough, an emergency family council can be called.

*A Social Learning Experience.* Through the interactions of family members, a child develops opinions of self and social relationships. The family council is a good means for developing independent persons who care and are concerned about others.

#### How Do We Start?

Probably most important when starting a family council is "openness." Think, "How can we, as a family, go about this together?" rather than, "Now you've all come to the meeting I planned!" Following are some key points to starting a family council.

*Set a meeting date and time.* The family council should meet periodically, perhaps once a week or three times each month. Find a time when all family members can be present. A family council meeting should be held on a planned basis, not just whenever someone wants to call a meeting or when things seem to be going wrong. If a family council is called only when things go wrong, too much negativism enters in, which is destructive to the purpose and intent of the council.

*Attendance.* All family members are invited but not required to attend the family council. Any member can choose not to attend or can leave the

meeting. However, those not attending should know that family decisions will be made regardless of the number of members present. Don't use this as a threat but rather as a natural and logical consequence of a given happening.

*Who is included?* Everyone who lives in the household should be included and on an equal basis. As a rule of thumb, a child who can use words is able to participate effectively in the family council. An elderly person or a non-family member living in the household should also be included.

*Who should preside and who should take notes?* Each meeting needs a chairperson and a secretary. These offices are usually held by a parent until all of the members feel at ease with the family council. Then these offices can be rotated so each member has a chance to be chairperson.

*Order.* Order is as important to a family council as it is for any other meeting. If anyone misbehaves to such a degree as to make meetings unpleasant, or if anyone becomes sufficiently annoyed, that person can leave. Remember, the purpose of the family council is to discuss concerns in a sensible and clear manner. If a member disturbs the meeting, the chairperson has the responsibility to ask that person to behave. If the member does not behave, then anyone who is annoyed can leave. A member cannot be expelled from a meeting because of unpleasant behavior, however.

*Procedures.* The family council should be considered an open forum with complete freedom of expression. Members are allowed to express their opinions, and no one can quiet the person who has the floor. Every member should have a turn. A person should be especially aware not to interrupt, correct, criticize, or expand on a child's comments.

The family council is not a time to preach, scold, or otherwise dominate the meeting. It is a meeting where one member can express opinions on an equal basis with everyone else.

*Issues.* The family council should be open for grievances, issues, problems, and any matters of common concern that affect the family. It should not be used to settle personal quarrels. The general rule to follow is that any member except the chairperson may bring up a subject to discuss.

*How to decide.* The general rule for making decisions in the family council is *consensus*. Issues should be discussed to reach a consensus in the same manner that labor and management negotiate their contracts. If unanimity is not possible, table the issue until the following meeting.

### General Rules

Keep rules simple. If members keep in mind that a purpose of the family council is to expedite communications between each other and not to teach them how to run a meeting, the family council concept will flourish. To help establish a family council, the following guidelines can be used.

- A member is allowed the floor by being recognized by the chairperson.
- The person who has the floor cannot be interrupted by other members.
- The person who has the floor is asked to comment on the point or issue being discussed. New topics are not to be started unless the concern being discussed is resolved or tabled.
- Decisions can be made that influence other members who are absent. However, these decisions should not punish those not attending.
- Minutes should be kept and posted.
- Compromise the wishes of the group when health, education, or other real values are not endangered. If brothers and sisters disagree about household tasks, they can make a list of necessary jobs and then choose what jobs they will do for a week until all the jobs are taken. In this way, children can learn that each person must make some sacrifices so that all can enjoy the home more.
- Watch for signs of growth in responsibility and ability to cooperate with others. Are the children learning to control angry expressions when others disagree with them? Can they present a differing point of view without discrediting another's intelligence and motives? Can they place group benefits and long-time interests above their own immediate wishes?

If so, the family council is a success.

Remember, the interactions of family members change over time, and so may rules or guidelines that govern the family council. All rules or guidelines need to be examined and re-evaluated from time to time.

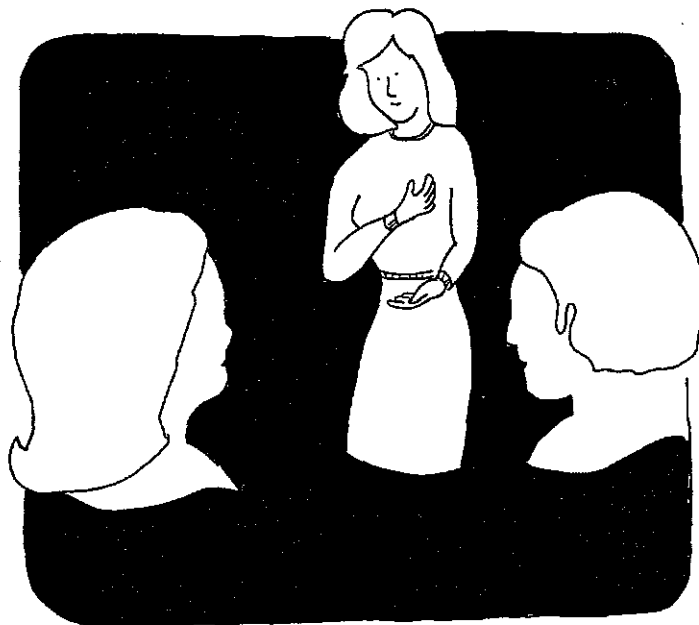
If young people want to do something that seems like a mistake, discuss it rather than lay down the law or forbid it. Call attention to some things which they may not know or may have overlooked. If the matter is not too serious, allow them to make their own decisions and then face the consequences. Children are more apt to learn to make good decisions if they have proper knowledge and can take the responsibility for a poor choice as well as reap the benefits from a good one.

A good way to end a family council meeting is with some family fun, such as a special treat served afterward.

### Summary

Probably the most important advice ever given to a parent is to establish a family council. However, before starting a council, you must understand the procedures and hazards. To succeed, the family council must operate in a democratic spirit.

Finally, don't allow yourself, as a parent, to be sabotaged by your child in giving up the idea of a family council. The family council represents something new to the child—a change in the game plan which may not be liked. There may be a desire to return to the rules used before the family council was instituted. If you believe in the family council idea, stick to it. Others will soon realize that this is the best way to participate in family decisions.



**7** Participants will take part in a mock family council meeting.

Role play the three family council meetings. (See page P-50.) You may add more members to each family, giving them names, ages, and concerns.

Ask for questions.

As the participants begin to role play, you will observe that those who are members of the "Brown" family will make more progress. The "Jones" and "Kelly" families, on the other hand, will have great difficulty completing their work. These two situations were set up to demonstrate the importance of starting out with a fairly simple agenda; the Jones and Kelly families simply have too much to do.

Analyze the problems with the group and help them to see why the Brown family had fewer difficulties.

**OBJECTIVE 7**

**Participants will take part in a mock family council meeting.**

Role play the following family council meetings.

**The Jones Family**

**Members:** Mom, Dad, Kathy (12), Paul (7), Debbie (16), Sue (14), and Grandma Jones (73).

Mom is tired of cleaning the bathroom.  
Dad and Paul want to plan a family fishing trip.  
Kathy wants to hurry and go to a friend's house.  
Debbie and Sue are having trouble sharing a room.  
Grandma wants the T.V. turned off at 9:00 p.m.  
The family cat has had four kittens in the basement.  
She now has a litter box that needs emptying.

**The Kelly Family**

**Members:** Mom, Dad, Allan (17), Peggy (15), and Russell (4).

Mom and Dad want to start planting the garden.  
Peggy wants to play the stereo at night, but the T.V. is always on.  
Allan wants more allowance.  
Russell wants to visit Grandma who lives 900 miles away.  
Aunt Sue has asked if her two kids can stay with your family for the week end. They are 2 and 3 years old.

**The Brown Family**

**Members:** Mom, Dad, Susan (16), Sandy (16½), Candy (14), Robert (11), Michael (7), and Uncle Tom (22).

Mom and Dad are going away for the weekend.  
Susan and Sandy both want to have dates Saturday night.  
Candy doesn't want to stay at home with the boys.  
Robert is tired of getting stuck babysitting Michael.  
Michael insists he doesn't need babysitting.  
Uncle Tom thinks it would be easier if everyone stayed home. A lot of yard work must be done.



**8** Participants will understand contracting and how it works.

Discuss rationale. Assist participants in drawing up a sample contract for the situations given. Remind them that the teen should be involved in drawing up the contract.

Ask for any situations the participants have experienced where they feel contracting might have helped.

Use Worksheet #8 on page P-52 to explore ideas for contracts in certain situations.

## OBJECTIVE 8

Participants will understand contracting and how it works.

**C**ONTRACTING may be a parenting skill that will make getting along with your teens easier.

Contracts are agreements you can make with your teens so that both of you know and agree what is expected of the teens and of you.

When you write out a contract, you need to remember to be specific. Both parties should know exactly what is expected of them.

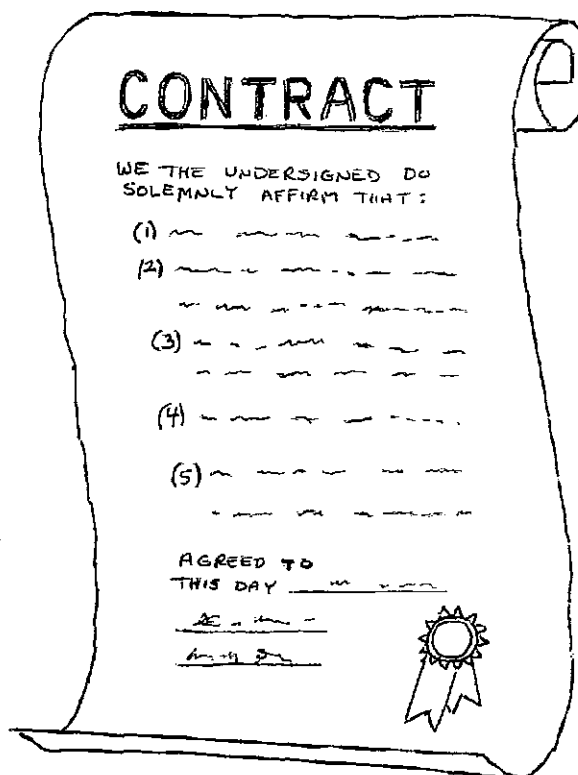
Contracting should be treated in a businesslike manner. Anger or guilt feelings should not be involved if the contract is broken. It should in no way imply the teens are a failure. It simply means this particular contract has been broken.

The contract needs to be reasonable. It should be obtainable for the teens. Your expectations of your teens should be in direct relationship to what they are capable of. Not all teens are capable of the same things, so be sure to take this into consideration.

The contract should be drawn up together. Both parents and teens should have input. Contracts should meet the needs of the teens as well as those of the parents.

Contracts need to start out covering small tasks or goals. Once your teens understand how contracts work, then you can take on larger tasks and goals.

In many ways contracts are like good news articles; they need to be written in such a manner that they



answer these questions: Who? What? When? Where? How? Parents who are contracting with teens will learn the value of deadlines (when appropriate), and they will want to plan very specific ways of carrying out the contract with the teen. A good question to ask during the development of the contract might be: Now, how will we know when you have completed this first part?

In a sense, a contract is an agreement that leaves little to question or chance and has no legalistic "loopholes."

**Worksheet #8**

Write down some basic ideas for contracts that might help in these situations.

Karen (14) would like to have more free time after school to be with her peers. You would like her to come home right after school because she takes so long to get her household chores done.

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Andy (16) wants designer jeans. You feel regular blue jeans are good enough. There are several odd jobs around that you need done.

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John (15) has trouble getting up in the morning. He also wants to go more places in the evenings.

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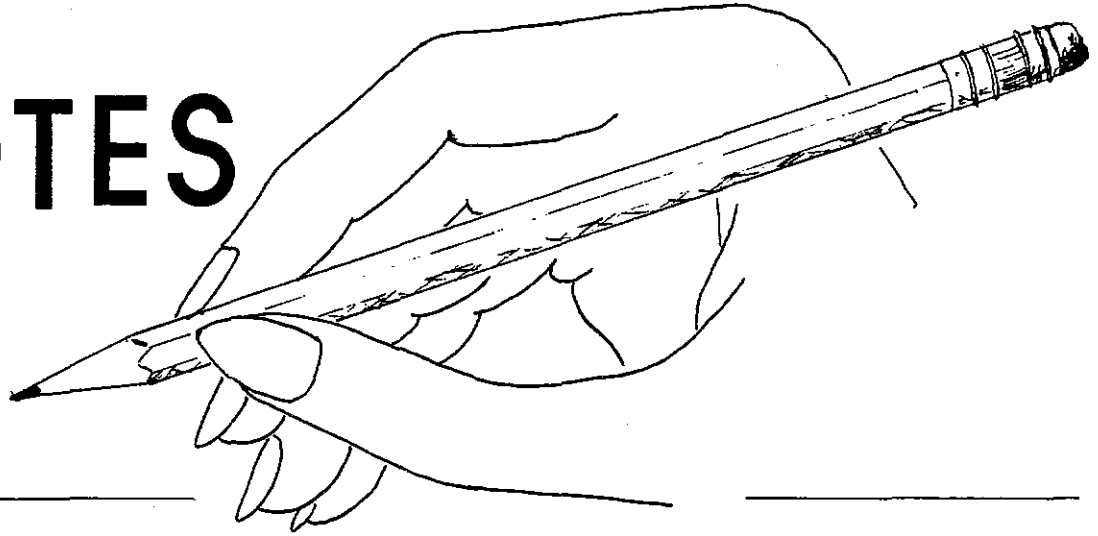
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# NOTES



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## **Session Five**



## **Your Foster Teen, School and Community**

# Trainer's Guide

## School, Home, and Community

### OBJECTIVES:

	Page
1. Participants will be aware of some of the problems that may arise for their teens at school and some of the things they can do to prevent them or make them easier.	T-91
Worksheet #9	T-92
2. Participants will learn how to structure homework to help their teens succeed at school.	T-94
3. Participants will learn how to become an advocate for a child and how a school hierarchy works.	T-96
4. Participants will be aware of the areas of development that affect teens and their relationships to their communities.	T-100
Worksheet #10	T-101
5. Participants will explore various behavior and misbehavior problems that may arise.	T-103
Worksheet #11	T-109

**1** Participants will be aware of some of the problems that may arise for their teens at school and some of the things they can do to prevent them or make them easier.

Discuss and fill in questions given on Worksheet #9 on page P-55.

Read rationale given. Discuss some questions and answers that might come from a parent conference.

Discuss helping teens prepare a response to give for their being in a foster home.

Talk about the need for confidentiality.

Remind foster parents that the case worker can legally visit the child in his or her school, but parents and case workers should try to keep each other informed.

You should tell foster parents to let the school know who is authorized to pick up a child and remove her or him from school. Usually adolescents are aware of the case workers and other "authorized" visitors, however.

One possible way of handling this unit is to invite a school representative (principal, counselor, or teacher) to your group of foster parents to discuss mutual problems and concerns.

Remember that having the school as part of your "fostering team" can be a valuable resource for your teen as well as for other foster teens in your community.



# School, Home, and Community

## OBJECTIVE 1

Participants will be aware of some of the problems that may arise for their teens at school and some of the things they can do to prevent them or make them easier.

### Worksheet #9

What are some of the problems a foster teen may have in school?

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What are some things we can do to make it easier?

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**Adjustment Problems**

**M**ANY TIMES being placed in foster care as a teenager not only means changing homes but also changing schools, friends, and social communities.

School systems often vary in academic achievement and expectations, what kinds of behavior they expect or will tolerate, relationships between students and staff, emphasis on sports or music, etc., and general routine. Adjusting to a new system is a big job and takes time. Most schools are understanding of this problem and help as much as possible.

Should your teens seem to be having more trouble adjusting to their new schools than you feel is normal, you should arrange a parent conference.

If your teens are having trouble academically in school, the information on pages P-58 to P-60 will give you an overview of the rights provided by law concerning their education.

The law provides for an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for children who do not fit the "norm" group in each academic area. You will be asked for your input into the IEP. Part of the plan may involve your helping with homework in a specified manner, etc. You will be working closely with your teens and their teachers to assist your

teens either in learning skills to bring them up to the "norm" or stimulating their advanced knowledge beyond the "norm."

**Why are you in a foster home?**

One thing that needs to be done before your teens go out into the community is to discuss with them and help them to prepare a response as to why they are not living with their own families.

Often our teens come from situations that are unpleasant for them to talk about, and having details of the situations common knowledge in the communities would be damaging to their acceptance.

We need to help our teens prepare a comeback to the question, "Why are you living in a foster home?" Usually a simple, "My family needed some time to work out some problems," is answer enough.

This or some similar reply is what the foster family should give when asked by others or when mentioning that they have a new foster child with them.

Details of your foster teens' backgrounds should be given to others only if these will in some way assist someone in working with your teens, and then information should be given only in strictest confidence.



*Why are you in a foster home? Why are you in a foster home? Why are you...?*

**2** Participants will learn how to structure homework to help their teens succeed at school.

Review how to structure.

Discuss some ways of structuring homework and explore some ways of reinforcing success.

**OBJECTIVE 2**

Participants will learn how to structure homework to help their teens succeed at school.

**S**TRUCTURING study habits may be something that your teens would benefit from.

Many foster teens have problems with academics in school. This may be due to moving a lot, poor study habits, poor attitude toward the importance of school, and many other things.

Your teen may not even know the meaning of "to study" and as a result be completely overwhelmed with the request to study homework. Check with your school about availability of tutors. Sometimes community groups (Lions, Jay Cees, Boys Clubs, Optimist Club, Junior League, etc.) will pay for needy children to receive tutoring.

You may also be helpful to your foster teens by merely portraying an attitude that learning can be fun, and your teens should see you reading for enjoyment and/or learning skills once in a while.

These simple tips may help to structure the teen's study habits:

- Set aside a special time for study.
- Establish a regular place in which to do homework away from the T.V. or the radio.
- Check to see if your teen has some basic sense of outlining or note-taking. Teachers often provide a variety of note-taking styles. Your job is not to teach the subject, however, and if you see the teens have a need for this skill, ask the school for help.
- Make yourself available to answer questions and to help, especially with the rough spots, but don't do the homework for them.



Good academic performance may not be something your foster teen will achieve. You need to be very sensitive to your teens' capabilities. Expecting more from them than they can give is unfair, but so is accepting less than they are capable of. Spending time with your teens and their homework as well as keeping in touch with their teachers on a regular basis will give you a good idea of what they are capable of achieving.

**3** Participants will learn how to become an advocate for a child and how a school hierarchy works.

Discuss material given on laws and rights of individuals.

Discuss how to gain satisfaction by going to people of higher authority.

Remind foster parents that the case worker should be informed of the results of any school conferences concerning your teen. They like to hear "good" things, too.

Your school might have some films or materials on mainstreaming that would be particularly useful to parents who are fostering handicapped children.

If you can obtain it, the 16mm film, "Why Johnny Can't Learn," is an excellent resource.

**OBJECTIVE 3**

**Participants will learn how to become an advocate for a child and how a school hierarchy works.**

**Handicapped Children and the Law**

**B**ECAUSE of their life circumstances, most of the foster children would qualify as "special education" students. Foster parents need to be aware of the potential resources provided by Public Law 94-142 passed by the U.S. Congress in 1975. It has been called the "Bill of Rights for the Handicapped." It requires states to provide free and appropriate public education for all handicapped children.

In this section are some discussions of PL-94-142, Nebraska State Education Department regulations, and some excerpts from a Lincoln newspaper on sound educational practices. The key provisions of PL 94-142 are as follows:

**Non-discriminatory Testing and Assessment**

Tests must avoid racial and cultural bias, and more than one measurement must be used. Decisions on which instruments to use are left to the local level.

**Involvement of Families**

Parents are to have adequate notice and a voice in developing child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP). If they request it, they can get a copy of the IEP. Parents have a continuing right to inspect their child's records.

**Least Restrictive Environment**

Handicapped children are to be educated with non-handicapped children to the maximum extent appropriate. Note that the law states "appropriate" rather than "to the maximum extent possible." Placement decisions must be made individually and must be reviewed at least annually.

**Individualized Educational Program**

Prepared for each handicapped child, the IEP is a statement of present status, annual goals for the child, and the criteria for evaluating the child's progress.

**Provision of Related Support Services**

These may include specialized medical services, counseling services, and transportation services.

**Due Process**

Due process procedures must be guaranteed regarding identification, evaluation, and placement. Furthermore, the confidentiality of personally identifiable information must be protected.

Each state has the responsibility for developing criteria by which handicapping conditions are verified. The Nebraska Department of Education has recently issued a set of guidelines which do not have the force of law, but "... have been endorsed by the State Board of Education as the recommended practice for the verification of..."<sup>1</sup> handicapping conditions. The introduction to this publication states:

"Verification is a team process and not a product of a certain assessment tool or the subjective reactions of one professional. The school district is by state and federal rules, responsible for verification of all handicapped students."<sup>2</sup> Foster

<sup>1</sup>Nebraska Department of Education, *Guidelines for the Verification of Speech Handicapped, Learning Disabled, Educable Mentally Retarded and Behaviorally Impaired in the State of Nebraska*. Lincoln: Nebraska Department of Education, 1983.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

parents may ask the school district to show them the publication. Many of the foster children might be able to receive assistance under the definition of "Behaviorally Impaired."

Who are the handicapped according to PL 94-142? The following definitions are provided as the Nebraska Revised Education Statutes:

**Statutory Provision 43-604**

**Handicapped Children; definitions:**

(1) **Special education** shall mean the provision of educational experiences and services through the use of special facilities and special adaptive classrooms, or either of the same, to provide special instruction to handicapped children or the supportive services necessary to diagnose, place, and maintain children in special education.

(2) **Handicapped children** shall mean either physically handicapped, educable mentally handicapped, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed children, children with specific learning disabilities, or such other children as shall be defined by the State Department of Education.

(3) **Physically handicapped children** shall mean children (a) who are residents of Nebraska, (b) who are visually handicapped, acoustically handicapped, defective in speech, cardiopathic, tubercular, cerebral palsied, orthopedically handicapped, or otherwise physically handicapped, and (c) who, by reason of their physical defects, are unable to attend regular public school classes, are not physically adapted to hold full-time membership in regular school facilities, or who in order to profit from regular school instruction, need facilities and procedures not available in the regular public school classes attended by physically normal children. Such definition shall include the physically handicapped with mental retardation if, in the opinion of the examining physician, educational psychologist, psychologist, or psychiatrist, the condition can be improved materially by education and treatment.

(4) **Educable mentally handicapped** shall mean children of school age who, because of retarded intellectual development as determined by individual psychological examination and deficiencies in social adjustment, require additional supportive services in order to function profitably within regular educational programming.

(5) **Behaviorally impaired** shall mean children with a serious condition exhibiting one or more of the characteristics specified in this subsection in sufficient frequency, duration, or intensity to require intervention for educational, social, or emotional growth and development. The term shall include children who are autistic. The behavioral impairment cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors. The characteristics of behaviorally impaired children include:

(a) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;

(b) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;

(c) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or

(d) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

(6) **Orthopedically handicapped children** shall mean those whose locomotion, mobility, or use of limbs are impaired by crippling because of (a) congenital anomaly, (b) birth injury, (c) trauma, (d) tumor, (e) infection, (f) disease, or (g) other conditions such as fragile bones or cardiac impairment.

(7) **Specific learning disability children** shall mean those children of school age who have verified disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in an inability to listen, think, speak, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Such term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or of educational disadvantage.

(8) **A mentally retarded child** shall mean a child who would benefit from training or education in the areas of self-care, social adjustment to his immediate surroundings, and vocationally related activities which will contribute to his economic usefulness in the home or in a specialized situation providing for activities such as sheltered work experience and a supervised living environment.

(9) **Multihandicapped children** shall mean children who have two or more coincidental and

educationally significant physical or psychological handicaps or both physical and psychological handicaps. This includes physically handicapped children with mental retardation if, in the opinion of the examining physician and psychologist, the child's condition can be improved materially by education and treatment.

### Parents Involved in School Programs

The following excerpts from a *Lincoln Sun* article (September 12, 1979) provide some helpful hints about parental (or foster parent) involvement. However, some legal questions arise as to the extent to which foster parents may or may not be involved in the IEP (Individual Educational Plan) development. A good idea would be to check with your case worker and determine whether your involvement in the IEP is possible. The Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska Department of Social Services are still in the process of developing policy as of June, 1983, and you should check with the case worker before you demand involvement in the IEP development.

### Public Law 94-142; Involvement:

The law requires public schools to prepare an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for each handicapped student. The student's parents should have a say in drafting the IEP. Here is what parents can do to keep tabs on what the schools are doing:

- If, after evaluating your child, public officials did not invite you to an IEP meeting, ask when the meeting will be scheduled. The law requires such a session.
- Before the IEP meeting, jot down questions you want to ask school officials. Make a list of what educational and special services you think the schools should provide. Bring the questions and list with you to the meeting.
- At the IEP meeting, make sure the plan will meet your children's special needs for learning how to take care of themselves, how to master basic skills in academic subjects, how to get along with other people, and how to master basic physical skills such as muscle coordination.

### Short, long term goals

- Have school officials explain what specific steps will be taken over the short term (three months) and the long term (school year) to achieve learning goals set.
- Find out how much time your child will spend in regular classes and how much time in special classes. Ask what school officials expect each setting to do for your child.
- If school officials admit that a certain service would be helpful for your child but that they can't supply it for one reason or another, ask for a full explanation. Then decide whether the service is important enough for you to press them to supply it.
- Find out when school officials plan to review your child's progress under the IEP. A date should be set, and you should be involved in the review.

### Appeal available

- Before parents leave an IEP meeting, they should ask about the process for appealing decisions made by school officials.

Parents may appeal school officials' evaluation and classification of their children as well as provisions made through the IEP. Parents also may appeal if they are being charged for services the school district is supposed to pay for. An appeal is initially made to the proper authority in the state education department.

Parents who plan an appeal should be prepared. . .

—to show why school officials' evaluation and classification of their children is in error. This may be based on other professional opinions or experiences in other schools.

—to show why the IEP as decided by school officials will not meet the needs of their children. Again, this position may be based on other professional opinion and experience.



**4** Participants will be aware of the areas of development that affect teens and their relationships to their communities .

Discuss and complete statements given.

Discuss rationale given for basic life skills.

**OBJECTIVE 4**

**Participants will be aware of the areas of development that affect teens and their relationships to their communities.**

**Worksheet #10**

Identify some areas of concern for a teenager in a new community.

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What are some things we can do to make his or her entry easier?

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**R**EVIEW development areas on pages P-2 to P-4. As we get to know our teens better, we can determine where they are developmentally in these areas and begin to help them progress.

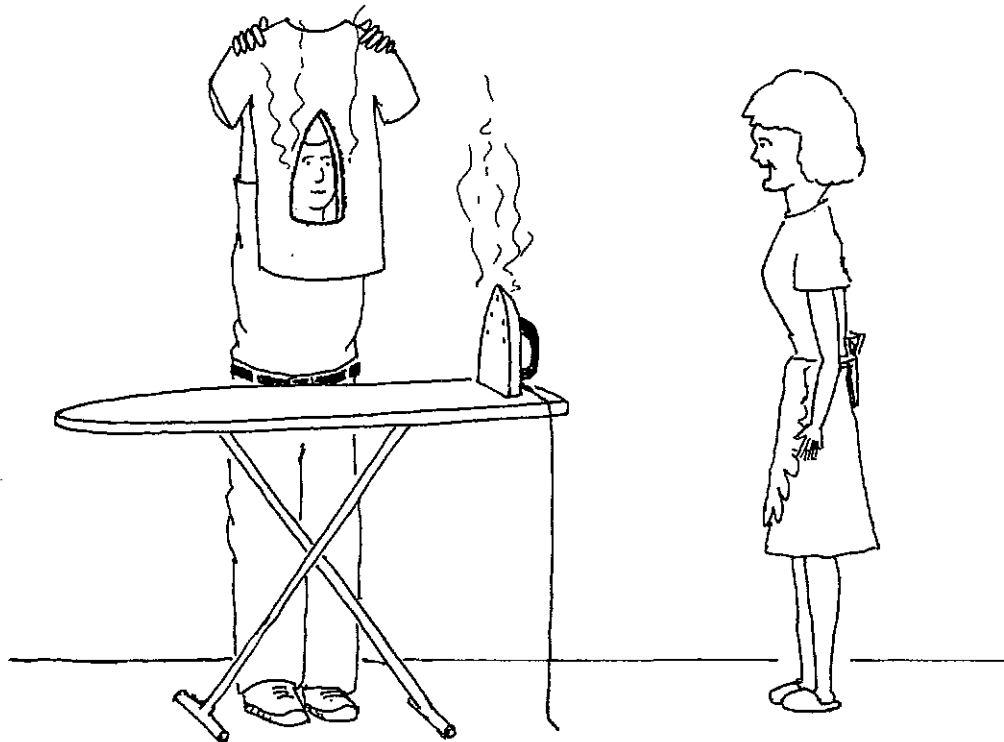
### Basic Life Skills

Another area of development that will show up almost immediately in your relationship with your teens is that of basic life skills. This area covers such things as employment skills, career planning, selection and care of clothing, making a bed, and washing hair. Sometimes it involves personal hygiene and while these are sensitive matters, these are skills teens need. If the teens are lacking in these basic life skills, discuss it with them and develop a plan. Use the problem solving loop and help them gain these skills as soon as possible. They should be discussed with sensitivity to the teens' feelings and in a non-judgmental way. If you are able to help the teens in these life skills, not only will they be able to perform them, but

they will gain self-confidence by being in control of their environment.

In the area of personal grooming, one possible way to help your children is to have a hair stylist, a home economics teacher, or a cosmetics consultant come into your home and show the whole family about hair styles, importance of hair washing, clipping nails, and proper use of cosmetics. A home care consultant such as a home economics teacher can teach skills about sewing, mending, ironing, and washing. Foster parents should not assume that all teens know how to use a washing machine. Unless you check it out, you may find that dark colors have been washed with whites and you end up with newly tinted clothing.

Knowing how to take care of themselves and their surroundings not only gives them confidence but also a feeling of being useful and worthwhile and a feeling of belonging because they are contributing members of the family. They can do a job and the family depends on their doing it. They are needed.



*Well, at least it was an old shirt. I'm sure next time you'll do better!*

**5** Participants will explore various behavior and misbehavior problems that may arise.

Discuss personal hygiene.

Discuss lack of motivation.

Discuss goals of misbehavior.

Complete stress check list (Worksheet #11 on page P-67). Discuss stress levels.

Discuss bedwetting and the problems that go with it.

Complete and discuss list of why teens might lie. Some reasons might be:

- fear of punishment
- insecurity
- impress others
- get attention
- embarrassment
- survival or safety
- expectations too high
- copying others
- testing people
- power
- protect others.

Discuss stealing and why a teen might steal.

- proving he can do it
- for buying power
- revenge, trying to hurt
- to share with others
- it's fun (risk taking)
- envy
- different concept of property
- impulse
- and many of the ones listed for reasons to lie.

Role play situations given.

Discuss why teens run away.

Discuss manipulation, bullying, lack of respect for authorities, and abuse of property.

**Objective 5 (Continued)**

Use Clarke's Behavior Chain on page P-68.

Some group activities that you might use have been suggested by the author.

1. Choose a behavior (interrupting, saying put-downs, hitting, etc.). Each person write the problem in the middle of the chain and write an example of each communication inside the links. Share your examples in groups of 3 or 4 to get more options for each link.
2. Identify which links you would use to tell a high school senior she will not have a kegger for the party in your home.
3. Share examples of ways in which each link could be misused.
4. Identify the links that actually ask for a behavior change.
5. Identify the links that encourage independent thinking.
6. Identify the links that encourage responsibility.

**OBJECTIVE 5**

Participants will explore various behavior and misbehavior problems that may arise.

**Personal Hygiene**

**G**OOD PERSONAL HYGIENE is a trait all of us would like our teens to have. Many teens coming into foster care have poor personal hygiene. How to help teens develop good hygiene can be a real problem for some foster parents.

Tact is required to encourage teens to change how they look and dress without communicating that they are less than okay. We need to try to pinpoint why teens look and dress the way they do.

Do they know how to take a bath correctly, wash their hair, clean their fingernails, and so on? Are they aware of how to use deodorant, razors, hair conditioners, and other aids to good grooming? If they are girls, have they ever been taught how to apply make-up correctly or how to curl their hair and other skills?

Are they using their sloppy appearance to gain attention? This may be how they received attention in the past, and you may be playing right into this negative reinforcement cycle.

Does their sloppy appearance demonstrate feelings of worthlessness and undesirableness? If they looked as good as their peer group, would they feel out of character because they feel they are bad and worthless and should look the part?

Once you have determined why you feel their appearance is not all that it could be, then you are in a position to do something about it.

Education on how to take care of the body, hair, clothes, etc., may be all they need. They may need encouragement until good personal hygiene becomes habit. Your teens may have come from a home where good grooming was not important and almost impossible to attain. They may need a lot of positive reinforcement before you can assume that the problem is solved.

If your teens are seeking attention through their sloppy appearance, you can help them improve by reinforcing only good appearance and ignoring sloppy appearance. If sloppy habits are so obnoxious that you cannot just ignore them, then you will need to take action.

The action you take must place the problem on the teen's shoulders, not yours. A message to the teen might be:

“Andy, you need to take a bath and change your underwear every morning.”

If your teens' sloppy appearance is displaying a poor self-image, you will need to handle things a little differently. Pick out some part of the teens' appearance that is good and reinforce it. A message to the teen might be:

“Shawna, your hair is such a pretty color. Would you like for me to help you curl it?”

It is a long slow process to build self-image. Don't get in too big a hurry. Remember always to be positive. Be sure to let your teens know when you are pleased with their appearance.

You may need to make house rules concerning cleanliness. Examples:

You must take a bath each day.  
You must wear clean clothes.

If it is a house rule and applies to everyone, the teen will not feel quite so threatened.

**Lack of Motivation**

“I can't get Johnny to do a thing. He eats, sleeps, goes to school, and does only what he absolutely has to.”

This complaint is heard from biological parents and foster parents alike. Several extra factors may be adding to foster teens' lack of motivation.

Change of diet and eating habits may cause them to over-eat (or under-eat) and sleep more. They may also have some catching up to do.

"Sleep is the cure for all evils" is an old saying that probably belongs here. You don't have to think about what is going on if you are asleep. . . It may be a way of hiding from problems.

The natural growth spurts that occur with teens may increase food intake and sleep requirements.

We have already discussed teens' possible reluctance to do things for fear of failure and lack of knowledge needed to perform the task.

Lack of motivation is but one of the problems the foster teen may experience. The teens may have other needs they are consciously or unconsciously trying to achieve, and this is really the reason for inappropriate behavior. These reasons might be called the goals of misbehavior. In order to help our teens in the slow, painful process of behavior change, we must understand why they behave the way they do.

### **Goals of Misbehavior**

Rudolf Dreikurs, a prominent psychiatrist, classed children's misbehavior (or lack of behavior) into four broad categories. He suggested there are goals in each misbehavior that the teen may or may not be aware of. Those goals are:

#### **Attention**

Usually teens prefer to get attention through useful ways. However, if this has not worked (possibly before coming to your house), they seek attention in useless ways. Even negative attention is better than being ignored. We can break this by giving attention through positive behavior reinforcement and, when possible, ignoring bad behavior. Remember: Catch them being good.

#### **Power**

Teens are learning to control their own lives. In learning how to do this, they may go overboard

and seek to do only as they want. "You can't make me do anything" is frequently heard. Often parents and teens engage in a power struggle that neither of them can win. (Both of them can lose.) When dealing with power seeking teens, adults must refrain from getting angry and engaging in a power struggle. Back up and think of another solution. Use the problem solving loop.

#### **Revenge**

Teens who have the feeling of having lost a power struggle are convinced they are not lovable. They tend to feel significant only when they are hurting others as they feel they have been hurt. Parents need to be sure they do not fall into the trap of retaliating. All this does is set the stage for further attack. Try to identify the original problem and work on solving it. In some cases the teen may not know the problem either, and you'll need to search together. Use reflective listening and parent messages to assist.

#### **Display of Inadequacy**

Teens who fall into this group may have got there long before you met them. They have given up hope of succeeding and would just as soon you would not expect anything of them either. They respond passively or not at all.

Recovery from this attitude is slow. Focus must be on the teens' assets and strengths. Encourage any change. (Even anger is an improvement because they are feeling and reacting again.) You may want to seek professional help if you feel overwhelmed by the problem.

So far we have discussed problems of personal hygiene, lack of motivation, and the goals of misbehavior that Dreikurs identifies. Other problems foster parents may encounter with their teens include bedwetting or teens who lie and steal. While these are unpleasant experiences, foster parents must try to understand that these problems do exist and try to probe the reasons behind the behavior.

**Bedwetting**

Bedwetting has got to be one of the most frustrating problems that confront foster parents. Its causes are numerous and its cures are obscure and elusive.

Some of the causes are physical. A good physical should be done on each child who comes into foster care; however, the doctor might not have been aware of the problem and not checked for causes. A return trip is in order. Even if the problem is not physical, the doctor will probably have some suggestions about things to try.

A good precaution is to put a plastic sheet on the bed to be assigned to a foster child. It can always be removed later if not needed.

Bedwetting is the teen's problem. Don't take responsibility for it. Teach him or her how to do the laundry and make up the bed. Don't shame or put down the teen. Treat it as a factual problem.

**Lying**

Foster parents are often shocked to find that they have serious problems with teens who lie. This behavior is sometimes related to developmental gaps. It might be a means of controlling others or getting back at adults, or it could be a form of denial or a means of meeting a fantasy or wish. Thinking about the reasons for this behavior is important. Let's see if we can, as a group, identify and discuss some of the possible reasons for it.

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**ACTIVITY**

Let's list as many reasons as we can that teens might lie.

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What can we do about it when we know they are lying? Often we know why they might be lying but we aren't sure. Sometimes we need to take a guess.

Example:

"John, I know you went to the pizza parlor after school. I am upset because you told me you had stayed at school working on your math. I think you made up the math story to keep out of trouble."

He could then answer, "Sam said that's what he tells his mom," or "Yeh, I thought you'd be mad," or "Gary said he'd beat me up if I didn't go with him."

Your guess may be wrong, but it gives you a starting place. It also causes the teens to think about what motivates them to do and say the things they do. It gives them ownership and responsibility for their decisions.

Finding the reason for telling the lie is not necessarily the end of this situation. Consequences of dishonesty may need to be added to the consequences of the misbehavior.

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**Stealing**

Many of the reasons for stealing are the same as those for lying. In some cases, it seems to be a status symbol among youth in school or other groups. It could also be that part of their character development is lacking: they do not understand property ownership. Let's discuss it and be alerted to the possibility that it might happen with our foster children.



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## ACTIVITY

Many of the reasons for lying also apply to stealing. There are some others.

Let's list some of them:

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The approach to handling stealing is much the same as lying.

Role play some of the following situations concerning stealing.

1. Your foster boy comes home with several pens and other school supplies that you know he did not have money to buy.
  2. You have been confronted by your teenage daughter who is upset that your foster teen has just returned from town wearing her sweater. Your foster teen says it's her sweater.
  3. While shopping with your foster daughter, she leaves you for a short time to try on some clothes while you look at some shoes. After you get home, you find a new blouse in her closet that you know she didn't buy.
  4. You have received a phone call from a friend at school who saw your foster son carry a crate of empty pop bottles from the neighborhood laundry to the grocery store next door.
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### Running Away

Foster teens run away from foster homes for many reasons. Two that are fairly easy to understand are when the teen is unhappy in his placement or has family or friends he would like to live with.

They also run away for reasons that are very complex and hard to understand.

Self-esteem and feelings of being loved and lovable may play a big part in decisions to run away. They may really like it at your home and run away because their feelings of love and attachment may be very frightening to them.

Safety for a teen on the run is a major concern. If you have a teen who comes up missing, you need to contact your case worker immediately. Don't wait until morning or office hours. If you do not know how to contact your case worker after office hours, find out. If you cannot reach your case worker, call the Child Welfare Information hot line—(800) 742-7575 or 471-3305.

### Other Misbehaviors

Surly attitudes, bullying and lack of respect for authorities, abuse of property, and manipulation are behaviors that usually begin to decrease as teens' self-images grow more positive.

Reflective listening, parent messages, structuring, rules, limits, and consequences are all parenting techniques that will help you through these behaviors.

Be sure you communicate to the teens how you feel and what kind of behavior you would like to see. These behaviors may have been acceptable in places they have been in the past. They will not recognize these behaviors as unacceptable if you do not communicate your feelings and desires.

### Stress in Our Lives

The problems listed above are all examples of stress in the lives of the foster family. We cannot avoid some stress. Like problems of misbehavior, stress can be changed only when we know it exists and when we confront it honestly. A good way of starting a discussion with your teen is for each of you to use one of the many stress instruments available as the basis of a discussion between the parents and the teens. Worksheet #11 can be used, or you can add other items of your own.



**Worksheet #11**

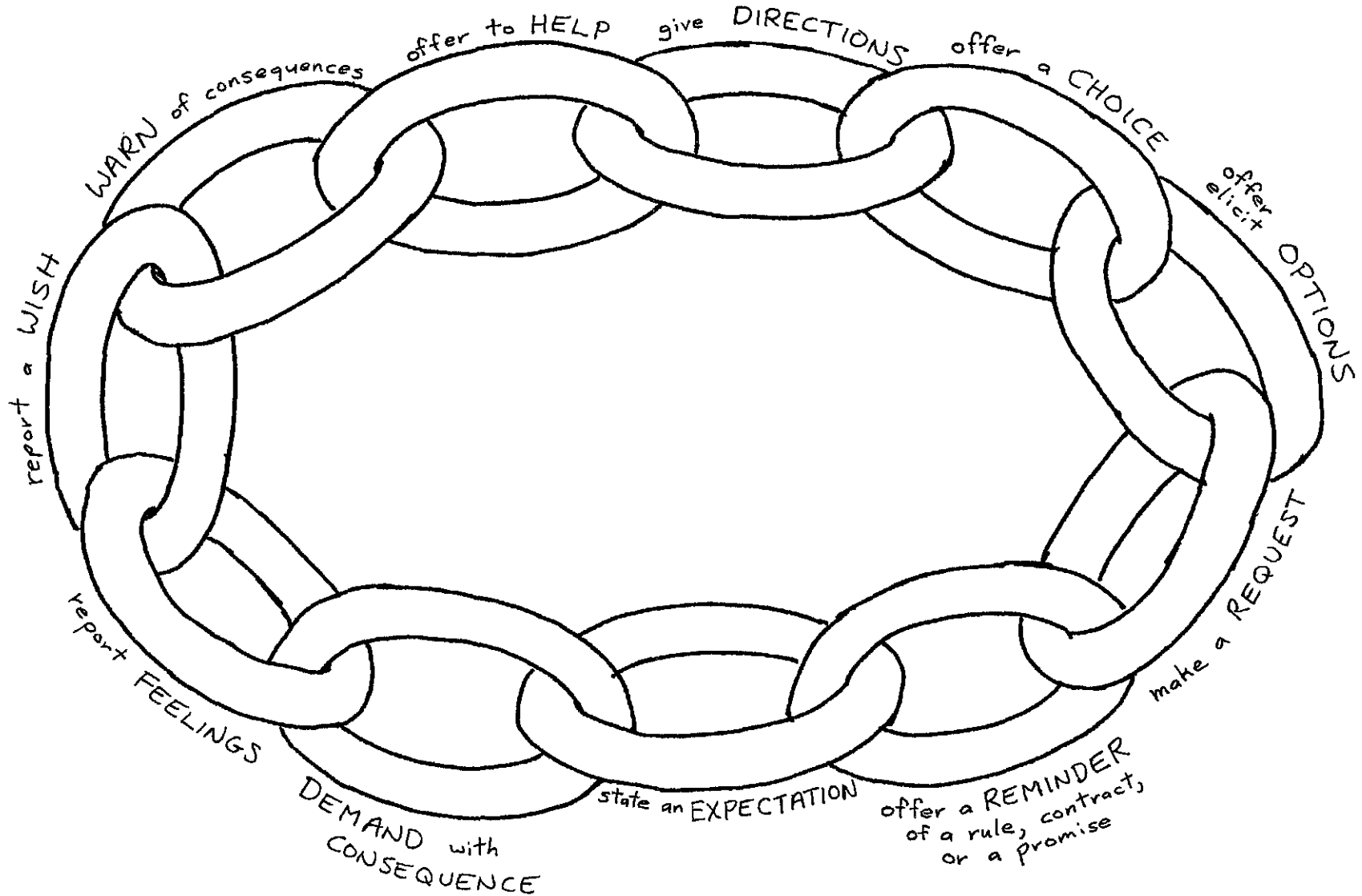
**Food for Thought**

How much stress is in your life? Your foster teens'? Each of you score your own papers, then transfer the impact value to the Your Score column or the Teens' Score column, and use the results as the basis for a discussion.

Event in the last year	Value	Your Score	Teens' Score
Developing new friends	18	_____	_____
Quarrel with neighbors	26	_____	_____
Change in job or school	31	_____	_____
New job or school	46	_____	_____
Pregnancy	49	_____	_____
Divorce/break-up of family	86	_____	_____
Change in church activities	19	_____	_____
Family member jailed	61	_____	_____
New drug or alcohol problems	59	_____	_____
Minor violation of law	34	_____	_____
Involvement in physical fight	38	_____	_____
Purchasing own home	40	_____	_____
Moving to new home	40	_____	_____
Addition of family member(s)	43	_____	_____
Problem with children	49	_____	_____
Problem with parents	49	_____	_____
Serious change in social life	32	_____	_____
Break-up with steady	51	_____	_____
Period of homelessness	51	_____	_____
Change in sleeping habits	16	_____	_____
Change in eating habits	15	_____	_____
<b>Total</b>		_____	_____

The higher your score, the greater is your stress, and you may want to examine your lifestyle.

# Behavior Change Chain



P-68

From *Ouch, That Hurts!* by Jean Illsley Clarke  
Daisy Press  
16535 9th Ave. N.  
Plymouth, MN 55447

T-110

# THE CHANGE CHAIN

## Eleven Ways to Ask People to Change

By Jean Illsley Clarke

**H**AVE YOU EVER wished you could get someone to change but not said anything because you didn't know what to say? Or said something that sounded critical when you didn't mean to be critical? Or given up, because people don't seem to change when you ask them? I have, many times.

When a person was doing something that was annoying or destructive for me or could be destructive for him, I knew of three things to do. I could  
 ignore it  
 criticize  
 ask the person to change.

Ignoring it usually didn't work. Criticizing often made it worse. Asking "Wouldn't you like to do this another way?" frequently brought an abrupt rejection.

The change chain, this golden chain of eleven links, provides us with eleven positive ways to tell people that we want them to do something, that we want them to change their behavior, or that we are concerned about one of their attitudes. The use of the chain does not guarantee success, (some people will say "no" eleven times), but it does increase our chances of being effective by providing us with lots of options.

Assume that someone has criticized you and you have decided not to ignore it and not to criticize back. Here is a list of the eleven links and an example of how you could use each in this situation. Be sure that you use each one without criticism in your words, voice, facial expression, or body posture.

- **Report feelings**—"I feel angry when you criticize me."
- **Report a wish**—"I wish you would tell me what you want me to do instead of criticizing me."
- **Offer a warning**—"If you continue to criticize me, I may stop listening to you."
- **Offer to help**—"Do you need something from me?"
- **Give directions**—"I have trouble hearing you when you criticize me. Tell me what you want me to do in a gentle tone and don't call me stupid."
- **Offer a choice of two options**—"Do you want to discuss this calmly now, without critical words, or would you rather wait until tomorrow?"
- **Offer or elicit three or more options**—"Here are several ways you might get me to change my behavior."
  1. Tell me in a soft voice what you want me to do.
  2. Write me a note asking me to do something specific.
  3. Call me tomorrow and tell me what you want me to do without using any "put down" words.
  4. Let me know when I do please you.
- **Make a request**—"Will you stop criticizing me and tell me what you wish I would do?"
- **Offer a reminder**—"Remember the agreement we made about not criticizing each other?"
- **State an expectation**—"You are important to me. I expect you to stop criticizing me and find a way to talk to me that is easier for me to respond to."

- **Issue a demand with consequences**—“Find a way to tell me what you want without putting me down. If you keep on criticizing me, I will avoid spending time with you.”

By now you realize that the links are connected in a chain as a symbol of the support and helpful boundaries that a chain can offer. Think about the chain that holds a ship to a dock to keep it from floating away while cargo is unloaded. Recall the chain across a path that keeps cars from roaring through an area that is reserved as a peaceful retreat for hikers. Feel the golden links that circle a wrist and remind us that someone loves us.

The links are not arranged in a hierarchy of least to best but in a continuous chain to remind us that each link is important and is most effective in some situations and least in others. It also reminds us that our chances of success are as strong as our weakest link. Our job is to keep each link strong and to increase our knowledge of when to use each one.

Sometimes we try one that doesn't work, so later we try another one. Or we combine two links.

For example, when Tom talks with the adolescents in his charge about truancy, he helps them generate a list of things they can do (elicit options link). The list includes continuing to skip school. Tom tells the young people that they can choose what to do. They voice their preferences as they discuss the options. He reminds them that if they continue to skip school, they will be suspended, which will affect their work programs (warn of outcomes link). The young people say, “Hey, you said we could choose and now you say we will have to suffer the consequences!” Tom says, “Yes, you can choose and you will also have to live with the results of your choice. All people make choices and all of us experience consequences, sometimes pleasant, sometimes unpleasant.” Tom used the elicit options link to encourage thinking and the warn of outcomes link to encourage responsible consideration of the future.

Here is a description of each link, its uses and its misuses. While all links are suitable for use with adults, certain links support the developmental tasks of children at different ages. The examples

of ways links can help children are general. Watch your child's responses to tell whether a specific link enhances his or her growth or seems manipulative or heavy at any given time.

- **Link: Report a feeling.**

**Description:** Report a negative or a positive feeling and relate it to a behavior. Own the feeling. Say, “I feel. . .” Do not project it onto the other person with a “You make me feel. . .”

**Examples:** “I feel frustrated when you let things go until the last minute.” (Angry looks)  
 “When you drive this fast I feel scared.” (Shudder)  
 “I'm glad you kept your promise to me.” (Hug, kiss, smile)

**Strengths:** This link encourages awareness of, concern for, and responsiveness to the feelings of others. Report feelings to teenagers, but remember they may appear not to care because they are in the process of separating emotionally from their parents.

**Hazards:** Constant reports of feelings without asking directly for behavior changes are manipulative and encourage the child to be overly responsible for the feelings of others. This produces adults who are “pleasers” and who support dysfunctional family activities such as chemical dependency. Or a child may find the burden is too heavy and decide to care only about his own feelings.

- **Link: Report a wish.**

**Description:** Tell a specific behavior you wish the person would do. Remember that you are only expressing a wish, not asking for a specific change. Avoid generalities such as,

“I wish you would do better,” or  
 “I wish you would be a good girl,”  
 or “I wish you were nicer to me.”

**Examples:** “I wish you would do your homework in the evening and avoid this morning hassle.” (Sigh)  
 “I wish you would drive within the speed limit.”  
 “I wish you would value yourself enough to take your promises seriously.” (Hand on shoulder)

**Strengths:** This link helps people learn how to be successful at pleasing other people, plus the skills listed under report a feeling.

**Hazards:** Same as report a feeling.

- **Link: Warn of outcome.**

**Description:** A warning is a reminder to think about the possible outcomes of a behavior or an attitude. The outcome can be positive or negative. Remember to describe the outcome clearly. Avoid generalities such as “No good will come of that,” or “You will get hurt!”

**Examples:** “This morning homework hassle is a drag. Do you think the family is going to put up with your grumpiness and help you catch the school bus indefinitely?”  
 “Think about what often happens to people who drive above the speed limit. Is that what you want for yourself?”  
 “If you continue to break your promises to me, I will not feel like trusting you.” (Back away)  
 “If you continue to be this thoughtful of other people, you will have lots of friends.”

**Strengths:** Encouraging people to think about the outcomes of their behavior fosters clear thinking, responsibility, and independence and is

helpful for teens of all ages but especially around age 14 when they are recycling early separation tasks.

**Hazards:** Overuse of this link, or careless, generalized use or global threats may result in specific fears or general anxiety and worry. Or the child may give up trying to cope with the warnings and decide that she or he will ignore possible consequences of her or his behavior.

- **Link: Offer to help.**

**Description:** Offer to help in a general or a specific way. Avoid offering to take responsibility away from a person or preventing the person from learning and growing, as in, “Here, let me do that for you. You don’t know how.”

**Examples:** Open body posture.  
 “Do you want me to help you set up a schedule for the preparation of your term paper?”  
 “I am scared about your safety when you speed. Do you want me to help you in some way?”  
 “Do you want ideas from me on how to handle the promise you made?”  
 “Do you want some help from me?”

**Strengths:** Offers of assistance encourage trust and respect for self and set the stage for the development of cooperative skills. Offers of help are appropriate for people of all ages and especially so when people are starting something new. Examples: 12- or 13-year-olds starting adolescence with all of the new sex role skills they will need to learn, and adults or teenagers who are entering any new activity or group.

**Hazards:** The overuse of offers to help leads to overdependence, lack of responsibility, lack of initiative, the mistrust of one's own ability, and a denial of one's power to be in charge of one's own life. Offers to help that are appropriate at one age level are patronizing if offered at a later age.

- **Link: Give directions.**

**Description:** Directions should be clear. If you are asking for a behavior or attitude change, your directions are often more effective if they contain a reason and a specific statement of behavior to avoid (do this, because, don't do this). Use statements that describe behavior such as "Remember to say please and thank you."

**Examples:** "Do your homework in the evening. You are crabby and push on all of us when you try to do it at the last minute. Don't fool yourself into thinking that you'll have time enough in the morning."  
 "Stop speeding. You are risking your safety and the safety of others. Drive within the speed limit."  
 "Keep your promise."  
 "Your don't care attitude about standards will pull down your grades. Pick one or two things to do well today and do them neatly and completely."

**Strengths:** Clear directions offer standards and define limits. They create an environment in which children can feel confident that they can become competent and self-sufficient and can get their own needs met. Understanding directions enables them to please other people because the child knows what other people want. Clear directions are supportive for anyone who is starting something new.

**Hazards:** Too many directions discourage independent thinking and invite overdependence. If a person feels overburdened with directions, she or he may give up or find manipulative ways to ignore or sabotage the directions.

- **Link: Offer a choice of two things.**

**Description:** "You may do either this or this" offers a choice with limited options. The technique is often referred to as "the grandma question," as in "Do you want an apple or a peach?" and a cookie is not an option. The two items offered should be somewhat parallel and should not involve a threat.

**Examples:** "Are you going to do your homework before you go to bed, or are you going to set your alarm clock for six and do it before breakfast?"  
 "Are you willing to stay within the speed limit, or shall I drive today?"  
 "You promised to sweep the garage today. Are you going to do that this morning or this afternoon?"

**Strengths:** Two choices are often used as a convenience or to assure compliance when there is some issue of safety or when the person requesting the behavior is in a hurry. Choosing between two alternatives strengthens thinking because the person gets to decide which thing to select.

**Hazards:** Since the person offering the two options is clearly in charge of the possible activities, the invitation to think is present but limited. This link does not encourage responsibility, and, if grossly overused, can invite overdependence as in, "You haven't told me what I can do yet." Or, if the child tires

of constantly having someone limit his or her options, he or she may use deliberate or manipulative ways to defy both options. The choice of two should not be offered unless the choices are appropriate and unless the person offering is willing to carry through on the offer.

- **Link: Offer or elicit three or more options.**

**Description:** This method involves inviting the other person to think of several options or making several suggestions that would be practical or whimsical solutions to the problem.

**Examples:** “I hear you say that driving fast is fun. What are six safe things you do that are fun?”  
 “David, you are to practice half an hour today. You can do it before school, during lunch hour, or after school. Can you think of another way you could do your 30 minutes of practice?”  
 “You have not been keeping your promises recently. Let’s think what you could do. You could continue to break them and deal with the consequences. You could break half of them and keep the rest. You could keep them all. You could stop making promises you don’t intend to keep. You could do more things when the need arises so you aren’t in a position to make so many promises. You could take three days’ vacation from all promises and then start over and make only reasonable promises you intend to keep.”

**Strengths:** The use of three or more options strengthens thinking, responsibility, and competence. It supports the growth of competency and responsibility in 6- to 12-year-olds and affirms independence and separation in teenagers. It helps

adults avoid the limitations of either/or thinking.

**Hazards:** Overused, or used exclusively, the three or more options link does not offer enough structure, direction, and guidance to other people. Children or adults who are subjected to it incessantly often act whiny and nervous and show evidences of insecurity. A person who feels overwhelmed by too many choices may become passive and long for the comfort and direction of firmer structure.

- **Link: Make a Request.**

**Description:** A request is a question that begins with the words “Will you” or “Are you willing to . . .” or “Is someone willing to . . .” “Who will . . .” may sound like a request but often holds a hidden demand or plea, as in, “Who will help me finish this disagreeable job?” A request is a suitable link to use ONLY when both affirmative and negative answers are acceptable. Asking, “Will you set the table now?”, receiving no for an answer and then saying, “Well, set it anyway,” is crooked, and crooked questions encourage crooked answers.

**Examples:** “David, will you take your shower in the evening to leave more time for yourself in the morning?”  
 “Will you stop speeding?”  
 “You promised to go to the movie with us tonight. Do you still intend to go?”  
 “We are going to the game at seven. Do you want to go with us?”

**Strengths:** Requests encourage thinking and independence. Requests encourage competence and independence in 6- to 12-year-olds and support the separateness of teenagers.



- Hazards:** The hazards of overuse are apt to rear their ugly heads when people forget that they really want someone to do something and say, "Will you?" as in, "Will you stop speeding?" When the answer is no, they are stuck with that answer unless they are willing to say, "Sorry, I shouldn't have asked that question. My mistake. There is not an option about doing that. Slow down right now."
- **Link: Offer a reminder of a rule, a contract, or a promise.**
- Description:** When you offer a reminder, you make a statement that is designed to encourage the listener to think, to remember, and to act. It can be given with a supportive sound or with a warning ring. In the latter case the hidden message is, "Remember the consequences part of the contract."
- Examples:** "David, remember our agreement about what we are each responsible to do before breakfast."  
"Remember the rules about safe driving."  
"You made me a promise on Thursday about my birthday." Sometimes a reminder is given by pointing a finger (at an unmade bed) or handing the person an object (an unemptied waste basket).
- Strengths:** Reminders encourage thinking and responsibility.
- Hazards:** Constant reminders become nagging and encourage irresponsibility and lack of attentiveness. They sound as if the person doing the reminding is willing to be in charge of the other person's behavior. Overuse of reminders can produce temporary deafness or resentment in older children and adults (Get off my back).
- **Link: State an expectation.**
- Description:** This link involves a simple but explicit statement of expected behavior.
- Examples:** "I expect you to be ready and at the bus stop when the school bus comes."  
"You are important to me. I expect you to drive safely."  
"I'm depending on you to keep your promise."
- Strengths:** Expectations give signals about who the speaker thinks the other person is. They offer a solid background for children to live up to and to push against. Teenagers can use them to reflect upon who they are. "Am I really this person you expect me to be? Am I still OK if I don't live up to your expectations?" Sometimes adolescents defy the expectations to achieve separateness.
- Hazards:** Expectations may be inappropriate or too general to be useful. "I expect you to be the man of the house now that Daddy is gone." Too many expectations can feel overwhelming and may be met with over-compliance in which the individual gives away his power to think and act for himself and to establish his own identity. He may conclude that he must be perfect, or always be strong, or always please, or constantly try harder or always hurry. Or, high expectations may result in the opposite behavior which is a "so what?" attitude.
- **Link: Demand with consequence.**
- Description:** A demand with consequence is usually thought of as being a directive, "Shape up," followed by a negative consequence, "or ship out." It can also have a

positive consequence. "Continue to treat me like this and I will love you forever," or "Keep up your studies as you have been and you will make the dean's list for sure," or "Continue this type of work and attitude and you will make the team." In either case, the sender is in charge, is doing the thinking, setting the standards, and setting the limits.

Examples: "You are not to watch TV until you have finished your practicing."  
 "If you miss the bus, you will have to walk to school today."  
 "Drive within the speed limit. Any time that you exceed it you will lose the use of the car for the weekend."  
 "If you break your promise I will be mad at you."  
 "If you keep your promise, I will be very proud of you."

Strengths: This link is useful when it is necessary to set limits. It may encourage responsibility in teens and frequently motivates adults to reconsider their behaviors or attitudes.

Hazards: Too many or too few demands and consequences invite irresponsibility. Overuse of this link results in squashed or rebellious children, children who are not thinking for themselves but are responding to the thinking of the other person. Overuse discourages thinking and responsibility for self and encourages blind obedience. ("I was just following orders.") The underuse of it encourages people to believe that they are not responsible for thinking through their own behavior. ("I didn't think it mattered.") Consequences are usually most effective if they are specific and short-term. "If you don't keep your promise, I will fuss at you this evening," is

more useful than "I will hate you forever."

Another aspect of consequences is the need to be sure that they penalize the right person. Remember, keep the discomfort where it belongs. The teenager who is grounded from driving can no longer do family errands. Better to ground him from his pleasure driving and increase the amount of family driving he is to do during the consequence period.

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## ACTIVITY

How often do I use each link?

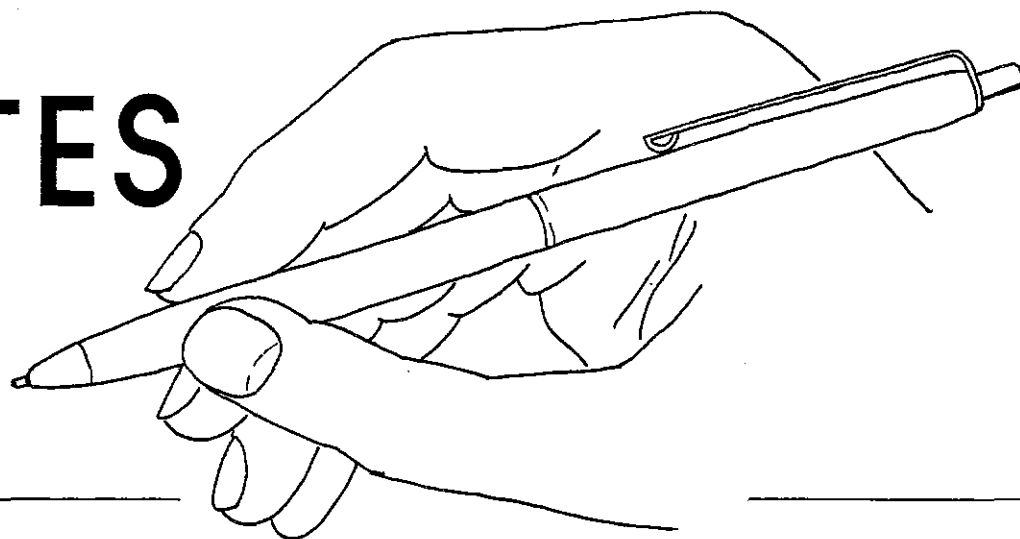
For one day, record how many times you use each link in the Change Chain. Put a (+) by the item if it got the desired change and a (-) if it did not. Think about which links you use most often and whether you would be more effective if you used different links.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. If someone is asking me to change my behavior, which two options do I respond to most readily? Least readily?
  2. Do I use most often the ones I like best?
  3. Have I asked people I am close to which links they prefer, or do I just assume that I know?
  4. Are some of my links as strong as steel and others as weak as paper?
- 

The foster parents will need to use their best communication skills when dealing with sensitive issues of personal hygiene, lying, stealing, and lack of motivation. They are all tied up with self-esteem. Parents need to use the behavior chain, "I" messages, and reflective listening. They need to give straight, clear messages.

# NOTES



A series of horizontal lines for writing notes, starting from the top of the page and extending to the bottom.

## REFERENCES

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# Session Six



# Sexuality

# Trainer's Guide

## Sexuality

### OBJECTIVES:

	Page
1. Participants will learn about the different types of language used in discussing sexuality and learn the five different aspects (or areas) of human sexuality.	T-121
2. Participants will be aware of their own values and attitudes toward sexual issues.	T-128
Worksheet #12	T-129
3. Participants will explore ideas that would help teens coming from sexually abusive homes develop healthy attitudes toward their sexuality.	T-131
Film Summary —“Incest: The Victim Nobody Believes	T-132
4. Participants will learn how to help teens who are acting out sexually to resolve their problems.	T-135
5. Participants will become aware of resources available to help teens cope with problem pregnancies.	T-137
6. Participants will learn about venereal diseases.	T-139

**1** Participants will learn about the different types of language used in discussing sexuality and learn the five different aspects (or areas) of human sexuality.

Foster parents need to be sensitive to the fact that adolescence is a period of rapid physical, emotional, and intellectual growth, and the whole area of body image as it relates to the teen's self-image is an area that requires understanding, compassion, and sensitivity on the part of the adults who are dealing with adolescents.

Sexuality is a subject that is usually difficult for people to understand and to communicate openly about. In order to relate well to others concerning sexuality, we need to be in touch with and comfortable about our own personal sexuality.

In our sexually repressive society, parents are usually lacking in skills and knowledge with which to deal effectively with issues of sexuality. Parents are often emotionally uncomfortable when sexual issues emerge and generally do a poor job of providing an atmosphere in which sexually healthy individual growth is optimized. (Remember, we can't blame ourselves for this. Most of us grew up in sexually repressive families!)

Point out that four types of language are used in reference to human sexuality: (1) childhood, (2) scientific, (3) common discourse, and (4) street language. Have participants read the introduction and material for Objective 1 beginning on page P-78.

Have participants read the five aspects of sexuality on pages P-79, P-80, and P-81 and discuss the implications for a broader definition of sexuality they provide.

# Sexuality

## OBJECTIVE 1

Participants will learn about the different types of language used in discussing sexuality and learn the five different aspects (or areas) of human sexuality.

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS to stop a conversation in a social gathering is to say the word, "sex." It will get attention in all groups regardless of the age. Few other topics generate as much emotion, embarrassment, or concern, and yet one of the difficulties in our culture is that we pretend that we do not know different types of language are used to communicate about the topic of sex. When we hear a child repeat a term in so-called "street language," we tend to recoil and worse yet tell the child, "I don't know what you mean." Foster parents as well as biological parents must recognize that there are four general types of discourse around the topics of sexuality. We need to know each of the language types and be able to talk with children about this vital topic. If your moral values are such that you are offended by the use of street language, tell your teens so and they can deal with it.

### Four Types of Language

1. **Childhood language of sex.** Words like, "crack, wiener, pee," which children have learned from other children or from misinformed or uptight adults
2. **Scientific language of sex.** Words like vas deferens, clitoris, copulation. It's okay not to be an expert here, but general familiarization is important.

3. **Common discourse.** These are words and phrases used in "polite" conversation. Common discourse often consists of a number of innuendos, body language, and voice and tone inflections. The most common sexual word in the English language is, "IT." "They were in the back seat of a car doing it!"
4. **Street language of sex.** Slang words which are sometimes considered "dirty," "filthy," or "foul," make up the basis for the street language. "Fuck" is the most common street word used to describe intercourse, but sometimes young children hear it and they repeat it without really having the concept of intercourse. If you have trouble with these words, let your teens know that it is "your problem."

Bell<sup>1</sup> points out the power of words used to describe the sexual organs:

Words naming sexual organs have a lot of power. While "penis" and "testicles" (so-called proper terms) are quite sober and unemotional, they are not often used. Some families have their own private, even silly words.

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth Bell, *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives*, New York: Random House, 1980, pp. 11-12.



Slang is especially colorful and strong:

<i>penis</i>	<i>testicles</i>
cock schmuck	balls
prick schlong	nuts
dick pecker	jewels
stick thing	rocks

... Slang is tricky because we use these words in many different ways: to express fondness and pride (then they are funny, friendly, loving, playful); to put down or to make fun of somebody; or to hurt someone, to do violence to them.

The common operating definition of sex in our culture is SEX = INTERCOURSE. When we hear the word "sex," some variation of this word "intercourse" pops into our minds. This definition of sex does not capture the wholeness and richness of human sexuality. This section on sexuality attempts to expand and broaden our awareness and perceptions of what Dennis Dailey and Richard Spano (University of Kansas sexual therapists) call our "sexual beingness."

"Teaching" children about sex often consists of not teaching them about sex. We start in on this task when they are little and forge onward. We put girl babies in pink and boy babies in blue. We keep clothes on both sexes at all times. We tell them not to touch themselves or others "there." We say, "when you're older we'll talk about 'that,'" or "that isn't nice to talk about." Then we put children off with strange tales of birds and bees, storks and cabbage leaves, or if we are truly enlightened, we give them some basic ideas about anatomy and making babies. When we are all through, kids and adults alike both come away wondering, "Is that all?"

The answer is, "No!" That's not all; there is a lot more to sexuality than most of us realize. Once again, as foster parents we are faced with an even tougher problem because we don't know what our teens have been told or have experienced. We need to be very efficient in determining what needs our teens have in this area and how to help them fulfill those needs.

Dailey and Spano<sup>2</sup> indicate that we can talk about sexuality in terms of five aspects: sensuality, intimacy, identity, reproduction, and sexualization. These areas (or aspects) give us a much broader, more inclusive definition of the richness of human sexuality.

1. **Sensuality** is the ability and the need to be aware of, in touch with, and accepting of your body and the bodies of others. Most of us have not reached our potential sensuality. Children are naturally sensual until we train it out of them. As adults, most of us have some type of serious sexual dysfunction at some point in our lives because we are not aware and accepting of our bodies.

Each of us has a body imagery which is a mental picture of ourselves and our bodies as well as a long list of comments (mostly negative) about the body. Examples include the pressure on women to be "beautiful," and on men to be "handsome and muscular." Teens are especially focused on body imagery as their bodies are changing rapidly and taking adult form. Teens are often acutely sensitive and overly critical about what they consider the flaws in their bodies.

Another aspect of sensuality involves physiology and anatomy. Knowing your body and how it works is important, and often the lack of this knowledge can be very costly. When we teach children about the body and its sexual aspects, we almost always focus on "reproductive issues" and fail to discuss the "feeling" issues. This is the reason why most of the sex education classes in schools tend to be poor because they focus mainly on reproduction, and the general public tends to think of sex education as reproductive information only.

Skin hunger, the need to touch and to be touched, is an aspect of sensuality that is sorely undernourished in our culture. We often equate touching with the general definition of sex, which is intercourse. Thus, we shy away from touching and its importance in family relationships, because we confuse it by constantly associating touch—all

<sup>2</sup>Dennis M. Dailey, "Sexual Expression and Aging," in Forrest Berghorn, Donna Schufer, and Associates, *The Dynamics of Aging*, Boulder: Westview Press 1981, and lecture from Family Sexual Abuse Treatment Workshop presented in Lincoln.

touch—as leading to intercourse. Many teens as well as adults may be having unsatisfactory intercourse when they are really “skin hungry.”

Touching and being touched may have different meanings for different people. Foster teens will need time to learn their foster family’s affectionate touching patterns and will be helped in that adjustment by explanations and verbal encouragement.

Foster teens are often weak in this area. Their self-images may be very poor, and they may wish they they looked like anyone but themselves. Thus, touching and being touched may be a very frightening experience for them, especially if the foster teen has been involved in sexual abuse such as incest. Families may need to explain to foster teens that the rules of the foster family are such that touching is appropriate, but there is a strict rule against genital satisfaction of any kind between foster children, other household members, and foster parents.

We need to help adults and teens to understand that some of our richest, fullest, and most passionate sexual moments may often involve only the satisfaction of skin hunger.

If our skin is our largest “sex organ,” our mind is the most important “sex organ.” Fantasy and daydreams often help prepare us for sexual relationships with people. We may also have trouble with sexual relationships because we are reliving sexual trauma such as rape or incest. Our bodies may sometimes not work right if we are pre-occupied with unresolved issues around birth control, infertility, or lack of knowledge of our body and how it works.

2. Intimacy is the ability and the need to experience emotional closeness to another person and to have that closeness returned. The opposite of an intimate relationship is the type of superficial relationships which we form with most of our acquaintances and the people we meet on a daily basis. Sharing, caring, liking, and loving are terms which might be used in describing an intimate relationship.

Being in an intimate relationship involves risk-taking and self-disclosure. Intimate relationships usually develop slowly over time and are constantly changing. Two married people may or may not have an intimate relationship. Parents and children often have problems being intimate. Teenagers, especially, often do not disclose their thoughts or feelings for fear of being ridiculed, lectured to, or worse yet, being ignored. This area of intimacy may be the most difficult for foster families and foster teenagers. Most foster teens, who have moved around frequently, have learned that risk-taking and self-disclosure lead to heartache and rejection when the intimacy is not reciprocated. They have often built a tough shell around themselves and are very good at playing games that mask their true feelings. Trust is a key to building and maintaining an intimate relationship. By the same token, trust is built on a solid core of positive, intimate interactions.

Each of us has a part of ourselves that is private and not shared with others. We have a right to that privacy, and it is necessary for our own personal growth. Some persons keep almost everything to themselves, have almost no intimate relationships, and seem to live in concrete silos. Others may be too transparent and live by the “let it all hang out” philosophy. Chances are both of these types of people will have difficulty forming relationships and may often be lonely and hurt.

A wonderful aspect of being in an intimate relationship involves the idea of positive vulnerability. There’s a “high” that comes with being accepted for what we are and being able to truly share ourselves with another person. Sharing ourselves sexually seems to be the most difficult type of intimacy. Reaching our fullness as a sexual being is difficult without sexual intimacy. One of the benefits of our intimate family relationships may be to prepare us to transfer that intimacy to our future partners.

3. Identity is a person’s sense of who he or she is and the feelings he or she has about himself or herself. Sexual identity is how a person sees himself or herself as a male or as a female.

Children begin to establish a gender identity between the ages of 2 to 5. When they realize that people are either male or female, and they themselves are either male or female, they have completed the very important task of establishing their gender identity.

Gender "role" identity starts very early also and is shaped by societal and familial expectations. We attribute a set of behaviors, characteristics, and roles to females and call those feminine. In the same way, we label certain characteristics masculine. Unfortunately, most people get stuck in feminine and masculine roles. An emotionally expressive, gentle man may be labeled a "sissy," and an assertive, strong woman may be called "unfeminine." Androgynous is the term used to describe a person who has the characteristics of both sexes. Many people today are moving toward integration of roles and characteristics that were once considered strictly for males or for females. Women are working outside the home, and men are taking responsibility for raising children.

Another ingredient in the establishment of a person's identity is sex object preference. Sex object preference is defined as the way in which a person gets his or her erotic needs met—from whom does a person get his or her erotic need satisfaction? We label these relationships as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. In our culture, men are expected to be masculine, male, and heterosexual. Women are expected to be female, feminine, and heterosexual. Any variations are considered deviant. Teenagers can often be confused when they experience attraction to members of their own sex. They have heard some things about homosexuals, and they fear that their attraction to a friend of the same sex (e.g., attractions because of general interests, athletic skills) or any show of affection (slap on the back, arm around shoulder) will be interpreted as a homosexual tendency. Or some teens may have been involved in experimentation with homosexual acts. They need to know that these feelings and experiences will not necessarily lead to a lifetime of sexual preference.

4. **Reproduction** is the biological process by which new individuals are created. Most formal sex education courses focus on this area of sexuality and often utilize scare tactics to emphasize the negative aspects of sexual relations such as possible V.D. and unwanted pregnancies. All teens and adults must be taught realistically about venereal disease, contraception, and abortion as well as all other aspects of human sexuality. The instruction should be done without trying to scare people or to espouse a particular set of values or beliefs.

The concept of "new life" is at the core of the notion of reproduction. As human beings, we have the unique ability to take a conscious part in the renewal of life. Even very young children are often fascinated by babies and play-act being parents. Older persons enjoy grandchildren and memories of having and raising their own children.

In our society, becoming a parent is often considered to be a natural and essential part of becoming an adult. Infertile couples often suffer identity and intimacy crises. A woman, especially, may feel she is not a "whole person" if she does not bear a child.

Because of the great status that we afford to "motherhood," a number of young teenagers may become pregnant and have a baby to fulfill identity and intimacy needs. A young girl suddenly becomes an adult when she has a child and is afforded a great amount of autonomy in the eyes of society and the law. When the reality of the responsibility that goes along with the autonomy hits, the young mother often needs to return to being a child herself. The great problem of "children raising children" has yet to be solved by our society, and certainly it is one of the most critical issues facing us today.

5. **Sexualization** is the use of our sexuality to influence, control, and manipulate others. On the extreme end of a continuum illustrating sexualization would be rape, coercive marital sexual relations, family sexual abuse, and sexual harassment.

All of the above should be considered as “sexual acts,” not “sexual events” and involve coercion varying in degree from subtle pressure to the violent use of power. People who are survivors of these types of sexualization are usually greatly affected in all areas of their sexuality.

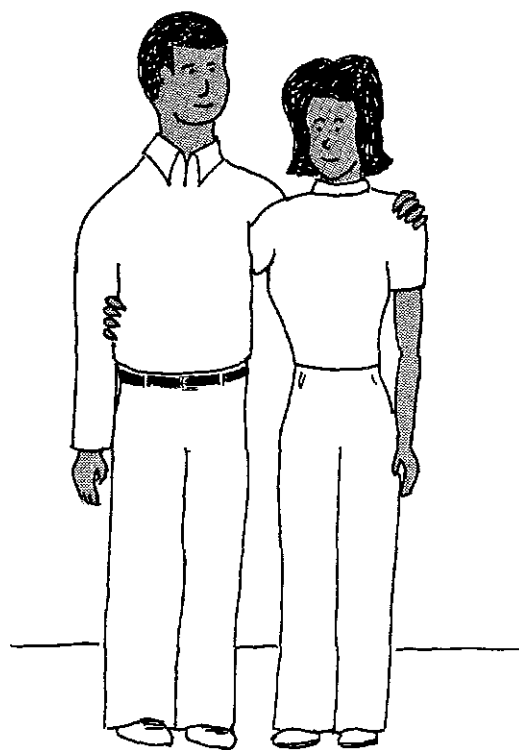
The majority of people are neither perpetrators nor survivors of forceful acts of sexualization. However, each and every one of us has probably used our sexuality in some way to influence or to manipulate others in relationships. Females are taught almost from birth to be seductive and to use their sexuality to manipulate people. They begin by dressing up in frilly dresses and playing “cutsie pie.” How many times has a father been overheard saying, “My little girl has me wrapped around her little finger?”

Most people who have been in a sexual relationship with a partner have, at one time or another, withheld sex to prove a point after a disagreement, rather than facing the issue directly. Teenagers are certainly not immune to such use of their sexuality.

Our culture contributes greatly to the use of sexualization with its emphasis on domination and submission in male-female relationships and with the struggle for power. One can turn on the television for only five minutes and will surely see an advertisement with sexual undertones. The images of the “macho” male and the “seductive” female surround us daily, and no wonder our teenagers grow up knowing well how to use their sexuality for personal gain.

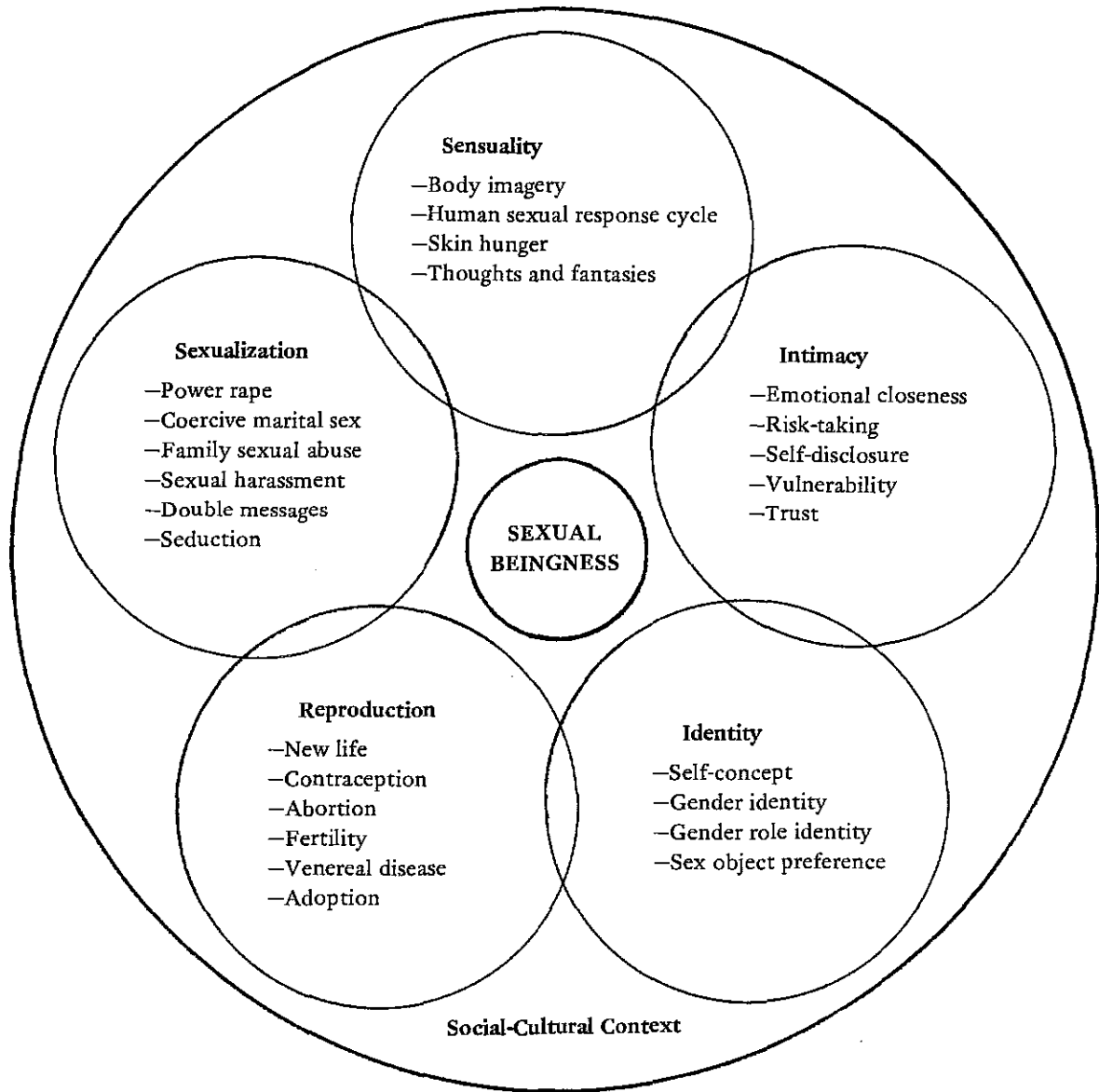
The five aspects (or areas) of sexuality discussed above can be visualized three dimensionally as five interlocking spheres whirling in space to symbolize the ever-changing nature of our human sexuality. The core of the circles can be called our “sexual beingness.” Surrounding the circles should be an all-inclusive sphere which we can label the “social-cultural” context of our sexuality.

The “social-cultural” context encompasses the systems that influenced us as we grew up. It includes socio-economic levels, ethnicity, race, religion, and urban or rural communities, to identify a few of the factors. Also included is our own particular family’s system of rules and attitudes about sex. Foster teenagers have often been part of a variety of family systems and have been exposed to a variety of patterns and rules regarding sexuality. Expecting a person who had grown up differently from us to accept our attitudes and experiences as their own would be a mistake. When we discuss socio-cultural influences, we often find that people have a lot of commonality as well as a lot of uniqueness. We must accept teenagers for what they are and let them know we value their experiences and attitudes. The human sexuality systems are illustrated in the diagram on page P-83.



## HUMAN SEXUALITY SYSTEMS

(From Dennis Dailey and Richard Spano, University of Kansas)



**2** Participants will be aware of their own values and attitudes toward sexual issues.

This section is designed to get participants to explore their own values and beliefs. Worksheet #12 on page P-84 may bring up some discussion of right or wrong.

Encourage participants not to make judgments, just to clarify their own feelings.

**OBJECTIVE 2**

**Participants will be aware of their own values and attitudes toward sexual issues.**

**O**UR VALUES and attitudes toward sexual issues will greatly affect how our teens react to us as well as to others. We need to explore our own feelings in these areas.

The worksheet may help you clarify what you feel about these issues.

**Worksheet #12**

Circle the letter(s) you feel most nearly expresses your present attitudes toward the issue mentioned.

1. In my opinion, premarital intercourse
  - a. is wrong under any circumstance; sex belongs in marriage.
  - b. is okay if the couple is engaged and plans to marry.
  - c. is okay provided each partner has some commitment and sense of caring and concern for the welfare of the other.
  - d. is okay under any mutually agreed upon circumstance.
  - e. is okay as long as they are responsible enough to use birth control.
  - f. other \_\_\_\_\_

---
  
2. If an unwanted adolescent pregnancy were to occur in my family, I believe
  - a. the couple should marry and raise the baby on their own.
  - b. the girl should have an abortion.
  - c. the girl should have the baby and raise it alone.
  - d. she or her parents should pay expenses.
  - e. her parents should help raise the baby.
  - f. his parents should help raise the baby.
  - g. the baby should be put up for adoption.
  - h. other \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Sex education, in my opinion,
- should be the responsibility of parents and family.
  - should be part of the school program.
  - should be available in the community.
  - belongs in the church's educational program.
  - should not be taught.
  - other \_\_\_\_\_
- 
4. Regarding communication with my son or daughter about sex, I believe I should
- actively bring up sexual development, feelings, and behavior with my children and encourage family discussion of sexual matters.
  - wait for my adolescent to raise questions or indicate readiness to talk, then answer as best I can.
  - make books and other information available.
  - encourage my adolescent to talk to others who would be good counselors but not discuss the matter with him or her in very great detail myself.
  - not discuss sex with my adolescent at all; just let him know my beliefs by example.
  - not discuss sex with my adolescent but simply state my feelings about what's right and wrong and demand they abide by my rules as long as they live under my roof.
  - other \_\_\_\_\_
- 
5. A high school boy should be responsible for contraception in his sexual relationships
- always.
  - after talking to his partner about it.
  - only if the girl doesn't provide contraceptive protection herself.
  - never, since protection against pregnancy is a girl's private problem and not a boy's responsibility.
  - never, because contraception is wrong.
  - never, because sexual relations belong only in marriage.
  - other \_\_\_\_\_
- 
6. How should parents respond to the knowledge that their adolescent is sexually active?
- Say nothing; don't acknowledge the situation.
  - Tell them you're outraged by the behavior and forbid them to have intercourse again. Clearly restate your belief in chastity before marriage.
  - Tell them you feel that if they are old enough to engage in sexual intercourse, they also must be old enough to handle the responsibility for and the consequences of a pregnancy or use adequate birth control.
  - other \_\_\_\_\_
-



**3** Participants will explore ideas that would help teens coming from sexually abusive homes develop a healthy attitude toward their sexuality.

Read and discuss the rationale section.

Ask participants to list some symptoms sexually abused teens might display and think of some ways of helping them resolve their problems.

Show the film: "Incest: The Victim Nobody Believes."

Discuss the film.

You may want to make the participants aware of some of the additional readings. Here are some suggestions:

Loretta M. McCarty, "Investigation of Incest: Opportunity to Motivate Families to Seek Help," *Child Welfare* Volume LX, Number 10, December 1981.

The Foster Parent Training Project at the Center for Applied Urban Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha has a collection of materials compiled by the Child Welfare Institute, Washington University, St. Louis. You may check out this collection for reading.

## INCEST: THE VICTIM NOBODY BELIEVES

20 minute, color sound

Produced by Gary Mitchell Film Company, Inc.—San Francisco and Motorola Teleprogram

### Film Summary

Three women discuss their experiences regarding sexual abuse from their fathers.

One woman did not actually experience sexual intercourse with her father, but he fondled her and had genital contact with her and coaxed her into genital contact with him. The other two women experienced fondling as early as 5 years of age, and both had been subjected to sexual intercourse with their fathers by the time they were 12. In one case the woman said she continued on condition that her father would not abuse her three younger sisters. Five years later she learned that he had also molested them.

Some quotes from the women:

“I knew it wasn’t right, and I was afraid to talk about it.”

“It was a way of getting any kind of attention or affection”

“I wanted some affection from my dad when I brought home a report card, and he ignored the card and started to get sexual with me.”

“When I realized what he was doing, I tried to separate myself from him.”

“My mother didn’t know how to deal with it. She would cry and say, ‘Your father is a very sick man and I don’t know what to do about it.’ She just couldn’t deal with it at all.”

“I walked around for years feeling there was something wrong with me.”

“I hated most people: they couldn’t know what I was going through.”

“I’d never been worth anything before.”

“I wanted my dad to be a real dad.”

“I was suffering a lot of pain and had no way of dealing with it.”

“I feel relieved since I have dealt with my father.”

### Points for Discussion After the Viewing

Discussion leader should permit viewers to express their feelings and reactions to the experiences of the three women and/or personal experiences.

- Note that the entire family is in a state of dysfunction: mothers and others in the family know of the incest yet they maintain the secret.
- Fathers who threaten their daughters with death for any reason (sexual or otherwise) are in need of therapy and counseling.
- Note that at least two of the women felt they were responsible for “holding the family together,” and they feared they would be taken away, or mother would have a nervous breakdown, or dad would be “locked up.”
- A very important point the film brings out is the need for more information. One woman in the film said, “If only there had been a crisis center or a telephone number posted on a sign to call, I would have called.”
- Two women stressed that schools and parents often advise children not to accept rides or candy from strangers but “failed to warn us that it might be members of the family who would molest us.”
- Women who have been involved in incest and who deal with it by seeking legal counsel are relieved, and they should be viewed as “survivors” who have done the proper thing.
- Incest is a symptom of far deeper problems with the individuals with a marriage and with the functioning of a family.

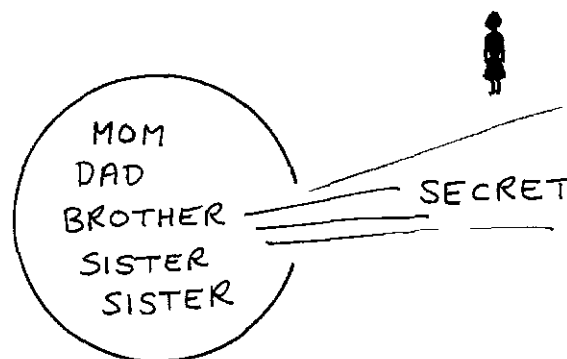
**OBJECTIVE 3**

Participants will explore ideas that would help teens coming from sexually abusive homes develop a healthy attitude toward their sexuality.

**I**NCEST, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse of children are subjects that most adults find hard to relate to and understand. When a teen who has been sexually abused comes into our home, we usually feel total contempt and anger toward the person who did the abuse. This feeling is natural and almost impossible to avoid. However, if we express those feelings to teens, we are giving them still another problem to deal with. Our anger and frustration are our problems, and we should not dump them on the teens. In the session, "Hey! What About Me?," we address those feelings and how to resolve them.

When the authorities enter into a family and remove a child or children due to a sexual abuse problem, several things happen. First of all, this family, like every other family, has a wall around it, separating it from the rest of the world. Inside this wall are the family members, and they have a secret—the sexual abuse that has been going on. When that secret becomes known to others, it tears a hole in the wall around the family. The first concern of everyone involved is that we keep the secret as hushed as possible and patch up that hole before anything else can happen.

When the child is removed from the home when the "secret" spews out that hole, the hole is often patched with that child on the outside.



The secret of incest spews out.

When this happens the child on the outside will probably assume a lot of the blame for the trauma his or her family went through. After all, when he or she left, the family went back to "normal." The family may also feel this way. "Now that that kid is gone we're okay again." Helping a teen recognize what is going on and who owns what problem is a hard task and one a foster parent should not have to face alone. Your case worker will probably handle this. Often a professional counselor or psychologist is assigned to a sexually abused teen's case. You should visit with this person if you have any questions as to what your role should be.

In the case of teens who have been involved in incest, a mere touch on the shoulder could evoke



**4** Participants will learn how to help teens who are sexually acting out to resolve their problems.

Read and discuss rationale.

Ask for input and questions about behaviors the participants have dealt with.

Brainstorm with the group as to some ways of handling sexually aggressive teens.

Discuss the "Sexualization" aspect of human sexuality on pages P-81 and P-82 and how it relates to teens as they "act out."

**O**NE CONCERN that foster parents frequently have when fostering teens who have been sexually abused is how that teen may act and interact in their home.

Teens who have been abused sexually by adults are often confused as to what their roles should be when relating to adults. If flirting or rubbing up against their biological fathers was what was expected of them at their own homes, they may assume that is what is expected of them in your home. How to give the message that this is not acceptable behavior without giving the teen feelings of rejection is difficult. Let's look at the teens' behavior using the developmental continuum approach that we learned on page P-2 of the introduction session.

Sexual behavior develops from birth. At birth we label a baby boy or girl. Pink or blue. As little girls and boys develop they go through different stages. Little girls get dressed up in frilly dresses with ribbons in their hair and sit on Daddy's lap and flirt. Little boys help Mommy and are taught to open the door for her. They both play house and assume roles of each parent. They go through stages of being rough and tough and soft and tender. They may cycle through these stages fast or slowly, once or ten times. How parents react to them in these stages forms their ideas of what kind of behavior gets what kind of reaction.

A teen that is displaying inappropriate (for your household) sexual behavior needs to receive the

#### OBJECTIVE 4

**Participants will learn how to help teens who are sexually acting out to resolve their problems.**

same kind of message we would give to a smaller child displaying this behavior.

Remember: Focus on the behavior. Your teenage daughter rubbing up against you makes you uncomfortable with her. You own the problem. Your message to the teen should reflect that. Not that the teen is bad or that she is displaying filthy behavior. "I feel uncomfortable when you rub up against me like that. I would lots rather you hold my hand or rub my shoulder." If the behavior should continue after that kind of parent message, you would have to go into more detail as to why you wanted her to quit and then firmly insist that she do so.

When you make the decision to take a teen who has been sexually abused and/or active into your home, you need to consider all the members of your family. The present children in your home need to have healthy sexual attitudes.

**5** Participants will become aware of resources available to help teens cope with problem pregnancies.

Read discussion in the participant's manual.

These are sensitive areas in terms of public values. As trainer, you will want to avoid pushing your own values.

Foster parents will want to discuss with their case workers as to what involvement the biological parents should have in these matters. The sexually active foster child is not likely to be influenced greatly by either biological or foster family values. Information presented in an objective manner is likely to be the best approach.

**OBJECTIVE 5**

**Participants will become aware of resources available to help teens cope with problem pregnancies.**

**Problem Pregnancy**

**P**REGNANCY outside of marriage presents problems for the girl, the boy, their parents, foster parents, and the case worker. We all have our own values regarding problem pregnancies, but foster parents are best advised to confront the teenagers with sound information. If a girl thinks she is pregnant, the first step she should take is to have an accurate test so she is dealing with facts, not supposition.

Once pregnancy is established the girl has these choices:

- Get married and keep the baby
- Have the baby and keep it without marriage
- Have the baby and place it for adoption
- Have an abortion.

Ruth Bell's book, *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives*, suggests:

1. Be clear about your options.
2. Talk with someone you trust, someone who is realistic and supportive. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each choice. Discuss your needs. Talk about your feelings.
3. Share your feelings with the guy with whom you got pregnant.
4. The decision is yours, and you will have to live with the consequences of the decision you make.

Bell's book has a good discussion of issues of problem pregnancies on pages 194 through 216. She lists the toll-free number for the National Abortion Federation, (800) 223-0618, and explains the details of having an abortion if that is

the choice of the girl. Bell cautions pregnant girls not to sign forms for either abortions or adoption options until they have read them and discussed them with persons they trust.

The National Committee for Adoption has a hotline in Washington, DC for referrals to any place in the United States for information on adoption. The number of NCFA is (202) 463-7563.

A complete listing of resources available to deal with problem pregnancies is impossible. Every county in the state has at least one or more agencies. Consult the yellow pages in the telephone book, or better yet, consult your case worker for a complete and current listing of resources available.

Sexual ignorance is not sexual innocence. Sexual knowledge is not sexual promiscuousness. If foster teens are sexually active, they need to know the realities of possible problem pregnancies, and they alone will choose whether to continue to be sexually active. Some judges have supposedly "ordered" foster parents to prohibit foster teens to have sexual intercourse, but a foster parent cannot assume responsibility beyond instruction. Thus, the sexually active teen (whether male or female) should be armed with sound, accurate information.

The types of contraception available are: condoms for men and the following for women: foam (used with partner's condom), diaphragm, IUD, cervical caps, and birth control pills. Bell's book has a very complete and detailed discussion (pages 166 through 189) on contraception including "natural" methods.

Your trainer has a number of copies of Bell's book which may be checked out for reading and made available to your foster teens.



**6** Participants will learn about venereal diseases.

Discuss material given.

Have copy of Ruth Bell's *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* to share with group.

## OBJECTIVE 6

Participants will learn about venereal diseases.

**T**RADITIONALLY venereal disease (V.D.) has meant gonorrhea or syphilis.

Actually, a lot more diseases are passed through sexual contact than those two. Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) is a new term that covers them all.

The old regulars:	syphilis and gonorrhea
The new panic:	herpes
Other viruses:	hepatitis and venereal warts
Common infections:	non-gonococcal urethritis (NGU) and vaginal infection
Bugs:	pubic lice and scabies.

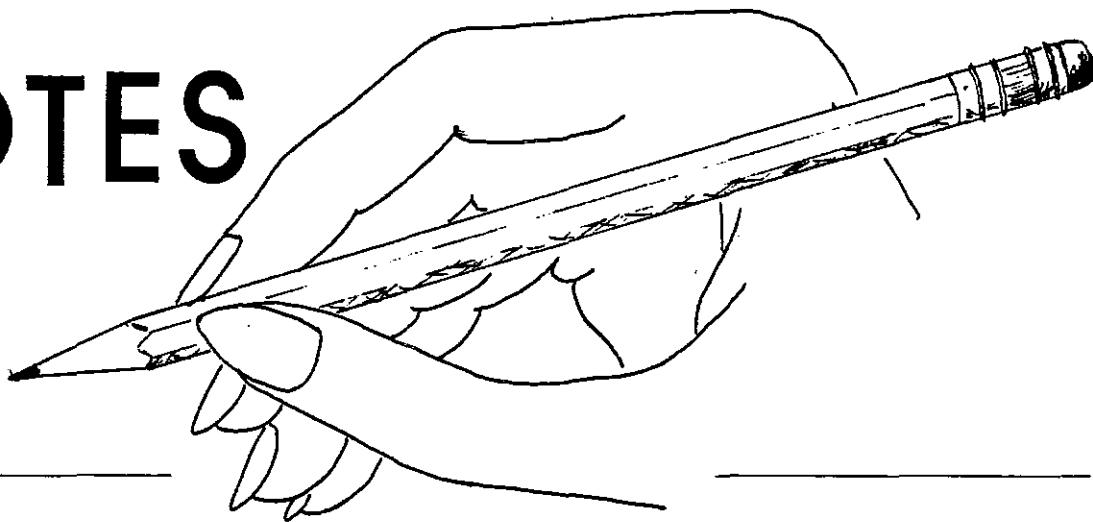
If your teens have been or are sexually active, STD is something you should be prepared to discuss with them. Several good books are available on this subject if you need more information than what you have. One of them is:

*Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* by Ruth Bell, Random House Press. New York, 1980.

Your trainer should have a copy of this book that you can look at and check out. See especially pages 216 through 233. If you want information or need to find a clinic or doctor, a national venereal disease hot line may be reached by calling (800) 227-8922. The hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.



# NOTES



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# Session Seven



## Self-Esteem

# Trainer's Guide

## Self-Esteem

### OBJECTIVES:

	Page
1. The participant will understand the components of self-esteem. Worksheet #13	T-144 T-145
2. The participants will understand why foster teens' self-esteem may be low.	T-146
3. The participants will learn ways of building self-esteem.	T-149
4. The participants will learn what it means to be self-confident and how to develop it in teens.	T-152
5. Participants will examine their own self-esteem as it relates to being a foster parent. Worksheet #14	T-155 T-156

**1** Participants will understand the components of self-esteem.

Have participants complete the personal profile Worksheet #13 on page P-93.

You need to point out that this profile (Worksheet #13) is a very PERSONAL document and not to be shared with anyone unless the participants desire. It is intended for the foster parent's own personal assessment and growth.

In view of the above, do not ask participants to share their personal profiles. You can, however, ask general questions and use the documents as a basis for discussion of their REACTIONS (not responses!) to the worksheet.

# Self-Esteem

## OBJECTIVE 1

Participants will understand the components of self-esteem.

**S**ELF-ESTEEM consists of our self-concept or self-image—mental and physical, our skills and talents, our personal traits, our important relationships, our family, our past experiences, and memories—all that we are.

### Worksheet #13

Complete the following Personal Profile.

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I like \_\_\_\_\_

My family is \_\_\_\_\_

My best feature is \_\_\_\_\_

I'm proud of \_\_\_\_\_

My face is \_\_\_\_\_

My friends \_\_\_\_\_

I spend a lot of time \_\_\_\_\_

My body is \_\_\_\_\_

I look \_\_\_\_\_

My parents \_\_\_\_\_

I wish \_\_\_\_\_

I need \_\_\_\_\_

People think I'm \_\_\_\_\_

Nobody cares when \_\_\_\_\_

How do you think your foster teen would complete this profile?



**2** Participants will understand why foster teens' self-esteem may be low.

Read rationale and brainstorm some of the reasons foster teens might have low self-esteem.

In general discussion, you can give some of the reasons why people have low self-esteem and why helping foster teens with low self-esteem will be hard if your own is low.

Two 16mm films on this topic might be useful. Explore their availability through local film lending libraries. The Foster Parent Training Project at CAUR does not have copies. The films are "Don't Condemn Me Until You Know Me," and "Cypher in the Snow."

**OBJECTIVE 2**

**Participants will understand why foster teens' self-esteem may be low.**

**T**EENS who come into foster care, whether or not through some faults of their own, are having something done to them or for them for their own good, and there is usually a strong message that this is being done because their birth parents failed them in some way.

Dealing with the "bad seed theory" that often goes with being a foster child is left almost solely in the hands of the foster parent.

No one can feel good about themselves if they feel they came from bad roots.

As foster parents we are often very critical of our foster children's biological parents and past life style. We find it almost impossible to relate to "that kind of people." How could anyone do that to a child or treat a child like that is a question often heard. How we resolve our feelings toward their parents is of vital concern to our foster children.

Whether we approve or not, our foster children are part of their biological families. They have been given that identity. Those families' values and behaviors represent them. When we downgrade their families, we downgrade them.

Children's self-concept is built from birth. It represents all that they are--their bodies, minds, clothes, possessions, parents, siblings, memories, etc. Frequently their placement in foster care tears apart almost every area of their self-concept.

- Body — "Well, let's start by getting you cleaned up."
- Mind — "Maybe some testing should be done."

- Clothes — "I can tell right now you need new jeans."
- Possessions — "You can put your junk in this drawer."
- Parents — "I just don't understand how anyone could treat their kids that way."
- Siblings — "Maybe you can go visit them someday, but right now let's just get you settled."
- Memories — "Just forget about that, you're here now, and don't let that stuff worry you any more."

And so on. We try to shove their past into a dark corner so that we don't have to deal with it. We feel far more comfortable dealing with the here and now because we understand it and are in control of what happens. Discarding our foster children's past is like discarding them and asking them to start over. It is an impossible expectation.

Normally, teens feel okay about themselves in many ways because they are consistently cared for and loved by their parents. A foster child is denied these feelings. Children removed from their parents are not getting these feelings and furthermore have no chance of getting them from their birth parents until they are returned.

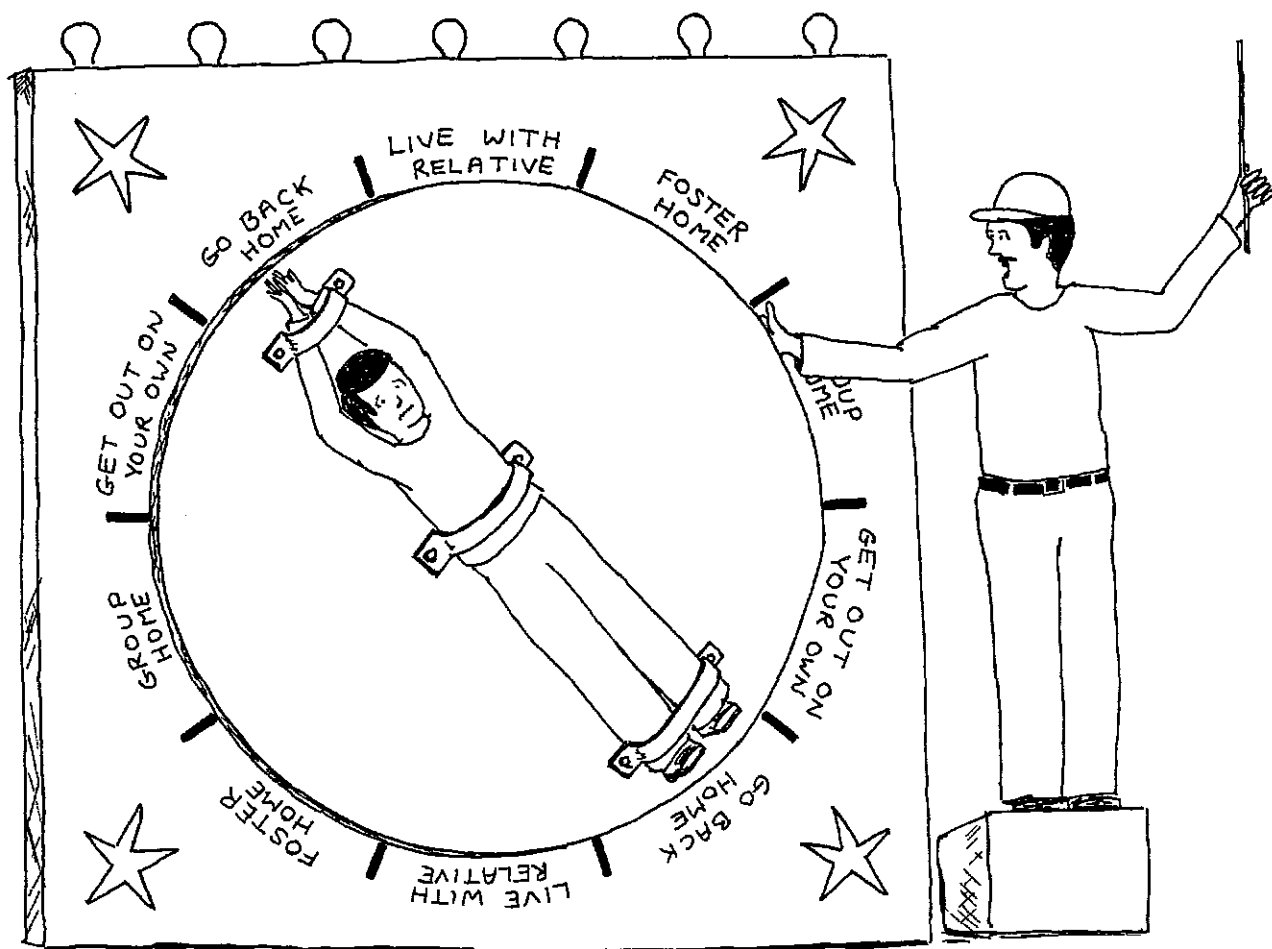
Many foster children tend to assume the blame for things going wrong even if they were innocent parties. They tend to think of themselves as bad, unloved, and unwanted when they enter foster care. Thus—"How could these people care for me

and want me... My own parents didn't... Why should these strangers?" Thus the foster parents have no credibility in the children's eyes.

Our feelings of self-competency are coupled with our feelings of being in control. Usually children entering the foster care system have the feeling of being on a runaway roller coaster. Their biological parents don't usually know what will happen. The case worker says, "We'll see what the judge says." The foster parents say, "I'll look after you," and the guardian ad litem asks, "What do you want to

happen?" No one seems to be in control, least of all the child.

Normal adolescence is a trying time, but compound it with the emotional stress foster children are dealing with, and it can be overwhelming. They may resort to distortions, daydreaming and fantasy, despair, bitterness, anger, and abusive behavior, reinforcing and maintaining their own poor self-images. They may seem deliberately to set themselves up to fail because they have had it proved to themselves time after time they are bad.



*Where you'll stop nobody knows!*

### 3 Participants will learn ways of building self-esteem.

Read and discuss rationale.

Ask participants for their ideas of how to build self-esteem.

Trainers may want to suggest, as an additional reading, chapter 5, "Impaired Self-Esteem and Self-Control," in Claudia Jewett's *Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss*.

Trainers may want to role play some of the four different ways to parent and discuss with participants the difference between structuring and criticizing, for example. Several examples are provided in Clarke's book, *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*.

This is also a good time to review reflective listening and also "parent" or "I" messages. See page P-21. Good straight messages are important, and trainers should remind foster parents many times that "I" messages CAN BE POSITIVE as well as a means of conveying a concern or negative feeling.

**OBJECTIVE 3**

Participants will learn ways of building self-esteem.

**How do you build self-esteem?**

**F**IRST OF ALL let's go back and review the introduction session and discuss Building a Positive Relationship With Your Teen on page P-10.

We need to accept our teens in their entirety, just the way they are. That does not mean that we are not going to try to help them develop and grow. It simply means we are not doing any judging of them or their backgrounds.

Encouragement is a vital skill needed to help you focus on your teens' strengths and assets. Encouragement helps build self-esteem and confidence. The focus on the teens' behaviors is directed toward the positive. Mistakes are minimized and used as learning experiences.

We need to pay more than just lip service to the theory that all children are basically good. We need to believe in our children. We need to have a "can do" attitude toward children—an attitude of positive expectations.

Most teens seek to do what they feel is expected of them. If we hold positive expectations, teens' behaviors have a better chance of being positive.

We often set unrealistic expectations for our foster teens. Due to varying backgrounds and experiences our teens may not have the skills and information needed to perform what we consider "normal" activities and behaviors. We communicate to them that anyone their age should be able to handle "normal" situations. They can't live up to those expectations. We have set them up to fail.

Competition between our foster children and our natural children or between foster children is

sometimes promoted by the foster parent. Comparing one child's behavior to another is bound to cause trouble. Statements like, "I thought I'd seen it all, but your behavior beats all," perpetuates the "bad seed theory" that is underlying foster children's attitudes toward themselves. Acting out against siblings in the home is one way of venting those feelings—"See, I am the worst child."

Wanting too much too fast is something we are often guilty of. We see such potential in our teens we tend to push them along as fast as we can. We know they can do better. We know they can succeed at almost anything. The teens may translate this into a message that says they are not accepted unless they are successful and doing good work. Many teens are very threatened by this. Failure would mean rejection in their minds, so maybe it would be safer not to try.

We must communicate in words and actions that we accept our teens just the way they are. . .not just the way we think they could be.



*You know, this car sure runs a lot better since you gave it that tune-up!*

Jean Illsley Clarke<sup>1</sup> has identified four ways of parenting that people use: (1) nurturing, (2) structuring and protecting, (3) marshmallowing, and (4) criticizing. The first two contribute to high self-esteem. The second two contribute to low self-esteem. Simply defined, the four parent messages are:

### Nurturing

This message is gentle, supportive, caring. It invites the person to get his or her needs met. It offers help. It gives permission to succeed and affirms.

Examples: "I'm glad you're here." "I care about you." "You are so good about helping with the baby. You'll make a good mother some day."

### Structuring and Protecting

This message sets limits, protects, asserts, demands, and advocates ethics and traditions. It tells ways to succeed and affirms.

Examples: "We expect you to be home by 10 o'clock on school nights. If you are not, you will have to give up some privileges." "Studying at a certain time every day will help to improve your grades."

<sup>1</sup>Jean Illsley Clarke, *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*. Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1978.

### Marshmallowing

This message sounds supportive, but it invites dependence, suggests persons will fail, and negates.

Examples: "You poor thing." "I'll do it for you this time." "There's nothing you can do about that."

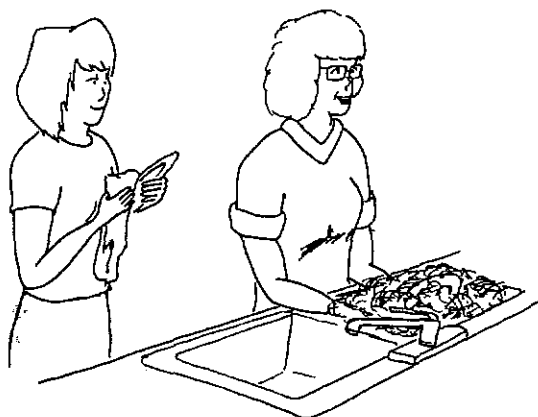
### Criticizing

This message ridicules, tears down, tells ways to fail, and negates.

Examples: "You always forget to do that." "You never do the chores without being told to." "What a dummy you are."

Clarke points out that persons of low self-esteem don't ask for what they want because they believe they can get along without. They don't believe they need strokes, so they don't accept positive strokes. They don't give others strokes because they believe others don't want them. They think it is conceited to love themselves so they don't.

The person of high self-esteem is just the opposite. Clarke's "Behavior Chain" on page P-68 also presents eleven different options for communication. Parents should examine these alternatives and see whether they are marshmallowing (and thus making the receiver dependent and more helpless) or whether they are structuring (and thus contributing to higher self-esteem).



*Thanks for helping with the dishes. I really appreciate the good job you do.*

**4** Participants will learn what it means to be self-confident and how to develop it in teens.

Read rationale and discuss continuum of development as it relates to self-confidence.

Practice giving positive feedback or “stroking” honestly and appropriately.

**OBJECTIVE 4**

**Participants will learn what it means to be self-confident and how to develop it in teens.**

**S**ELF-CONFIDENCE and the feeling of being in control are closely related.

When teens have no control over what is happening to them, feeling self-confident is very difficult. They certainly have no control when they are placed in foster care.

Their confidence continues to be on shaky ground even after they are “settled” in a new home. This is an unknown situation. Adapting will take time.

We can do several things to assist this adaptation.

Observe closely the development that your teens display. Look back at the continuum of development given on page P-2. Determine where your teens are with these tasks. You now have an idea of what concepts they are strong in and what ones they need to develop.

Review Objective 4 in *School, Home, and Community* on page P-62. It talks about teaching your teens basic skills. Having these basic skills will give your teens control over their environment. They will be more self-sufficient and their self-confidence will flourish.

We feel in control of a situation and therefore self-confident when we know what is expected and how to fulfill those expectations.

A “Life Story Book” can be a useful way for a teen to make sense out of his or her world. Two examples follow.

**Example A**  
**The “Life Story Book”<sup>1</sup>**

1. The life story book helps the child put pieces together in one place. It visually shows them who they are.
2. This information helps them to achieve an identity—a real sense of who they are.
3. It is a good place for the child to begin to understand what has happened to him and why and to resolve any previously unasked questions.
4. Most children will resist working on it because it can be painful to remember the past.
5. Start with the present good stuff—then work backward to the old stuff.
6. Introduce the subject of doing the life book by showing your child other life books or baby books. Say, “Why don’t we start a book?”
7. The child will start to remember things as he or she is working with the book.
8. The book can be made from easily available materials, such as scrapbooks or folders tied together with yarn. Use crayons, construction paper, glue, and felt-tip pens.
9. The book begins or ends with “I was born on... in...” and continues with events



listed in order of occurrence. Pictures of birth parents, ex-foster parents and current foster parents, siblings and foster siblings, and of the child all contribute to a child's eventual sense of self. If pictures of persons are not available, photographs of the hospital the child was born in, schools attended, and houses lived in can be substituted, but one should at least contact ex-foster parents for pictures. Often, a treasured photo will be found buried in an old family album. Report cards, examples of schoolwork, pictures of the child's former social workers, birth and baptismal certificates, and maps and magazine pictures can be used.

10. Each reviewed step in the child's life provides an opportunity to correct an erroneous view of past separations from loved ones and to put the past into proper perspective.
11. All the information needed can be found in the case record. No matter how painful, information is to be presented simply and factually without value judgments.
12. There must be a trusting relationship between the child and whoever is sharing the data with the child.

The scrapbook can be used with children from preschool through adolescence. It is concrete and provides each child with a permanent visual record of his life in care and those who shared it with him. It can be used equally well with those children who are returning to birth parents, those who are joining adoptive parents, and those who are leaving foster care due to age.

### Example B Life Story Book<sup>2</sup>

The use of visual aids in the treatment and care of children can be very helpful. Adults tend to grasp ideas through words and talking while children often appear to understand words but usually understand visible things a great deal better. If they can reconstruct the experience through play-acting or visiting an actual location or person important in their past, or see a picture of something that they remember quite accurately, they will begin to correct false impressions of their

past lives. At roughly age three, when a child becomes interested in himself and where he came from, we start the life story book.

In Barry's scrapbook the worker began with a picture of Barry, now age 6, as a baby with his "first real mama." The story mentioned his birth-to another, the reconstruction of his or her life in a facts about his childhood. Barry asked what his mother did for him when he was a baby. The worker responded that his mother did such things as feed and bathe him and change his diapers. Barry indicated that he wanted that written into the story.

Life story books are a working tool, not to be confused with some of the "children's books" that we have put together, beautifully photographed and nicely mounted, to be given to the adoptive family. Our life story books are grubby, fingerprint-smudged epics. Their owners often take them to school, finding for the first time in the eight or ten years of their lives, that they can talk with authority about who they are and what their background is. The book is the receptacle of all information that the worker has on the child that the child is able to understand. It is written, if possible, in the child's own language. However, if the child is not able to write, we record his comments about himself and his experiences in his own language. These tapes are typed up without grammatical corrections so that the child can recognize his or her own words. They are pasted in the book along with appropriate pictures. For the child who has been in the care of more than one agency and has been moved from one foster home to another, the reconstruction of his life in a book like this becomes a tremendous emotional experience. The books are simply made, usually from construction paper, and are bound in inexpensive scrapbook covers, making them expandable for any number of years. They are often kept in the social worker's office, but children periodically take them home and comment on them the next time they see their worker.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Claudia Jewett and Linda R. Biggert, *Adoption Report*, Vol. 3, Spring, 1977.

<sup>2</sup>Adapted from *Older Children Need Love Too*, a DHEW publication.

**5** Participants will examine their own self-esteem as it relates to being a foster parent.

Complete Worksheet #14 (Self-esteem Profile for foster parents) on page P-100.

As the participants start to fill in this profile, remind them that this also is a personal and private document. It is not to be shared with the group. You can have participants discuss their reactions to the profile and talk about categories they may wish to share with others. It might also be helpful to relate those five categories (love, structure, challenge, modeling, and independence or responsibility) to the Behavior Chain discussed on P-68 and to the four ways of parenting mentioned on P-97.

**OBJECTIVE 5**

**Worksheet # 14**

Participants will examine their own self-esteem as it relates to being a foster parent.

**SELF-ESTEEM PROFILE**  
**Related to the Job of Foster Parenting**

	Not at all like me					Describes me				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>LOVE</b>										
1. I know that I am lovable (even if foster child doesn't love me).										
2. I expect my family/friends to love me.										
3. I offer unconditional love (even when foster child acts awful).										
<b>STRUCTURE</b>										
4. I offer clear structure. . .										
5. . .with reward consequences. . .										
6. . .and punishment consequences that are not punitive.										
<b>CHALLENGE</b>										
7. I challenge destructive behavior.										
8. I challenge destructive attitudes.										
9. I challenge destructive decisions.										
<b>MODELING</b>										
10. I consistently express and live my beliefs.										
11. I share my mistakes and failures with my foster child.										
12. I share my successes and accomplishments with my foster child.										
<b>INDEPENDENCE OR RESPONSIBILITY</b>										
13. When my foster child achieves, I celebrate and claim the part I had in that.										
14. When my foster child fails, I grieve briefly, then spend a limited amount of time deciding what I could do differently if confronted with the same situation, and I do not feel personally defeated.										
15. If I can't make it with a foster child, I say, "This child and I don't mesh. That doesn't mean that I'm not OK. We just don't mesh." I send the kid back and feel glad about making that decision.										

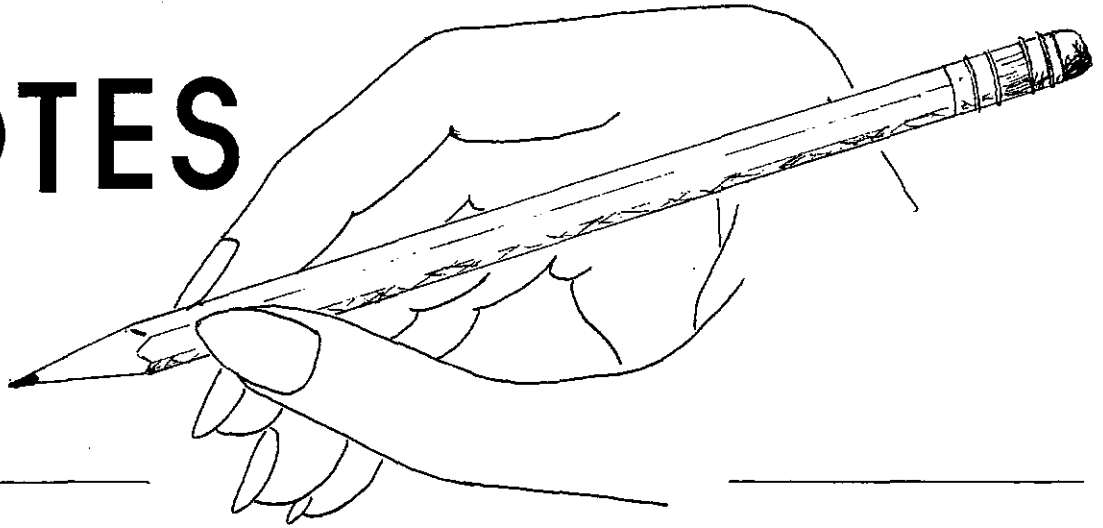
Add your total score.

What score do you need for you to feel good about your foster parenting?

Published with permission

By Jean Illsley Clarke, author of *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*

# NOTES



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# Session Eight



The Total Teen

# Trainer's Guide

## The Total Teen

### OBJECTIVES:

	Page
1. The participants will be aware of how teens' past may affect their present.	T-160
2. The participants will understand why building a working relationship with the teens' biological parents is in the teens' best interests.	T-162
3. Participants will understand foster teen bounce and how it affects them.	T-165
4. Participants will be aware of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Worksheet #15	T-167 T-169

**1** The participants will be aware of how the teens' past may affect their present.

Read rationale.

Discuss some other ways the teens' past might affect their present and some parenting skills that might be used to help them through their problems.

Stress that parents should be working on "fixing the problem" NOT on "fixing the blame!"



## The Total Teen

### OBJECTIVE 1

The participants will be aware of how the teens' past may affect their present.

**W**HEN WE TALK about the total teen, we need to look at their past, present, and future, their highs and lows, their strengths and weaknesses, and their hopes and dreams.

We cannot talk about individual traits in individual foster teens, but we can discuss some general traits or characteristics that almost all foster teens share to some degree.

How the teens' past affects them in the present is obvious in what they know and don't know. It also affects how they relate to other people and circumstances. Accept your teen's talking about his or her past, but as foster parents you should avoid "digging" into or dwelling on the past.

Your relationship with your foster teens may be working smoothly and things seemingly going very well, and then all of a sudden—trouble. They're moody, upset, and almost totally different persons. Often the trigger for this change comes from their past. Christmas, birthdays, family celebrations, and other special events may cause the teens to reflect about their past. They may be feeling guilty about things going so well in a foster home when they couldn't make things work in their biological homes or how much they miss their own homes or wondering and resenting that they don't belong to a family that is like the foster family instead of their own, and so on.

An alert foster parent can catch this feeling at its beginning and avoid having it build to a full scale blow-up or stop of progress. A good reflective message might be:

"Most families have their own traditions for Christmas. It's fun adding some other families' traditions to ours. When Judy came she told us about her family gathering around the tree and singing on Christmas Eve. We tried it last year, and it was a lot of fun."



This gives your teens a chance to express what they were feeling about their families and their Christmas celebrations. It also lets them know that you would be willing to listen to them talk about their families.

**2** Participants will understand why building a working relationship with the teens' biological parents is in the teens' best interests.

Read rationale.

Discuss some things that might help develop a working relationship between foster parents and biological parents.

Talk about some things that might get in the way. Think of some things that might help avoid them.

Brainstorm or role play in order to identify the feelings the foster children have. Try to get parents to develop a feeling of empathy. Remember empathy is NOT marshmallowing (as Clarke would call it). Empathy is a feeling that says, "I hear you, you feel strongly about this, and I think I know how you feel."

Re-entry into the birth family is always a possibility so the foster parents want to avoid denial behaviors and extremes that try to get the foster child to deny the birth family.

**OBJECTIVE 2**

**Participants will understand why building a working relationship with the teens' biological parents is in the teens' best interests.**

**T**EENS come into foster care in varying conditions. They may be hurt and alone. They may be part of a sibling unit. When fostering several children from the same family, you need to be conscious of the unity and security that comes



from being part of that family unit. Siblings who come into foster care from a poor home situation often have established a very self-sufficient system of their own. They may be accustomed to taking care of each other and have very little need for an outsider. Often the oldest child has taken on the role of parent. They may resent your trying to take over that role, or they

may even doubt your ability to do the things required. The older child's feelings of self-worth and being needed may be damaged if you instantly take over all responsibility for the younger children.

When the sibling unit is split and placed in different foster homes, the problem is compounded because the individual members still face damaged feelings of self-worth, but added to that is a feeling of failure because their little family unit has failed. There is also the uncertainty that the other siblings are all right and are being taken care of. Foster parents should take these factors into consideration and promote as much contact between the siblings as possible.

Most children who come into foster care will be returning to their own homes when their stay with you is over. As foster parents you can help

this "going back" be easier for the teens by looking at the situation through their eyes.

When the teens come into your home for the first time is when the getting ready to return to their own homes process begins. How you handle your responses to what your teens tell you about their parents and family units has a lot to do with how easy the going home process will be for all concerned. Many foster parents make judgments as to the worth of the birth parents and almost require the teens to take sides as to who are the best parents. Doing this places the teens in the middle. They must either agree with the foster parents that their parents are no good or side with their birth parents and thus against the foster parents. Downgrading the teens' biological parents regardless of whether they side with or against you will only make it harder for their families to be reunited when the time comes.

Ideally both the foster parents and the birth parents want what is best for the teens. This is a good common ground to build a relationship on. Approaching the situation with this in mind will make the foster teens' stay and their return to their original families easier for them to handle.

Your foster teens' visits with their original families may seem to you to be nothing but an interruption in your family's life. Your teens may come back from visits upset and hard to get along with. The visits seemingly do no good—only harm. Many foster parents are reluctant to have visits and become upset with the biological parents. Some social workers feel visits are needed only when the court order insists and then as seldom as possible.

The effect this lack of contact can have on teens may be devastating. The teens may feel totally isolated from their biological families and feel that they are no longer a part of them. They may feel that since the families continued on without them that they were the ones to blame for their being in foster care and that their going back would only cause more failure on their part. Teens may begin to forget the rough parts of living with their birth families and remember only the good. They also may begin to fantasize and pretend what they would like their families to be. If they continue this long enough, they can totally lose contact with reality and believe that their make-believe world is real.

Teens who have these mixed up ideas about what things will be like when they do go home are going to have a lot more trouble dealing with the situation than teens who have had contact with their birth families on a regular basis.

Teens who are fortunate enough to have foster parents who can view their birth parents as partners working for the good of the teens have all the advantages that both sets of parents can give.

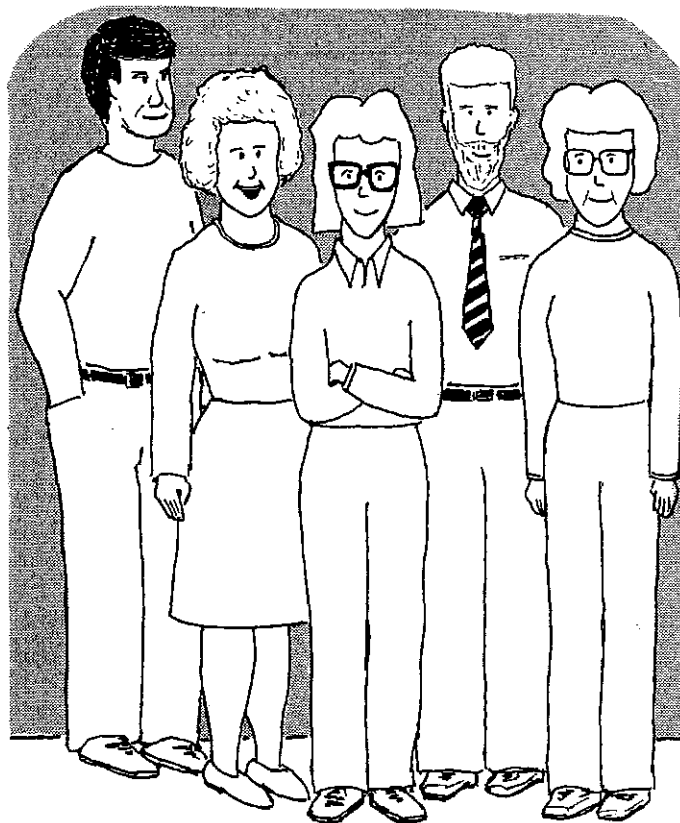
Establishing this partnership takes work and cooperation on the part of both sets of parents and the case worker. Your case worker will know if the biological parents are the types of parents who could work in a partnership. If the case worker feels that they are, then the next step will be to meet the birth parents. This might best be done without the teens present. When working with the biological parents remember your goal. . .helping the teens. The teens' biological parents will be just as leery of this meeting as you are. Just as you have been labeled the "good" parents, they have been labeled the "bad" parents. Labels can get in the way if you let them. Stress that you are equal partners in this effort to help the teens.

If you can effectively work with your teens' biological parents, you will gain a lot of much needed information to help your relationship with the teens be more productive. It will also give the

biological parents good feelings of self-worth. You, the "good" parents, are asking them for information, so they can't be totally "bad."

Developing this partnership can also give you an opportunity to really help your teens long after they leave your home. You can have a great deal of influence on how the birth parents parent your teens. They will learn by watching you what techniques work. You will need to keep communication lines open so that the birth parents know what skills you are using, why, and when. If these communication lines are healthy and in good working order, the birth parents will feel good about calling you when they are having trouble with the teens, and you will feel good about calling them when you are concerned about how things are going.

This system will provide the teens with a great deal of security and feelings of being loved and cared about. They will not have to worry about divided loyalties and feelings of abandonment.



**3** Participants will understand foster teen bounce and how it affects teens.

Read rationale.

Discuss life timelines.

Ask for reactions participants feel foster teens might have after being bounced several times.

Foster parents need to develop empathy for the child without dwelling on the teen's negative experiences.

Refer participants to the discussion on the life story books on pages P-98 and P-99.

## OBJECTIVE 3

Participants will understand foster teen bounce and how it affects teens.

## The Foster Teen Bounce

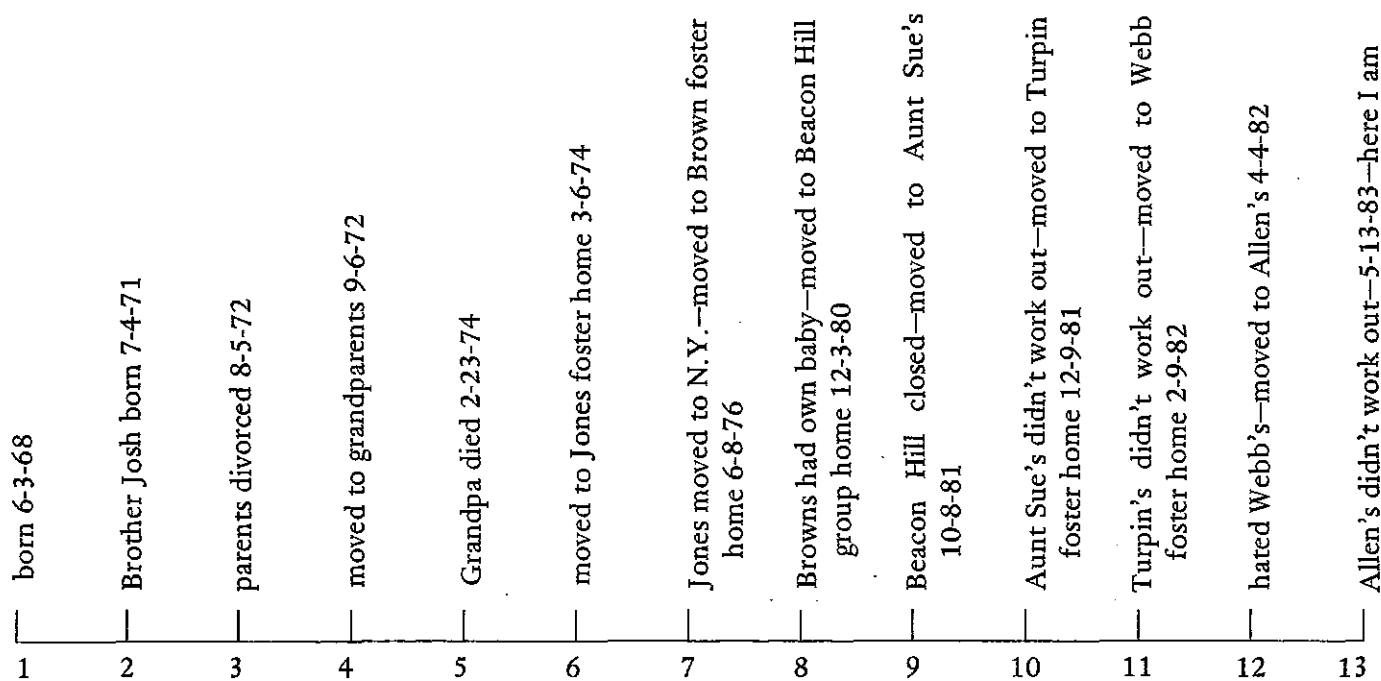
**M**ANY TEENS in foster care have been in and out of the foster care system for most of their lives. These teens have a hard time relating and bonding with still another set of foster parents.

They have been moved and bounced so many times before their arrival at your home that they may have lost track of how many “parents” they may have had. They may be very reluctant to get involved, and if they do they will probably do so with the idea of gleaning the best this home has to offer before they move on. Teens in this situation often have the attitude that if they don’t like it here or if you do anything or require anything of them that they don’t like, they will be thrown out or can force the case worker to move them.

Helping teens develop a life timeline can help them feel in touch with their past and give them a sense of roots. Getting the information to build this life timeline may be difficult but may give you and your teens a good deal of insight as to why they have been bounced so many times.

A teen’s life timeline might look like the one below.

A teen with this type of life timeline will require a different type of parenting from a teen who is in foster care for the first time. This type of teen will probably have very little sense of family. Bonding to and belonging to your family may not be something he or she will be capable of for a long time if ever.



**4** Participants will be aware of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Discuss Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as it relates to foster teens.

Discuss study questions given and Worksheet #15 on page P-108.

Ask for questions.

Refer participants to Session #5 and mention the need for parents to develop a resource file for teens.

This resource box contains:

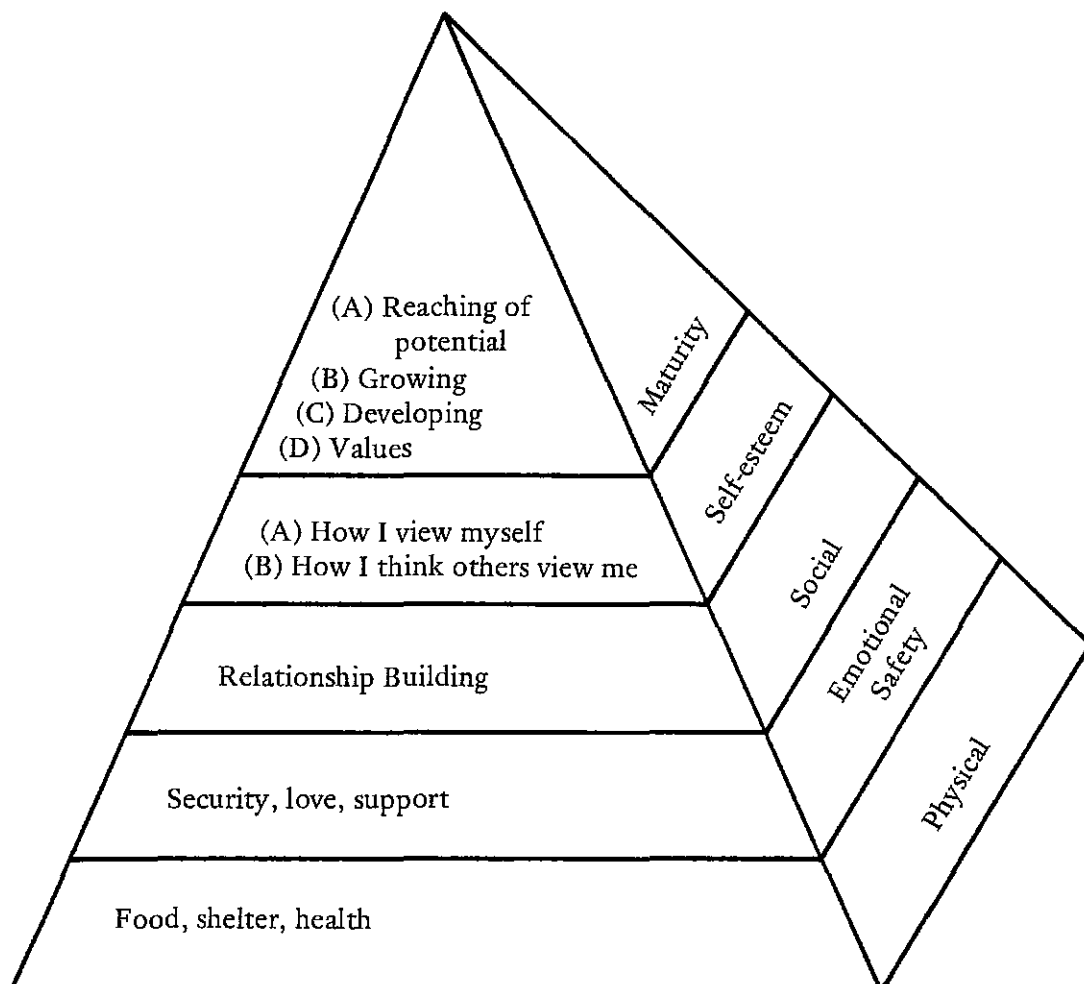
- Information on job interviews
- Colleges or vocational schools
- Preparing job resumes
- Information on insurance
- Forms of financial management such as how to open a checking or savings account.

**OBJECTIVE 4**

Participants will be aware of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

**A**BRAM H. MASLOW developed a Hierarchy of Human Needs that has been studied and accepted as valid by the experts for many years.

It looks like this:





**Worksheet #15**

Teens who have bounced several times are usually working with the bottom two levels of needs. Basic physical needs, such as food and shelter, are probably not points they are worrying about. However, because they are teenagers and going through many physical changes, their physical needs may be causing them some concern.

What kinds of things can we do that can help our teens meet these needs?

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The next level of needs is emotional needs that involve security, love, and support. What are some of the things that may cause our foster teens to feel insecure? What can we do to meet these needs?

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The third level of needs is social needs or relationship building needs. What kinds of social needs do teens have?

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Next comes the level of self-esteem. How do I view myself and how do I think others view me? We talked about building self-esteem earlier. You might want to review it and see how it fits in this level. See page P-96.

The highest level of needs is that of maturity. This level includes values, developing, growing, and reaching potential.

What do we mean by moral development? values? conscience?

How do we help teens develop these things?

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(Continued)

What are some of the areas related to daily living that our teens will need to know to be mature adults?

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These are some of the behaviors that are typical of teens. Let's examine this list and think about why teens might behave this way.

Loud, noisy, bragging behavior

Daring, risk taking, seeking something new

Belonging and intense loyalty to peer group

Withdrawal from parents and family

Rebellion against authority and deliberate misbehavior

Idealistic, discarding monetary values.

How can we help our teens value maturity?

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Helping teens prepare for their futures either with or without you has got to be part of your job as parents. If your foster teens are returning to the natural families, you need to do all you can to help the relationship between your teens and their natural families be all that it can possibly be.

If your teens are reaching the age where they will be out on their own, then you need to help them learn the daily living skills needed to live independently.

Some of them are:

- How to find a job
- How to find a place to live, set a budget, and live with in it

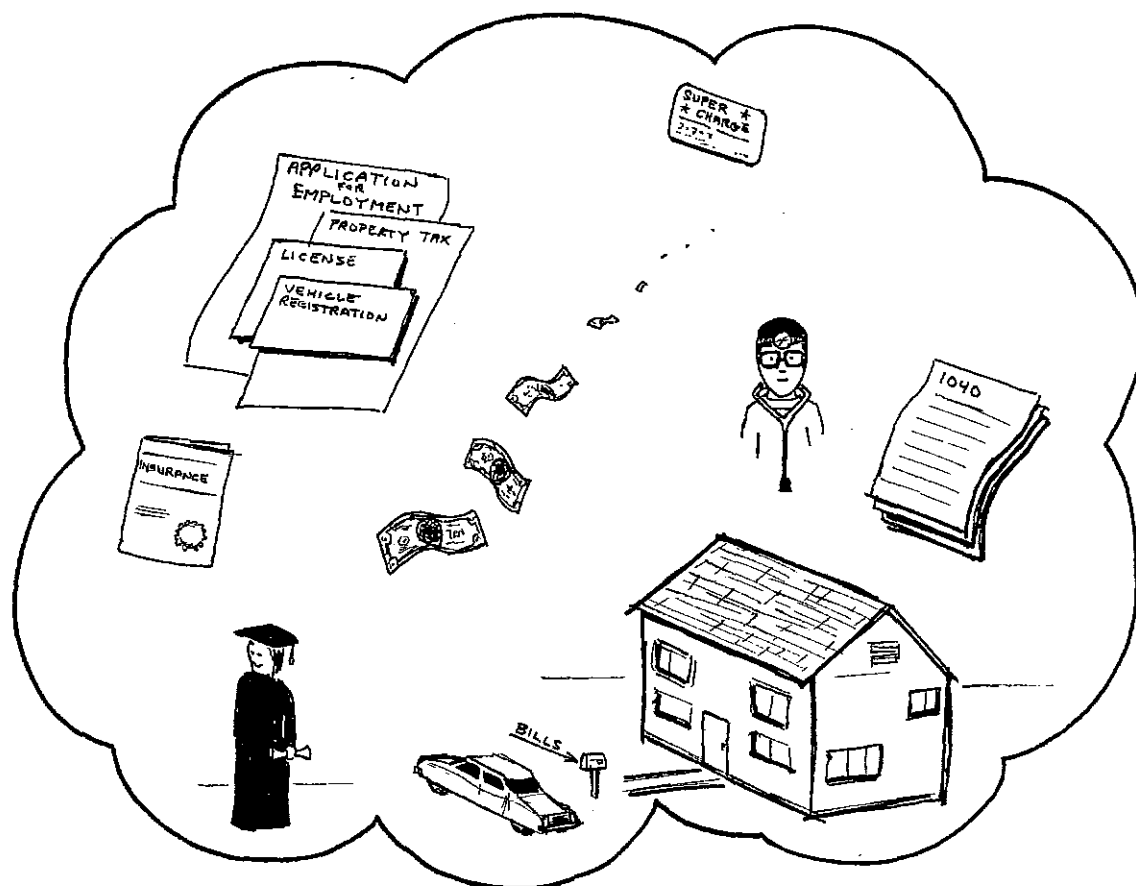
(Continued)

- How to organize and operate a home
- How to meet basic health requirements and where to go for medical and dental help, etc.
- How to meet educational goals, scholarships, student loans, etc.
- How to establish credit, get a loan, take out insurance, and pay taxes
- How to and when and where to seek legal assistance.

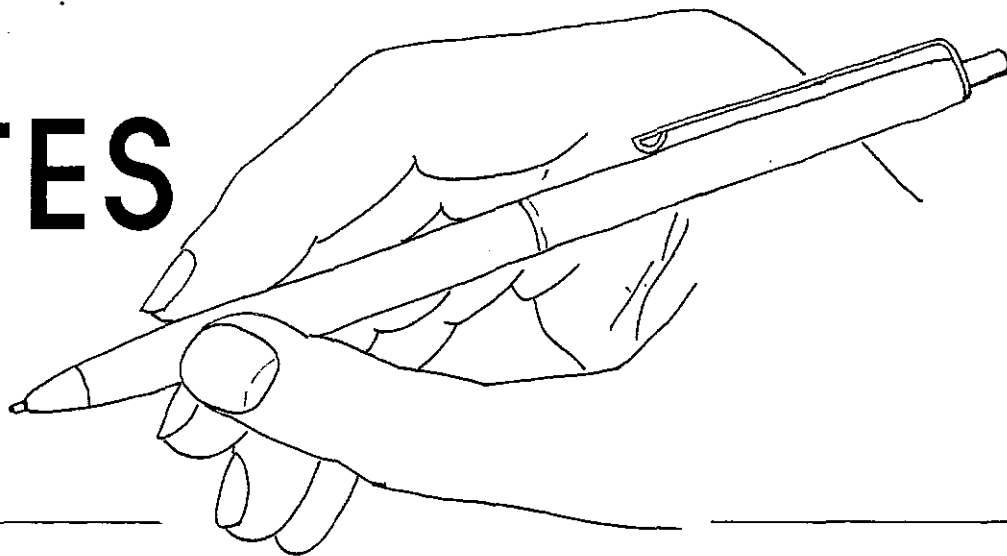
When foster teens leave our homes, we often feel a need to leave the door open for those teens to return if they should need or want to. If this is the case, we need to communicate that to our teens, not with the insinuation that they will probably fail but with the message that we would really like to hear from them and would like to continue to be a part of their lives.

Foster teens will come to appreciate the help you can give them in some career planning skills, matters of insurance purchases, contract and credit buying, opening checking accounts, and information on seeking employment.

This gives the teens a further sense of belonging, even if you never see or hear from them again. They are wanted and accepted by you, just the way they are.



# NOTES



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# Session Nine



## Drugs and Alcohol

# Trainer's Guide

## Drugs and Alcohol

### OBJECTIVES:

	Page
1. Participants will be aware of some of the problems facing teens concerning drugs and alcohol.	T-175
Worksheet #16	T-176
2. Participants will be aware of their own feelings, beliefs, and values concerning alcohol and drugs.	T-177
3. Participants will be aware of the different types of drugs and their effects.	T-179
4. Participants will be aware of some of the symptoms of drug use.	T-181
5. Participants will be aware of teens' social needs and how to fulfill them as a deterrent to drug and alcohol usage.	T-183
6. Participants will learn some ways of keeping their teens away from drug and alcohol problems.	T-185

**1** Participants will be aware of some of the problems facing teens concerning drugs and alcohol.

Use the questions for discussion given on Worksheet #16 on page P-113.

When or why does the use of alcohol constitute a problem?

When it is used to the point it interferes with other activities

When it impairs the judgment and functioning of the user

When it involves illegal activity

When it affects health.

What are some of the reasons that teenagers may use and abuse alcohol?

What are my personal views, beliefs and values regarding the use of alcohol?

Encourage participants to assess what their true feelings are.

Looking back on my own experiences with alcohol, how did I handle it? My parents? My peers? What would have helped or what could have been handled better?



# Drugs and Alcohol

## OBJECTIVE 1

Participants will be aware of some of the problems facing teens concerning drugs and alcohol.

### Worksheet #16

When or why does the use of alcohol constitute a problem? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the reasons that teenagers may use and abuse alcohol? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are my personal views, beliefs, and values regarding the use of alcohol? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did I handle my own experiences with alcohol? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When or why does the use of drugs constitute a problem? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the reasons that teenagers may use and abuse drugs? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are my personal views, beliefs, and values regarding the use of drugs? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did I handle my own experiences with drugs? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When or why does the use of tobacco constitute a problem? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the reasons that teenagers may smoke? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are my personal views, beliefs, and values regarding smoking? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did I handle my own experiences with smoking? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can I as a parent do to assist my teenager in dealing with these questions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2** Participants will be aware of their own feelings, beliefs, and values concerning alcohol and drugs.

Read page P-114. Ask participants what kinds of feelings they have toward alcohol and drugs and how those feelings relate to the teens in their care.

**OBJECTIVE 2**

**Participants will be aware of their own feelings, beliefs, and values concerning alcohol and drugs.**

**A**LMOST everyone in our society today uses drugs. We also use chemicals to change how we feel about ourselves and the situations we face.

We use medicine when we are sick, and coffee, tea, or soft drinks to give us a boost during the day. Caffeine and sugar give a feeling of extra energy and a lift in mood.

Tobacco helps some people relax. Many people use alcohol because they like the feeling they get from that drug.

People use all these things to change the way they think or feel and to influence the way they relate to others.

These drugs have been used for years and are regarded by most people as acceptable for adult

use, even though we know they may be harmful to the user. These are legal drugs.

Teens turn to illegal drugs for many of the same reasons we use legal drugs. Other influences may be peer group pressure, trying to prove themselves important and adult, or for something different to do on a boring day.

Marijuana is the most common illegal drug used. The effects of marijuana are still subject to debate, but most users claim the effects are similar to that given by some of the legal drugs.

Teens often are confused as to why some drugs are legal and some illegal. Marijuana advocates would like teens to believe marijuana is a modern, updated drug and is illegal only because law makers are old fashioned.



*I wonder why some teenagers turn to drugs?*

**3** Participants will be aware of the different types of drugs and their effects.

Read page P-115 on drugs and their effects.

Encourage participants to contact their local regional alcohol center for more information if they would like it.

Publications are available from some of the drug treatment centers that describe the "street" names of the various drugs. You might want to get a list of this type so you know what the teens are talking about.

Caution participants to work with their case workers if they suspect drug or alcohol use.

**OBJECTIVE 3**

**Participants will be aware of the different types of drugs and their effects.**

**D**RUGS of all types are easier to talk about when grouped in classes as follows:

**ALCOHOL** is one of the most widely used and misunderstood drugs. Most people think booze is a stimulant. It is a sedative. The effect varies according to your mood and situation. It can make you laugh, cry, become sleepy or aggressive. Other effects include a lowering of inhibitions, lessened ability to concentrate, and reduced coordination and reaction time. Overdoses of alcohol can cause hangovers, depress breathing, and cause loss of consciousness, coma, or even death. Many people become physically addicted to alcohol while others become psychologically addicted.

**STIMULANTS** (uppers) are drugs such as amphetamines (dexedrine, methedrine) known as speed, certain diet pills, and cocaine (coke). Stimulants increase energy and self-confidence and depress appetite. They also increase heart rate, blood pressure, and blood sugar. High doses may cause panic, confusion, hallucinations, aggression, mental breakdown, and serious heart irregularities. Dependency on these drugs is promoted by the feelings of depression, drowsiness, and fatigue when you stop using even small doses.

**DEPRESSANTS** (downers) include tranquilizers (Valium is one brand name) and sleeping pills (barbiturates and drugs like Quaalude). These drugs calm your nerves and temporarily help you sleep. People build tolerance to these drugs and need to take larger and larger doses to achieve the same effect. People on depressants have trouble thinking clearly, have slurred speech, and cannot concentrate. They become emotional, irritable, and suspicious. Paranoid, depressed, and suicidal feelings may develop. Large doses may cause death.

**NARCOTICS** include morphine, codeine, heroin, and pills with brand names like Percodan and Dilaudid. Doctors prescribe these drugs as pain-killers. They cause a feeling of peace and quiet in some people. Many people experience nausea, dizziness, mood changes, and lack of desire for sex and food. Tolerance builds for these drugs, requiring the user to take larger and larger doses to achieve the desired effect. People take these drugs for the "high" and then continue taking them to avoid the very painful withdrawal symptoms.

**HALLUCINOGENS** include LSD, mescaline, peyote buttons, certain mushrooms, and PCP (angel dust). The effects of these drugs vary from person to person and from use to use. They are very unpredictable. Some people claim to think more clearly while others experience panic, fear, hallucinations, and depressions. LSD occasionally triggers a long mental breakdown that can last for many months. PCP affects the spinal cord and the brain and produces disorder in thinking, hallucinations, temporary paralysis, and a feeling of being removed from one's surroundings. People have stopped breathing and their kidneys have failed on PCP. Convulsions, raised blood pressure, and memory loss are fairly common. The effects of this drug are very much like schizophrenia.

**MARIJUANA AND HASHISH** are the drugs most widely used. The effects include a dreamy state, a free flowing feeling, and increased awareness. Some people experience a feeling of panic, loss of control, depression, headaches, and nausea. There is still much debate as to the long range effects of using these drugs. Some studies show marijuana changes hormone balance.

**4** Participants will be aware of some of the symptoms of drug usage.

Read page P-116 on helping your teens avoid drug and alcohol problems. Stress the teens' social needs.

Remind participants NOT to jump to conclusions and confront the teen without first discussing the matter with the case worker as to the best possible approach.

**OBJECTIVE 4**

Participants will be aware of some of the symptoms of drug usage.

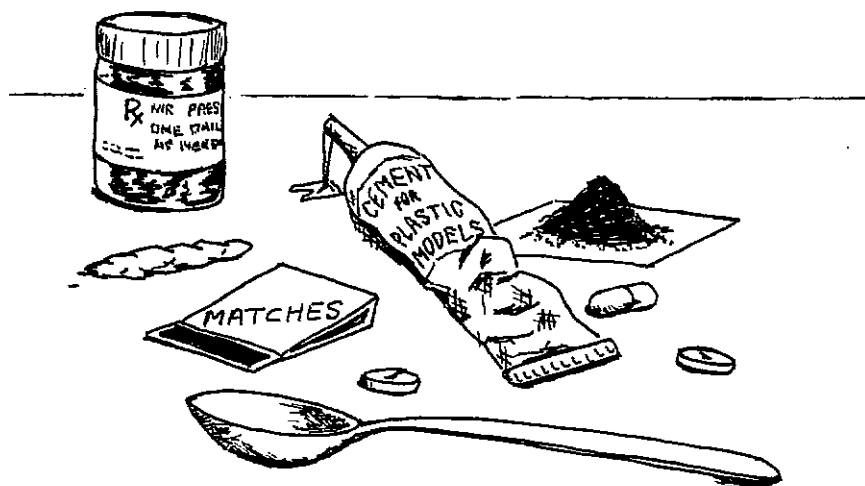
**H**ELPING your teen avoid drug and alcohol problems is certainly the ideal way of handling the situation, but what if you suspect they may already have problems?

Some clues you should watch for are:

- Disappearance of prescription pills from the medicine chest
- Tablets and capsules of unknown origin among teens' possessions
- Large supplies of model cement and glue, cement-smeared rags or handkerchiefs
- Peculiar odor on teens' breath or clothes
- Signs of intoxication with or without smell of alcohol
- An odor of burned rope (marijuana) and incense burning to cover it up
- Sunglasses and long sleeved shirts worn at odd times and places or blood spots on sleeves
- Repeated attempts to borrow money or disappearance of money and valuables
- Sudden changes of moods and behavior, sleeping habits, and attitudes
- Different circle of friends and reluctance to have you involved with them.

If you should find your teen is addicted to drugs or alcohol, seek professional help immediately. Ask your case worker for help in finding the best community resource.

More information is available through your Nebraska Regional Center on Alcoholism.



**5** Participants will be aware of teens' social needs and how to fulfill them as a deterrent to drug usage.

Discuss the social needs of teens.

The need to belong.

The need for love and attention

The need for companionship

The need for understanding

Remind participants that how to help teens meet these needs is taught in other chapters. You may want to review them.

Sometimes teens have been known to carry around boxes of vitamins as well as "no doz" to show that they are part of the drug scene.



**OBJECTIVE 5**

Participants will be aware of teens' social needs and how to fulfill them as a deterrent to drug usage.

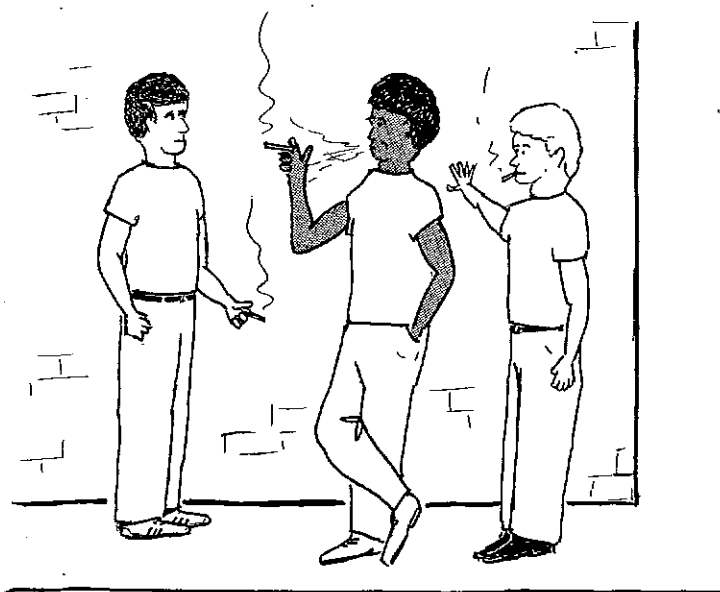
**K**NOWING what different drugs are and how they affect the people who use them is an important thing for foster parents to know. But it is even more important to know why teens are turning to drugs and some ways of changing the teens' outlooks toward themselves and their needs to become involved with drugs.

Teens usually turn to drugs to fulfill their social needs. Those social needs are:

- The need to belong
- The need for love and attention
- The need for companionship
- The need for understanding.

If we can help teens to meet these needs in productive ways, their needs for drugs will be lessened.

As serious as drug problems are, they may be much less serious than the communication or self-esteem problems they signal. Foster parents may need to re-examine the family's entire patterns and/or relationships to see whether underlying causes exist for the use of drugs as a means of escape.



**6** Participants will learn some ways of keeping their teens away from drug and alcohol problems.

Read page P-118 on keeping your teens free from drug and alcohol problems.

Ask participants for more ideas that might help.

Conclude this session by stressing the idea that teens who have a high self-image and constructive activities and positive peers are a lot less apt to have drug or alcohol problems.

The film, "There's an Addict in the House," can be the means of a good discussion, and this film is available from the Foster Parent Training Project.

**T**HE WORD ADDICT once conjured up thoughts of down and out winos shooting drugs into their veins in a dark alley. Today the word refers to almost anyone who habitually uses something. Addictions to alcohol, cigarettes, or even cream puffs are all somewhat similar. An addiction need not be a freak disease. It is an ordinary process that gets exaggerated and has undue control over one's life.

The following are personality traits that tend to be factors that contribute to addiction:

- Risk taking—people who have a high need for stimulation
- Impulsive behavior—people who have difficulty delaying gratification
- Low self-esteem
- Non-conformity—a strong desire for total independence and a weak commitment to goals
- Social alienation—people who feel unaccepted by society
- Feelings of helplessness—people who feel they lack control over their lives or that their lives are controlled by fate, luck, or other outside forces.

## OBJECTIVE 6

**Participants will learn some ways of keeping their teens away from drug and alcohol problems.**

Genetic factors or body chemistry may affect the way we react to various substances and experiences.

Drinking, smoking, and gambling seem to run in families. All family members seem to be expected to engage in these behaviors.

Social and cultural factors also influence addiction; i.e., macho men drink and real women sip cocktails.

You can help your teens stay addiction free by helping them meet their social needs: the need to belong, the need for love and attention, the need for companionship, and the need for understanding.

You can also help by watching your own attitudes and behaviors. Set a good example.

Control availability—quietly. Alcohol, cigarettes, etc. should be kept in a controlled location.

Keep your teens active and interested. Keep self-image growing in a positive manner.

Be consistent and someone your teens can depend and rely on.

Keep communication lines open and active.

Don't panic and assume the worst if your teens happen to experiment with alcohol and drugs.

Keep informed. Know what is going on in the community and with your teens and their peers.



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Bandler, R., J. Ginder, and V. Satir. *Changing with Families*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1976.

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Booklets available from the National Clearinghouse for Drug Abuse Information, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857:

Parents, Peers and Pot

Play It Smart: Facts for Teenagers About Drinking

Talking to Your Teenager About Drinking and Driving

Drug Abuse Prevention and Your Family

Drug Abuse Prevention and Your Friends

Drug Abuse from the Family Perspective

Booklets available from the Wisconsin Clearinghouse, 1954 East Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53704-5291:

Alcohol and Marijuana Information for Teens

Double Trouble: Mixing Drinks with Other Drugs

Show Them the Way to Go Home: Social Drinking and Anti-social Driving

You Asked for It: Information on Alcohol, Other Drugs and Teenagers

What You Can Do: A Citizen's Guide to Community Organization for the Prevention of Alcohol, Other Drug, Mental Health and Youth Problems

Who's Raising the Family (a workbook for parents and children)

# Session Ten



**Hey! What About Me?**

# Trainer's Guide

## Hey! What About Me?

### OBJECTIVES:

	Page
1. Participants will become aware of and understand why they are involved in foster parenting.	T-190
2. Participants will clarify what they feel the role of a foster parent is.	T-192
3. Participants will understand the mechanics of stress management.	T-194
4. Participants will explore and learn how to cope with feelings of guilt, resentment, jealousy, etc.	T-197
5. Participants will become aware of the role of the case worker and some times when they should call him or her.	T-199
6. Participants will realize the need for support groups and receive help in laying plans to start a group if one is not in their area.	T-201
7. Participants will learn how to let go of foster teens when they return to their biological parents or leave the foster home for other reasons.	T-203
8. Participants will become aware of how keeping foster teens may affect their biological children.	T-205
“The Cookie Jar Theory”	T-207

**1** Participants will become aware of and understand why they are involved in foster parenting.

Read rationale and discuss types of helpers.

Discuss some of the things participants expected from foster care that have turned out differently.



# Hey! What About Me?

## OBJECTIVE 1

Participants will become aware of and understand why they are involved in foster parenting.

### ACTIVITY

List some reasons people become foster parents.

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**W**HEN YOU ASK a group of foster parents how they happened to become foster parents, the different answers would probably be numbered by the number of people asked. I've heard answers from, "My teacher husband brought him home from school," to "The boy next door needed a place to go."

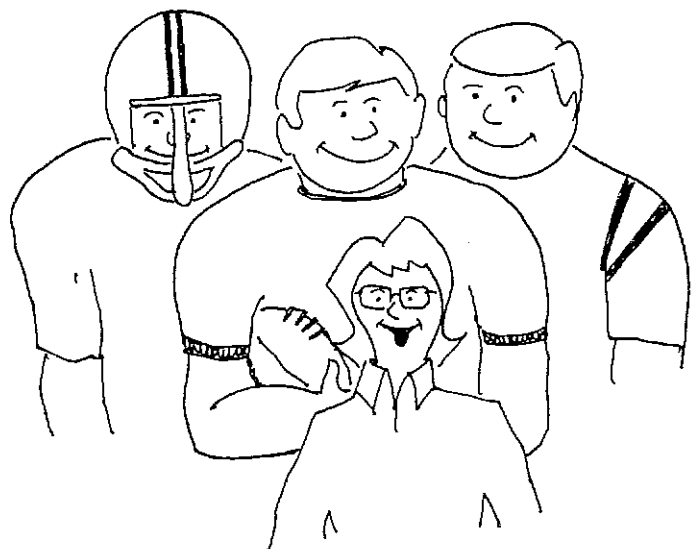
However, if you ask why they are foster parents, the answers would almost always contain "I wanted to help."

True helpers realize that helping is a two-way street. Helping makes them feel good, useful, needed, and so on. That does not mean we are using our foster children to meet our own needs. Before we can get anything from foster parenting, we must give of our whole selves. We are going to get out of foster parenting about what we put into it. If we approach it with a lack of commit-

ment or a lack of knowledge or a lot of unrealistic expectations, we are going to come away feeling cheated and unfulfilled.

Foster parents often begin thinking they can save the world, change the system, break even financially or possibly make some money, or have a clean, well-mannered little one for their children to play with, and the list goes on. Needless to say, these people are not going to have their needs met.

Your expectations about foster care can only be met if the children and their needs come first, and then benefits to you and your family will be many.



*My husband is a coach. Do you have any football players?*

**2** Participants will clarify what they feel the role of a foster parent is.

Read rationale.

Discuss things a parent needs to be.

**OBJECTIVE 2**

**Participants will clarify what they feel the role of a foster parent is.**

**M**OST PARENTS have the experience at some point in their child's development when they think, "Good grief! Is this great hulk of a kid the small baby I diapered, nursed through the chicken pox, and so forth?"

The same type of feeling often hits us as foster parents even though we have known the teen for a short time. We signed up to be foster parents, and we all have tucked away in the corners of our minds visions of being a really neat parent to a child who needs and wants us—a child we can "parent."

Instead...we get this teenager who is doing his best not to need a parent, to be independent, self-sufficient, to be his own person.

We naturally feel shaken. This is not the way we pictured it at all. We have to begin redefining our ideas of what kind of a parent role we will be playing.

At this time many foster parents, rather than sort through and redefine their role as parents, opt for a role they understand and know how to play without too much effort—the role of friend. We know how to be a friend. Our teens accept that friendship (as long as their peer groups are not around), and we feel more secure doing something we know how to do.

Several things are wrong with this relationship.

You are the parents. Teens need you to carry out all the parenting skills we've talked about in other sessions. They are not as independent and self-sufficient as first impressions might lead you to believe.

You are a role model. When they become parents themselves, they will parent as they have been parented. We know that in the past their role models have probably been fairly shaky, thus our model is very important. The fact that they have been removed from their own parents and placed with you leads them to believe that you are really good parents. You are not their only role model, but, depending upon the impact you make, you may influence their actions.

Friends do not make rules. You will have to switch roles if a problem comes up. The teens will have a hard time adjusting to you when you do this. They need to be able to count on your being the same and acting the same day after day.

Parents have to establish credibility. They must be dependable, they must be consistent. They must be a sounding board and sometimes a source for information and advice.

A parent is a person who makes leaning unnecessary, not a person to lean on.

The list of things a parent needs to be goes on and on. No wonder we all sit back every so often and ask ourselves, "Why me, why am I doing this?"

**3** Participants will understand the mechanics of stress management.

Read rationale.

Discuss burnout, how it affects the foster parents, and how it affects teens.

Review and add to the list of things that might prevent burnout.

**OBJECTIVE 3**

**Participants will understand the mechanics of stress management.**

**H**OW WE HANDLE stress may be the key to how successful and long lasting we are as foster parents.

Our ability to cope with and adapt to new conditions and responsibilities in our jobs, clubs, and leisure activities may be high. We assume this ability will stand us in good stead when we face new situations in our homes. This is not necessarily true. The old saying, "A man's home is his castle," fits well here. Our home is our shelter, we count on it for creature comforts, ease, and tranquility, a place to let our hair down.

An efficient, out of control teenager can reduce all of this to chaos in approximately five minutes.

Following are six thoughts for living with stress and winning.

1. Keep busy doing "normal." Don't cease normal household routine for any length of time to engage in crisis.
2. Fight perfectionism. Do the best you can but don't get caught up in doing or having everything done perfectly.
3. Take action. Have a plan. Stop debating—start doing.
4. Look to the future. What is done can't be changed. Build on the past, use it for a

learning experience. Don't try to repair or patch the past. Get involved with the future.

5. Look for the little fun things in life. Take time to enjoy the simple things. Accept life's little surprises as gifts to chase away boredom.
6. Count your blessings. "I felt sorry for myself because I had no shoes until I met a man that had no feet" has a message for us.

The burnout rate (getting tired or disillusioned and quitting) of foster parents and social workers is very high. The statistics are frightening. How burnout affects the system and the children it serves is far reaching.

Training is a vital part of developing a successful network of foster parents and social workers. Dropouts and replacements cause this to be a never ending job. Getting advanced training to the people who need and want it becomes impossible because we are having to spend the time and training money available to offer the basic training to all the new people in the system. Recruiting and licensing foster parents takes staff time and funds. The system lacks credibility and continuity because of the continuous turnover.

We have spent a great deal of time talking about

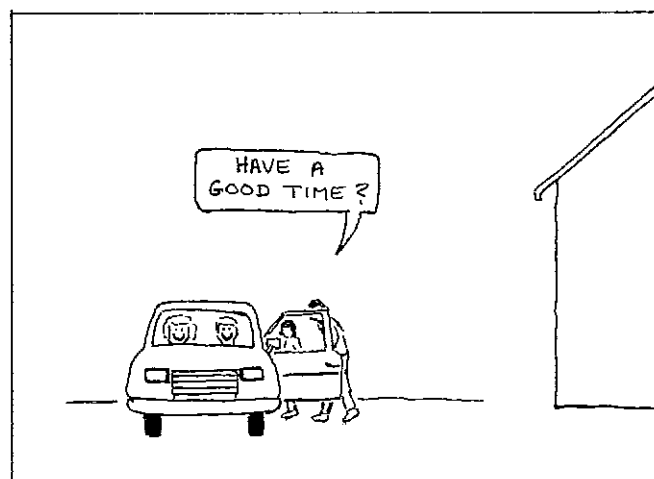
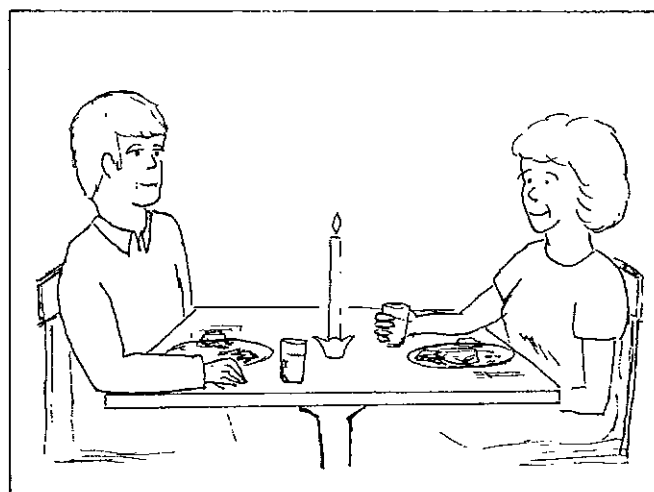
consistency, building relationships, working through problems, and how essential these things are to help teens develop and grow.

Foster teens are working in complex situations at best. If foster parents quit during or even just after their stay, this can be devastating to teens and reinforce their "bad person image" of themselves. "I'm so bad these people won't keep me" or "Having me around cured them of taking any more bad kids."

There are several reasons for burnout in foster parents, probably just as many as there are for getting in foster parenting in the first place.

Here are a few things that might help prevent burnout.

1. Join a support group. It will give you a sounding board and an idea bank. It will also give you the feeling of not being the only one playing the game.
2. Get more training. New pointers and skills will help keep your outlook fresh and exciting.
3. Switch the age, sex, or type of the children you keep. It will give you a change and a different outlook toward foster care.
4. Trade a "time off time" with another foster family. You keep my kids this weekend, and I'll keep yours the next.
5. Take a sabbatical leave for a predetermined amount of time.
6. Go to a National Foster Parent Convention. These are pure inspiration.
7. Take time off daily for yourself.



**4** Participants will explore and learn how to cope with feelings of guilt, resentment, jealousy, etc.

Read rationale and discuss these feelings. Review problem solving loop on page P-29 if necessary.

Talk about problem ownership.

**G**ONE ARE THE DAYS when children were needed to work the family farm or business. The monetary need for having children went out with the horse and buggy. More and more couples are opting not to have children but not you.

You take in someone else's children. You're special. You are that unique person who opens home, heart, and life to someone "extra."

That's a nice statement about a truly deserving person. . . you. But what happens when you don't feel so special. . . when that statement makes you feel threatened, something you have to live up to, and the thoughts you're having about foster care and your foster child aren't special at all? In fact, they aren't even nice.

You may resent the time, space, energy, and money spent on your teen. You may be jealous of the attention your teen gets from your spouse. You may begrudge making still another trip to town for a teacher conference.

This type of feeling is normal and usually occurs to every parent at some time or another. With our biological children we may not be conscious of these feelings because they have been with us for so long they and their needs are totally integrated in our life style.

One way of dealing with this problem is to use the problem solving loop on page P-29.

#### OBJECTIVE 4

Participants will explore and learn how to cope with feelings of guilt, resentment, jealousy, etc.

Begin by identifying the problem and its owner.

Example:

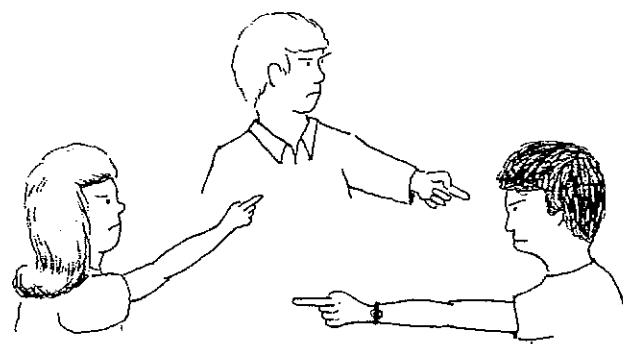
"I feel jealous and left out when Sarah and my husband spend the whole evening together."

Solution: Talk to husband and plan an activity that involves all three of you or possibly the whole family. You may not be the only one who feels this way.

Spend the evening with the whole family putting together a puzzle and take turns choosing music to listen to.

Evaluate the situation. Did you feel better after the evening?

Remember: This is your problem. You own it and are responsible for its solution. Do not place the blame with anyone. Solve the problem.



*Who owns the problem?*



**5** Participants will become aware of the role of the case worker and some times when they should call him or her.

Read rationale.

Encourage foster parents to stay in close contact with their case workers.

Stress giving the case worker the straight story about events in the foster family and with the foster teen.

**OBJECTIVE 5**

Participants will become aware of the role of the case worker and some times when they should call him or her.

**W**HEN YOU HAVE questions or concerns, you should not hesitate to call your case worker. You should know the role of the case worker and find out the times he or she is available. Know when to call for emergencies and when to call with good news. If he or she is not available, call the supervisor. In event that no one you are aware of is available, you can call this number and they will help find emergency assistance.

Child Welfare Information Line  
(800) 742-7575 or 471-3305

Call your case worker when:

You feel your teen needs more help than you can give him or her

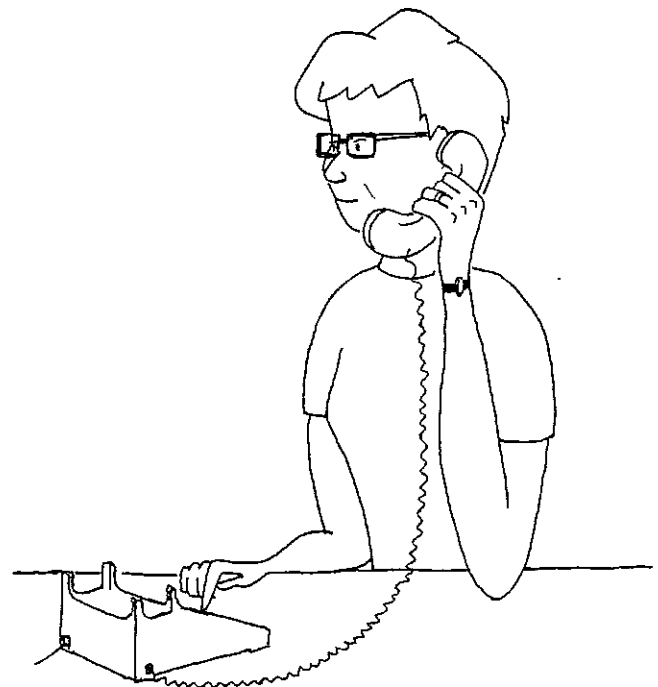
Your relationship with the biological parent feels threatening

The school system reports your teen is having learning problems

Your teen is in trouble with the law

Your teen's behavior suddenly changes

Your teen is missing after a reasonable waiting period



Your teen has health problems or needs

You are taking your teen out of town or the state

Your family has any major changes.

**6** Participants will realize the need for support groups and receive help in laying plans to start a group if one is not in their area.

Read rationale and discuss building support groups.

Have available names and addresses of people to contact to join state and national organizations.

**OBJECTIVE 6**

Participants will realize the need for support groups and receive help in laying plans to start a group if one is not in their area.

**D**URING MY YEARS as a foster parent several statements kept coming up whenever I talked about foster parenting with my non-foster parenting acquaintances. They would tell me, "Oh, I could never be a foster parent, I'd love them too much to let them go," or "I don't see why you do it...all those kids and all those problems." I always came away from those conversations feeling alone, misunderstood, and with major doubts about my sanity.

These people had no idea what foster parenting was about and could not relate to my concerns and ambitions for my foster children.

Joining a foster parent support group gave me the sounding board and idea bank I was hunting for. These were people who understood, people who had "been there" too.

Local foster parent support groups are found throughout Nebraska. If one is not in your area, you might want to form one using the people attending these training sessions as a beginning membership.

Also available is a state foster parent organization and a national association. Your trainer can obtain names and addresses for you to contact for information.

We should also be aware of our own personal support group and who belongs to it. As foster parents, we need to be more aware of our personal needs than some other parents because we are probably going to be dealing with more stress in our homes than they do.

To identify who belongs to your own personal support group, list all the people who ever said or led you to believe they would help or listen. Ministers, counselors and other professional "helpers" should be listed too. Now cross off all those who you feel are too busy, too unconcerned, too anything for you to call or disturb them. Cross off all those who didn't help or let you down when you called on them for support before.

Those who are left are those who are probably going to be able to support you when you are down or celebrate with you when you are up.

Identifying personal support groups is something you might want to share with your teens.



**7** Participants will learn how to “let go” of foster teens when they return to their biological parents or leave the foster home for other reasons.

Discuss how the participants feel about letting go and list some ways they have found to make it easier. Letting go is a grieving process. You may want to explore the stages of grief with the participants. (See *On Death and Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross.) You may also wish to discuss the sense of failure when the foster placement has not been successful.

Suggest participants read the “Cookie Jar Theory” on their own time. You may want to discuss this at a later session.

**OBJECTIVE 7**

Participants will learn how to "let go" of foster teens when they return to their biological parents or leave the foster home for other reasons.

**T**HE FEELINGS of loss and grief that a foster family feels when a foster teen leaves are natural, but nonetheless they are one of the most difficult times the foster family faces.

Most foster families have their own ways of dealing with their feelings after a child leaves. Some go their own separate ways, and each family member works through his or her emotions alone while others try to plan some fun event that will distract them from their emotions.

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**ACTIVITY**

You may want to write down some of the ways members of your training group handle this problem.

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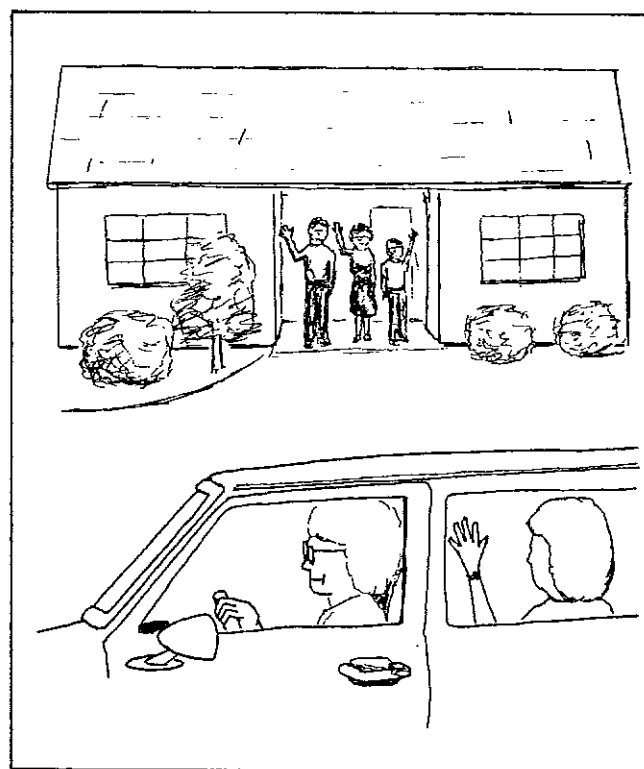
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**8** Participants will become aware of how keeping foster teens may affect their biological children.

Read rationale and ask participants how they feel their biological children feel about their foster children. Ask for both positive and negative feelings.

Ask participants to discuss some of the things they have done to help their biological children adjust.

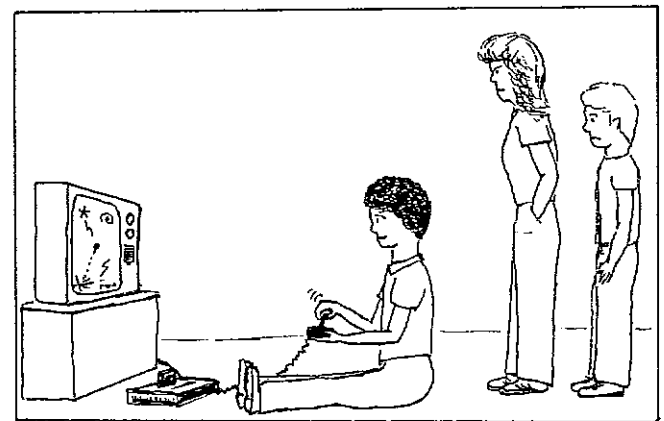
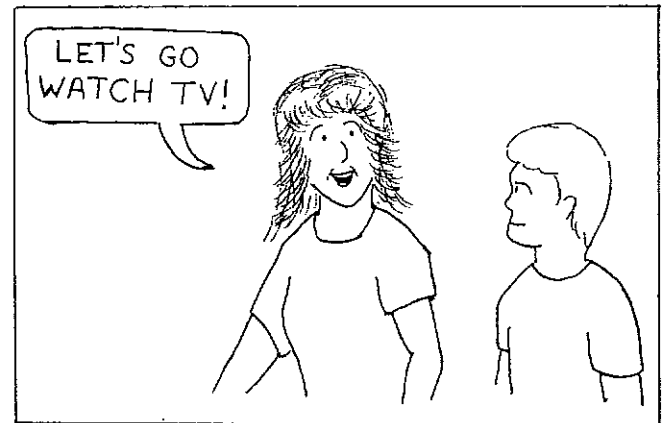
**OBJECTIVE 8**

Participants will become aware of how keeping foster teens may affect their biological children.

**T**HE EFFECTS of keeping foster teens on the foster family's biological children vary in almost every situation. The age of the biological children, the age of the foster child, the length of the placement, and the attitude of all parties involved are contributing factors to the way your biological children may be affected.

Competition, jealousy, and resentment may be emotions that arise on both the part of the foster and biological children. Children are being placed in a role they are unfamiliar with. Learning to handle this new situation may take time and a lot of patience and understanding on your part.

Your biological children and foster children may develop a very close relationship. Keeping this relationship moving in a positive direction is important. Your biological children need to be aware of some of the pitfalls that could occur. Good communication between you and your biological children is a must. Private conversations with each child on a regular basis can be very helpful. Often family council meetings are a good place to air some of the feelings toward the relationships between the children in your home.





# Help yourself to . . . the cookie jar theory

By Diana Kraus

This paper was written to help people understand the process of giving and getting that goes on in our lives on a daily basis.

**T**HE PREMISE FOR THIS THEORY is that as interpersonal interactions occur, they originate from some level of our life's cookie jars. We all have our own cookie jars, so this analogy hopes to present a simple yet useful systematic model for analyzing a person's own actions with respect to those of others.

The whole idea started with a very good friend of mine. We were very close and shared a lot of thoughts and ideas with each other. The more I was around her, the more I realized she was relating to people on a much different level from what I was. She was continually emptying her cookie jar of all its contents for anyone who might express a need, and then she was highly resentful to find nothing was left over for the people in her life who really mattered, let alone for herself.

For her 29th birthday I gave her a cookie jar filled to overflowing with an assortment of cookies. Needless to say, her response was something less than enthusiastic, for after being married for ten years and having two children she did have a surplus of cookie jars. However, this one was very special. My challenge to her was to start accumulating cookies for herself and to be more selective about how these were to be given out.

I would like to share some of my observations and examples with you. As you think of your life as a cookie jar, let's divide it into at least four different layers.

On the first layer, we find those cookies that we share with anyone, for example, the common courtesies such as "Please," "Thank you," etc. These we perform many times a day without much deliberate forethought. Almost no sacrifice occurs at this level. We initiate these actions in behalf of strangers, friends, and family alike. No specific level

of commitment has been established before this sharing occurs.

The second layer involves those parts of us we share with those who have become our friends or those who have become close to us as a result of work relationships. An example of this might be sharing a work load or sending a friend a note in appreciation of her friendship and talents. As we move from the first layer to the second layer, we see an increasing involvement of time and money.

When our commitment deepens, so does the level of sharing.

The third layer of cookies is characterized by contractual relationships such as marriage, family, and very close, deep friendships. The commitment at this level is significant, and many times the sacrifices it entails are initiated without much thought of reciprocation or immediate gratification. An example of this might be a wife's support and involvement with her husband's career or vice versa. Many others can be cited—taking care of a friend's children for an extended period of time, providing a loan, etc. These actions are in response to the recipient's needs or desires, and the sacrifice at this level is considerable.

The cookies found in the fourth layer of this proverbial cookie jar are somewhat different because they are truly our very own. They are the cookies that help us define ourselves and also help others define us. Not often shared or given to others, the fourth layer contains those talents or abilities that say, "I am. . ." or "I did. . .," special projects we have developed, the organized manner under which we work, periods in our lives of growth or failure. Here also are the hidden "I wish. . .," "I want to. . .," "I need. . ." desires and longings that if shared would make us very vulnerable to whomever we shared with. This level is what makes us independent persons.

The reason for fashioning such a model, or for that matter even spending so much time thinking about this subject, is that loneliness and emptiness are so very apparent in our society today. Two



main reasons cause an epidemic of "empty cookie jars." The first is that no cookies have been put into the jar. The second is that, although the person seems to have cookies, he or she is so much of a "giver" that a perpetual shortage or deficit occurs. Both groups of "empty cookie jar" lives seem to develop a martyr attitude that sees others as having it all and themselves as being deprived or used.

The challenge is to start accumulating cookies for our own jars, being aware of what level we want to fill and placing actions involving others on a definite level. Do things that make us feel good. Develop an ability or talent that makes us feel worthy. Start manufacturing a gut feeling or base for "Who am I?" "I am OK." Base these feelings on ourselves, not others. Start trying to identify what level the people we are dealing with are working out of.

Many relationships are bound to fail because the people involved are operating out of different levels. For example, in a casual sexual experience one person was viewing sex as a level 3 or 4 sharing while the other was looking for a "quickie" and therefore viewing sex as a level 1 or 2 experience. This dichotomy exists both inside and outside of marriage and results in one person feeling empty or used.

The empty cookie jar need not be a permanent curse. The purpose of this analogy is so that we can study our transactional habits and evaluate our feelings and emotions. We need to be aware of the level we are operating on and try to match it to the level of commitment we really want. This will eliminate stress on the relationship and the people involved.

Two additional aspects of this analogy should be considered. "Cookie monsters"

are alive and well in our everyday lives. Cookie monsters are people who keep their own jars full to overflowing at the expense of those around them. Their interactions are consciously or subconsciously based on, "Will it fit in with my objectives?" "Is it what I want?" "Is it best for me?" Learn to recognize these personality types and either avoid them or limit the amount of ourselves we will share. An in depth sharing experience with a cookie monster will often result in an empty cookie jar.

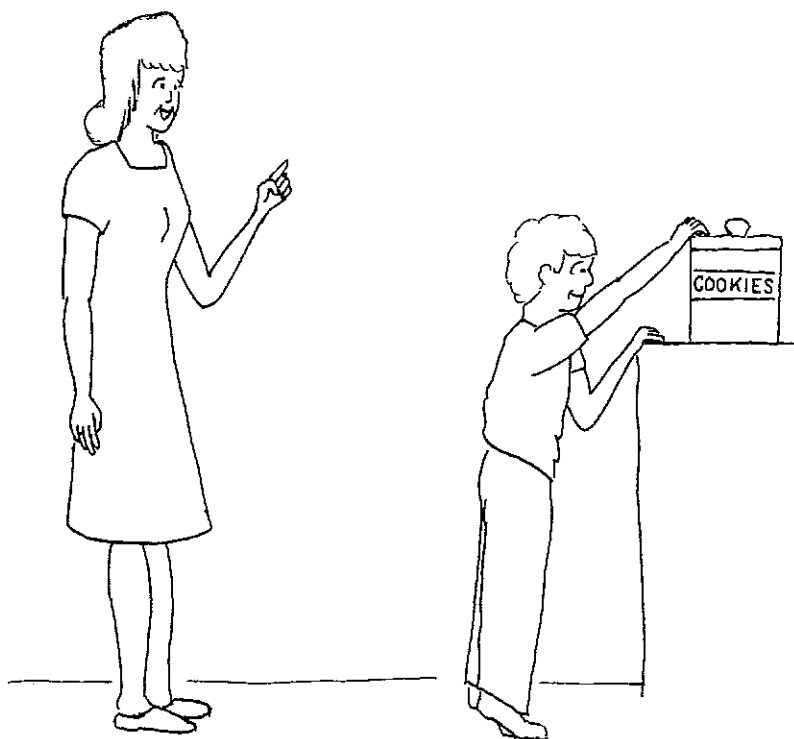
A more positive aspect of the cookie monster idea is that at different times, we all must be cookie monsters. Occasionally, to meet a special need, goal, or objective, we must have the cooperation and sacrifice of our support group. These times are important and valid not only for the recipient but also for the support group. We all need experiences in receiving

as well as giving to be able to do both well. The danger is not in the experience of receiving at a certain time but the perpetuation of expecting it into a lifestyle. When we are starting a new thrust in our lives, we need to take cookies until our own lives are settled enough to enable us to return to a giving level.

The second aspect of the cookie jar theory is that people are not cookies. That is husbands, wives, children, or friends cannot be cookies in our jars. The cookies with which we fill our jars are things, not people. People are entities within themselves, free to become what they deem fulfilling. If people become cookies, we try to fashion them into something fulfilling to us, but this may or may not meet their needs. Eventually, this leads to rejection or at least a redefinition of ownership and/or relationship

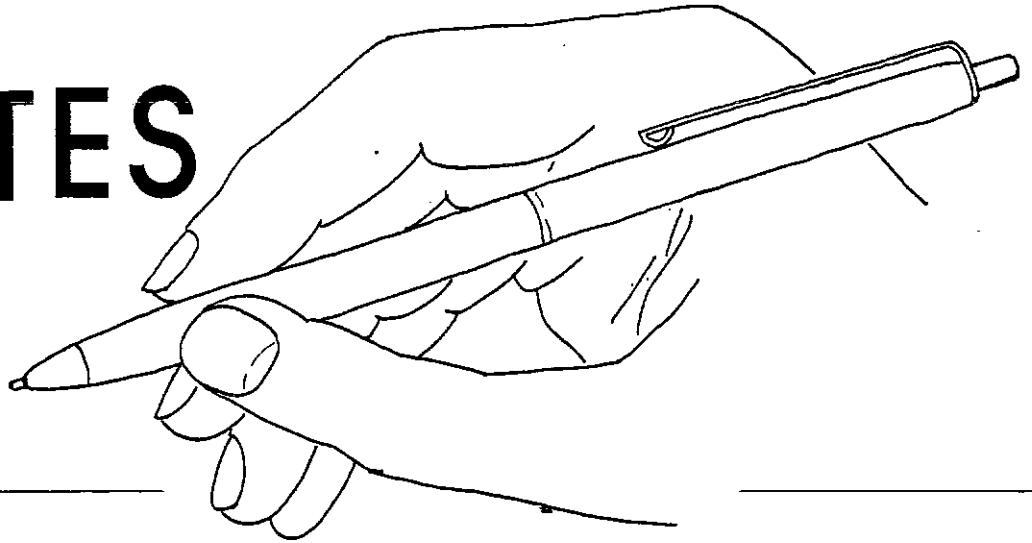
rights. When the rejection does occur, it can be devastating, especially if the people involved are meaningful components of our lives. Cookies cannot reject us. They are us! The abilities, contributions, and talents that we share with others can be our cookies but not the people themselves. The parenting skills we develop that produce happier children, the entertaining talents we acquire to encourage fun at home—these are our cookies. Those we care for benefit from these cookies as well as we do. Being the best we can be will benefit ourselves as well as others.

This simple model of the cookie jar provides a working analogy with which we can analyze our interactions with others. At best it can alleviate the "empty cookie jar" syndrome and at the least can help provide insight into the process of cookie accumulation and sharing.



*Help yourself, but leave some for me!*

# NOTES



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