



# **Teen Group**

**Facilitator Manual**

**Second Edition**

**Lily Anderson and Greg Routt**



# Step-Up Group Teen Curriculum

## Facilitator Manual



**Lily Anderson and Greg Routt**

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Step-Up: Building Respectful Family Relationships

Teen Group Facilitator Manual

The Step-Up curriculum was developed and written by Greg Routt and Lily Anderson  
Step-Up Program is a group intervention program for adolescents who are violent  
toward family members.

Step-Up is a program of King County Superior Court.

Edited by Sakson and Taylor Consulting

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with many families over the course of its development. We have learned from their hard work and effort to improve their family relationships.



# Introduction

The Step-Up curriculum is designed for counselors who facilitate groups with adolescents who have been violent towards parents or family members. The curriculum uses a cognitive behavioral, skills based approach partnered with restorative practice to help youth prevent the use of violent and abusive behaviors in the family. Teens learn and practice nonviolent, respectful ways of communicating and resolving conflict with family members in a group setting with other parents and teens.

The curriculum employs best practice and evidence based approaches including cognitive behavioral exercises, skill development, solution focused and motivational interviewing strategies to help youth make specific behavioral changes related to stopping violence and abuse in the home, and building respectful family relationships. A collaborative, family based approach is used in the family groups where parents and youth learn and practice skills with feedback and support from others. In parent group, parents learn a model of respectful parenting that balances leadership and positive support, promoting non-violence and respect in the family.

Family safety is a priority of the intervention with development of a 'safety plan' followed by weekly check-ins within the family group to monitor the youth's progress in staying non-violent and safe with family members. Weekly behavioral goals related to non-violence and respect are set by the youth with progress reported each week in group, fostering accountability for behavior and keeping the focus on using skills learned at home.

Step-Up uses a Restorative Practice model of accountability, competency development and making amends to restore family relationships. Restorative inquiry is used to help youth recognize the effects of their actions on others, cultivate empathy and take steps to repair harm done. A restorative practice approach of engaging youth in a collaborative process with the victim (parent) in a community of families, holding a balance of accountability and support, is a key element of the program.

The curriculum is designed to include parents and teens together at the beginning of each group for a '*Check-In*' and restorative process, followed by a skill building session, either together or in separate parent and teen sessions.

Step-Up was originally developed for youth involved in the juvenile justice system who are court referred after a domestic violence offense toward a parent or family member. However, the program is also appropriate for non-court involved youth, and most groups are a mix of community and court referred youth.

The focus of the curriculum is twofold: to address the issues of adolescents who initiate violence toward family members, and to address the needs of parents or family members who have been the targets of the violence. In most cases, youth and parents participating in Step-Up continue to live together and if not, they have regular contact with each other. The program is not designed for youth who do not have ongoing contact with the parent or caregiver they are abusive toward. Home practice of newly learned skills is key to integrating the new behaviors and restoring family relationships.

Treating adolescent violence in the family is both intervention and prevention. When families assimilate a respectful family model and youth experience success with using the behaviors that support it, they learn lifelong lessons about relationships. These values carry forward into their future relationships with intimate partners and their own families.

### ***Step-Up History***

In 1996, 63% of the 502 juvenile domestic violence charges filed by the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office were for juveniles who assaulted their mother or father. In 1997, the King County Department of Judicial Administration applied for and received funding from the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (GJJAC) to develop and implement a pilot project for teens who are assaulting their family members. Until the funding of this project, there was no specialized intervention in King County for addressing adolescent violence in the home.

The success of the Step-Up Program has depended largely on coordination with the juvenile justice system. During the initial phase of program development, Step-Up staff collaborated with juvenile probation counselors, judges, prosecutors and other court system personnel to coordinate a plan for referral and follow-up of juvenile domestic violence offenders. The coordinated community response model used for adult domestic violence has provided an outline of key elements in coordinating systems that respond to juvenile DV. Some examples include the development of

protocols for consistency in court response and probation follow-up, assessment of violence risk, safety planning and expedited services to the family.

Collaboration with law enforcement has been another important component. Step-Up developed a police training video on juvenile domestic violence to educate responding officers about the issue, how to communicate with parents and understand safety issues for the family. The response of the criminal justice system to teen's who are violent in the home has significant impact on the outcome for the teen and their family. Coordination between the Step-Up Program and the juvenile justice system has been crucial to its effectiveness in helping teen's change their behavior.

### ***Design and Structure of the Curriculum***

The curriculum is designed to be a 21-session program, with one session per week. Sessions are intended to be 1.5 to 2 hours, depending upon the group size. There is an addendum of optional additional sessions at the end of the curriculum. Group facilitators can, of course, change the number of sessions to suit time limitations and select session material they find useful.

The order of the sessions is flexible. Since safety of family members is a primary concern, the sessions that address physical violence should be completed first. After parents have identified their concerns in the first parent session, the group facilitator may decide to change the order of the sessions.

Some of the sessions build on each other and should be taught sequentially. These sessions include: *Making a Safety Plan* and *Understanding Warning Signs*; *Understanding Feelings*, *Understanding Self-Talk and Beliefs*, and *Hurtful Moves, Helpful Moves*; *Making Amends* and *Accountability Through Restorative Practice*.

The first edition of the Step-Up curriculum had more separate teen and parent sessions. However, we found it helpful to include parents in some of the teen skill sessions so that parents are able to learn the same skills. Parents can better support their teens' use of new skills at home when they have learned along with them. This change in the curriculum left extra parent sessions that are now in the addendum at the end of the manuals

and workbooks. Facilitators are welcome to select parent sessions from the addendum after they have covered the key parent sessions (see Training Manual for more information about Key Sessions).

Every session begins with parents and teens together for *Check-In* and is followed by *Group Activities* that are skill-building sessions either together or in separate teen and parent groups.

The curriculum includes a Teen Group Facilitator Manual, Parent Group Facilitator Manual, a Parent Workbook and Teen Workbook. Each session in the manuals and workbooks includes:

- Background Information - notes and guidelines for teaching the session
- Goals - what the participants should learn when they complete the session
- Important Messages - key points for teaching the session
- Session Overview - schedule for the session
- Group Activities – skill building exercises for the session
- Take Home Activities - activities to work on at home

## ***Check-In***

During the *Check-In* process at the beginning of every group, teens look at the Abuse / Disrespect Wheel and the Respect Wheel in their workbooks and identify behaviors that they used in the previous week. They also report on their progress on weekly goals and make a goal for the following week.

There is a *Check-in* section at the end of their workbooks that includes 20 *Check-In* worksheets and 20 *My Weekly Goal* worksheets.

Teens fill out the Check-In worksheets at the start of the group, along with the *How Did I Do* section on the *My Weekly Goal* sheet. The facilitator then has each teen share with the group, along with input from their parents.

See the Orientation session for specific details about how to facilitate Check-In. The Step-Up Training Manual includes a section about facilitating Check-In, along with a discussion of challenges and tips for a successful process.

## ***Step-Up Training Manual***

For those facilitators who do not participate in a Step-Up training, we strongly advise them to read the Step-Up Training Manual. The manual includes important information about the issue of youth violence in the family, the components of the Step-Up intervention model and the theory and use of restorative practice with families. The training manual provides information on assessment of youth and families and how to determine if youth are an appropriate fit for the program. Assessment tools are included for assessment of violence level and safety issues. Additionally, the manual offers tips for addressing specific challenges in working with these special youth and their parents. Establishing a climate of safety and respect in the group, responding to aggressive or abusive behavior and holding youth accountable in a supportive manner are discussed.

### ***Quality Assurance***

Step-Up has a quality assurance plan for those who would like to deliver the program as it has been evaluated. This includes a three-day training for facilitators, consultations and performance reviews. The full 21-session curriculum is delivered in weekly sessions. Contact the authors for more information about the quality assurance plan.



# Outline of Sessions

Session	Teens	Combined	Parents
1		Orientation to Step Up	
2		Making a Safety Plan	
3		Understanding Warning Signs	
4	Understanding Violence		Introduction to Parent Group: Strengths, Challenges, Changes
5		Understanding Self Calming	
6		Assertive Communication	
7	Understanding Power		How to Respond When Your Teen Is Violent
8	Making Amends		When Your Teen Is Abusive: Effects on Parenting
9		Accountability Through Restorative Practice	
10		Understanding Feelings	
11		Understanding Self-Talk and Beliefs	
12	Hurtful Moves/Helpful Moves		Guiding Change in Your Teen with Restorative Parenting
13		Safety Plan Review/Open Session	
14		Using "I" Statements	
15	Understanding Responsibility		Empowering Teens to Be Responsible for Their Behavior
16	Understanding Empathy		What Kind of Messages Are You Giving Your Teen?
17		Guidelines for Respectful Communication	
18		Problem Solving Together	
19		Problem Solving Together	
20		Open Session	
21		Moving Forward	
Extra Sessions	My Family Relationships	How We Change	Listening to Your Teen Making Changes Encouraging Your Teen Supporting Positive Changes in Your Teen





# Session 1: Orientation to Step-Up

## Teen and Parent Session

### ***Background Information***

The orientation prepares youth and parents for the Step-Up program. It is conducted in a group session with parents and youth together at the beginning of a new group series. If you are running an ongoing group with new families joining at different times, the orientation is delivered to the parent and teen in a separate session before joining the group. The orientation may include one or more families at once.

The purpose of the orientation is to introduce participants to the program and begin the engagement process. Orientation informs youth and parents about the structure of the group, the components of the program, how it will help them build skills to prevent violence and restore respectful family relationships. They learn about the *Wheels, the Check-In, Weekly Goal Planning and the Communication Agreement*.

### ***Goals***

- To introduce participants to the program and discuss the purpose and goals of the program.
- To begin to establish a safe and respectful climate in the group by discussing the *Ground Rules* for group and the *Communication Agreement*.
- To set participants expectations about the new skills they will learn and the behavioral changes they will make to improve their relationships with their family members.
- To begin to engage youth in talking about their behavior with others, and start to experience the value of being honest and accountable.
- To help families recognize that they are not alone, and begin to experience support from other group members.

- To facilitate the first *Check-In* with youth and parents, and help them begin to experience accountability as a positive experience where they are encouraged and supported by others.
- To teach youth how to plan a personal goal for behavior change and use the Goal Planning sheet to plan their first goal.

### ***Important Messages***

- The purpose of this program is to help you stop hurtful behavior toward your family members and learn safe and respectful ways to communicate and handle problems.
- We all have a part in making this group a safe and respectful place for everyone.
- You are not the only family experiencing this problem.
- You are capable of making changes; you have knowledge and wisdom about what you need to do to make positive changes.
- Parents and teens will be learning skills together.
- Even though things seem difficult between you and your parents right now, you can find positive parts of your relationship and build on them.

### ***Session Overview***

1. Complete the introductions and Warm-Up Exercise.
2. Discussion: What you will learn in Step-Up, Program Components, Acronym and Goals
3. Discussion: How the Sessions Work, the Wheels and Check-In process
4. Exercise: Your First Check-in
5. Discussion: Addressing Violence using Restorative Inquiry and Goal Planning
6. Discussion: Requirements for Completion of the Program.
7. Discussion: Ground Rules for Group

# Group Activities

## *Introduction*

Begin the group by introducing the facilitators and passing out the workbooks. Welcome parents and teens to Step-Up and tell them that during this session the group will get to know each other and learn about the program.

Most families should already be familiar with the purpose of Step-Up from their intake session. However, it is helpful to reiterate the program purpose before the introductions to remind youth that they are not the only ones using violent behavior at home. A discussion of the goals and skills sets an expectation for participants that they will make positive changes. Both parents and youth often feel encouraged to find out that they will learn how to solve problems together.

The orientation is directed primarily to the teen and their behavior change goals, with the parent as a support and participant in learning with them. The parent group orientation is the first session of the parent group. If it is on an ongoing group, new parents can be oriented to parent group in an individual session or at the intake interview session by discussing the main points of the orientation.

If it is an ongoing group with new families joining an established group, begin their first group with the 'Group Member Introductions' in the next section. The new family introduces themselves last. This demonstrates to the new family the group norm of youth talking about their behaviors in an accountable and direct way. It also helps the youth and parent when they hear the changes group members have made and the behaviors they are working on. It provides encouragement to the youth and parent to see other families who are making progress.

## ***Group as a Supportive Environment***

Facilitators should highlight the importance of group members supporting each other in their learning and encouraging one another through challenges.

Orientation is an opportunity to give youth a chance to think for themselves about what they believe is important for them to change in their behavior and begin the practice of making personal goals.

Most teens don't know what to expect when they come to their first group session. Those who are court referred often perceive their attendance at Step-Up as a punishment. Many teens appreciate the chance to speak openly in this first session, and are relieved to find it is a supportive environment. The restorative practice principles of 'working with' the youth, and holding a balance of support and accountability, begins during the orientation session.

It also helps youth when they understand that the primary focus of the program is stopping violence and being safe with their families. When they know this is the reason they are here, and that there is expectation that they will become non-violent, it keeps their attention on taking steps to change this behavior. It also helps them begin to integrate a personal intention to stop using violent behavior.

## ***Suggested Introductory Statement***

Introduce the program with a brief statement about the purpose of the group and why everyone is here:

Step-Up is a program for youth who have been violent in the home. Everyone is here to learn how to prevent hurting their family members, and learn new ways to handle anger and conflict so that everyone in the family is safe and respected. Parents are here to learn along with their teens so they can support their behavior changes at home. Everyone has something to learn.

You are all in this together, and you can all support each other in restoring your family relationships and making your homes a safe and positive place to be.

We want the youth to be honest and direct about the behaviors that brought them to the program, and avoid the tendency (common to youth, parents and professionals) to speak indirectly about it. When youth become accustomed to talking about their behaviors, they begin to let go of their denial and develop

empathy and accountability. This is a restorative practice theory, and a key to helping youth change.

### ***Group Member Introductions***

Refer to the following questions in the workbooks or write them on the board, and ask teens to introduce themselves by answering these questions.

1. What is your name?
2. What behavior brought you here?
3. What would you like to learn to help you get along better with your family?
4. Or, if you have been coming to the group, what have you learned that is helping you get along better with your family.

Have parents introduce themselves after their teens' introduction and share something they would like to learn in the program to improve their relationship with their teen. If they have been coming to the group, ask them to share something they have learned in the group that is helping them.

### ***Warm-Up Exercise***

The *Warm-Up Exercise* is a relationship-building activity for parents and teens. The purpose is to have parents and teens begin talking with each other in positive ways. Many teens and parents who come to this program are in the habit of communicating negatively with each other. This exercise helps them remember what it is like to relate with each other in a positive way. Feel free to replace or enhance this exercise with other warm up activities that engage youth and their parents in positive communication. It is important to keep the topic simple and positive in the session. Remember that when parents and youth start the program their relationships are often tense and volatile. Have them take a break if arguing begins, and move on to the next family. Come back to them later and invite them to give it another try, or hold off until another time (possibly in a family session for now. See section on separate Family Sessions).

Have parents and teens spend a few minutes writing down responses to the *Warm-Up Exercise* questions in their workbooks.

## ***Warm-Up Exercise***

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

1. A time I couldn't have made it through something difficult without my mom/dad/teen was:
2. A time when I appreciated my mom/dad/teen was:
3. Something I like about my mom/dad/teen is:

When they are finished, go around the group and have each parent and teen share their responses with the group.

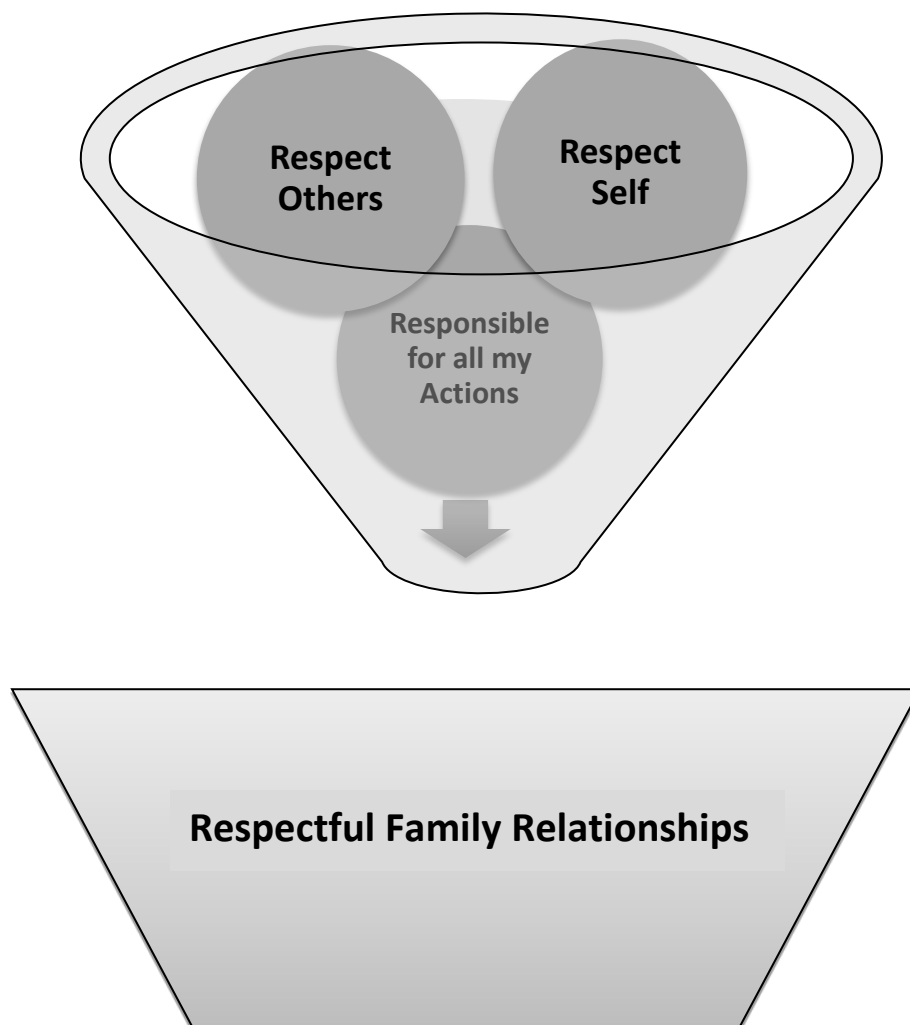
## ***The Three R's***

Refer group members to the Respect page in their workbooks, and explain the following:

Respect is at the heart of everything you learn, and we will be talking about respect in many different ways.

Write the following on the board:

1. Respect for Self
2. Respect for Others
3. Responsibility for All Your Actions



## ***Step Up Components***

Refer the group to *Step Up Teen Components* in their workbooks and briefly discuss each component.



Briefly describe each of the key components of the Step-Up Model:

### **Safe Behaviors**

Safety of family members is the first concern of the program. Stopping violence and abuse toward family members is your most important task. All of the skills that you learn in Step-Up help you stay non-violent. The first and most important skill you will learn in Step-Up is making a plan about what



you will do when you are getting upset and angry and might become hurtful to family members. We call this a 'Safety Plan' because it keeps your behavior safe.

## **Respectful Communication**

You will learn many different ways to talk to others in a way that is respectful to them and respectful to yourself. You will learn how to stay respectful even when you are angry and upset. You will know how to express your feelings and needs in a way that is not attacking or hurtful. You will learn how to talk about problems, listen and work together to resolve conflict.

## **Self-awareness and understanding of your thoughts, beliefs and feelings**

You will learn about what is going on inside for you when you become violent or abusive. You will learn how you can change your thinking in perspective to help you respond in a different way. You will become aware of your negative 'self-talk' that gets you amped up and angry, and how to change it to more helpful self-talk that calms you down and helps you see things more realistically. You will learn about the feelings you have beneath your anger and how to feel those feelings instead of the anger, so you can express your feelings and needs in a safe and respectful way.

## **Self-Calming**

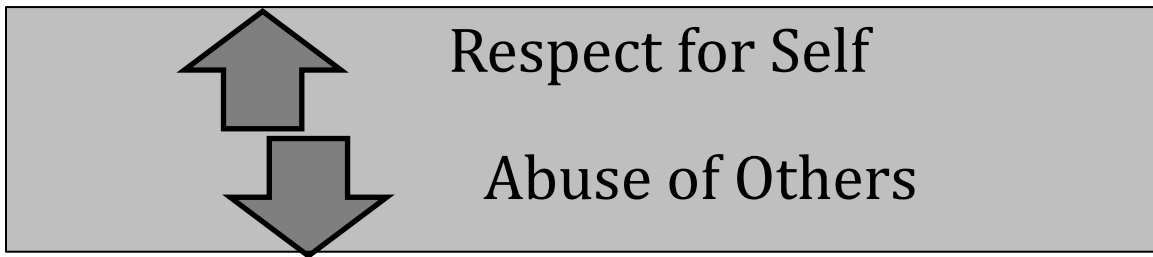
You will learn many ways that you can calm strong emotions and self soothe your nervous system when you are angry, tense or anxious. We will practice different relaxation techniques and meditations for balancing your mood over all, as well as what to do in the heat of the moment to prevent lashing out at others.

## **Responsibility for Behavior**

You will learn what it means to actively take responsibility for harmful behavior. We will guide you through a step-by-step process that helps you understand the impact of your behavior on others and how you can be accountable through making amends. This process is called 'Restorative' because it helps people restore relationships that have been damaged by hurtful behavior.

You will also write a 'Responsibility Letter' and an 'Empathy Letter' to the family member you were abusive or violent toward (usually the incident that brought you to Step-Up), and read them during your last session.

## ***Goals for Teens***

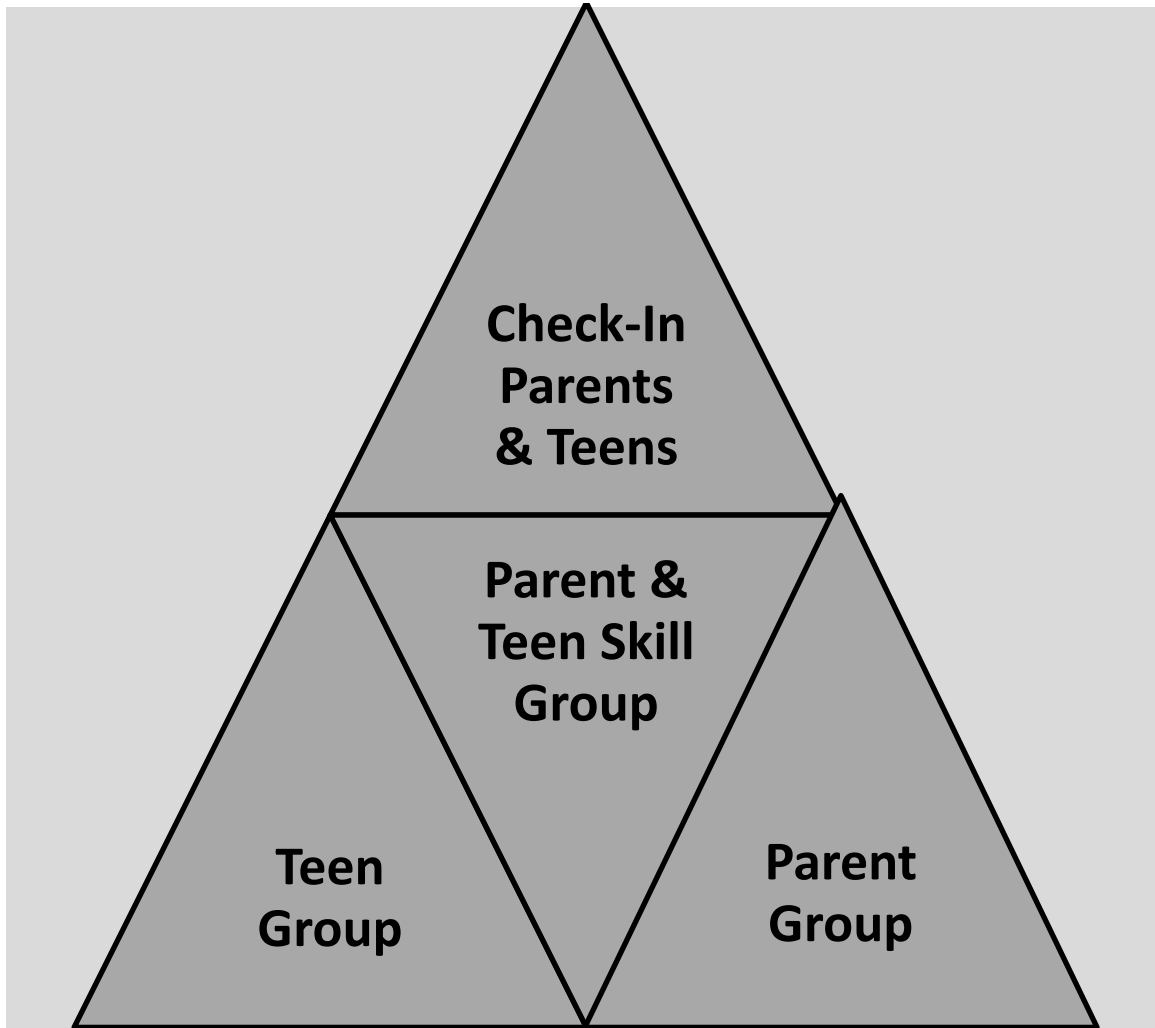


### **After you complete the program, you will be able to:**

- Know how to keep your behavior safe and how to prevent yourself from hurting others by using a personal 'Safety-Plan'
- Know how to talk respectfully even when you are upset or angry
- Learn how to change unhelpful thinking into thinking that supports you in staying safe and respectful.
- Have skills for managing difficult thoughts and emotions; you will know how to de-escalate yourself and calm down
- Understand your feelings and how to communicate them in respectful ways
- Know how to resolve conflict with family members in a respectful way
- Understand the meaning of accountability, and know how to use the 'Six Restorative Steps' to take responsibility for harmful behavior
- Realize you have choices about your behavior

## ***How the Sessions Work***

Refer to *How the Sessions Work* in the workbook. Explain that the program includes sessions with the parents and teens together, and separate teen and parent sessions. Every week when you come to the group, we will begin with parents and teens together for 'Check-In'. After Check-In, there is a skill building session, either with parents and teens all together, or in separate teen and parent groups.



## ***Communication Agreement***

The *Communication Agreement* overview is the first step in the program of defining the concept of 'respect'. During this conversation families begin to learn the basics of a key skill in the program: respectful communication. The goal of the *Communication Agreement* is for youth and parents to make an agreement with each other to follow these communication guidelines in the group, and as they strengthen these skills throughout the program, to use them at home. It is helpful to have the *Communication Agreement* posted in the room during group sessions every week. A periodic review of the *Communication Agreement* during the group is a reminder of the elements of interacting in a respectful way.

Refer the group to the *Communication Agreement* in the workbooks. Explain that the *Communication Agreement* is a guideline for how to communicate in the group. Tell the group that the goal is for families to communicate this way at home, too. Group members can help each other follow the communication Agreement by respectfully reminding others when they are not on the Agreement. Let the group know that they will be learning skills for each of the guidelines listed during their skill sessions.

# Communication Agreement

**R**espectful words, tone and manner

I will speak without blaming, criticizing or putdowns.

**E**xpress feelings and opinions in “I” statements

I will say, “*I feel ... when...*”

**S**top and take a break if I cannot stay respectful.

**P**ause to *THINK* before I *SPEAK*.

**E**ngage in the conversation with an *OPEN* mind

I will let go of what I think the other person means or wants.

**C**lear my thoughts so I can *LISTEN* completely when the other person is talking.

**T**ry to understand the other person’s feelings/opinions  
*EVEN WHEN I DISAGREE.*

## ***Step-Up Acronym***

Refer the group to the *Step-Up Acronym* in their workbooks. Explain the following:

The Step-Up acronym shows how the Step-Up skills work together to help you take a different path when you are headed in a direction toward becoming abusive or violent. You will be learning skills for each of the steps in the acronym.

# STEP UP

**Stop**

**ALL THE ACTION**  
Take a time-out &  
Calm yourself

**Think**

What am I feeling?  
Thinking?

**Evaluate**

What is the Problem?  
What are my choices?

**Plan**

How can I deal with this  
problem and stay on the  
Respect Wheel?

**Use skills**

“I” statements, listening,  
Assertive Communication...

**Patience**

... and lots of it, is what  
makes this work.

## ***The Wheels***

Refer group members to the *Abuse/Disrespect Wheel* and the *Respect Wheel* in the *Check-In* section at the back of their workbooks. Explain the following:

These wheels show different kinds of behavior used in relationships with family members. The behaviors on the *Abuse / Disrespect Wheel* are emotionally or physically hurtful or disrespectful toward family members. The ones on the *Respect Wheel* are safe behaviors that show consideration and respect for others.

Go around the wheels and review each of the sections, discussing the behaviors listed and giving some examples of each to broaden their understanding.

Ask the group for some examples, such as for the category of ‘emotional abuse’. Ask them if they can think of other kinds of emotional abuse. And, ask them for other examples of ‘respectful communication’.

*Important Note:* Make a point that some of the behaviors on the *Abuse / Disrespect Wheel* may not be intended to hurt or disrespect another person. When we ask teens to think about their behaviors on this wheel, we are referring to behaviors that are used purposely to be hurtful or disrespectful to others. We understand that adolescents are not perfect, and sometimes unintentionally violate trust or forget or ignore other family member’s needs. Our focus is on behaviors that are intentionally disrespectful or abusive to family members. This is an important point for parents. Point out that we do not want to label annoying teenage behaviors as ‘abusive’. Discussing this distinction in the parent group when the youth are not present is helpful to avoid parents inappropriately labeling their teens’ behaviors.



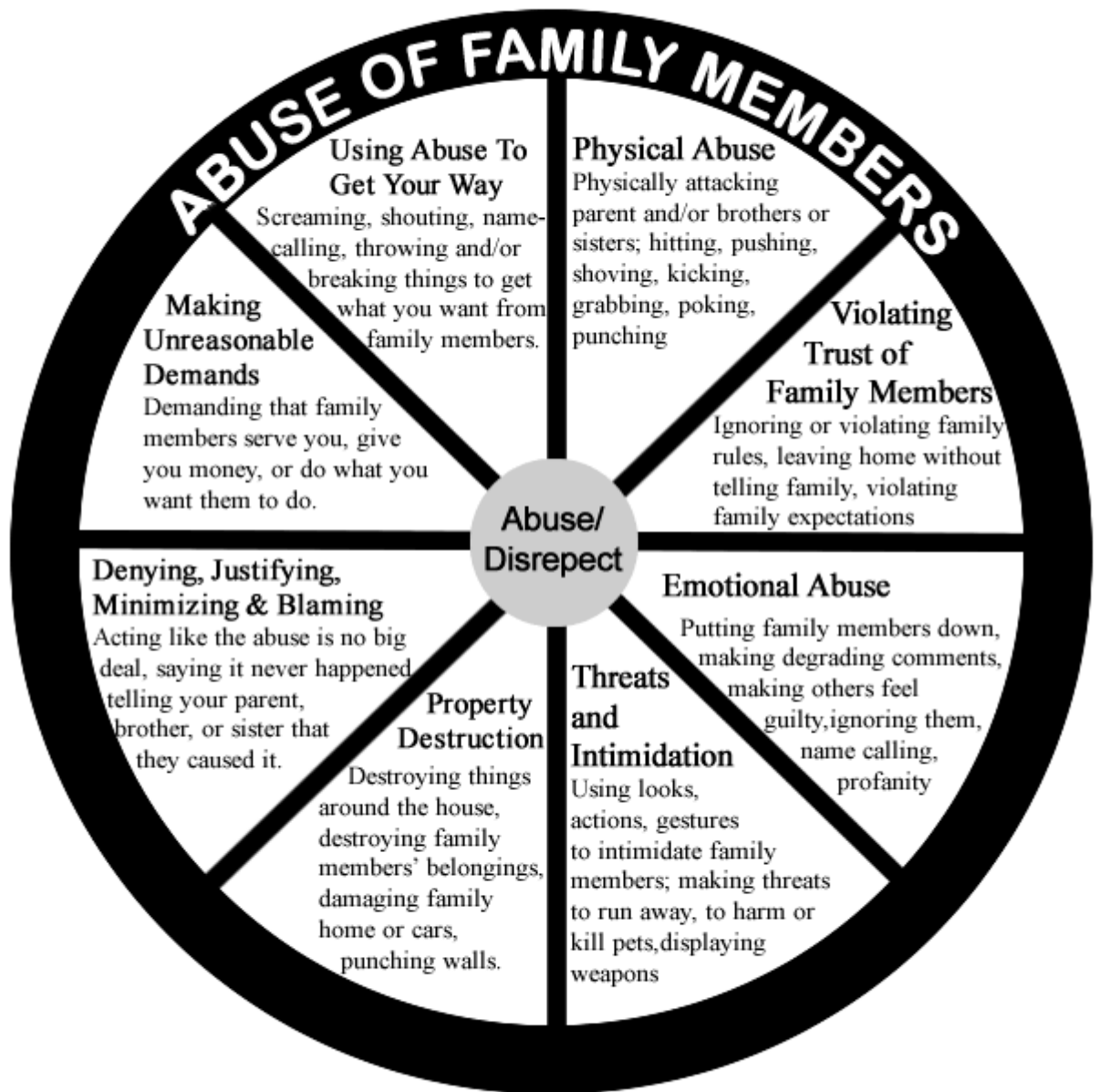
## ***The Wheels***

The purpose of Step-Up is to move from the *Abuse Wheel* to the *Mutual Respect Wheel* in your family relationships. All of the skills you learn in the program help people stay on the *Respect Wheel* and off of the *Abuse/Disrespect Wheel*.

### **The Wheels help teens by:**

- Raising awareness of the behaviors used in families.
- The *Respect Wheel* shows a model of what a respectful family looks like.
- The *Abuse/Disrespect Wheel* defines violence, abuse and disrespect in a family.
- The Wheels are a tool to help you recognize your respectful behaviors and be accountable for disrespect, violence or abuse in your family.
- The Wheels give you a new way to think about your behavior. For example, when you think about a conflict at home, you can ask yourself, “which wheel was I on when I talked to my mom about that problem?” and “How can I talk to her about it and stay on the respect wheel?”
- Families can put a copy of the wheels up at home. When there is conflict, someone can say, “let’s try to stay on the *Respect Wheel* while we talk about this.” You can use the *Communication Agreement* to guide you.

# Abuse/Disrespect Wheel



# Mutual Respect Wheel



## ***Check-In***

Check-In has two parts:

### **1. Check-in on the Wheels**

You will look at the *Wheels* every week and reflect on behaviors you did at home during the previous week, and fill out a *Check-In* worksheet and share it with the group.

### **2. Goal Planning and Self-Evaluation**

After the *Wheel Check-In*, you will choose one behavior to work on during the following week and fill out a goal worksheet. The next week you share how you did and rate yourself on a scale of 1 – 10.

## ***Check In: How It Helps***

- Pay attention to your behavior. When you know you will be talking in the group about how your behavior during the week it helps you become more aware of it.
- Be accountable to the group about moving off the *Abuse/Disrespect Wheel* and onto the *Respect Wheel*
- Recognize your respectful and positive behaviors.
- Think about what you could have done differently if you did something on the *Abuse / Disrespect Wheel*.
- Make a plan every week about how you will use your skills at home to stay on the *Respect Wheel*.
- If you have been violent toward a family member in the previous week, you will use a restorative process with your parent to be accountable and make amends.
- Practice respectful communication during check-in discussions
- Learn from each other and give each other feedback and support.

## ***How Do You Do Check-In?***

- At the beginning of every group session, you will fill out the Check-In worksheet and we will go around the group and every teen takes turns sharing what they wrote. Parents add any important behaviors you might have missed, especially respectful behaviors.
- If you have been physically violent or threatening, you will answer five 'Restorative' questions, to be discussed shortly.
- After Check-In on the Wheels, you will plan a goal for the following week using the goal planning questions on the backside of the Check-In worksheet.

## ***Your First Check-In***

Have teens fill out the Check-In sheet about their last week. Go around the group and have them each share what they wrote. Invite parents to add anything important that the teen may have missed.

# Worksheet

## **Check-In Worksheet**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Look at the wheels and write down any behaviors you did in the last week.

Abuse/ Disrespect	Respect

If you did a behavior on the Abuse/Disrespect Wheel, what could you have done differently so that you stayed on the Respect Wheel?

---

Choose one of the behaviors you did on the Respect Wheel. What helped you stay respectful? What skill did you use?

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## ***Addressing Violence: Taking Responsibility for Behavior using Six Restorative Steps***

Refer the group to ‘*Taking Responsibility for My Violent Behavior Using Six Restorative Steps*’ in their workbooks. Tell the group:

- In Step-Up, you will learn a meaningful way to be accountable to your family when you have been violent.
- If you have been physically violent toward people or property, or threatened to do so, we will guide you through a
- ‘Restorative’ process for taking responsibility for your behavior as you answer these questions.

### **Read through the questions. Then explain the following:**

These questions are called ‘*Restorative Inquiry*’, and they guide you in a step-by-step process that helps you

1. Think about how your behavior impacts the person you harmed, and how it affected other people in your home.
2. Recognize the different ways people are harmed when someone is abusive or violent.
3. Learn how to actively take responsibility for harm caused by making amends.
4. Make a plan to do something to repair damage or harm done.
5. Think about what you could have done differently in the situation so that you stayed on the Respect Wheel.
6. Make a plan to prevent doing the behavior again

This process is called restorative because it helps you restore relationships damaged by hurtful behavior. It gives you a better understanding of how your behavior impacts people and helps you feel empathy. Empathy motivates you to do something about what happened to show that you care and that you want to fix problems caused by your behavior.

It is lifelong learning that applies to any situation where you have caused a problem for others and want to make amends. It is a meaningful way to take responsibility for your behavior, as opposed to just saying, “I’m sorry”.

## ***Goal Planning and Self-Evaluation***

Refer the group to the *Goal Planning* worksheet, on the backside of the *Check-In* sheet.

Before reading the questions, discuss how the goal planning will work.

After *Check-In* on the Wheels, you will make a goal to work on a specific behavior during the following week. This will be something on the Abuse Wheel that you want to stop doing, and something on the Respect Wheel you want to do more. They go hand in hand, because when you decide you want to stop a behavior, it is important to think of a behavior you use to replace it. The questions on the worksheet help you with this.

The questions also help you think through: when do I usually use this behavior? What is going on for me? How can I do it in a different way?

Example: Let’s say the biggest problem that you and your Mom talked about at *Check-In* was that you have been yelling at her a lot. So, you and your Mom decide this would be the most important thing to work on this week.

First, think about when you usually yell at her. Your Mom can help out with remembering. Together you figure out that it is usually when she wakes you up in the morning, or when she asks you about your homework.

Then you think about what you will do differently so that you stay on the Respect Wheel. If you visualize it ahead and make a plan about how to respond differently, you are more likely to remember to do it.

Here is where your new skills come in. You will be learning new skills in Step-Up to help you achieve your weekly goals. Think about a Step-Up skill you have learned that will help you.

Now ask the group:

From the overview of Step-Up skills we have talked about today, does anyone have a suggestion for a skill to prevent yelling?



Write some ideas on the board.

Read the questions on the *Goal Planning* sheet and use the above as an example as you answer each question. Or ask group members if anyone would like to offer a goal they want to make for the example.

Refer group to *Weekly Goal Planning* in their workbooks and review the *Tips to Succeed with your Goal*.

## **Worksheet**

### ***Weekly Goal Planning***

Every week at *Check-In*, you will choose one behavior to work on at home during the week. As you learn skills in Step-Up, you will be able to use your new skills to help you succeed with your goal.

For example, your goal might be to stay non-violent when you get angry with your Mom. You could decide to use your *Safety Plan* so that you will separate and calm down to prevent getting violent.

### ***Tips to Succeed with Your Goal:***

- Be specific about the new behavior. Exactly what will you do?
- Keep it simple. Don't make huge, overall goals, such as "I will get along better with my mom" or "I will be respectful". Break it down by asking, "What exactly do I do when I am not respectful?" Such as, yell, swear, call names, etc. Then replace it with a specific behavior, such as, talk without putdowns or swearing, and if I'm too angry, take a break and use my safety plan.
- Think about what gets in the way? How can you deal with that?
- Visualize you are doing the new behavior.
- Write it down and put it in a place you will see every day.

The following week at *Check-In*, you will answer the '*How Did I Do*' questions at the bottom of the worksheet.

Read the '*How Did I Do*' questions and ask if there are any questions.

Have teens make a goal for the following week and fill out their worksheets. Offer assistance to them as needed.

### ***Facilitator Tips***

- Parents can help their teens with goal planning if the teen cannot decide what to work on. If it is causing conflict between them, provide guidance with choosing a specific violent or abusive behavior related to a problem that has been going on at home.
- Have them begin with goals pertaining to any physical violence that the youth has been using. They should start with the most serious behaviors. Once those have stopped, they can move on to less serious behaviors.
- Encourage youth and parents by reminding them that it is a 'small step' by 'small step' process. Change takes time. Moving their score up from a 3 to a 5 deserves recognition.
- It is important for the teens to answer all of the questions on the worksheet. Have them fill out their '*How Did I Do*' on the goal worksheet right after they come in the door for group while waiting for group to start. Or take a few minutes to have them all do this at the beginning of group. They can do this along with filling out their Check-In worksheet.

## Worksheet

### ***My Goal for the Week***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The behavior I will work on is:

---

Steps:

1. When do you usually use (or not use) this behavior?
2. What is the new behavior you will use? (try to be specific)
3. What can you say to yourself that will help you do this?
4. My self-statement is \_\_\_\_\_
5. What can you do different to help you succeed with your goal?

### **How Did I Do?**

1. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (1=worst, 10=best): \_\_\_\_\_
2. If you had some success, how did you do this? What did you do that was different? Or, what helped you?

### ***Ground Rules for the Group***

Refer the group to the *Ground Rules for the Group* in the workbooks. It is important to keep the rules posted on the wall every week. Go over the ground rules, and ask if there are any questions and if anyone thinks we have left out something important. This is a review for most teens because they should have filled out a Group Participation Agreement including the ground rules during their intake interview.

## ***Ground Rules for the Group***

To make this group a safe and respectful place for everyone I agree to the following ground rules:

1. Follow the Communication Agreement when I talk.
2. Keep information shared in the group confidential.
3. Everything that is discussed in the group stays in the group.
4. Do not identify group members to anyone outside the group.
5. Come to each session sober, not under the influence of alcohol or drugs
6. Do not engage in side conversations while the group is in session.
7. Put away phones and other electronics.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Closing***

Commend everybody for coming to Step-Up. Close by giving them the following take home activity, or if time permits, have them do the activity and share with the group before ending the session.

## **Worksheet**

### ***Take Home Activity or Closing Exercise***

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

My Personal Strengths:

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# Session 2: Making a Safety-Plan

## Teen and Parent Session

### ***Background Information***

In this session teens will learn how to make a step-by-step plan for keeping their behavior safe when they are angry or upset and might use hurtful words or behavior. We call it a *Safety Plan* because it helps their behavior stay safe and non-violent. Using this terminology helps teens understand the goal of the plan: keeping family members safe from harm. For youth who have already set up a safety plan at their intake or orientation, this session is a review and gives them time to problem solve any challenges they have had using their plan.

It includes details about where they will go when they separate and what they will do to calm themselves down. Rules are included to address some of the barriers to success. Parents can support their teens by letting them know if they see that the teen is escalating and hasn't made the choice to separate.

The *Safety Plan* is one of the key skills in the program to prevent violence and abuse. Facilitators should help youth and parents keep this skill foremost in their repertoire of skills. If a youth is continuing violence or abuse, it may be helpful to meet with the family for a side session to help them succeed with this skill. Whenever violence or abuse is reported at check-in, the first question should be, "What prevented you from using your *Safety Plan*?" Using the *Safety Plan* should be a weekly goal until it is mastered.

## **Goals**

- To develop a personal *Safety Plan* to prevent hurtful behavior toward family members.
- To use the *Safety Plan* at home as a strategy for disengaging from heated conflicts, de-escalating and calming down before interacting again.
- For parents to support their teens in using their *Safety Plan* at home.

## **Important Messages**

- Using the *Safety Plan* is a step toward better family relationships.
- The *Safety Plan* will help you stay safe with your family members.
- Using your Safety Plan means you care about the other person.
- The Safety Plan gives you a chance to calm down and think before you act.

## **Session Overview**

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Introduction: What is a Safety Plan?
3. Discussion: Overview of the Safety Plan
4. Exercise: Make Your Personal Safety Plan
5. Exercise: Share Safety Plans with the Group

# Group Activities

## ***Introduction***

Begin by saying the following:

During this session, teens and parents will work together to develop a plan for the teen to disengage from heated conversations that may be headed toward harmful behavior or words. It is a plan to help your teen's behavior stay safe when you are upset or angry, so we call it a '*Safety Plan*'.

Although this session is about the teens' safety plans, this skill can be used by everyone in the family as a way to disengage from conflict. The most important thing is that everyone supports and respects each other's safety plans. Parents are part of this session so that they can support their teens in using their safety plan. For youth who have already set up a safety plan at their intake or orientation, this session is a review and gives them time to problem solve the challenges they have had using their plan. This session can be reviewed when violence or abuse is reported at check-in, or if they have had difficulty separating from conflicts. Everyone in the group learns when they listen to other families work through their challenges using the safety plan. Invite people to help each other with tips that have helped them to be successful with the *Safety Plan*.

## ***Discussion: What is a Safety Plan?***

Explain the following:

The *Safety Plan* is a step-by-step plan to take a short break to calm down or re-group and then go back to the conversation and try it again after you have had time to think about it and you are in a calmer state of mind.

It's like a time-out in basketball or football. The game stops. The teams separate from each other to figure out a plan. The game restarts when the team members have a plan. It is not about taking off from home without telling anyone. It isn't just about leaving. A time-out is a way to try to solve problems within families.

Taking a break from heated arguments is one of the best ways to prevent hurtful behavior. Teens and parents tell us the *Safety Plan* was the most useful skill they

learned in the program. It is a lifelong skill people can use in many different situations to prevent saying or doing things they might regret.

Using your *Safety Plan* with your family will:

- Help you get along with your family
- Keep you from hurting others
- Help you have better relationships

Refer the group to the *Discussion Questions* in their workbooks and guide a discussion using the questions.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Have you ever taken a break from heated conflict? What did you do?

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2. How was it helpful?

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3. What was difficult about it?

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4. What gets in the way of it working well?

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5. What makes it work?

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## ***Your Personal Safety Plan***

Refer the group to the *Safety Plan* in the workbook.

Go over the steps as you explain the *Safety Plan*, and have them fill out their own plan as you explain each of the steps. Invite questions from teens and parents along the way. There may be disagreements between the teen and parent about where the youth can go during their separation, and what they will do to calm down. You may need to help them problem solve as they come up with the plan.

Make the following points as you read each of the steps of the *Safety Plan*.

## **STEP 1**

### **I will take a time-out when:**

- I start to feel angry or upset and might become hurtful.

### **Point Out:**

- If you catch yourself before you start to say or do things that are hurtful it is much easier to separate, and it prevents harmful behavior.
- Do you know the feeling inside when you are getting upset or angry in a conversation before you lash out at the person?
- What does that feel like? Invite the group members to share how they feel before they say or do something that is hurtful. Examples may include: angry, agitated, annoyed, frustrated, or irritated. Others may identify physical sensations, or thoughts.
- We call these feelings, thoughts or sensations '*Red Flags*'. They let you know that you could be headed in the direction of becoming hurtful. You will learn more about this in the next session.

## **STEP 2**

### **I start to use any hurtful behaviors including the following:**

- Yelling or shouting
- Name-calling or profanity
- Threats or intimidating behavior
- Property damage
- Any unwanted physical contact

### **Point Out:**

- Before people become physically violent, they usually start with verbal or threatening behaviors. It commonly starts with raised voices, put downs or swearing. If you don't catch yourself when you have the feeling (as

we just talked about), the next place to catch it is when your voice raises, or you start to put the person down, call names or swear.

- The minute you start to act mean, threatening or demanding it is time to stop and separate.
- If it gets to the point of becoming physical toward people or property (for some people it happens very fast), stop immediately and separate.
- In order to make your *Safety Plan* work the best, separate the minute your voice is raised or disrespectful words are used. After you gain more Step-Up skills you will be able to catch yourself and change your behavior without separating.
- Note for parents- a family rule can be: the moment voices are raised or hurtful words are said, everyone stops and separates until things are calm. Then, see *What to Do After a Time-Out*.

### **STEP 3:**

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

#### **Point Out:**

- It is important to let your parent know you are using your *Safety Plan* so that they will respect this and allow you to separate
- When you separate without saying anything, others do not know you are using your *Safety Plan*
- Think of something short and respectful to say using an “I” statement, such as: I’m using my *Safety Plan*, I need a break right now, I need space, I am going to go calm down, ‘Time-Out’
- The moment you let others know you are separating; all talking should stop to prevent continued escalation.

## **STEP 4**

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

**Point Out:**

- This is a time to be alone and do something to calm down, not socialize with friends or take off to others' houses
- Make a list of places where you can go to briefly calm down, such as a room where you can be alone, the porch or yard, walk around the block, a bike ride.
- The places on your list need to be okay with your parents

## **STEP 5**

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

**Point Out:**

Do something to calm yourself.

- Make a list of things that calm your emotions, such as walking, shooting hoops, deep breathing, music, petting your animals, draw, or use self-calming skills you have learned in Step-Up
- Ask group members for their ideas and make a list of self-calming activities and put them on the board. This will give them ideas for their *Safety Plan*. They will learn more in the Self-Calming session and make a personal *Self-Calming Plan*.
- Once you are calm, think about how you can go back and finish the conversation in a respectful way. Think about what you want to say and how you can stay on the Respect Wheel as you say it.

## **Step 6**

**I will stay away from others for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes, or until I can be respectful to everyone in the house.**

### **Point Out:**

- Most people only need 15 – 30 minutes to calm down
- A time frame helps parents know when they will be able to talk to their teen again. A time out should not be more than 60 minutes.
- The time will vary depending upon your self-calming activity, and plans for the day. If you are going on a walk or bike ride, talk with your parent about where and for how long.
- Plan ahead as you write your *Safety Plan* to avoid discussions at the time of separation.
- If you are calm in 5 or 10 minutes, you can go back to the conversation. The point of time-out is to calm down. It is not a punishment, but a tool for you to use to help yourself prevent violence and abuse.

## **Step 7**

### **Read over the final part of the Safety Plan**

I agree to the following:

- I will not use this plan as an excuse to leave the house or avoid things I am supposed to do.
- I will use this plan as a time to be alone, calm down, and think about how to deal with the problem.
- If the other person separates from me, I will respect their time alone and not bother them.
- After my separation time I will return and make a plan with the other person about what to do next: finish the discussion, plan a time later to talk about it or let it go.

## Point Out:

- It can be tempting to use the *Safety Plan* any time you are in an uncomfortable conversation, such as discussions about grades, rules or chores. Reserve your *Safety Plan* for the times you really need it.
- Anyone in your home can use this tool. Every family member should respect each other's time alone when they are in a time-out.
- Returning to the conversation after your time-out is important so that you can decide what to do next, and so that there is closure to the interaction that was interrupted by the time-out.

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

Explain the following:

### **The Safety Plan has a beginning, middle and end:**

1. Separate from the person or situation and go to a place where you can take a time-out and be alone.
2. Do something to calm down. Once you are calm, think about how you can talk about the problem respectfully.
3. Go back to the person and talk about what to do next.

It is important to go back to the person after the time out to figure out a plan about what to do next. What happens after taking a time-out is just as important as taking the time-out. Just separating is not a solution to the problem. This is a short termsolution to prevent abuse or violence. After taking a time out, it is important to return to the person and decide what to do.

Now we will talk about some of the options for closure at the end of your *Safety Plan*.

Refer group members to: *What to Do After a Time-Out* in their workbooks and discuss each option.

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

### ***Let it go***

After you have cooled down, and you talk to your parent again, you both might decide to drop it. It is your parent's decision whether it can be let go. You might have different opinions about this.

### ***Put it on Hold***

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

### ***Discuss it***

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

Refer group members to: the *Safety Plan Rules* in their workbooks and discuss.

## **Safety Plan Rules**

### ***Your Safety Plan is a Time to be Alone***

It is not okay to go to a friend's house, or take off and your parent doesn't know where you are. When you make your *Safety Plan* with your parent, discuss where it is okay to go and make a list on your *Safety Plan* so that your parent knows where you are.

### **Your Safety Plan is a Time to Calm Down and Think “How can I deal with this problem without being abusive?”**

When you are separated, do something to calm down (by using your *Self-Calming Plan*, changing your thinking, taking deep breaths, walking, etc.). Once you have calmed down, think about how you can talk respectfully about the problem.

### **You are Responsible for Your Own Safety Plan, Not Other Peoples’.**

Parents will make their own decisions about when they need to separate from you. Sometimes your parent may need to remind you to use your *Safety Plan* if you are being abusive and are not separating. Think of this as way your parent is trying to support you.

### **You are Responsible for Your Own Safety Plan, Not Other Peoples’.**

Parents will make their own decisions about when they need to separate from you. Sometimes your parent may need to remind you to use your *Safety Plan* if you are being abusive and are not separating. Think of this as way your parent is trying to support you.

### ***Share Your Safety Plan***

Have each teen share their *Safety Plan* worksheet with the group.



# Take-Home Activities

Ask group members use their *Safety Plan* this week and to fill out the *Safety Plan Log* in the workbook. Next week, at check-in, they will report on how their Safety Plan went.

## Worksheet

### ***Safety Plan Log***

During the following week, you can support your teen in using their *Safety Plan* whenever they are starting to feel upset or angry during a conflict. After the *Safety Plan* your teen will write down how it went in the log in their Teen Workbook.

#### **Situation: (describe a situation)**

1. When did you decide that you needed to separate? What were your warning signs?
2. What did you do after your time--out-let it go, put it on hole, or discuss it?
3. How was your Safety Plan helpful?
4. How was it challenging or difficult to do?
5. What can you do differently next time so that it works better?
6. Make changes in your Safety Plan, if needed, to make it more successful.



# Session 3: Understanding Warning Signs

## Teen and Parent Session

### ***Background Information***

In this session parents will help teens to identify their ‘red flags’ that indicate that they are heading in the direction of abusive or violent behaviors. ‘*Red flags*’ are personal warning signs that a time-out is necessary in order to avoid using hurtful behavior. The earlier you notice your warning signs and use your *Safety Plan*, the easier it is to separate from the situation.

Parents will also identify their own ‘red flags’ that let them know they should separate and calm down before finishing a conversation or interaction with their teens.

Self-calming thoughts are used to help de-escalate one’s emotions and separate from a potentially difficult situation. Parents and teens will learn more self-calming practices in the *Understanding Self-Calming* session.

### ***Goals***

- To identify personal red flags
- To identify self-calming thoughts

### ***Important Messages***

- The sooner you take a time-out when you start to feel upset, the better. It is more difficult to take a time-out when you are angry or agitated.
- Identify the first red flag that indicates you may get abusive. The goal is to recognize that you need a time-out, and then to take it, before you become abusive.

## ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Discussion: Red Flags
3. Exercise: My Red Flags
4. Exercise: My Own Red Flags: Identifying Parents Red Flags
5. Discussion: Self-Calming Thoughts
6. Exercise: My Self-Calming Thoughts.

# Group Activities

## ***Discussion: Red Flags***

Start by reviewing the definition of red flags provided in the *Red Flags* worksheet.

### ***Red Flags***

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

Paying attention to these warning signs in ourselves helps us know when we need to use our Safety Plan and take a time-out.

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

- **Negative thoughts:** “She treats me like an infant!” “She never lets me do anything!” “He’s an idiot!”
- **Difficult feelings:** Angry, frustrated, hurt, jealous, anxious, impatient, unappreciated, neglected, abandoned.
- **Body signs:** Tight muscles in the neck, back or jaw; clenched teeth; upset stomach; flushed face; feeling short of breath.
- **Actions:** Raising of the voice, shouting, saying bad words.

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

## ***Exercise: Identifying Red Flags***

Have teens fill out *My Red Flags* in their workbooks.

## **Worksheet**

### ***Teen's Red Flags***

- Negative Thoughts
- Difficult Feelings
- Body signs:
- Actions:

While teens are filling out their red flags, have parents fill out worksheet *Identifying Red Flags in Your Teen* in their workbook. After parents have filled out their teen's red flags, have them fill out *Identifying My Own Red Flags* for themselves.

## **Worksheet**

### ***Identifying Red Flags in Your Teen***

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

- Negative Thoughts
- Difficult Feelings
- Body signs:
- Actions:

## Worksheet

### ***Identifying Your Own Red Flags (Parent Exercise)***

- Body signs: (Examples: feeling tense, stomach ache, headache, shoulder tension)
- Feelings: (Examples: anger, frustration, revenge)
- Thoughts: (Examples: “he’s not going to get away with this,” “she’s a selfish brat”)
- Verbal signs: (Examples: saying hurtful things, put-downs, criticism, threats)
- Actions: (Examples: pointing your finger, getting too close to the person, slamming your fist)

Have them share their responses in small groups or with the whole group. As group members share their red flags, ask each teen to try to figure out what his or her earliest red flag is. Let them know that it’s important to use your *Safety Plan* at the earliest red flag.

When you see warning signs in your teen, let him or her know that you are seeing ‘red flags’ and it is time for the *Safety Plan*. Give your teen the opportunity to separate, but if he or she refuses, say that you are going to use the *Safety Plan* and separate.

If you are experiencing your own red flags, and want to avoid yelling or saying unhelpful things to your teen, tell him or her that you are going to take your own time-out for yourself. Separate from your teen and let him or her know you are taking a break, where you will be and how long you will be separated. This helps teens who become anxious when the parent separates and they follow their parents or keep pestering them.

## ***Discussion: Self-Calming Thoughts***

Next, explain to the group that their thinking can affect their feelings and behavior. Point out that some thought patterns get people more worked up and angry, like dwelling on how stupid they think their parents are. Conversely, people can choose to think about things that help them calm down and deal with the situation, like, “This is getting me nowhere. I need to calm down.”

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

You should use self-calming thoughts when:

- You feel yourself starting to get upset or angry.
- You start to use abusive behavior (yelling, name calling, put-downs, or anything physical).
- You are using your Safety Plan and are trying to calm down.

Have the group think of examples of calming thoughts that might help them take a time-out. For example, teens may say, “I need a break; I can talk about this later.”

Next, have them think of calming thoughts to focus on during a time-out, like, “Things will work out better if I calm down.” If they are having difficulty thinking of examples, ask group members to think of a time when they were about to get violent or abusive and stopped. Ask, “What did you think or say to yourself that helped you stay in control?”

## ***Exercise: My Self-Calming Thoughts***

Refer teens to the list of *Self Calming Thoughts for Teens* in the workbook; and refer parents to the list of *Self-Calming Thoughts for Parents*. Let them know these are examples to give them ideas for their own self-calming thoughts.

Refer parents and teens to *My Self-Calming Thoughts* in the workbook. Ask them to write down three self-calming thoughts for themselves.

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

- I’m not going to let this get to me.
- I can stay calm.



- Stop. Let it go.
- I'm going to take a time-out now.
- If I stay calm, things will work out better.
- I can take charge of how I act.
- I don't have to get mad.
- Step away. Stay calm.
- I'm going to go chill out. We can talk later.
- It's okay. I can deal with this.
- I'm not going to yell.
- I can talk calmly about this.
- Go take a walk around the block.
- I'm not a little kid. I don't have to throw a temper tantrum.
- This is no big deal.
- I can handle this.
- I can talk without yelling.
- I can talk about how I feel without being abusive.
- I will take three deep breaths and sit down quietly.

### **Self-Calming Thoughts for Parents**

- He is responsible for his behavior.
- Let it go for now. I can talk about it later when we are both calm.
- I am calm and in control.
- I will go in another room and take some deep breaths.
- I cannot control his behavior, but I can control my behavior.

- I don't have to deal with this right now; it will only make it worse.
- He is responsible for his feelings.
- She is upset and mad and she can deal with that on her own.
- I can't "make" him do anything. I can provide choices and consequences, and then it is his decision.
- I don't have to engage in this battle. I can take a time-out, calm down and think about how I want to communicate.
- I don't have to "win."
- The strongest influence I can have with my child is to model the behavior I want her to learn.
- I will disengage now and go do something relaxing.
- She can figure this out on her own. I will let her be.

## Take-Home Activities

During the following week, pay attention to your red flags and add them to the *Your Red Flags* worksheet. Try to notice your earliest signal that you are becoming angry or upset.

Use your *Self-Calming Thoughts* when you notice your red flags and see if it makes a difference.

# Session 4: Understanding Violence

## Teen Session

### *Background Information*

The goal of the Step-Up program is for teens to choose nonviolent and non-abusive behavior in family relationships. In this session you will ask teens to think about how their choice of violent and abusive behavior has affected their lives.

Some teens don't regard some of the emotionally abusive behaviors they use as abusive. Many have come to view name calling, yelling, and put-downs as normal behavior. It is important to stress that violence includes any behavior that physically harms, scares or threatens a person, and emotional abuse includes any behaviors that verbally attack, put down, humiliate, or are intentionally hurtful to a person.

When teens are violent and abusive, they usually act without thinking about the outcomes and consequences of the behavior they use. An important step toward choosing nonviolent and non-abusive behavior is to recognize the consequences of violent and abusive behavior.

In this session and throughout the program, you can help teens think about their behavior by asking, "What were the consequences of your behavior?" Use the questions on the back of the abuse and respect wheels for further guidelines.

## **Goals**

- To define violent and abusive behaviors
- To identify payoffs, outcomes, and consequences of violence and abuse

## **Important Messages**

- Violent and abusive behavior hurts people even if they aren't physically hurt.
- Violent and abusive behavior has negative consequences for the person who is abusive, as well as for the person who is the target of the behavior.
- Violent and abusive behavior is learned.
- People have choices about how they respond to a situation. Violent and abusive behavior is not a "reaction" over which an individual has no control.

## **Session Overview**

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Separate into parent and teen groups.
3. Discussion: Violent and Abusive Behavior.
4. Discussion: Payoffs, Outcomes and Consequences of Violent and Abusive Behavior.
5. Exercise: Payoffs, Outcomes and Consequences
6. Discussion: Choices

# Group Activities

## *Discussion: Violent and Abusive Behavior*

After check-in, lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions. As appropriate, stress the important messages for this session when you discuss their responses to these questions.

1. What are violent and abusive behaviors? (List their responses on the board on a continuum from less severe to more severe.)
2. Where/how do people learn to use violence and abuse?
3. How do violence and abuse affect relationships? How do they affect the abusive person? The victim?

## Worksheet

1. Make a list of violent and abusive behaviors, identify ones that you have used, ones that were done to you, and ones that you have seen.

Behaviors	Behaviors You Have Used	Behaviors Done to You	Behaviors You Have Seen
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

## ***Discussion: Payoffs, Outcomes and Consequences***

Write the following three terms on the board, and read the definition for each to the teens. Then have them think of examples using their worksheet *Payoffs, Outcomes, and Consequences*. This can be done in small groups or as a brainstorm on the board.

- **Payoffs:** The immediate results of being violent or abusive. This is what you get out of being violent or abusive that makes you more likely to do it again.
- **Outcomes:** How being violent or abusive affects a situation. Typically, the outcome of violence or abuse does not match the outcome you want in the situation.
- **Consequences:** The long-term results of being violent or abusive. What happens or may eventually happen if you continue being violent or abusive. How violent or abusive behavior will affect your life.

## ***Exercise: Payoffs, Outcomes and Consequences***

### **Worksheet**

Give some examples.

<b>Payoffs</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Consequences</b>

Now, use an incident from your life and write down the payoffs, outcomes and consequences.

<b>Payoff</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Consequences</b>

## ***Discussion: Making Choices***

How does thinking about payoffs, outcomes and consequences affect the choices you make?



# Session 5 Understanding Self-Calming

## Teen and Parent Session

### ***Background Information***

This session gives teens and parents tools for calming their nervous systems when they feel strong emotion, anxiety or stress. When teens and parents understand how their brain and nervous system work, they are more motivated to use self-calming skills. Providing a brief and simple overview of brain function in relation to their emotions, especially anger and how they have the ability to change their brain helps them feel more optimistic and confident as they implement self-calming strategies.

Participants will make their own personal *Self Calming Plan* including a list of activities they will use when they are feeling stressed, anxious or angry. *The Self Calming Plan* gives them something to do when they use their *Safety Plan* and are taking a time-out from an escalated interaction with a family member. Facilitators can ask teens if they remembered their self-calming plan when they report incidents of abuse or violence at check-in, and using their self-calming plan can be a helpful weekly goal.

This session ends with teaching the group a mindfulness meditation. Each week thereafter, the group will begin with a relaxation technique or calming meditation. There are five activities in the Addendum of this curriculum that can be used. You can also add others that you find useful. It is important to use short activities ranging from 3 to 8 minutes. Using one activity for three or four weeks in a row helps them learn the strategy. If participants do not feel comfortable with the activity, invite them to just sit quietly during this activity.

### ***Goals***

- To gain some understanding about how the brain and nervous system function in relation to emotion, anxiety and stress.
- To realize that they have some ability to influence their brain and nervous system functioning.

- To learn specific strategies to calm the nervous system and improve mood.
- To recognize that when they are escalated and angry, they have options that really work to calm the high emotion and prevent abusive and violent behavior.
- To make their own *Self Calming Plan* that they will use when they begin to feel escalated, angry or anxious to keep their behavior safe.

### ***Important Messages***

- You can change your brain
- You are already changing your brain when you learn skills in Step-Up, plan your weekly goals and practice using your new skills
- You have the ability to alter the activity in your brain and your nervous system to help you calm down.
- You have many choices when you become upset and angry to help yourself settle down and take care of yourself so that you are not hurtful to others

### ***Session Overview***

1. Check-in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Introduction / Discussion Questions
3. Discussion: You Can change Your Brain
4. Discussion: Understanding your Brain and Nervous System
5. Discussion: Brian's Story
6. Discussion: Calming Strong Emotions
7. Exercise: How can we activate our Pre-frontal Cortex? How can we activate our Para-Sympathetic Nervous System
8. Exercise: My Self-Calming Plan
9. Exercise: Mindfulness meditation

# Group Activities

## *Discussion Questions:*

### **Ask the group:**

- How many people feel like they go from feeling upset to rage really fast?

### **What does it feel like?**

- Does anyone experience this more slowly, like a gradual build up?
- What does that feel like?

When you feel extreme emotions- it can feel like a storm inside that you don't have any control of. For many people it feels like it just 'takes over'. It may happen fast, however, there is a whole process going on in your brain and nervous system that you are not consciously aware of.

Even though there is a lot going on unconsciously, you do have some control of your emotional reactions. We actually have the ability to 'calm the storm' by balancing our brain's mood regulating circuits.

This session will give you information and skills to help you calm strong emotions so you are able to think more clearly, make better decisions, and respond to problems better.

## ***You Can Change Your Brain***

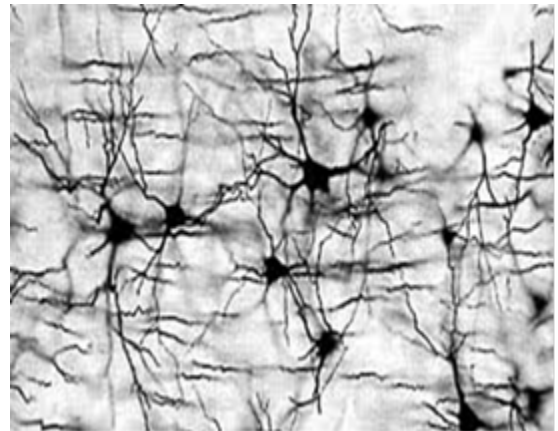
Explain the following referencing the neural networks picture in the workbook:

We have the ability to physically change our brains. In fact, we are doing it every day, and we don't even know it. Every time you have a new experience or learn a new skill, your brain grows new neural connections. It's called 'neuroplasticity'.

When you first start using a new skill or behavior, new nerve connections begin to grow, like branches on a tree. At first they are small and thin, and it may be hard to do the new behavior. But as you continue to practice it, the 'branches' become thicker and stronger, and the behavior becomes easier and easier.

### ***Neural Networks in the Brain***

Another way to think about it is to imagine making a line in the sand on the beach. The first time you run your finger or a stick through the sand, it is shallow and some sand falls back in, so it is less visible. The second time, it goes a little deeper and holds better. Every time you do it again, the groove becomes deeper and deeper, making the line more clear and distinct. It is the same with the neural pathways in your brain.



Remember when you learned to ride a bike? First, it was really hard and you fell a lot, but as you kept at it, it got easier and easier. Finally, you did not even have to think about it- you just hopped on your bike and rode, without thinking about the different parts of the skill. Your brain developed a whole network of neural connections just for that behavior, that you will have forever- you will never have to re-learn it.

Likewise, you are creating new neural connections in your brain as you practice all of the skills you are learning here in Step-Up. The more you use them, the easier it becomes as your brain strengthens the neural networks for that skill. You are re-wiring your brain.

When you do your goal planning each week, as you make a plan about how you will respond to a situation in a new way, you are strengthening the part of your

brain that helps you react less impulsively and think through what the outcomes might be for your actions.

The more you use the new behavior, the easier it becomes as your brain strengthens the neural networks for that behavior.

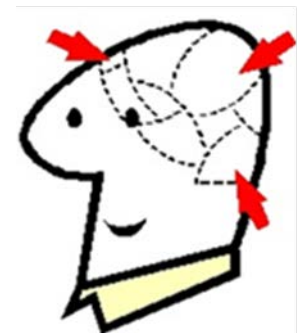
At the same time, the pathways for the old behaviors are ‘pruned’ away, like pruning branches off of a tree.

This even happens with our emotional states. For example, if you have had a lot of anxiety, your neural pathways become wired for anxiety. If you develop tools to feel calm, as you are calm more of the time the anxiety pathways are weaker and eventually are pruned away from lack of activity. They call it ‘use it or lose it’

Refer group members to *Three Steps to Re-Wiring Your Brain to Change Your Behavior* in their workbook and explain:

In sum, there are three parts to changing your brain and your behavior:

1. **LEARN** – gain information so that you understand how and why it works; learn skills to actually do a new behavior or skill;
2. **PLAN** - how and when you will use the new skill or behavior;
3. **PRACTICE** – do the new behavior or skill over and over



You are doing this every week in Step Up.

## ***Understanding Your Brain and Nervous System***

### ***A Handy Model of Your Brain***

Refer the group to *Understanding Your Brain and Nervous System: A Handy Model of Your Brain* in the workbook.

Explain the following as you model for them how to make a brain model with your hand:

Let's talk more about how our brains work. We are going to make a model of the brain with our hands. Everyone hold up your hand. If you put your thumb in the middle of your palm and then curl your fingers over the top, you have a handy model of your brain (quoted from Dan Siegel, *Mindsight*).

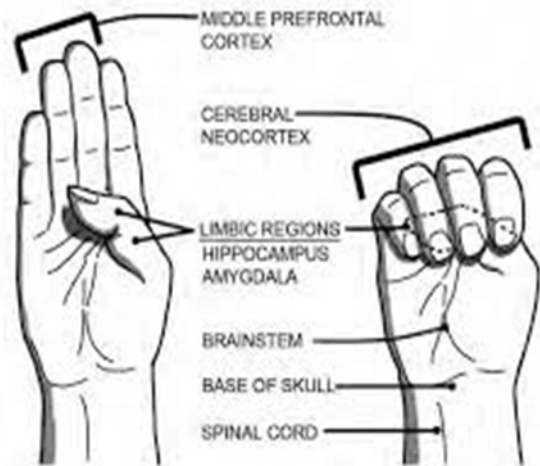
The face is in front of the knuckles and the wrist is the spinal cord connecting to the brain stem. If you lift up your fingers you'll see your thumb, representing the limbic area of your brain, and your palm is the inner brainstem. Now curl your fingers back down over your thumb, and they are your brain's cortex.

So, here you can see the three major regions of your brain- the brainstem, the limbic area, and the cortex. Each of these regions interacts with each other to help our bodies, minds and emotions function together to keep us alive, safe and healthy.

Also point out the picture of the brain in their workbooks so that they can reference the brain areas on the picture as well. (You are welcome to use other visual aids during this session, such as coloring book images for them to color, plastic models, or posters).

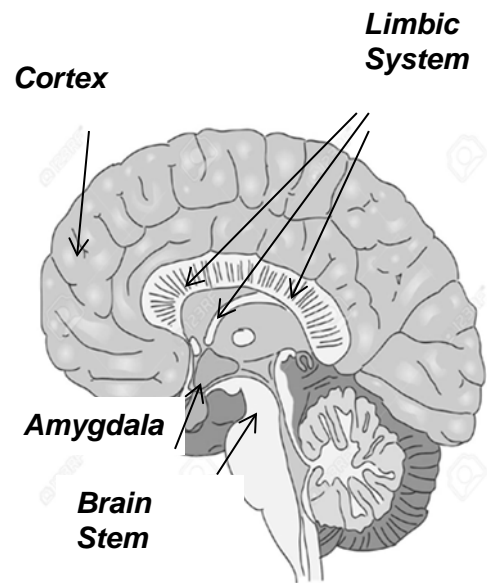
Pointing to the areas of the brain on your own hand model explain:

**The cortex** is the thinking part of the brain. It helps us with reasoning, planning, thinking things through, especially the pre-frontal cortex in the front part over your forehead. The cortex also has regulatory circuits that calm our emotional states. When your cortex is activated it can send inhibitory fibers downward into the limbic system which calms and soothes us.



**The brainstem** and **limbic** areas of our brains are more primitive and are responsible for our basic drives, such as food, sleep and safety. The limbic system is also about instinct and survival, and is the seat of our emotions.

**The Amygdala**, a small almond size part, receives and evaluates-“is this good or bad?”. It perceives when there is danger and puts us into ‘fight or flight or freeze’ response. It triggers the nervous system to release chemicals and hormones that give us energy to fight or flee. It is a good thing, except it can be activated when we don’t really need it



Brain studies show that the amygdala and limbic system can be become over-activated, particularly for people who have had ongoing stress or who have had experiences producing high levels of fear or anger. This can result in over-reacting to things that are not worthy of such strong emotions or behaviors. This is thought to be because our bodies and the limbic system hold memories of events that can be unconsciously triggered by another event that produces a similar type of emotion.

We are going to read a story that is an example of this.

Read the following story:

### ***Brian’s Story***

*Brian was bullied a lot when he was in fifth grade. He was a little overweight and kind of shy at school. He had moved to the school as a new student because his family had recently moved to Seattle.*

*Brian felt lonely and kind of depressed because he had to leave his friends. He wanted to make some friends at school, but was having a hard time connecting with anyone. There were a group of kids who taunted him and called him fat and other mean things. He tried to ignore them.*

*One day after school as he was walking home they jumped him and hit and kicked him, calling him fat and stupid. They took his backpack and ran off. He was scared and angry. He was afraid to fight them back, and just tried to get through the rest of the year, knowing he would be at another school the following year. He stayed away from areas he knew they would be.*

*After a while Brian made a few friends and started feeling better, but was still anxious every day when he had to walk home from school, not knowing if those guys would jump him again.*

*At home his mother noticed he was more irritable and often in a bad mood. He seemed to over react to the smallest things. When she asked him about school he would get agitated and not want to talk or yell at her to leave him alone.*

*One day his 10-year-old brother called him fat, and he jumped up, threw his chair against the wall and tackled his little brother. His mother intervened, and got him to go outside.*

*Brian felt like he wanted to pummel anything and anyone. His heart rate was high and he was shaky. His mother told him to walk or run around the block. He didn't want to do this, but he didn't know what else to do, so he ran... and ran.*

*After about 5 minutes he started to feel some settling in his body. He then slowed to a walk. He felt calmer, and walked around the block a few more times and then slowly back home.*

*As he calmed down, he began thinking about what happened. When he came in the house he looked at his mom and brother and felt terrible about what he did.*

### **Discuss the following:**

Brian had a past experience of fear for his safety in which his limbic system activated, and then he continued to experience stress and anxiety about whether it might happen again for a while, probably keeping his amygdala and limbic system on high alert, especially when he was walking home every day. This sensitized his system to any indication of threat.

While his 10-year-old brother was probably not a big threat, it still triggered a fight reaction because it brought up the same emotions he felt when the bullies called him 'fat', and the fear and anger he experienced when they hurt him.



## ***Calming Strong Emotions***

The end of Brian's story tells us the good news about our brains and our ability to self-regulate and calm strong emotions, even when they feel out of control.

Brian didn't know it, but his mother was very wise when she told him to walk or run around the block. We will talk about why in a moment.

After Brian had been running for a while, he started to feel more settled and calm. He was able to think more clearly. He realized what he had done, and felt empathy for his mother and brother as he recognized what had happened.

Ask the group: Does anyone have any ideas about what helped Brian calm down?

Explain the following:

Brian's amygdala had calmed down and his pre-frontal cortex kicked in.

When your pre-frontal cortex is activated it helps you calm down, think things through, and feel less reactive and emotional. It is our area of higher thinking. We have more empathy and ability to understand others when we are in our pre-frontal cortex.

Adolescence is a time when the pre-frontal cortex not completely developed, but it is working hard on it. During the teen years, there are times when their cortex is beginning to function at a higher level. That's when parents think, "Wow, he is really maturing. That was a smart decision he made." Or, "She is really thinking things through more than ever before." But, two days later that same parent is saying, "What is she thinking? It's like she can't think forward more than 10 minutes." Or, "he seems like he is seven years old again, what the heck?" This is because brain development in teens is inconsistent-the new neural networks are not strong enough yet to hold up all of the time.

The good news is that teens have the ability to help their brains develop and strengthen the new networks by using skills they are learning today and every week in Step Up. .

The first part is to do things that activate your cortex, meaning you are shifting energy into your cortex.

## ***How to Activate Your Pre-Frontal Cortex and Calm your Nervous System***

Go over the *How to Activate Your Pre-Frontal Cortex and Calm Your Nervous System* in their workbooks as you explain:

There are a lot of ways to activate the pre-frontal cortex. Even though Brian didn't know it, he was turning on his pre-frontal cortex when he was running and walking because he was breathing deep and moving his body. Breathing and moving are two ways to help your frontal cortex come alive.

This is partly because breathing and moving activates a part of our nervous system that helps turn down the limbic system response fear and anger. It helps the cortex send those inhibitory fibers down into the limbic system to calm down the amygdala. And it signals the calming part of our nervous system to kick in.

We have two parts our autonomic nervous system that work with the different brain regions by secreting chemical or hormones that activate or calm us.

### **1. The sympathetic nervous system**

This part of the nervous system stimulates and activates you. When you have stress, fear, anger and other strong emotions, the sympathetic nervous system, along with the limbic system, kicks in to give you energy to respond and deal with it. And, as we talked about, it usually does not help unless you are in a situation where you need to fight or flee. It makes things worse, generally, because activating chemicals increase your anxiety, making it harder to think clear to deal with the situation.

### **2. The para-sympathetic nervous system**

This part of the nervous system helps you calm down and shift to your pre-frontal cortex.

Body movement in any form, also activates the parasympathetic nervous system.

Ask group members:

What are some other types of body movement people might use? List on board.

## ***Body Movement***

Moving your body in any way- walking, dancing, skateboarding, kicking a ball around, or anything that gets you moving, will kick in your parasympathetic nervous system and calm you.

## ***Deep Breathing***

Deep breathing is the fastest way to immediately trigger your para-sympathetic nervous system and settle anxiety, and stress.

It can be difficult for some people to sit down and focus on breathing when they are in a highly activated state, so running or fast walking is a good way to get started. Body movement gets you breathing without even having to think about it- it just happens. As you settle down, you can begin to focus on slowing and deepening the breath.

## ***Breathing Out***

It is the breath out that kicks in the para-sympathetic nervous system. So, doing something that helps you emphasize your breath out, is the best. For example:

Blowing up a balloon, blowing bubbles, or blowing on a pinwheel. What else?

Generate ideas from the group and list on the board.

## ***4x4x4 Breathing Exercise***

Refer group to the *4X4X4 Breathing Exercise* in their workbooks, and explain:

Here is a quick breathing exercise that you can use any time you start to feel anxious, agitated or when you are using your safety plan and taking a break from an escalated situation. It is called *4X4X4 Breathing*.

Facilitate *4X4X4 Breathing Exercise*.

Explain that anything (healthy) that calms and soothes you is probably kicking in your parasympathetic nervous system and pre-frontal cortex.

Breathing deep slow breathes, all the way down to your belly and filling up your whole torso with air, and then slowly breathing out, has an immediate calming effect. It kicks in your parasympathetic nervous system and turns down your sympathetic warning system (fight or flight), helping you feel calmer and less amped up.

Try this:

1. Take a deep breath in for a count of 4;
2. As you count, fill up your lungs, belly and whole torso with air;
3. Hold for a count of 4;
4. Then breath out slowly for a count of 4;
5. Hold for a count of 4;
6. Then breath in again for 4;
7. Do this 4 times.

A long, slow breath out is most important. When you breath out, it calms you down. See if you can breathe out very slowly, and when you feel like your breath out is complete, see if you can breathe out even more

## ***Ways to Calm Your Nervous System***

Ask group: What helps you feel calm?

Brainstorm some ideas and write them on the board.

After you have generated a list, go over the *Ways to Calm Your Nervous System* worksheet in the workbook.

### ***Examples:***

- Deep breathing
- Physical exercise
- Music

- Dancing
- Drawing / coloring
- Writing in a journal
- Relaxation exercises
- Meditate
- Rub your feet
- Put your attention on your core center of your body – 2” below naval, 1” inside- breathe into it slowly 12 times.
- Feel the inside of your heart or inside of your abdomen- breathe into it slowly 12 times.
- Squishy ball, play dough, a rock to keep in your pocket and rub
- Get outside and walk, run, kick a ball
- Touch grass with your bare feet
- Sit down near a tree
- Warm fluids- tea, warm milk

### ***My Self-Calming Plan***

Have the group members make their own *Self-Calming Plan*, using their *My Self-Calming Plan Worksheet*. Have them fill in the plan with a list of self-calming behaviors they will use when they have strong emotion, such as anxious or angry, and those they will use preventatively to regulate their mood and reduce anxiety overall.

Ask everyone to do at least 3 self-calming behaviors in the following week, and report back to group during check in about how it went.

## ***Meditation***

Let's talk about meditation. Researchers are beginning to learn more and more about what happens to people's brains when they meditate. They have found, through new brain technology, that when people meditate their middle frontal area of the cortex becomes highly activated. The middle frontal cortex is important for emotional balance, cognitive flexibility, development of empathy, and regulation of fear.

Scientists looked at the brains of experienced meditators and found that the amygdala is far less active than in most people. Meditation rewires your brain. It increases and strengthens the fibers that calm strong emotional reactions, especially fear and anger.

There are many different types of meditation. Meditation does not have to be long and it does not necessarily mean sitting still and silent. The main idea is being present in the moment without putting attention on your thoughts.

A meditation called 'mindfulness' has been found to be especially helpful for people with stress, anxiety, and anger issues

## ***Mindfulness***

What is Mindfulness?

1. Mindfulness is a form of mental activity that trains the mind to become aware of awareness itself, and
2. To pay attention to one's own attention

Mindfulness is defined as paying attention to the present moment from a stance that is non-judgmental and non-reactive.

The benefits of mindfulness:

Teaches self-observation

- Is a form of 'tuning in' to your self – called attunement, which helps you become more aware of yourself- including your thoughts, feelings and body

- Helps the parts of the brain that regulate mood to grow and strengthen, stabilizing the mind and enabling one to achieve emotional equilibrium and resilience.
- Stimulates the growth and strengthening of the neural connections that we talked about earlier in the pre-frontal cortex that send inhibitory fibers into the amygdala to calm and soothe us.
- Stimulates and strengthens the part of the brain (frontal cortex) that enables us to resonate with others and regulate ourselves

## ***Mindfulness Meditation***

Mindfulness can be achieved by paying attention to the present moment. Being mindful is holding yourself fully in this moment in time. We all spend a lot of time thinking about the future and the past, our minds spinning with what we are going to do or what we should have done. What happens when we do this is that we are not present. Have you ever noticed you just walked in the door of your house and have no memory of the walk or ride home? That's because you were off in your mind the whole time- completely unaware of your body in the present as you walked home or sat in the car.

A way to become present in the moment is to pay attention to what you are doing right now – for example, feeling your feet walk down the sidewalk, looking at the cracks in the cement, the grass, the gardens you walk past.... using all of your senses to take in what is around you- smells in the air, the feeling of the wind on your face, the sounds around you- dogs barking, cars going by, and things you see.

Mindfulness is also observing without judging. It is being an observer of what is- such as a feeling or a thought, and just allowing it to be without deciding it is good or bad, or trying to change it.

So, as you practice being fully present, and feelings or thoughts come along (which they will), allow yourself to just observe without judging them or trying to do something about them. For example, when you realize you are not being present and you're thinking about school tomorrow or what you will do when you get home- instead of deciding "I'm am not doing this right or I have to stop thinking....", just notice it, accept it, and then come back to the present, putting

your attention on your body, the chair you are in, the sounds you hear around you, etc.

Let's practice. Start by closing your eyes and put both feet flat on the floor.

- Feel your breath. Feel the sensation of it through your nostrils. Feel your chest and abdomen move out as it fills with air, and move in as the air goes out. Continue to just feel your breath. If thoughts come, just observe them but don't engage. Let them pass by and go back to feeling your breath.
- Feel your body in your chair. Feel the chair against your back. Feel the weight of your legs on the seat.
- Feel your feet. Feel the sensation of the bottom of your feet against the floor. Feel your toes. Feel the bones inside your feet.
- Feel your hands on the table or your lap, just feel these sensations of your fingers. And your arms.
- Feel your chest, and your breath making it rise and fall. Feel your heart. You might feel it pumping.
- Feel your stomach. Feel for sensations inside. Your dinner digesting, or emptiness and hunger.
- Feel your lower belly. Your lower back. Upper back.
- Feel the inside of your mouth. The inside of cheeks. Feel your tongue. And the roof of your mouth.
- Feel your skin.
- Listen to the sounds in the room. The air, sounds outside of the room, people's breath, your own breath. Feel your breath move in and out. Stay with your breath and just feel the air in your nostrils as you breathe in, and breathe out. Breathe in and breathe out.
- Now, without looking up, open your eyes. Look at the table, then look around the room, and then see each other.



What do you feel like now?

You can practice this when you are eating, walking, sitting in your room or in school. It helps calm your mind. It helps bring back focus when your mind is feeling scattered. You can do it during 'time-out' or anytime you feel anxious. When thoughts come as you do this, you just observe the thought and then let it go...



# **Session 6: Assertive Communication**

## **Teen and Parent Session**

### ***Background Information***

The purpose of this session is to help teens learn how to communicate their feelings and thoughts in a respectful manner. Often, teens in the program know only three ways to communicate negative feelings: They become aggressive and disrespectful when they try to get their point across, or they become passive and don't say anything at all to avoid conflict, or they become passive-aggressive. In any case, they do not feel anyone has heard them.

The assertive communication techniques covered in this session help teens and parents communicate respectfully with one another. Parents should practice the same techniques so that they can model assertive communication for their teens.

Be sure to stress throughout the session that assertive communication is not a tactic to get one's way. The purpose is to let the other person know how one feels and thinks about a situation.

You should also encourage the use of assertive communication during the remaining sessions of the program. Point out when a teen or parent has an opportunity to change an aggressive or passive statement into an assertive one. Over time, the whole group will benefit from such reminders.

## ***Goals***

- To examine different styles of communication
- To learn skills for assertive communication
- To learn how to use “I” statements

## ***Important Messages***

- Assertive communication is a way to express your feelings and thoughts respectfully.
- You can respond to a difficult situation without being aggressive or passive.
- Assertive communication helps others hear your point of view, but it is not necessarily going to get you what you want.

## ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Discussion: Styles of Communication.
3. Exercise: Styles of Communication Scenarios
4. Exercise: Practicing Assertive Communication

# Group Activities

## *Discussion: Styles of Communication*

Begin the group with the following explanation:

There are four different ways that a person typically responds when he or she is upset or in disagreement with another person. One way is to respond by verbally attacking the other person and saying why he or she is wrong. It often involves criticism and put-downs, and does not involve listening to the other person's point of view. We call this **aggressive** communication.

The second way to respond is just the opposite of aggressive communication, and is called **passive** communication. The passive communicator does not say what he or she thinks or feels and tries to act like he or she is not bothered by the situation. The person usually acts like this to avoid conflict.

The third way is a combination of these two styles and is called **passive-aggressive** communication. This is when someone responds indirectly about his or her feelings by doing things to let the other person know he or she is mad, but never really saying what he or she thinks or feels. An example would be someone who sarcastically says "fine" and walks out of the room and slams the door.

There is a fourth way of communicating that is not passive or aggressive. Does anyone know what it is?

Guide the group to come up with ideas by asking:

1. Is there a way you can be direct about what you think and feel without criticizing, blaming, or using put-downs?
2. How would you do this?

After the group has discussed some of their ideas, explain the following:

The fourth way of communicating is called **assertive** communication.

When someone communicates assertively, that person shows respect for the other person and self-respect. An assertive person talks about his or her feelings

and thoughts in a way that shows respect and consideration of the other person. An assertive person is respectful to himself or herself by being direct and honest.

If you feel the group needs more help understanding these styles of communication, go over the definitions in the *Styles of Communication* worksheet in the workbook.

## ***Styles of Communication***

### ***Aggressive Style***

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

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

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

### ***Passive Style***

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

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

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

## ***Passive-Aggressive Style***

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

## ***Assertive Style***

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

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

## ***Exercise: Styles of Communication Scenarios***

Refer the group to *Styles of Communication Scenarios* in the workbook. Have group members read each scenario and identify the responses as assertive, passive, passive-aggressive or aggressive.

This can be done individually or in pairs. When everyone is finished, read each scenario and ask the group to identify the responses.

## Worksheet

### ***Styles of Communication Scenarios***

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## ***Exercise: Practicing Assertive Communication***

Refer the group to the *Practicing Assertive Communication* worksheet in the workbook. Have the group divide into pairs, read each scenario, and write an assertive response to each situation. Have each pair share what they wrote with the group when finished.

### **Worksheet**

#### ***Practicing Assertive Communication***

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

1. John's son Dave, who is 17, borrowed John's car. When Dave took the car, it was clean and had a full tank of gas. John gets in the car and finds hamburger wrappers and soda cups on the floor, and an empty gas tank. What assertive statement could John make?
2. Lisa just got on the phone with her friend. She has been doing her laundry and her clothes are in the dryer. Her mom comes in and tells her to get off the phone and get her clothes out of the dryer right away. What assertive statement could Lisa make?
3. Pat's son, Frank, left a big pile of dirty dishes in the sink. He is in his room, watching TV. What assertive statement could Pat make?
4. Jay made plans with his friends to meet at the mall Friday night. Friday morning, Jay's mom asks him if he will help that night with preparing for a garage sale she was planning for Sunday. What assertive statement could Jay make?
5. Loretta was planning on going to an early movie and dinner with a friend. Her 14-year-old son, Neil, asks her to give him a ride to a friend's house at about the same time the movie will start. There is no way she can make it to the movie on time if she takes Neil at the time he wants to be at his friend's house. What assertive statement could Loretta make?
6. Greg has had a really rough day at school. Things didn't go well at his afternoon job, either. He is exhausted and feeling stressed. He comes home, looking forward to just relaxing in his room and listening to

music. His mom tells him she wants him to help her clean the basement. What assertive statement could Greg make?

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

### ***My Assertive Communication:***

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

## **Take-Home Activities**

Ask group members to practice using assertive communication this week. Suggest that they pay attention to opportunities to tell people their feelings or thoughts in an assertive way. They can write down what they said in the blank space under *My Assertive Communication* at the bottom of the *Practicing Assertive Communication* worksheet.



# Session 7: Understanding Power

## *Teen Session*

### ***Background Information***

Power in personal relationships is often defined negatively as getting other people to do things that you want them to do, and this kind of power means having power over people. Violent and abusive behavior is one way to achieve this negative kind of power. But there are nonviolent and non-abusive ways to achieve a positive kind of power. This kind of power uses negotiation and compromise. When teens identify their strengths, skills, knowledge, and resources, they can begin to recognize that they can use their personal power to make nonviolent and non-abusive choices.

### ***Goals***

- To identify personal power
- To identify negative and positive uses of power
- To examine how teens can use their personal power in positive ways

### ***Important Messages***

- Power in itself is not a problem. It is how we *use* our power with others that can sometimes be a problem.
- Our personal strengths and skills can give us power in positive ways

### ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Discussion: How We Use Power in positive and negative ways.
3. Discussion: Ways We Have Personal Power using our Strengths and Skills.
4. Exercise: Identifying our Personal Strengths and Skills.
5. Exercise: Using Personal Power.

# Group Activities

## *Discussion: Power*

Begin the session with a discussion of the following. Be sure to write any key messages that come out of the discussion on the board.

- **What is power?**  
(Examples: to be able to get your way; to have whatever you want; to have people look up to you; to have people want to be like you)
- **What are some different ways that people have power?**  
(Examples: to threaten to hurt someone when they don't get what they want; to be skilled at doing something, like football; to be able to persuade people to a point of view)
- **What are some things people do to have power?**  
(Examples: act threatening; coerce; develop a skill)
- **What are some destructive ways to show power?**  
(Examples: threaten; coerce)
- **What are some respectful ways to show power?**  
(Examples: develop a skill; stand by your friends)

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

## ***Discussion: Ways We Have Personal Power***

Explain to the teens that power can be used in positive/respectful ways or negative/abusive ways. Use one or both of the following examples to illustrate the point:

Your math teacher has power because she has certain **skills** and **knowledge** about teaching math. She might also have some personal **strengths**, like using humor when she teaches the class. Or maybe she has a lot of patience and is willing to spend extra time so everyone in the class can learn. She can use her power in a **positive** way by using her skills to help you learn. She can use her power in a **negative** way by yelling at you, humiliating you in front of the class, or threatening to fail you.

You are baby-sitting your little brother, who is watching a show on TV. You want to watch a baseball game on a different channel. You have the power to change the channel, because you are older, bigger, have more **knowledge** and **skills**, and are **responsible** for your brother. If he objects, you can use your power in a **negative** way by threatening to hit him or lock him out of the house. Or, you can use your power in a **positive** way by negotiating a plan with him, like letting him have the TV for the rest of the evening after the game.

Continue the discussion of personal power by putting the following headings on the board: **Strengths, Skills**. Explain that one source of personal power comes from your strengths and skills. We all have personal strengths and skills that give us the power to make changes in our lives. Refer teens to the **Personal Strengths** and **Personal Skills** worksheet. Ask them to match each personal strength and skill with a definition. And write down three of their own personal strengths and skills.

## ***Personal Strengths and Skills***

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

1. Courage ____	1. To have sympathy and feelings for people with problems.
2. Open Mindedness ____	2. Being able to wait; taking your time to do things.
3. Endurance ____	3. To face danger or difficulties in spite of fear.
4. Dedication ____	4. To have the ability to work well with others
5. Cooperative ____	5. Following through; acknowledging when you are wrong
6. Compassion ____	6. To push yourself to meet a goal
7. Loyalty ____	7. To stand behind friends and family no matter what happens
8. Accountability ____	8. Strength to continue on even though you are tired, stressed or have a long way to go.
9. Patience ____	9. Being dependable and consistent
10. Reliable ____	10. Being interested in the opinions and ideas of others; being willing to consider new ideas



## **Personal Skills**

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

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

1. Listening	1. To take action to deal with feelings calmly.
2. Compromising	2. To figure out a solution to a conflict
3. Respectful Communication	3. To express your thoughts and feelings using language that acknowledges other people's dignity.
4. Empathy	4. Paying attention to what someone is saying.
5. Problem Solving	5. To put yourself in someone else's shoes
6. Coping with difficult emotions	6. Being willing to give something up to come to an agreement

Now, refer the group to the *Ways We Have Personal Power* worksheet.

## ***Ways We Have Personal Power***

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

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

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

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

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4. Larry just had an argument with his girlfriend, Lindsey, about their plans for the weekend. Larry wants them to go to a friend's party and Lindsey wants to see a band at a club. They keep arguing about it.

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

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### ***What Personal Power Do You Have?***

After you are sure the teens have a good sense of personal power, have them fill out the *What Personal Power Do You Have?* worksheet to identify their own strengths and skills that give them personal power in a positive way.

### **Worksheet**

#### ***What Personal Power Do You Have?***

Strengths: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Take-Home Activities**

Ask the teens to think of ways they use their personal power during the next week and let them know they will report back to the group during check-in.



# Session 8: Making Amends

## Teen Session

### ***Background Information***

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

### ***Goals***

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

### ***Important Messages***

- Making amends is a way to take responsibility for your behavior by repairing damage caused by your behavior.
- Making amends is different from saying “I’m sorry.”
- The best way to make amends is to stop using abusive and violent behavior.
- Repairing damage in a relationship is a long-term process.

### ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Separate into parent and teen groups.
3. Discussion: Making Amends.
4. Exercise: Making Amends Scenarios
5. Exercise: Making Amends Worksheet

# Group Activities

## ***Discussion: Making Amends***

Begin by telling the group that when you hurt someone physically or emotionally, or you do something that causes a problem for another person, you can take responsibility for your behavior by doing something to repair the damage or hurt caused by the behavior, or by doing something to fix the problem created by the behavior. We call this making amends.

Ask the group:

1. What are some of the kinds of damage or harm that can be caused by abuse and violence? (List responses under the following headings: Physical, Emotional, Relationship.)
2. What are some ways to repair the damage or harm caused by the abusive/violent behavior?

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

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

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

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

## ***Making Amends***

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

Share the following different ideas for making amends if the teens don't come up with these ideas themselves:

- Acknowledge that you were wrong.
- Help fix the problem that was created by your actions.
- Repair something that has been damaged or pay to have it fixed.

- Help the person in some way.
- Do something special for the person that shows you care about him or her.
- Ask the person what you can do to make amends.

Discuss the following points:

- Saying “I’m sorry” is not the same as making amends. People often apologize when they want the other person to forget what was done to him or her. Making amends involves taking concrete action to make things better. Most people who have been harmed feel better when action is taken to make things right.
- When you do something to make amends for an abusive or violent incident, it doesn’t mean everything will be just fine and go back to the way it was before the incident. The victim probably won’t say, “That’s okay, I’m not mad anymore.” He or she may be angry and upset with you for a while. The purpose of making amends is not to get the person to “forgive” you or tell you everything is okay. The purpose of making amends is to take responsibility for your behavior, take action to fix damage or resolve problems created by the behavior, and put effort into improving the relationship with the person.
- It is not always clear what to do to make amends. When something has been broken, such as a door or wall, part of making amends is to fix it or contribute money to get it fixed. It is more difficult to come up with ideas about how to make amends when someone is emotionally hurt.

### ***Exercise: Making Amends Scenarios***

Refer the group to the *Making Amends* worksheet in their workbooks.

Have group members take turns reading the scenarios and brainstorm ideas for making amends, or break into small groups/pairs and have each group write down ideas for each scenario and then share the ideas with the large group. Write all ideas on the board.

## Worksheet

### ***Making Amends Scenarios***

How could the people in the following scenarios make amends?

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

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

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

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

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5. Larry's mom was upset with him because he had not been home very much over the last three days and had not done his chores or any homework. As Larry's mom was telling him what he needed to do, he started yelling at her, called her names and pushed her  

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

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## **Take-Home Activities**

Refer the group to the *Making Amends* worksheet in their workbooks. Ask teens to think of a time when they were abusive/violent to someone in their families and



write down at least three things they could have done to make amends for the behavior.

### ***How Can I Make Amends Worksheet***

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

1.

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2.

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3.

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# Session 9: Accountability through Restorative Practice

## Teen Session

### *Background Information*

In this session teens will learn how to be accountable for their behavior when they have been hurtful to a family member. Step-Up uses a restorative practice model to address violent behavior and help youth take responsibility in a meaningful way.

*Restorative Inquiry* is a series of questions used to guide youth through six steps of accountability. This process helps them learn a model for how to take responsibility when they have hurt another person. It is based on restorative justice theory that when a person who has caused harm is given the opportunity and guidance to understand the impact of their behavior on others, and is able to actively make amends to “make things right,” he or she is less likely to repeat the harmful act. This process of accountability shows respect to those who have been harmed and helps youth regain respect for themselves.

The first step is acknowledging the hurtful behavior. This means being willing to talk about a harmful behavior without blaming the other person, denying it, minimizing the impact or justifying why you did it. The first exercise in this session is a discussion about the ways people are not accountable when they describe their behavior, along with two scenarios for applying the learning.

The restorative steps are introduced along with a scenario to help group members apply each of the restorative inquiry questions to a situation where a teen is violent toward his mom.

The restorative process was introduced to parents and teens during the orientation session. Teens answer the restorative inquiry questions at check-in if they have been violent during the previous week. Some of the teens and parents may have already engaged in the process and can be invited to share how they felt it was helpful to them.

The *Restorative Inquiry* questions guide youth in a reflective process about the impact of their behavior on others and themselves and what they can do to resolve problems that were caused by the behavior and make amends. The final part of the process is recognizing what they could have done differently and making a plan to prevent repeating the behavior.

When teens have a tangible way to take responsibility for problems caused by their behavior it builds their self-respect and sense of capability. This reduces their shame and the barriers of blame and justification that commonly follow wrongdoing.

The restorative steps teach them lifelong skills for how to be accountable for their behavior in a purposeful way. It also teaches them how to understand others' experiences and feel empathy and healthy remorse. This motivates a genuine desire to repair the harm, and most importantly, change their behavior.

## ***Goals***

- To understand the meaning accountability
- To recognize how we avoid accountability
- To learn the Six Restorative Steps for Taking Responsibility for Behavior.
- To understand how accountability for hurtful behavior is helpful to those harmed and oneself.

## ***Important Messages***

- The first part of accountability is to acknowledge the behavior and be willing to talk about it.
- You are responsible for your own behavior, regardless of what the other person said or did that upset you.
- Accountability is a sign of personal strength and maturity.
- Taking responsibility for hurtful behavior is respectful to others and to oneself

## ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Discussion: What is Accountability.
3. Discussion: What People Do Instead of Being Accountable.
4. Exercise: Avoiding Accountability Scenarios.
5. Discussion: Taking Responsibility for Behavior using Six Restorative Steps.
6. Practice: Applying the Six Restorative Steps.

# Group Activities

## ***Introduce the session with the following statement:***

This session is about how to be accountable when you have been violent or abusive to a family member. You will learn a six step process that helps you understand the impact of your behavior on others and guides you with how to actively take responsibility and make amends. During our next session you will learn more about making amends. Let's start with talking about the meaning of accountability.

## ***Discussion: What Is Accountability?***

Begin the group with the following discussion questions:

1. What does it mean to be accountable?
2. What do people do to be accountable about something they did?  
Example: Just say what you did; be honest.
3. Think of a time when you saw someone be accountable when that person did something wrong. The person could be a friend, a parent, a teacher, or anyone you know. What did you feel about this person?  
Example: "I remember when a friend lost a CD I loaned him. I was glad that he just told me right away and paid me back as soon as he could. I didn't mind loaning him another CD because I knew I could trust him."
4. What are some of the ways our society holds people accountable?  
Examples: Going to court; getting arrested.
5. What is the difference between being accountable for yourself and having accountability imposed on you?  
Example: When a person chooses to be accountable, it shows he or she has personal strength. When a person is forced to be accountable, his or her accountability doesn't carry as much weight or have as much value.
6. Who are you accountable to?  
Examples: Friends, parents, teachers, probation officers.

7. What makes it hard to be accountable when you've done something wrong?  
Examples: fear of punishment, shame, embarrassment.
8. What feelings do you have when you've decided you've done something wrong?  
Examples: Guilt, shame, embarrassment.
9. What do people sometimes do instead of being accountable?  
Examples: deny, justify, minimize, and blame.
10. How does being accountable help someone change his or her abusive/violent behavior?  
Example: Accountability shows that the person recognizes that he or she wants or needs to change.

### ***Discussion: Acknowledging your Behavior using Accountable Communication***

Begin by explaining:

The very first part of being accountable is being honest about your behavior and being willing to talk about it. Saying the behavior that you did- such as, I hit you, I shoved you, I hurt you, I scared my sister, etc., is showing accountability to the other person. It shows that you recognize your harmful behavior. This means a lot to the person who was hurt.

You all practice this every week during *Check-In* on the wheels when you describe behaviors that you did on the *Abuse / Disrespect Wheel*.

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

There are a lot of ways that people avoid accountability for their behavior by the way they talk about what happened and what they did.

Refer the group to *What People Do Instead of Being Accountable* in their workbooks.

Write deny, justify, minimize, blame on the board and discuss the definitions.

- Deny: Saying the behavior never happened.
- Justify: Giving reasons for the behavior, such as, “I had to hit my brother, he wouldn’t be quiet”, or “She made me really mad.”
- Minimize: Saying the behavior is no big deal. Making it sound less serious than it was, such as, “I barely touched you”, or “I was just moving you out of my way.”
- Blame: Saying that the behavior was caused by another person or by something else besides you.

After going over the examples, ask the group:

Why do you think people blame others, deny, justify or minimize their behavior when they have done something wrong?

After sharing ideas, point out that these are ways that people try to feel better about themselves when they have done something that they know is not okay. It is human nature to want to try to explain our behavior because we don’t want to feel like we are bad or mean or want to hurt others. It can be a natural reaction, however it is not helpful because it does not provide a pathway toward take responsibility and making amends, and it leaves the other person feeling more hurt and upset. Acknowledging your behavior in a direct and honest way opens the door to move forward and talk about it, and then take steps to repair the harm done and restore the relationship.

### ***Exercise: Avoiding Accountability Scenarios***

Refer group to *Avoiding Accountability Scenarios* in their workbooks. Read the scenarios and discuss the questions at the end of each scenario. This exercise can also be done in small groups, and then come back together to share answers.

### ***Avoiding Accountability Scenarios***

Read the scenarios and notice how the person is not being accountable by the way they talk about it:



Alex has tryouts for basketball at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday morning. He asks his Mom, Rita, to wake him up at 6:30 a.m. so he can get ready. Rita says, "I will wake you up once, but I have to leave for work at 6:45, so you better set your alarm." Alex says, "OK." He stays up until 1:00pm on his phone and forgets to set his alarm. Rita wakes him up at 6:30 a.m. and leaves for work.

Alex goes back to sleep and wakes up at 9:00 a.m. Then he calls his mom at work and yells at her, "Hey, what's up! You didn't wake me up- I missed tryouts! What the... ? !! You wanted me to do basketball so bad. Forget it, I'm not doing it!"

1. How is Alex denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming?

---

2. What could Alex say about his behavior that shows accountability?

---

Pete spends a lot of time playing computer games. He just got a new game and has been on the computer for three hours. His mom told him it was time to get off and do his chores. He ignored her. She kept coming into his room and telling him he needed to take a break and come do chores. He got really annoyed by the fourth time she came into the room and he jumped up and screamed at her to get out of his room. He grabbed a hockey stick and swung it toward her. She yelled, "Pete, stop! Put that down! I'm leaving the room- do your safety plan and calm down." She left the room. She gave him time to calm down. He came out about fifteen minutes later. His mom was really upset by his behavior. He said, "I didn't hit you with it. I was just trying to get you to leave my room. You always barge in on me. I was going to do my chores at the end of the game. You know I can't talk in the middle of a game. You need to just calm down, Mom. It's not that big of a deal. I wasn't going to hit you with it."

1. How is Pete denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming?

---

2. What could Pete say about his behavior that shows accountability?

## ***Discussion: Taking Responsibility for Behavior Using Six Restorative Steps***

Have group members turn to Taking Responsibility for My Behavior using Six Restorative Steps in their workbooks.

Explain the following:

After acknowledging your hurtful behavior in an accountable way, the next part is taking responsibility for the harm that resulted from what you did. There are six steps that include all of the important parts of being fully accountable to the person you were violent or abusive toward and your family. These steps are from Restorative Justice, and are used to guide a conversation that leads to making amends and preventing the behavior from happening again. When used in families, it helps to restore relationships damaged by hurtful behavior. Go over the six restorative steps and their purpose.

### **Worksheet**

1. Who was harmed by your behavior?	This helps you understand the ripple effect of your behavior. Think of all of the people who were affected in any way by what happened, such as family members, friends, etc. It helps you understand the larger impact of your behavior?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What was the harm done to them?</li></ul>	Think of physical and emotional harm.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did it affect them?</li></ul>	Think of how they might feel and how it impacted their life?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What other harm or damage was caused?</li></ul>	Think of physical, emotional, and other ways it may have caused a problem for family members.

	<p>All of the above questions help you understand the impact fo your behavior from other’s perspectives and help you feel empathy. The person harmed should take part in answering these questions. This information can help you figure out how you can make amends.</p>
<p>2. How did it affect my relationship with my family members?</p>	<p>This helps you think about your relationship and how the behavior impacts trust and feelings in your relationships.</p>
<p>3. How did my behavior affect me?</p>	<p>This helps you recognize that you are also impacted by your behavior. Think about how you feel and your sense of self-respect and competence. Think about the consequences you will experience. On the positive side, ask yourself “What did I learn from this? How will it help me in the future?”</p>
<p>4. What could I have done differently?</p>	<p>This helps you realize that you have a choice and that you have other options for responding to anger. Think about the skills you have learned in Step Up. What skills could you have used so that you stayed on the Respect Wheel?</p>

5. What do I need to do to make amends?	How can I repair the harm damage done? Or fix the problems that were caused? What can I do to make things right?
6. What do I need to do so I don't repeat the behavior again?	What is my plan to prevent repeating the behavior? The most important part of making amends is to make a commitment to changing my hurtful behavior. Tell the person about your plan. Make it a weekly goal in Step Up. For example, using your safety plan.

**Exercise: Applying the Restorative Steps to a Story**

Refer group to Jason's story in workbook. Ask them to think about the *Restorative Steps* as they listen to the story.

**Jason's Story**

*Jason left school early because he was tired and didn't want to go to last period because he didn't do his math homework and was way behind in that class. He went over to a friend's house to hang out until he was supposed to be home at 4:00. He knew his mom was taking him to a counseling appointment that day, and didn't really want to go. He played X Box with his friend for a while. Some other friends came by and they went down to the store to get something to eat. He noticed it was getting dark, and realized it was almost 6 o'clock. He could practically hear his mom's voice in his head freaking out because he missed his counseling appointment.*

*He went home, and sure enough as he walked in the front door his Mom yelled, "Where have you been! It's past 6:00! You were supposed to be home by 4:00 and go to a counseling appointment at 4:30! You know I have to pay for those appointments! What are you thinking! And the school called and said that you left school early and skipped your last class. Isn't that math? The class you are failing? This is not working."*

*Jason looked at her and all he wanted to do was turn around and leave again, but instead he pushed past her to go to his room. As he pushed past her, he said- "Just shut- up!" This made his mom angrier and she followed him to his room, saying, "Jason, we need to talk about this". She started into his room after him, and he turned around and shoved her out the door. The shove was so hard that she fell back onto a table. The table fell over and a glass bowl fell and shattered, and mom fell onto the floor. Jason's little sister came running out of the room and started crying. She yelled at Jason to stop and he yelled at her to mind her own business and slammed the door.*

*Mom got up and decided she better just leave him alone, knowing nothing good was going to come of trying to talk right now. She had a friend coming over for dinner and called and cancelled it. She fixed the table and left the glass on the floor. She took his little sister for a walk to just get out of the house.*

After reading the story tell the group: Now we are going to read each of the restorative questions and think about how Jason could answer them about what happened. This exercise can be done in small groups or as a large group discussion. Group members should fill out the blank *Taking Responsibility for my Behavior using Six Restorative Steps*

## **Worksheet**

### ***Taking Responsibility for my Behavior using Six Restorative Steps***

Answer these questions as if you are Jason.

1. Who was harmed by my behavior?

- 
- What was the harm done to them?

- 
- How did it affect them?
-

- What other harm or damage was caused?

---

2. How did it affect my relationship with my family members?

---

3. How did my behavior affect me?

---

4. What could I have done differently?

---

5. What do I need to do to make amends?

---

6. What do I need to do so I don't repeat the behavior again?

---

### ***Personal Practice: Taking Responsibility for My Behavior using Six Restorative Steps***

This exercise can be done in the group or as a take home activity, depending on the time. Refer teens to the second blank *Taking Responsibility for my Behavior using Six Restorative Steps* in their workbooks. Ask them to answer the questions about their own behavior when they were violent toward a family member. This could be the incident that brought them to the group or a more recent incident of violence at home. The teens' parents should participate with them as they answer the questions, sharing their input about how they and other family members were affected and their ideas for making amends. Group members should share their answers with the group. If time is limited, they can share during check-in the following week.

## Take-Home Activities

Complete the *Restorative Steps* worksheet for their own behavior if they did not do so in the group. Teens and parents can work on this together, if possible.





# Session 10: Understanding Feelings

## Teen Session

### *Background Information*

The exercises in this session are designed to bring teens to a deeper understanding of anger.

Anger is only one feeling among other feelings that we experience in our lives. During this session, we want to help teens recognize that when they are angry they also have other feelings. The facilitator can help teens understand this by asking them what feelings they are having besides anger when they talk about being angry. You may need to help them with this by giving them examples of feelings they might be experiencing. Most teens have never learned how to talk about their feelings.

### *Goals*

- To identify the relationship between power and anger
- To separate feelings of anger from the behavior a teen chooses
- To recognize feelings, in addition to anger, experienced by a teen
- To understand the relationship between anger and other feelings

### *Important Messages*

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

- It is OK to feel angry; it is how we behave when we are angry that can be a problem. More specifically, anger should not be used to justify violence and abuse, or to intimidate or make other people feel powerless. There are ways to express anger without violence and abuse.
- Anytime you are angry, you also have other feelings.
- When you express feelings other than anger, people are more likely to listen to you and understand you.
- You have a choice about what to do with your anger, and you are responsible for the way you choose to respond.
- You are *not* responsible for someone else who chooses to respond to his or her anger with violence. If you are the victim of someone else's violence, *you are not to blame*.

### ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Separate into teen and parent groups.
3. Discussion: Using Anger to Justify and Gain Power.
4. Discussion: Identifying Feelings
5. Exercise: Identifying Feelings.
6. Exercise: Anger Scenarios.

# Group Activities

## ***Discussion: Using Anger to Justify and Gain Power***

Begin the session with a discussion of the following questions. Be sure to emphasize any important points that come out of the discussion by writing them on the board.

1. How is anger used to justify violent or abusive behavior?
2. How do people use anger to have power over others?
3. Can you be angry and respectful at the same time? How?
4. What can you do to help control your anger so you can stay respectful?

Have the class brainstorm some of the negative ways people behave when they are angry (hitting, yelling, etc.) Then ask what other choices people have for how to respond when they are angry. Ask participants what advantages there might be to responding in a respectful, non-abusive way when they are angry.

## ***Discussion: Identifying and Talking about Feelings***

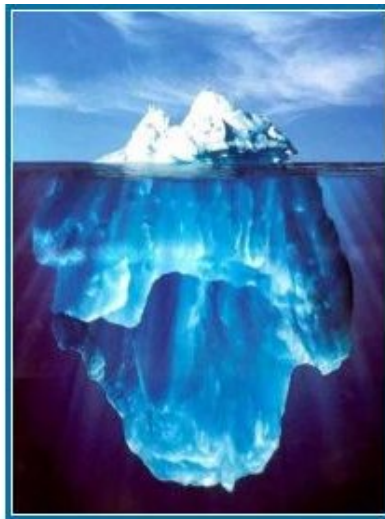
Use the illustration of the iceberg in the worksheet to introduce participants to the idea that anger is used to mask other feelings.

Tell students that anger is the tip of the iceberg. The part of the iceberg under the water is where all the other feelings are. Tell the teens that people often show only anger to the people around them. But just as a captain must know what lies beneath the water in order for a ship to successfully navigate around an iceberg, people need to understand what lies beneath their anger and other people's anger in order to cope effectively with their feelings.

## ***Iceberg of Feelings***

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

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



## ***Why does putting our feelings into words help?***

Explain the following:

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

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

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

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

Next, discuss the following situations with the group to examine how we are socialized at an early age to hide our feelings:

- Let's say a 7-year-old boy gets punched and knocked down by a 9-year-old boy. If the 7-year-old starts to cry, what will the other kids say to him? What will they say about him? What will he learn about showing pain and fear?
- If a five-year-old girl comes into the house crying and tells her mom that her brother said she couldn't play with him because she was stupid, her mom may say, "Oh, he's just being a boy. Stop crying." What will the girl learn about feeling sad?

Point out that it is these types of experiences that teach us that anger is a much safer feeling to show than other hard feelings.

When you are sure the class recognizes that anger is not felt in isolation from other emotions, tell them that it is more helpful to communicate the feelings they are having than to act out the anger. Use the following story to illustrate this point:

*Let's say you are mad at your mom because she picked you up late. If you think about it, you can figure out what other feelings you are having besides anger. Maybe you are worried you will be late for practice, or something else you had planned to do. Instead of just telling her how mad you are, or acting angry with her, you can tell her how you feel—"I'm worried I will be late for practice." Then your mom can understand why you are upset, and it is less likely to turn into an argument that escalates into blaming and anger.*

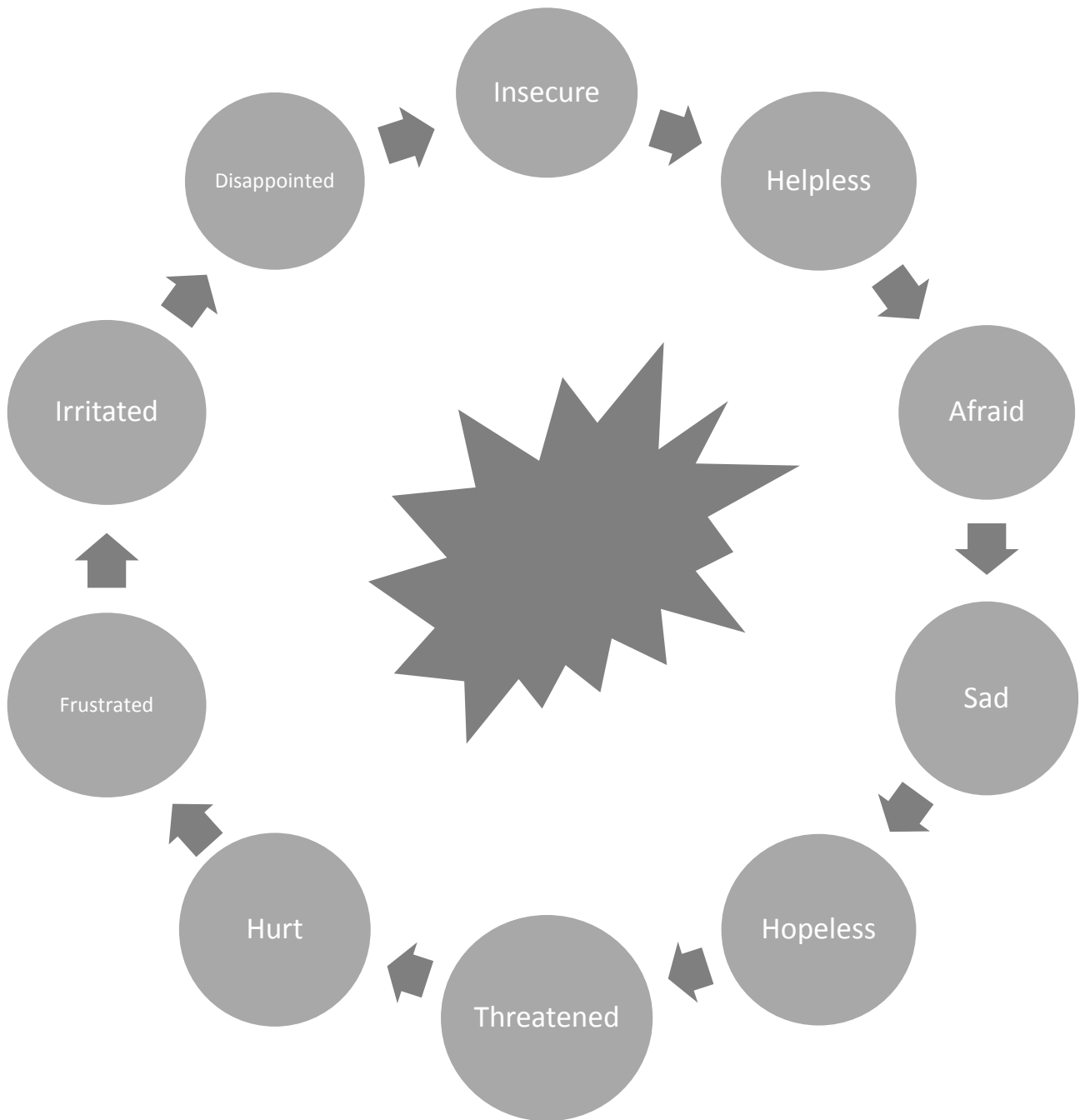
## ***Exercise: Different Kinds of Feelings***

Refer participants to the feelings wheels in their workbooks. Explain:

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

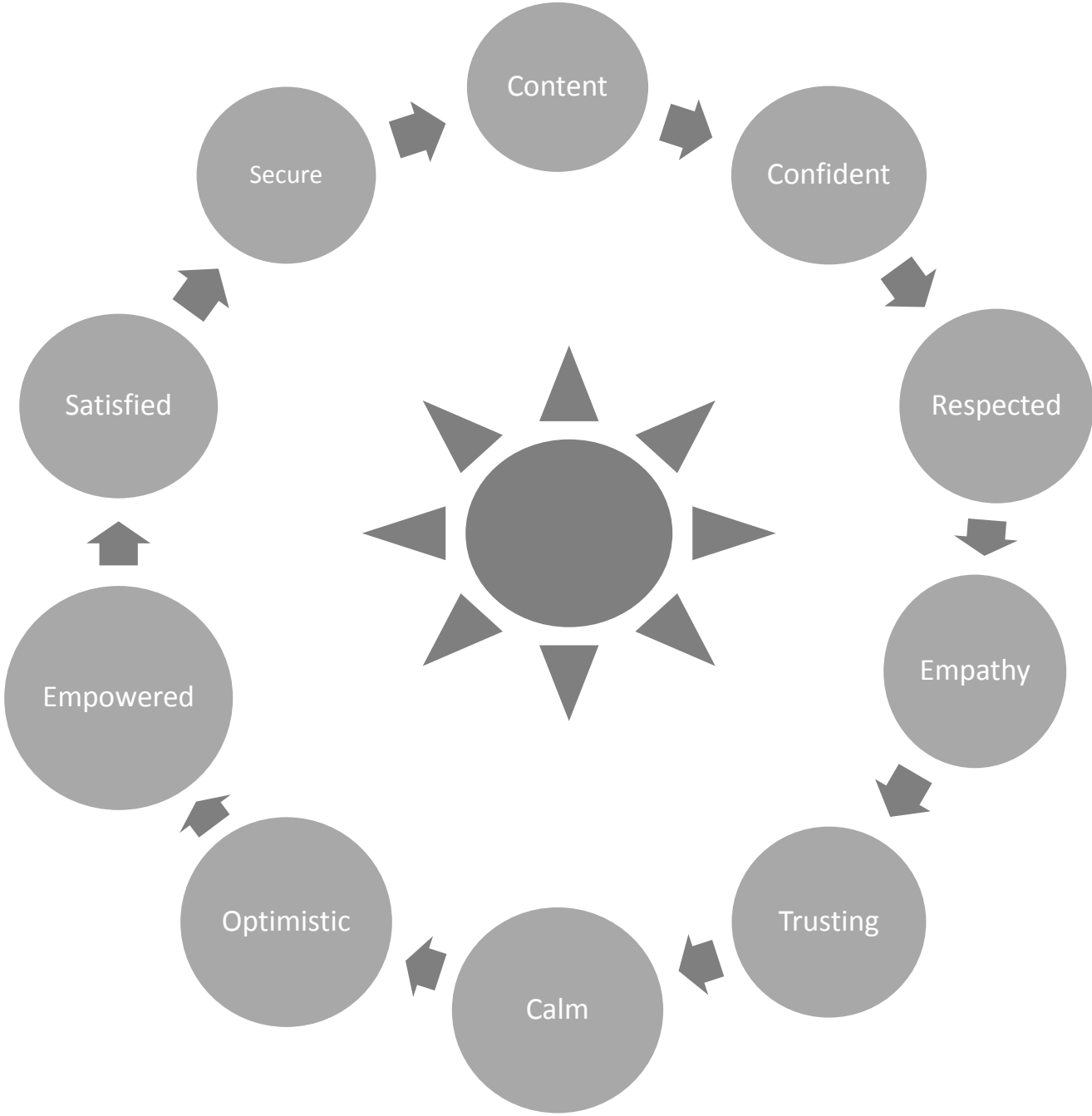
For this exercise, you will look at the two wheels and think about a situation when you felt one of the feelings on the wheel. We will go around the group and share until we have talked about all of the feelings on each wheel.

## Difficult Feelings





**Helpful Feelings**



## ***Exercise: Identifying Feelings***

Have the participants turn to the *Identifying Feelings* worksheet in the workbook. Ask them to read each scenario and think about what feelings the person might be having. They can do this individually, in small groups, or as a large group. Have them share their answers with the whole group while you write down the feelings on the board.

### **Worksheet**

#### ***Identifying Feelings***

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

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

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

Barb is angry. What else might she be feeling?

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

Jake is angry. What else might he be feeling?

---

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

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

Alex is angry. What else might he be feeling?

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

Katie is angry. What else might she be feeling?

---

### ***Exercise: Anger Scenarios***

Finish the session by doing some role-playing. Have volunteers act out various scenarios in which they get angry. Have them think of situations in their own lives when they get angry. Ask the volunteers to try to communicate any feelings they might have other than anger and consider how their choices might change the outcome of the experience. Encourage group members to help each other identify possible feelings and how to communicate those feelings.

### **Worksheet**

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

1. What happened?
- 

2. What did you say and do?
- 

3. Besides anger, what feelings did you have?

---

## **Take-Home Activities**

Ask group members to pay attention to other feelings they are having when they get angry during the following week. Ask them to try to communicate the other feelings instead of the anger. They will report back to the group about their experiences during check-in.

# Session 11: Understanding Self-Talk and Beliefs

## *Teen and Parent Session*

### *Background Information*

Self-talk is another word for thinking. In any situation, you always have thoughts about what is going on around you. Those thoughts affect how you feel about the situation, and how you respond to it. This is because your thoughts have to do with how you perceive what is happening. During this session you will become more aware of the things you say to yourself in difficult situations and how it impacts your feelings and behavior. You will learn how to change unhelpful thinking to self-talk that helps you respond to stressful events in more respectful and non-violent ways.

You will also learn about the beliefs you have that affect your thinking, feelings and behavior. Beliefs are ideas you have developed in your life about how things should be, what is right and not right, and your capabilities. Beliefs have a strong influence over our thinking, feelings and behavior. You will learn how these all work together to determine the choices you make and your behavior. Once you figure out your unhelpful thoughts and beliefs, you can change them to ones that lead you away from abusive or violent responses to conflict and toward respectful ways to solve problems.

### *Goals*

- To understand self-talk and beliefs
- To learn that people's thinking and beliefs are not always true
- To learn how to change unhelpful thinking and beliefs to ones that support respectful, non-violent relationships
- To learn how to use self-talk to change behavior
- To learn how to use self-talk to make better choices

## ***Important Messages***

- When I pay attention to the way I think, I can decide if it is helpful or harmful, and I have the ability to change it.
- When I can change my thinking, it changes my feelings and behavior.
- My beliefs influence how I think and act.
- Beliefs are often at work below the surface of our awareness, so we don't often think about them.
- When we learn about our beliefs, we can decide if they are true or untrue, helpful or unhelpful.
- I can change my thinking and beliefs to help me stay safe and non-violent.

## ***Session Overview***

1. Meditation / Relaxation activity
2. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
3. Separate into parent and teen groups.
4. Discussion: Who Controls Our Behavior.
5. Discussion: Self-Talk.
6. Discussion: Changing Negative Self-Talk into Helpful Self-Talk.
7. Exercise: Changing Negative Self-Talk into Helpful Self-Talk.

# Group Activities

## *Explain the following:*

In this session we help teens become aware of how their thoughts, feelings and beliefs interact with each other and influence their behavior. This gives them self-awareness and insight about what is happening internally for them before they become aggressive.

We explore how peoples' perceptions and thinking about a situation impact how they feel and react, and even more importantly, how perceptions and thinking can be inaccurate. Teens will learn how changing the way they think about a situation can calm or shift negative feelings so these feelings are less intense. Likewise, they will learn how changing feelings can influence thinking.

When people know how to slow down and observe the cognitive, emotive and behavioral process leading to their behavior, it enables them to make more thoughtful decisions about how to respond and act. Teens will also learn how to notice their overall 'mindset' and shift it to a more positive and helpful mindset.

The primary goal of Step-Up is to learn how to replace abusive behaviors with respectful behaviors. To reach this goal, we need to figure out how to respond instead of react to troublesome situations. Reaction is when strong emotions drive our behavior. When these emotions are negative, people often feel like the other person is causing the difficult feelings, and they react and lash out.

Responding is different. If we can step back and observe the situation and how we are thinking about it, we can decide how we want to respond. Noticing our thinking and how we talk to ourselves about the problem gives us information about how we view the situation. Sometimes our perspectives are off, and we need to shift our view of the situation. If we take time to pay attention to this it helps us more 'thoughtfully' respond to interactions in respectful ways.

During this session you will learn how to pay attention to your thoughts and beliefs to figure out if they are realistic or helpful, and change them if they are not. If they are realistic, you will learn that you have a lot of choices about how to deal with the situation. This will help you respond instead of react to challenges in your life.

## ***Discussion: Who Controls Our Feelings, Thoughts, and Behavior***

### **Explain the following:**

One of the major roadblocks for people is a belief that they are powerless to change their feelings, thoughts and behaviors.

Lots of times we feel like other people control our feelings and our actions. We might say things like, “My mom makes me mad,” “My sister made me angry so I hit her”, “I’m late for school because my mom puts me in a bad mood and I miss the bus.” Other people definitely influence us, but we are the ones who really have the most influence over how we feel and act.

We always have a choice about how we behave. No one can “make” us behave in a certain way (for example, someone is not raising my hand for me to hit this person—I make the choice and act).

Feelings are a little more complicated. People and situations do influence how we feel. It seems like we have no choice about it. However, we do have some control over our feelings. We can have a bad feeling about something, and then we can change the negative feeling by changing the way we think about it or by looking at it in a different way.

Here is an example of how a person’s thinking can affect the way he or she feels:

Jon is in a supermarket with narrow aisles. He’s in a hurry and he’s trying to move quickly with his cart. He needs to get to the check-out counter and get out of the store to catch his ride. A tall, broad-shouldered man is studying all the different cereal boxes on the shelf in front of him. He and his cart are blocking Jon’s way. Jon says, “Excuse me.” He doesn’t move. Jon says, “Excuse me,” louder. The man still doesn’t move.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What kinds of things might Jon start to think
2. Example: Jon might think, “What a jerk. This guy is just trying to make me mad. Who does he think he is? How rude!”
3. How would he feel?



4. Example: He might feel frustrated, irritated, impatient, and mad.
5. How might he behave?
6. Example: He might yell at the man to move out of his way.

Now, imagine that a woman comes up to the large man and they start speaking in sign language. Jon then realizes that the man is deaf. How would that knowledge affect:

1. Jon's thinking?
2. Jon's feelings?
3. Jon's actions?

In the example above, what made Jon mad?

It may seem like the man blocking the aisle made Jon mad. What really made Jon mad was his thinking and his perception about what was going on. When Jon thought, "What a jerk. This guy is just trying to make me mad." He became irritated and then mad. If he stopped for a second and instead thought, "I wonder what's up? Maybe he is deaf and doesn't hear me," Jon wouldn't have gotten mad, but instead could have just found out whether the man heard him or not.

Although we may not be aware of it, we have choices in how we think about things.

When we get angry about something that happens, or something a person does/says, there are two parts to what is contributing to our anger:

1. The event that happens—called *external triggers*.
2. The thoughts we have about what happened—called *internal triggers*.

We don't have much control over external triggers, especially when it is another person's behavior. There are lots of things that people do that can make us mad. And there are a lot of situations and events in life that can make us mad. Sometimes we have control over preventing a situation or event from happening, and sometimes not.

We do have some control over internal triggers. We can pay attention to the thoughts we have about what happens, and our perception and beliefs about it. And we can do things to change how we think and talk to ourselves about it.

### ***Discussion: Self-Talk***

Refer the group to the *Self-Talk* worksheet and explain the following:

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

We talk to ourselves all the time and aren't aware of it. If you start paying attention to it you will hear yourself. You hear your mom's car pull up in the driveway and you think, "Dang, I didn't do the dishes. She's going to yell at me about it." Or you get home and see that your little sister is using your laptop, and you think to yourself, "She is going to mess it up or get in my stuff." If you listen to yourself carefully for a day you will hear all sorts of things that you say to yourself.

In addition to thinking and self-talk, we have feelings and beliefs going on at the same time. Thinking, feelings and beliefs all interact with each other when we respond to something that happens.

### ***Discussion: Beliefs***

Refer the group to the beliefs worksheet in their workbooks and explain the following:

Our thinking and self-talk is shaped by our beliefs. Beliefs are the notions we hold about the way things are, or should be. They have to do with the values and perspectives we learned from our family, community and culture.

Beliefs are below the surface of our awareness, but they have a strong impact on our life perspective. They are learned in childhood and throughout our lives, and may be true or untrue. Some of our beliefs are helpful to us, and others can get in the way of being our true selves and can damage our relationships. They are difficult to change, but it is possible to change them if we can learn what they are.

Some of our beliefs are about what we think is important and what we think is right or wrong. They are often ‘shoulds’, like ‘you should never show weakness’, ‘children should never talk back to their parents’, ‘boys should never cry’, ‘it not okay to speak up when you disagree’, or ‘you should always stick up for your family.’

Beliefs can be about others, the world, and us. They can be helpful or unhelpful to us.

## ***Beliefs about Myself***

Refer the group to *Core Beliefs about Myself* in their workbooks.

Explain the following:

Core beliefs are about who we are as persons, our capabilities, self-worth and personality. These beliefs are deep and often out of our conscious awareness. They impact our thoughts and self-talk, for example if I have a core belief that I am powerless and incapable, and then when faced with a challenge I might say to myself, “I can’t do anything about it; it’s hopeless, nothing will ever change.”

Here are examples of negative and positive core beliefs we have about ourselves:

### **Negative Core Beliefs**

*I never do things right*  
*I am not very smart*  
*I am helpless*  
*I am bad*

### **Positive Core Beliefs**

*I am a good person*  
*I can succeed if I try*  
*I am important*  
*I am capable*

Briefly discuss the following questions:

- How do we develop these Core Beliefs?
- How do you know if they are true or not?
- How can you challenge those that are not true, and change them?

Think of one positive belief and one negative belief you have about yourself.

Positive Belief \_\_\_\_\_

Negative Belief \_\_\_\_\_

### ***How Self-Talk, Feelings and Beliefs Work Together***

Refer the group to *How Self-Talk, Feelings and Beliefs Work Together* in their workbooks.

Write on the board: Something Happens

Describe the following scenario:

*Derrick's mom told him she would take him to the store after school so he could buy the new video game that just came out. He was really excited about it as he walked home from school. He couldn't wait to play it.*

*Derrick walks in the front door and sees his mother at the dining room table with his 10-year-old brother. Mom says, "Hi, Derrick. I'm sorry, but I can't take you to the store today. I need to help Sam out with a big project that's due tomorrow. I can take you on Thursday."*

#### **Explain to the group:**

When something happens that causes distress, there are usually a series of thoughts, beliefs and feelings that occur as the person thinks it through. The thoughts, beliefs and feelings impact each other. For this part of the exercise, we will think of all the possible unhelpful thoughts and self-talk, beliefs and feelings Derrick might have that could lead to more distress and hurtful behavior. We will start with the very first thing he might have said to himself when he learns that he can't play the new game today.

Ask the group:

1. What thoughts / self-talk might Derrick have right after his mom told him she couldn't take him to the store? What was his immediate thought?
2. What feelings might he have?
3. What beliefs support this self-talk?
4. How might he behave?

Have them turn to the Something Happens worksheet in their workbooks and go over the examples.

Point out how the beliefs foster the self-talk, and they both generate the feelings. Then, in the end, all of it impacts how the person behaves.

### ***Something Happens***

Derrick's mom can't take him to buy the new game today as they had planned because she has to help his younger brother with homework.



**Thought**  
**Belief**  
**Feelings**

*"I want to play that game! I have to!"*  
*"I can't wait. I don't have the patience. I can't stand it."*  
*Disappointed, frustrated, helpless, angry, victimized*



**Thought**  
**Belief**  
**Feelings**

*"She said she would take me. She lied."*  
*"People should keep their word. She's doing it on purpose"*  
*Betrayed, unimportant, let down*



**Thought**  
**Belief**  
**Feelings**

*"She cares more about my brother. He gets all of the attention. She always does what he wants."*  
*"I am not worthy of attention. I'm not good enough."*  
*Jealous, sad, hurt, angry*



## ***Behavior***

Yells and swears at Mom, kicks the wall

<b>Thought</b>	She doesn't care
<b>Belief</b>	<i>"If someone makes me feel bad, I have a right to make them feel bad too. They deserve it if they make you feel bad."</i>
<b>Feelings</b>	<i>Revenge, hopeless, shame</i>

## ***Identifying and Changing Self-Talk and Beliefs***

Tell the group:

We can see from Derrick's story, the way we talk to ourselves and the beliefs we hold, affect how we feel and how we act. When something difficult happens, we can think about it in ways that get us more worked up and mad about it, or we can think about it in ways that help us calm down and figure out how to deal with it.

If you listen carefully to your self-talk when you are angry, you might notice that it is exaggerated, unrealistic and even completely untrue. Researchers who study anger have found that people with anger problems commonly have distorted thinking and perceptions that give rise to the anger. Listening to your self-talk will help you learn if this is true for you. The good news is that you are capable of changing your thinking and self-talk if you pay attention to it.

Let's look at Derrick's thoughts, self-talk and beliefs that led to him swearing at his mom and kicking the wall.

- Which of his thoughts and beliefs are really true and realistic?
- Which ones are not true, or are blown out of proportion?

Write their answers on the board, under two headings:

1. True / Realistic and
2. Not True /Unrealistic or Exaggerated

Then ask:

What could Derrick say to himself instead that would shift his view to be more realistic and less negative to help him cope with the distress?

List ideas on the board

**We are going to do more practice with figuring out unhelpful self-talk, and changing it into more helpful self-talk.**

### ***Changing My Thinking/Self-Talk***

**Refer group to *Changing My Thinking / Self-Talk* in their workbooks**

Tell group:

We are going to use another scenario to learn how to recognize your self-talk, and explore the different options you have for changing it and coping with the disturbance in a healthier way.

Describe the following scenario, or have a group member read it from the book.

*Jennifer's mom took her phone away because she had been staying on it late into the night and would not get up on time for school in the morning. Jennifer was angry and upset about it and begging her mom to give it back. Mom separated from her and Jennifer sat on the floor in her room not knowing what to do. She was so mad. She started throwing things around her room*

First ask: What does Jennifer need to do before she can figure out what she is thinking?

Point out: First, Jennifer should use her safety plan to stop and do something to calm her strong emotions. She should use her self-calming skills to de-escalate so she is able to think clearly and focus.

When Jennifer was throwing things around her room she was too emotionally escalated to think about her thinking. Her self-calming skills will help her settle down and activate her cortex so she will be able to focus and figure things out.

### ***Steps to Change Thinking / Self-Talk***

Go over the following and apply each step to Jennifer's situation. Have group members come up with ideas about how Jennifer might do this.

#### **LISTEN to myself:**

- What am I saying to myself?
- What might Jennifer have been saying to herself?
- Example: "I have to have my phone. She can't take it. I have to get it back- I have to be able to text my friends, and go on face book- I'll lose all my friends, they'll think I don't like them..."

#### **ASK myself**

- Is what I'm saying to myself really true? Is it realistic? Is it really this horrible awful and bad?
- Is my thinking helping me? Or making it worse?
- How was Jennifer's thinking affecting her feelings and behavior?
- Was Jennifer's thinking true or realistic?

#### **CHANGE it**

- If what you are saying is not really true or realistic, or maybe exaggerated, look at the situation again and change it to something more realistic.
- What kinds of self-statements could Jennifer make that are more realistic?
- If you decide what you are saying to yourself is really true, or parts of it are true, while you don't have control over the problem, you do have control about how you think about it and what you do.



## ***Handling Something I Cannot Change***

Refer the group to *Handling Something I Cannot Change* in their workbooks

Explain the following:

### **Worksheet**

Sometimes we realize our negative thoughts are really true. We are not exaggerating. It is what is happening and it is really challenging. What do you do then?

**FIRST:** Recognize that it is true.

- Jennifer could say: “This really is just the way it is, I don’t have control over this one- Mom took my phone and I don’t have it. I can’t change her mind.”

**SECOND:** What can I do? What are my choices?

- Keep thinking about how awful it is and ranting and raving and drive myself and everyone else nuts- and get in more trouble.
- Accept it. Saying:”It is what it is” can sometimes bring some relief because you realize there is nothing you can do to change the situation. Let it go. This alone can help you feel better because you stop fighting it.

Jennifer could say to herself: “Okay, I don’t have my phone. All the screaming and yelling in the world is not going to change it. It will just make it worse.

- Switch from thinking about the problem to thinking about the solution.

What do I need to do to get my phone back?

- Tell myself something to help me cope with the distress.

For example, use as your self-calming statements. “It’s only a week, time goes fast, I will see my friends at school and tell them what’s going on.”

What else could Jennifer say to herself?

- Stop thinking

Do a mindfulness activity to bring yourself present (as we have learned about in class) by breathing, being in your body, focusing on your senses and what is happening right now in the room you are in. Go on a mindfulness walk, sit by a tree, or do any of the mindfulness exercises we have learned. When your thoughts come along, just observe and let them pass.

- Feel the feelings

Allow yourself to have your feelings. Cry, get mad, be sad- as long as your behavior is safe and respectful. Do something physical to move the emotions- walk, run, play catch with the dog.

- Talk about your feelings

Talk about how you feel respectfully, to someone who is able to listen. Or just say them to yourself or write them down.

Most of these (except the first one) help to calm strong emotions. Our thinking affects our feelings, and our feelings affect our thinking. If you can shift your emotions to more positive ones, it helps you have more positive thinking. If you shift your thinking to more positive thoughts, you have better feelings.

Tell the group that next week they will practice these skills more and apply them to their own personal situations

## **Take Home Activity**

Tell teens to be aware of how they have negative self-talk and helpful self-talk in a situation during the next week. They will tell the group about it during their next check-in.

# Session 12: Hurtful Moves/Helpful Moves

## Teen Session

### *Background Information*

An important part of changing behavior is to examine the choices we make. In earlier sessions teens critically examined their feelings, their self-talk and their beliefs. In this session teens will learn how these work together to impact how they choose to respond to an event. They will identify the feelings, self-talk and beliefs they typically have in a difficult situation and how to change them so they make better choices about their behavior.

### *Goals*

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

### *Important Messages*

- Feelings, thinking and beliefs all influence how we choose to respond to a situation.
- When we change how we think about a situation, our feelings change.
- Changing our feelings can help us make different choices about our behavior.
- Our beliefs support our thinking, feelings and behavior.

### *Session Overview*

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Separate into parent and teen groups.
3. Exercise: Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves.
4. Exercise: Turning Your Own Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves.

# Group Activities

## ***Exercise: Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves***

We have been learning about feelings, self-talk and beliefs and how they affect our behavior. Now we want to see how they all work together to affect the choices we make.

Refer the group to *Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves (Part A)* in their workbooks. Explain that this exercise presents a scenario and shows the feelings, self-talk and beliefs associated with a helpful move and the feelings, self-talk and beliefs associated with a hurtful move.

Read the scenario and go over the hurtful moves and helpful moves. When discussing self-talk, explain that negative thinking often includes “shoulds” and “blamers” or “put-downs.” Shoulds are when we think about what others *should* do. Blamers are when we blame the problem on others. Put-downs are when we try to make people feel bad about themselves. Tamers are thoughts that help you calm down and solve a problem.

# Worksheet

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

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

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

After the group has had some discussion about hurtful moves and helpful moves, refer them to *Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves (Part B)*. This page has a scenario and blank space in each box. Ask group members to fill in the boxes with their ideas. This exercise can be done in small groups or pairs. When they have completed the exercise, have them share their answers with the group.

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

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

**Complete the following worksheet as if you were Terry.**

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

## **Exercise: Turning Your Own Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves**

Refer the group to *Turning Your Own Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves* in the workbook. Ask group members to think of a situation when they were violent or abusive (it might be the incidents that brought them to Step-Up), and write it in the blank space at the top of the page. Then, have the group members go to the *Hurtful Moves* side of the page and write down the self-talk, feelings and beliefs that they might have had that led to the abusive action. Have the group members go to the *Helpful Moves* side of the page and fill in different self-talk, feelings and beliefs that would have helped them use nonabusive behavior. Finally, have group members write down the feelings and behavior that might have resulted from the change in their thinking and beliefs.

Have group members share their answers with the group.

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





## **Session 13 Safety Plan Review/Open Session**

This session can be used to review the *Safety Plan* and help families make revisions if needed. Youth who have not made a safety plan can make one during this session. This session can also be used to deliver one of the extra sessions that are at the end of the manual.



# Session 14: Using “I” Statements

## Teen and Parent Session

### ***Background Information***

In addition to teaching another facet of respectful communication, this session prepares participants for the coming sessions on problem solving. The goal is to teach teens and their parents how to talk about a problem without blaming, criticizing, or judging the people with whom they are in conflict. This is a difficult communicative skill to learn. You can help participants learn this skill by prompting them to change their comments into “I” statements when appropriate in this and the remaining sessions of the program.

### ***Goals***

- To learn how to use an “I” statement
- To recognize how “I” statements help people understand each other

### ***Important Messages***

- “I” statements help you focus on your own experience of a situation.
- “I” statements help you avoid blaming and criticizing other people.
- Other people usually respond less defensively when they hear “I” statements.

### ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Discussion What is an “I” Statement?
3. Exercise: “You” Statement versus “I” Statement
4. Exercise: Changing “You” Statements into “I” Statements
5. Exercise: “I” Statement Practice

# Group Activities

## ***Discussion: What is an “I” Statement?***

An “I” statement is a way for a person to give valuable information about how an event or situation affects him or her. By beginning with “I,” a person is acknowledging that the statement is how he or she thinks and feels. When you use “I” statements, people usually respond more positively because they are able to hear you and understand you better. When you use “you” statements that blame and accuse, people feel defensive and don’t want to listen to you.

The most important skill for effective problem solving is to be able to talk about a problem in a way that helps others hear your point of view—and without criticizing, blaming, or using put-downs. Learning how to state your feelings and point of view in an “I” statement can be a difficult thing to do. At first, many people tend to start the sentence with “I feel...,” but then go into the usual blaming and criticizing of the other person. A true “I” statement does not include blame or criticism, and only states the experience of the person speaking. It may need to include information about the behavior of the other person, but this information should be stated in as factual and non-judgmental a way as possible.

Refer group to *What Is an “I” Statement Worksheet* and discuss.

## ***What Is an “I” Statement?***

An “I” statement:

- Describes the behavior or situation that is a problem clearly and specifically, with as few words as possible.
- Describes how a person feels or how the situation affects him or her, through “I” sentences.
- Does not blame, accuse, criticize, or put down the other person in the conversation.

## ***What Is the Purpose of an “I” Statement?***

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

## ***How Do I Make an “I” Statement?***

**I feel** (feeling)

**when** (behavior or situation)

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

-or-

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

## ***Exercise: You” Statements versus “I” Statements***

Refer group to “You” Statements versus “I” Statements Exercise in workbook. Read statements and discuss how they would respond to each statement.

## **Worksheet**

### ***“You” Statements versus “I” Statements***

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

**“You” statement:**

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

**“I” statement:**

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

**“You” statement:**

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

**“I” statement:**

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

**“You” statement:**

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

**“I” statement:**

“When you talk while I’m talking, I get really annoyed because I feel like you aren’t hearing anything I’m saying. I’d like to take turns talking so you can listen to me and I can listen to you.”

## **Worksheet**

### ***Changing “You” Statements into “I” Statements***

Refer group members to the next worksheet, Changing “You” Statements into “I” Statements. Tell them they will now practice changing “you” Statements into “I” Statements. This exercise can be done all together as a large group, or in small groups or pairs and come back together and share.

“You are always late. You are so slow in the morning. I’m going to be late again, thanks to you.”

**“I” statement:**

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“You pig. You ate all the chips.”

**“I” statement:**

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“You always come barging into my room. Have you ever heard of the word ‘privacy’ before?”

**“I” statement:**

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### ***Exercise: “I” Statement Practice***

Have group members divide into pairs and have them write an “I” statement for each of the scenarios in the *“I” Statement Practice* worksheet in the workbook. Then, have the pairs come back together and share answers with the large group.

### **Worksheet**

#### ***“I” Statement Practice***

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

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

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

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

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

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5. Think of something you would like to say to your parent using an "I" statement. Try to say something that you would normally say in a "You" statement. Take turns each saying something to each other in an "I" statement.

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## Take-Home Activities

During the following week use "I" statements with your parent when you want to express an opinion or feeling about something.



# Session 15: Understanding Responsibility

## Teen Session

### *Background Information*

This session teaches teens a specific technique for taking responsibility for their actions. Before people can change their behavior, they have to acknowledge they are using behaviors they want to change. Asking teens to acknowledge their behaviors in writing is one powerful step toward making change.

The goal is for every teen to write a responsibility letter to the person who was a victim of his or her abuse or violence. This may take more than one session. Some teens may be able to work on writing their letters at home. Writing is a challenge for some teens and you may need to spend individual time with them and have them do the letters orally while you write the letters for them. Each teen will read his or her responsibility letter in the group with his or her parent present, before completion of the program. One way to do this is to have one teen read his or her letter each week following check-in, while the parents are still in the group. Another option is to have each teen read his or her responsibility letter to his or her parent at the last session of the program.

The instructor should review each teen's letter and edit it with the teen before the teen reads it in the group. You are editing it to be sure the teen has covered each of the questions and to ensure that the teen makes changes if he or she is denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming.

## ***Goals***

- To compose a responsibility letter to the victim of the teen's abuse/violence, acknowledging the abusive/violent behavior without denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming
- To identify taking responsibility as empowering

## ***Important Messages***

- Taking responsibility for abusive and violent behavior is a sign of personal strength.
- Taking responsibility for abusive and violent behavior is a first step toward changing behavior.
- Taking responsibility is a way to start repairing a relationship.

## ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Separate into parent and teen groups.
3. Discussion: What is a Responsibility Letter.
4. Discussion: Sample Responsibility Letter.
5. Exercise: Two Versions of What Happened.
6. Exercise: Practice Responsibility Letter
7. Exercise: Writing the Responsibility Letter.

# Group Activities

## ***Discussion: What Is a Responsibility Letter?***

Begin the group by reminding participants that an important part of changing their abusive behavior is being accountable to those people they abused. A responsibility letter is one way to do that. Have the group turn to the *What Is a Responsibility Letter* worksheet in their workbooks. Go over the instructions with them.

## ***What Is a Responsibility Letter?***

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

### **Here's how you do it:**

You decide what incident you are going to write about and let your counselor know about it. You may do this during group session time when everyone will talk about what they are going to write about, or you may talk about it to your counselor apart from the group.

After your counselor approves the incident you will write about, use the blank letter in the worksheet and answer the questions.

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

Give your letter to your counselor. He or she will read it and may ask you to make changes to it.

After you make all the changes, you will read the letter to the group.

## ***Discussion: Sample Responsibility Letter***

Refer the group to *Sample Responsibility Letter* in the workbook and read through the questions and responses to each question.

## **Sample Responsibility Letter**

Dear Mom,

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

*I'm writing to you about what I did on May 5. The argument was about me coming home late. I came home at 11:00 p.m. and went to my room. You came into my room a couple of minutes later. You asked me where I had been. I told you before I left that I'd be home at 10:00 p.m. I got loud and told you it was none of your business where I was. I told you to "get out of my room." You said you were sick of me talking to you that way and you wanted more respect. Tommy (my 7-year-old brother) came out of his room and told me not to call you names. I told him to shut up. Then he said, "I hate you." I kicked my foot toward him and said, "You better get out of here." He left crying. Then I started pushing you toward the door and I raised my hand like I was going to*

*hit you. You screamed and I said, "Just shut up and get out." You were in the doorway and I pushed you down into the hallway. I slammed the door and locked it so you couldn't get back in. Then I turned on my stereo so loud that the windows were rattling. About ten minutes later the police came to my door.*

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

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

**What were you feeling?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***How have you taken responsibility for your behavior and made amends?***

*I know you will want me to do certain things because of what I did. I should be a man and do what you ask. I'll probably be grounded for a while and have extra chores around the house. I have to show that you can trust me again. I'd like to make a plan with you about how to handle this kind of situation in the future.*

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

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

***Exercise: Two Versions of Describing What Happened***

Refer the group to *Two Versions of Describing What Happened* in their workbooks. Have a group participant read these two versions of a responsibility letter. Both letters are about the same incident, but are written based on two different ways of thinking about the incident.

***Two Versions of Describing What Happened***

***Version 1***

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

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

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

## **Version 2**

*I'm writing to you about what I did on May 5. The argument was about me coming home late. I came home at 11:00 p.m. and went to my room. You came into my room a couple of minutes later. You asked me where I had been. I told you before I left that I'd be home at 10:00 p.m. I got loud and told you it was none of your business where I was. I told you to "get out of my room." You said you were sick of me talking to you that way and you wanted more respect. Tommy (my 7-year-old brother) came out of his room and told me not to call you names. I told him to shut up. Then he said, "I hate you." I kicked my foot toward him and said, "You better get out of here." He left crying. Then I started pushing you toward the door and I raised my hand like I was going to hit you. You screamed and I said, "Just shut up and get out." You were in the doorway and I pushed you down into the hallway. I slammed the door and locked it so you couldn't get back in. Then I turned on my stereo so loud that the windows were rattling. About ten minutes later the police came to my door.*

### **Answer the following questions:**

1. How are these two descriptions different?
2. In the first version, which statements in the first paragraph are denying, justifying, minimizing, and blaming? In the second paragraph? In the third paragraph?
3. How does the second version show accountability?
4. How would the parent respond to the two different versions?
5. How would the parent feel about each version?

6. Which version requires more thought?
7. Which version would be more difficult to write?
8. Which version shows more consideration for others?

### ***Exercise: Writing the Responsibility Letter***

Now, tell the teens that you want each of them to write a responsibility letter to a family member about an incident in which the teen was abusive or violent to that family member. Ask each teen to give a brief description of the incident he or she is going to write about before he or she begins. They can begin the letter by answering the questions on the worksheet. Let them know you will be collecting their letters when they are through.

If possible, spend some time with each participant to discuss his or her letter. Give him or her some tips on how to revise it, if necessary.

Point out any denying, minimizing, blaming or justifying in the letter.

Tell group members they will be reading their letters during a group session.

See *Background Information* regarding options for reading letters in the group.

### ***My Responsibility Letter***

*Dear Mom,*

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

---

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

---

*What were you feeling?*

---

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

---

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



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

---

*What were the consequences to you?*

---

*What could you have done differently?*

---

*How have you taken responsibility for your behavior and made amends?*

---

## **Take-Home Activities**

Have group members continue to work on their responsibility letters at home.



# Session 16: Understanding Empathy

## Teen Session

### ***Background Information***

The goal of this session is for each teen to write an empathy letter to the person who was the victim of the teen's abuse or violence. Understanding another person's thinking, feelings, and experience of a situation can be the most important part of responding to a conflict with respect, and without abuse and violence. When asked about another person's experience, a teen will sometimes shrug his or her shoulders and say, "How should I know?" If the facilitator is patient, most teens will succeed in coming to an understanding about the feelings and experience of the victim of his or her abuse/violence.

### ***Goals***

- To define empathy
- To discuss how empathy can have a positive impact on relationships
- To practice empathy through letter-writing

### ***Important Messages***

- When two people try to resolve a conflict, they will be much more successful if they try to understand each other's feelings and perspectives.
- When you try to think about how another person experiences a situation, you may feel less angry at him or her and you are less likely to use abuse/violence against him or her.
- Having empathy can help you be more respectful.

## ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Separate into parent and teen groups.
3. Discussion: Empathy and Its Impact on Relationships.
4. Exercise: Empathy Letter.

# Group Activities

## *Discussion: Empathy and Its Impact on Relationships*

Start the session by discussing the following questions:

### Worksheet

1. What is empathy?  
Examples: Identifying and understanding the feelings and experiences of another person; putting yourself in someone else's shoes.
2. How does empathy affect your relationship with another person?  
Examples: Empathy brings people closer together; it makes a relationship stronger; it makes solving problems easier.
3. What difference would understanding the feelings and experience of another person make when you are responding to something he or she did or said to you?  
Example: The response would be friendlier to the person.
4. What situations make it hard to have empathy?  
Examples: When we don't like the other person; when we don't agree with the other person.
5. Can you have empathy for someone even when you don't agree with his or her point of view?  
Example: Yes; empathy doesn't mean agreement with another person.
6. What situations make it easy to have empathy?  
Examples: When we've had a similar experience to the other person; when we like the other person.
7. Think of a time when someone had empathy for you. When he or she tried to understand how you felt or how you experienced a situation, how did it make you feel?  
Example: I felt I could be more honest with the person than I would have if he or she didn't have empathy.

8. What does empathy have to do with mutual respect?  
Example: Respecting another person means we understand him or her.
9. If a person didn't have empathy, what would he or she be like?  
Example: The person would have difficulty having relationships with other people.

### ***Exercise: Empathy Letter***

Introduce the empathy letter exercise by referring to the *Empathy Letter Plan*:

Think about what happened when you were abusive or violent to the person(s) in the incident that you have chosen to write about. Think the whole situation through, and try to look at it through the other person's eyes, and experience it as if you are the other person. Try to really imagine you are that person. Use what you already know about them to help you know / understand how they might be feeling and seeing the situation.

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

1. Describe what happened as they might have experienced it and from their point of view as your parent, caretaker or other family member
2. What feelings might you be having if you were that person throughout the whole incident? There might be many different feelings, and they might change at different times.
3. What thoughts might you be having at different times during the whole situation?
4. How did the incident impact the person's life? Think about how it affected them in different ways, such as what they had to do as a result of your behavior (call the police, go to court, miss work, find childcare for siblings, fix a hole in the wall, or a broken phone, etc.)
5. What were the long term effects of what happened, especially your relationship with them and your other family members?
6. Refer group members to *Empathy Letter Example* in the workbook. Read the letter aloud or have a group member read it.

- Ask the group if they have questions or comments about the letter. If time permits, have group members begin their letters on the following page. They can work on their letters at home, and/or you can use time during the following group session for group members to write their letters.
- Let them know you will collect their completed letters when they are done. Be prepared to give feedback to each participant and have him or her make changes to the letter, if needed. The letter should include a range of feelings experienced by the victim (not just anger) and show that the teen has thought through the experience of the person.
- Schedule time in the following sessions for teens to read their letters. The letters should be read with the parents present in the group. One way to do this is to have one teen a week read his or her letter after check-in when the parents are still in the group.
- After the teen reads his or her letter, ask the teen's parent for comments. Did the teen accurately describe the parent's feelings, thoughts and experiences? The parent can add anything that was missing or not accurate in the letter. The parent can also have time to express other thoughts or feelings about the letter.

### ***Empathy Letter Example***

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

**Describe what happened when you were arrested or had an abusive incident from the perspective of your parent or the person you harmed.**

*The argument began because you came home late. You said you were going to be home at 10:00 p.m. but you didn't get home until 11:00 p.m. When you got home and I asked you where you were, you started yelling at me and started swearing. You also called me names. When Tommy heard you yelling at me he came into the room and you kicked your foot at him, swore at him, and told him to go back to his room. Then you came after me. You kept pushing me until I was near the door. You raised your hand at me, like you were going to hit me. Then you pushed me down on the floor in the hallway and slammed the door. Then I got up and called the police.*

## **What was the person thinking and feeling during this incident?**

*When you didn't come home on time, I was worried because I didn't know where you were.*

*When you started calling me names that really upset me, because I just wanted to know that you were OK. I feel degraded when you call me names. I can't believe my own son would call me those names. I was also upset because Tommy heard what you said and I think he'll start using that language if he hears you use it. When you kicked your foot at Tommy, I was afraid for him.*

*The first time you pushed me, I was really surprised. You had never done that before. I wasn't sure what you were going to do next. I remember being so scared because you raised your hand at me like you were going to hit me. I thought for sure you were going to do it.*

*After you slammed the door, I didn't know what to do. I was in shock. I wasn't sure this was really happening to me. My own son. I sat there trying to imagine what I was going to say to somebody if they asked me what happened. I was sure they'd think it was my fault.*

## **How were they affected by the incident?**

*I didn't want to call the police, but I didn't know what else to do to make you stop.. I didn't want you arrested; I just wanted them to talk to you. I'm sorry this happened, but I can't live like this anymore.*

## **What were the long term effects of what happened, especially your relationship with them and your other family members?**

*It's going to take me a while to trust you again. This isn't the first time this kind of thing has happened.*

*Tommy looks up to you and wants to be like you. I don't want him to think of you as someone who yells and hits people. I don't want him to start doing those things. Tommy and I shouldn't have to be afraid of you. If getting arrested means you will stop being violent with me, calling me names and threatening me, then I think it was worth it.*

*Love, Mom*



## ***My Empathy Letter***

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

Describe what happened when you were arrested or had an abusive incident from the perspective of your parent or the person you harmed.

What was the person thinking and feeling during this incident?

How were they affected by the incident?

What were the long term effects of what happened, especially your relationship with them and your other family members?

What else might the person want to say about it? For example, how they feel now that you are finishing Step Up and you have made changes in your behavior?

Love, Mom

## **Take-Home Activities**

Instruct teens to finish their empathy letters if they did not already do so in class.



# Session 17: Guidelines for Respectful Communication

## Teen and Parent Session

### *Background Information*

The skills covered in this session are critical to successful problem solving. Teens and parents will learn the first two steps of the 10-step problem-solving process: talking about the problem and listening. Because these are the most challenging parts of problem solving, we encourage you to spend an entire session practicing these skills so that participants can successfully complete the problem-solving process covered in the next session.

The purpose of this session is to learn the skill of talking about how a problem affects a person, and then listening and saying back to that person what he or she said. Listening and repeating back what was said is hard for many teens and parents, particularly when they disagree with what was said. Remind them that repeating back what was said does not mean that a person agrees with it. Also, be sure to stop participants from getting off track by talking about the problem (the who, what, and why) or trying to jump into solving the problem.

It is helpful to remind the group to use the “I” statements they learned in Session 16.

### *Goals*

- To learn and practice talking about a problem by using the Guidelines for Respectful Communication
- To learn and practice how to listen and say back what you heard by using the Guidelines for Respectful Communication

## ***Important Messages***

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

- Talking about a problem without blaming or criticizing.
- Listening to the other person's feelings and view of a problem.

## ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Exercise: Guidelines for Respectful Communication.
3. Practice respectful communication skills.

# Group Activities

## ***Exercise: Guidelines for Respectful Communication***

Refer participants to *Guidelines for Respectful Communication* in the workbook. Explain that these are guidelines for how to talk and listen when there is a problem.

Tell the group that each parent/teen pair is going to practice using the guidelines for respectful communication by taking turns talking with each other about a problem. Each pair will think of something that they view as a problem and talk and listen with each other while observing the guidelines from their worksheets. The rest of the group will observe and let them know if they are not following the guidelines (for example, if they start to criticize or interrupt each other).

Important: Do not let parents and teens start talking about solving the problems or about the causes of the problems. Let them know that they will have time to work on solving the problems later, when the group gets to the problem-solving steps in the following weeks.

## ***Guidelines for Respectful Communication When You Have a Conflict***

### ***When you are speaking:***

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

### ***Do not:***

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

### ***When you are listening:***

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

### ***When you respond to the speaker:***

- Describe what the other person said.
- Describe what you think the other person was feeling.

### ***Do not:***

- Correct what the other person said
- Argue about what happened
- Deny the other person's feelings
- Bring up the past or things that the other person does that bother you
- Criticize
- Put down
- Justify your behavior

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

## **Take-Home Activities**

Ask parents and teens to use the Guidelines during the next week. Remind them that the more they practice them, the easier they will be to use.

# Sessions 18 and 19: Problem Solving Together

## Teen and Parent Session

### *Background Information*

In this session teens and parents practice the 10-step process of problem solving.

Be aware that you may need to stop the problem-solving process in some cases. If one person is not willing to try to solve the problem or is unable to follow the communication guidelines, problem solving will not work. Both people must be willing to work on the problem with a cooperative attitude.

Stop the problem-solving process if:

- Either person becomes abusive.
- Either person is unable to follow the guidelines for respectful communication.
- Either person is not willing to negotiate.
- Either person is not willing to try to solve the problem.

Point out that parents should not use the problem-solving process to negotiate the rules, but should use it to negotiate problems that result when teens break the rules.

Depending upon the size of your group, it can take two to three sessions for everyone to complete the problem-solving steps. Do not worry if they do not actually solve a problem during the session. You may want to ask them to continue the process at home and then report back to the group on their success.

## ***Goals***

- To apply respectful communication skills learned in the previous session to solve a problem
- To learn and practice a 10-step process of problem solving
- To understand how problem solving together can improve relationships

## ***Important Messages***

- Negotiating a resolution to a problem involves listening to the other person. You don't necessarily have to agree with the other person to listen to him or her.
- Problem solving is most successful when both people want to come up with a solution.

## ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Discussion: What is Problem Solving?
3. Discussion: Tips for Problem Solving.
4. Discussion: Ten Steps for Solving a Problem.
5. Exercise: Problem Solving Practice.



# Group Activities

## ***Discussion: What Is Problem Solving?***

What are some things that people do that get in the way of problem solving? (Examples: raising voices, cursing, name calling, criticizing, blaming, interrupting, not listening.)

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

If you were watching two people “working out a problem,” what would they look like?

How would they talk to each other?

## ***Important Tips for Problem Solving***

- Don't try to solve the problem when either person is angry or upset. Being calm is most important.
- If either person becomes angry or upset during problem solving, take a time out and try it again when you are both calm.
- Follow the *Guidelines for Respectful Communication* (see Session 18 for review).
- Both people must be willing to try to solve the problem and have a cooperative attitude. If either person is resistant, stop and try it again later.
- It needs to be something that both people are able to negotiate and compromise on.

## ***Discussion: Ten Steps for Solving a Problem***

Review *Problem Solving* in the workbook and read through the ten steps and examples.

### **Worksheet**

#### ***Problem Solving (Teen Starts the Process)***

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

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

Step	How to do it	Example
10. Write the plan down and put it someplace where you both can see it every day.		<b>Parent:</b> "Let's write out our agreement and put it on the refrigerator so we both can see it."

### ***Problem Solving (Parent Starts the Process)***

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

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

## ***Exercise: Problem Solving Practice***

Have each parent/teen pair go through the problem-solving steps together while the rest of the class observes. Either person can begin the steps with a problem he or she has identified. If both parent and teen have a different problem they want to work on, they can do the process twice, one time with each problem. The person who has identified the problem starts the process with step one.

Be sure to bring them back to the steps if they get off topic, start arguing, or start thinking of ideas to solve the problem too soon. Ask the group to let the pair know if they are not following the guidelines for respectful communication, and to help them stay on track with the steps. Stop the problem-solving process if necessary (see *Background Information*). They can try it again next week if necessary.

When the pair gets to step 7, write their ideas on the board. After they have each thought of some ideas, you can invite the group to add any ideas they have. When the parent/teen pair does step 8, cross out ideas that are ruled out and circle ideas that both parent and teen might consider acceptable. The goal is for them to choose one idea to try during the following week. In step 9, help them make a plan that is very clear and specific (that is, who, what, when).

At the end of the problem-solving process, ask the group to give feedback to the parent and teen about what they observed and how they think it went. Group members learn from watching each other and giving each other feedback and support.

## **Take-Home Activities**

Have each parent/teen pair implement the solution they came up with during the problem-solving exercise at home. Check in with each pair in the following session to ask how things went.

# Session 20 Open Session

This session can be used to deliver one of the extra sessions that are at the end of the manual.





# Session 21: Moving Forward

## Teen and Parent Session

### *Background Information*

It is important to acknowledge that teens have taken steps toward using respectful behavior. It is often easier to identify how teens have been abusive rather than how they have been respectful. When teens start using new respectful behaviors, they should be acknowledged for the changes they have made. This last session is a way to assess the progress the teens in the group have made toward using more respectful behavior and look at goals they can continue to work on after they leave the group. This last session is also an opportunity for teens to give feedback to each other and to make statements about how particular group members have impacted them.

### *Goals*

- For teens to identify how they have changed their behavior
- For parents to identify how their teens have made positive changes and how their relationships have improved
- For teens to recognize how their behavior changes have affected their relationships with their parents
- For teens and parents to identify how they can continue working on having positive and respectful relationships

## ***Important Messages***

- Changes in behavior can have a positive impact on other people.
- Learning how to change is empowering.
- Both teens and parents have worked hard to learn how to have mutually respectful relationships.
- You can continue to work together to have positive and healthy relationships with each other.

## ***Session Overview***

1. Check in, review goal progress, and review take-home activities.
2. Exercise: Complete the Changes I Have Made and Changes My Teen Has Made worksheets.
3. Exercise: Message Exchange.

# Group Activities

## **Exercise: Changes I Have Made/Changes My Teen Has Made**

Refer to *Changes I Have Made* in the teen workbook and *Changes My Teen Has Made* in the parent workbook and have teens and parents answer the questions. Have teens and parents share their answers with the group after they have completed the questions.

### **Changes I Have Made**

1. How has your relationship with your parent changed since you started the program?
2. Rate your relationship on a scale from 1 to 10.

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

3. What have you changed in your behavior to contribute to the improvement in your relationship? (Look at the abuse and respect wheels as you think about behaviors you have changed.)
4. What did you do to change your behavior?
5. If you hadn't made these changes, what would your relationship with your family members be like today?
6. What behavior do you need to continue working on?
7. What do you need to do to change that behavior?
8. What skills have you learned in Step-Up that will help you in relationships in the future?
9. What have you learned about yourself since you have been in the program (your strengths, ability to change, etc.)?
10. How do you feel about yourself now?

## ***Exercise: Message Exchange***

Tell parents and teens: We are going to end the session by giving the teens positive messages. I will give you each several pieces of paper (the amount will be the number of teens in the group; for example, 8 if there are 8 teens). Take some time to think of something positive you would like to say to each teen in the group, and then write something for each teen on each piece of paper. Write something positive you have learned about the teen.

Let parents and teens know that only the person receiving the note will read it. They do not need to put their names on the notes they write, unless they choose to do so. The notes will not be read aloud in the group.

Give the group members pieces of paper big enough for a couple of sentences. (An 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper cut into 2-inch strips works well.) Have them fold the paper when they finish writing and put the name of the teen on the outside.

When they finish writing, collect the notes and distribute them to the teens. Teens can read their notes now, or can take them home and read them.

## ***Closing***

Thank parents and teens for attending the program. Let them know they have worked hard together to improve their relationships. Congratulate them for completing the program.

# Extra Sessions

## My Family Relationships

### Teen Session

#### ***Background Information***

During this session you will ask teens to think about their relationships with family members and to examine what they can do to improve their relationships. This is the first teen group session and many teen group members may still feel uncomfortable talking about themselves. This session is more about their families than themselves and can indirectly lead the teens to talk about themselves.

The *My Family Relationships* exercise gives the teens a chance to think about positive qualities and strengths of people in their families. It also provides an opportunity for group members to get to know each other and to learn about each other's families. It can be very beneficial for them to learn that other families also have conflict.

#### ***Goals***

- To identify the strengths of each family
- To learn about the families of the other participants and see that all have conflict
- To identify behaviors that strengthen family relationships and behaviors that destroy family relationships
- To identify ways group participants can impact family relationships in a positive way
- To build relationships among the members of the group

## ***Important Messages***

- Every family has strengths and every individual has positive qualities.
- Conflict is a normal part of family life and can strengthen family relationships.
- Violence and abuse destroy family relationships.

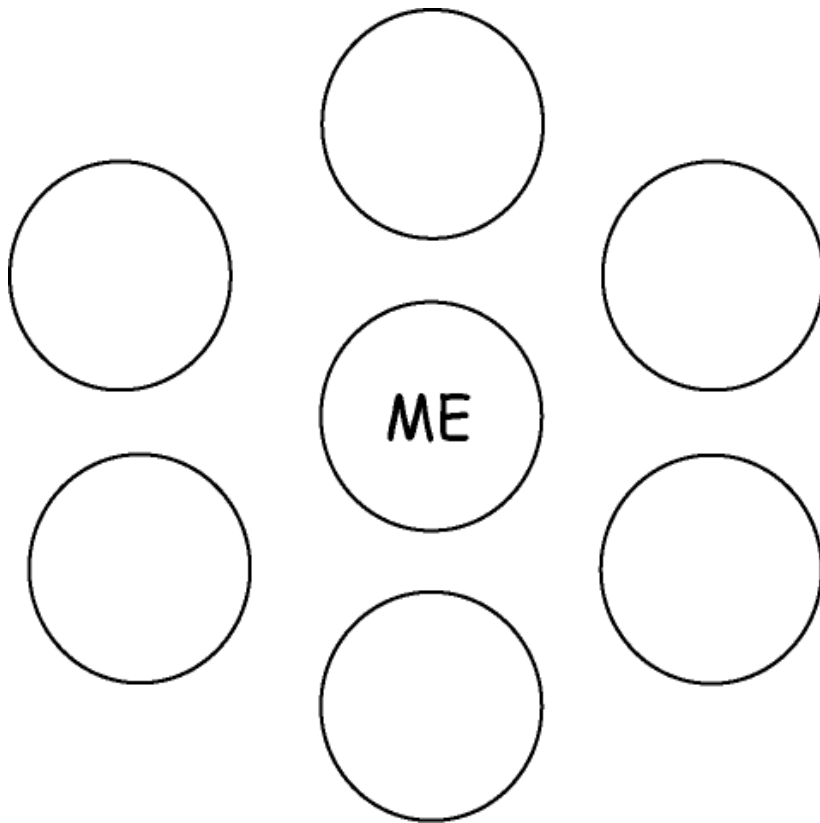
## ***Session Overview***

1. Check in and review take-home activities.
2. Separate into parent and teen groups
3. Exercise: My Family Relationships.

## Worksheet

### ***My Family Relationships***

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



- Draw a circle around the family member you feel closest to.  
What does this person do that helps you feel close to him or her?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Draw a square around the family member you have the most conflict with.  
What is the conflict usually about?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Draw a triangle around the family member you admire the most.  
What does this person do that you admire?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Draw a diamond around the family member you respect the most.  
What does this person do that earns your respect?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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## Take-Home Activities

Ask teens to try making behavior changes (the changes they wrote about in the *My Family Relationships* exercise) during the following week. Ask teens to notice how the behavior changes affect their relationships. Let them know they will report back during check-in next week.



# How We Change

## Parent and Teen Session

### ***Background Information***

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

### ***Goals***

- To identify the stages of change
- For each teen to know their current stage
- To understand how the stages of change apply to different personal issues

### ***Important Messages***

- Personal change takes place in stages or steps
- You do not have to change all at once to be successful
- Small steps are important to making important changes

## ***Discussion Questions***

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

### **Category 1**

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

### **Category 2**

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

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

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What is the difference between the two ways of changing?

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Which kind of change will last longer?

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Which kind of change is more difficult?

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Is it possible for one kind of change to crossover into the other?

For instance, maybe someone told you that you had to change and your first reaction was to resist any change. Then along the way you decided it was a good idea. The change you made started when someone told you to change and later you decided it was a good idea.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Preparation:** experimenting with small changes

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

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

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

**Maintenance:** maintaining new behavior over time

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

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

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

# Worksheet

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

## Scenario 1:

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

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## Scenario 2:

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

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## Scenario 3:

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

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**Scenario 4:**

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

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**Scenario 5:**

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

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**Scenario 6:**

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

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***Where Am I in the Stages of Change?***

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

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

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## About the Authors

**Lily Anderson** is a licensed clinical social worker with an M.S.W. from the University of Washington. She has worked with families experiencing youth violence in the home since 1997, developing and improving the Step-Up model to become an effective intervention that is being used nationally and internationally to address this form of family violence.

Lily has worked in the field of family violence since 1978, including work with survivors and parents of children impacted by domestic violence. She developed a Parents' Anger Management Program in Seattle from 1986 to 1998. Lily has authored three other curriculums: *Anger Management for Parents*; *Skills for Respectful Parenting*; and she co-authored a curriculum for parents of children who have experienced domestic violence, *Helping Children Who Have Experienced Domestic Violence: A Guide for Parents*. Lily has conducted trainings and presentations nationally and internationally on adolescent family violence and use of the Step-Up curriculum.

Ms. Anderson co-authored an article published in the *Journal for Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma: Adolescent Violence Toward Parents*, January, 2011. Lily also co-authored one of the first books on this topic, *Adolescent Violence in the Home: Restorative Approaches to Building Healthy, Respectful Family Relationships*, Routledge Press, 2014.

Lily co-authored a chapter, Building respectful family relationships: partnering restorative practice with cognitive- behavioral skill learning, in a book edited by Amanda Holt, *Working with Adolescent Violence and Abuse Toward Parents*, Routledge Press, 2016.

**Gregory Routt** has an M.A. in psychology from Antioch University (1992). He coordinated the Step-Up program from its inception in 1997, establishing the first groups and working with the court and community to bring awareness to this issue and begin developing a specialized treatment model when none other existed. He has worked with colleagues nationally and internationally exploring the issue of youth family violence and effective treatment modalities. He has trained court systems and community agencies throughout the country on the issue of adolescent violence toward family members and implementing the Step-Up curriculum.

Greg has also worked as a chemical dependency counselor with inmates in the King County Jail and with adult perpetrators of domestic violence at Family Services Domestic Violence Treatment Program in Seattle from 1992 until 1996.

Mr. Routt co-authored an article published in the Journal for Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma: *Adolescent Violence Toward Parents*, January, 2011. He also co-authored one of the first books on this topic, *Adolescent Violence in the Home: Restorative Approaches to Building Healthy, Respectful Family Relationships*, Routledge Press, 2014.

Greg co-authored a chapter, Building respectful family relationships: partnering restorative practice with cognitive- behavioral skill learning, in a book edited by Amanda Holt, *Working with Adolescent Violence and Abuse Toward Parents*, Routledge Press, 2016.