



# Parenting Skills Intervention

CURRICULUM FOR CAREGIVERS  
OF ADOLESCENTS

13 SESSIONS FOR FACILITATORS  
TO DELIVER PARENTING SKILLS  
TO CAREGIVERS OF ADOLESCENTS

SAFE HEALING AND  
LEARNING SPACES TOOLKIT



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International Rescue Committee  
Agency Headquarters  
122 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10168  
USA  
+212 551 3000

[Rescue.org](http://Rescue.org)

**For more information about the Safe Healing and Learning Spaces Toolkit**, please contact the IRC at [children@rescue.org](mailto:children@rescue.org). To download the resources in the SHLS Toolkit, please go to [SHLS.rescue.org](http://SHLS.rescue.org).

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#### **DISCLAIMER**

The content and conclusions in the Safe Healing and Learning Spaces Toolkit are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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# Contents

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|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b> | <b>10</b> |
|---------------------|-----------|

---

|                                                |           |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Part 1: Information for the Facilitator</b> | <b>11</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|

---

|                               |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Background Information</b> | <b>12</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------|

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| What are 'Parenting Skills'? | 12 |
|------------------------------|----|

|                                                                    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| What is the evidence to support the Parenting Skills Intervention? | 13 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                 |           |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Delivering the Parenting Skills Sessions</b> | <b>16</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| The SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum | 16 |
|--------------------------------------|----|

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Facilitation techniques | 17 |
|-------------------------|----|

|                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| Preparation for the Parenting Skills Sessions | 18 |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|

---

|                                          |           |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Part 2: Parenting Skills Sessions</b> | <b>22</b> |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|

|                                                                                    |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 1: Introduction to the Parenting Skills Curriculum</b> | <b>23</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| 1. Welcome and introduction | 24 |
|-----------------------------|----|

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| 2. Parents' hopes and expectations | 25 |
|------------------------------------|----|

|                                           |    |
|-------------------------------------------|----|
| 3. Parenting Skills Intervention overview | 25 |
|-------------------------------------------|----|

|                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
| 4. Co-creating rules | 26 |
|----------------------|----|

|                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| 5. What is positive parenting of adolescents? | 27 |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|

|                                        |    |
|----------------------------------------|----|
| 6. Sex vs gender: Why is it important? | 28 |
|----------------------------------------|----|

|                                              |    |
|----------------------------------------------|----|
| 7. Skills practice: Listening and supporting | 29 |
|----------------------------------------------|----|

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| 8. Home assignment | 31 |
|--------------------|----|

|               |    |
|---------------|----|
| 9. Evaluation | 31 |
|---------------|----|

|                                          |    |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring | 32 |
|------------------------------------------|----|



|                                                                                                         |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 2: Understanding wParent Stress</b>                                         | <b>33</b> |
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                                             | 34        |
| 2. Identification of parents' psychosocial and emotional needs                                          | 35        |
| 3. The impact of parents' stress on adolescents                                                         | 38        |
| 4. Relaxation techniques to cope with stress                                                            | 39        |
| 5. Home assignment                                                                                      | 41        |
| 6. Evaluation                                                                                           | 41        |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                                                                | 42        |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 3: Coping and Healing Strategies</b>                                        | <b>43</b> |
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                                             | 44        |
| 2. Talking and writing                                                                                  | 45        |
| 3. Making your own coping and healing toolkit                                                           | 49        |
| 4. Home assignment                                                                                      | 51        |
| 5. Evaluation                                                                                           | 52        |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                                                                | 52        |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 4: Adolescent Brain Development –<br/>A Work in Progress</b>                | <b>53</b> |
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                                             | 54        |
| 2. What is happening in our teenager's brain and body?                                                  | 55        |
| 3. Showing an interest in your teen's life                                                              | 63        |
| 4. Other changes adolescents are experiencing                                                           | 65        |
| 5. Education and brain development                                                                      | 66        |
| 6. Home assignment                                                                                      | 67        |
| 7. Evaluation                                                                                           | 68        |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                                                                | 68        |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 5: Building Positive Relationships<br/>and Creating Spaces for Dialogue</b> | <b>69</b> |
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                                             | 70        |
| 2. Mindfulness exercise: 'Game of 5'                                                                    | 71        |
| 3. What have you learned about your teenagers so far?                                                   | 72        |
| 4. Spending quality family time together                                                                | 72        |
| 5. Encouragement and praise                                                                             | 74        |



|                                                |    |
|------------------------------------------------|----|
| 6. Showing an interest in your teenager's life | 75 |
| 7. Home assignment                             | 78 |
| 8. Evaluation                                  | 79 |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring       | 79 |

## **Parenting Skills Session 6: Empathy – Respecting your Teen's Opinions, Thoughts and Feelings** **80**

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                         | 81 |
| 2. Game: Categories                                 | 82 |
| 3. Effective communication takes time and respect   | 83 |
| 4. The concept of empathy                           | 84 |
| 5. Showing empathy: The steps technique             | 85 |
| 6. Practicing the steps of empathetic communication | 88 |
| 7. Home assignment                                  | 90 |
| 8. Evaluation                                       | 90 |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring            | 91 |

## **Parenting Skills Session 7: Guiding Healthy Choices** **92**

|                                          |     |
|------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Welcome and introduction              | 93  |
| 2. Energizer: The picture game           | 93  |
| 3. Back to the brain!                    | 94  |
| 4. Family meetings and agreements        | 95  |
| 5. Supporting good decision-making       | 100 |
| 6. Home assignment                       | 103 |
| 7. Evaluation                            | 103 |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring | 103 |

## **Parenting Skills Session 8: Respecting Adolescents and their Changing Bodies** **104**

|                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                 | 105 |
| 2. Energizer                                                | 105 |
| 3. The experience of puberty                                | 106 |
| 4. Responding to the needs, fears and challenges of puberty | 111 |
| 5. Keeping your teenagers knowledgeable and informed        | 112 |
| 6. Home assignment                                          | 116 |
| 7. Evaluation                                               | 116 |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                    | 117 |



|                                                                                                                                          |                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 9: Protecting the Health, Well-being and Dignity of Adolescents – Reproductive Health and Early Marriage</b> | <b>118</b>     |
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                                                                              | 119            |
| 2. Relaxation exercise: Stretching                                                                                                       | 120            |
| 3. Sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies                                                                               | 120            |
| 4. Protection and tradition                                                                                                              | 123            |
| 5. Early or forced marriage                                                                                                              | 124            |
| 6. Who is ready to get married?                                                                                                          | 126            |
| 7. Practicing empathetic responses                                                                                                       | 127            |
| 8. Home assignment                                                                                                                       | 128            |
| 9. Evaluation                                                                                                                            | 128            |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                                                                                                 | 128            |
| <br><b>Parenting Skills Session 10: Healthy Relationships and Community Safety</b>                                                       | <br><b>129</b> |
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                                                                              | 130            |
| 2. Safety and healthy relationships in the family first                                                                                  | 130            |
| 3. Problem-solving skills for healthy relationships                                                                                      | 132            |
| 4. Safety in the community (expanding the STEP process)                                                                                  | 134            |
| 5. Home assignment                                                                                                                       | 138            |
| 6. Evaluation                                                                                                                            | 138            |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                                                                                                 | 139            |
| <br><b>Parenting Skills Session 11: Understanding Adolescents' Psychosocial Needs</b>                                                    | <br><b>140</b> |
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                                                                              | 141            |
| 2. Understanding the psychosocial impact of crisis on adolescents                                                                        | 142            |
| 3. Relaxation exercise                                                                                                                   | 145            |
| 4. Education and learning to support adolescent's psychosocial needs                                                                     | 147            |
| 5. Home assignment                                                                                                                       | 150            |
| 6. Evaluation                                                                                                                            | 150            |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                                                                                                 | 151            |



|                                                                                                   |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 12: Providing Psychosocial Support to Adolescents</b>                 | <b>152</b>     |
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                                       | 153            |
| 2. Talking and listening                                                                          | 154            |
| 3. Youth activities                                                                               | 158            |
| 4. Relaxation and mindfulness exercises                                                           | 159            |
| 5. Referral                                                                                       | 160            |
| 6. Home assignment                                                                                | 161            |
| 7. Evaluation                                                                                     | 162            |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                                                          | 162            |
| <br><b>Parenting Skills Session 13: Review and Celebration – Commitment to Positive Parenting</b> | <br><b>163</b> |
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                                       | 164            |
| 2. Energizer, game, song or relaxation exercise                                                   | 164            |
| 3. Presentation of curriculum                                                                     | 165            |
| 4. Sharing time                                                                                   | 166            |
| 5. Praise for parents and feedback from guests                                                    | 166            |
| 6. Presentation of certificates and public commitment to positive parenting                       | 166            |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                                                          | 167            |
| <br><b>Part 3: Resources</b>                                                                      | <br><b>168</b> |
| <br><b>Resource 1: Session Topics and Calender for Parenting Skills</b>                           | <br><b>169</b> |
| <b>Resource 2: Lists of Materials for Parenting Skills Sessions</b>                               | <b>170</b>     |
| <b>Resource 3: Parenting Skills Sessions – Attendance Form</b>                                    | <b>171</b>     |
| <b>Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report</b>                                 | <b>173</b>     |
| <b>Resource 5: Parent Support Groups Guide</b>                                                    | <b>175</b>     |
| <b>Resource 6: Coping and Healing Cards</b>                                                       | <b>177</b>     |



|                                                                                  |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Resource 7:</b> Brain Development and Toxic Stress                            | <b>179</b> |
| <b>Resource 8:</b> Impact and Symptons – Answer Key                              | <b>184</b> |
| <b>Resource 9:</b> SHLS Parenting Skills Training<br>Certificate Template        | <b>185</b> |
| <b>Resource 10:</b> Parenting Skills Glossary                                    | <b>187</b> |
| <hr/>                                                                            |            |
| <b>Part 4: Handouts</b>                                                          | <b>189</b> |
| <b>Handout 1:</b> Session Topics and Calender for Parenting Skills               | <b>190</b> |
| <b>Handout 2:</b> Showing Interest                                               | <b>191</b> |
| <b>Handout 3:</b> Identification of Parents' Psychosocial<br>and Emotional Needs | <b>193</b> |
| <b>Handout 4:</b> Feeling and Action Drawings                                    | <b>194</b> |
| <b>Handout 5:</b> Relaxation Exercise                                            | <b>195</b> |
| <b>Handout 6:</b> Relaxation Techniques                                          | <b>197</b> |
| <b>Handout 7:</b> Visualization Exercise – The Safe Place                        | <b>200</b> |
| <b>Handout 8:</b> Brain Development                                              | <b>201</b> |
| <b>Handout 9:</b> Spending Time With Adolescents                                 | <b>203</b> |
| <b>Handout 10:</b> Empathy                                                       | <b>205</b> |
| <b>Handout 11:</b> The 4 Steps of Empathy                                        | <b>207</b> |
| <b>Handout 12:</b> Family Meetings                                               | <b>208</b> |





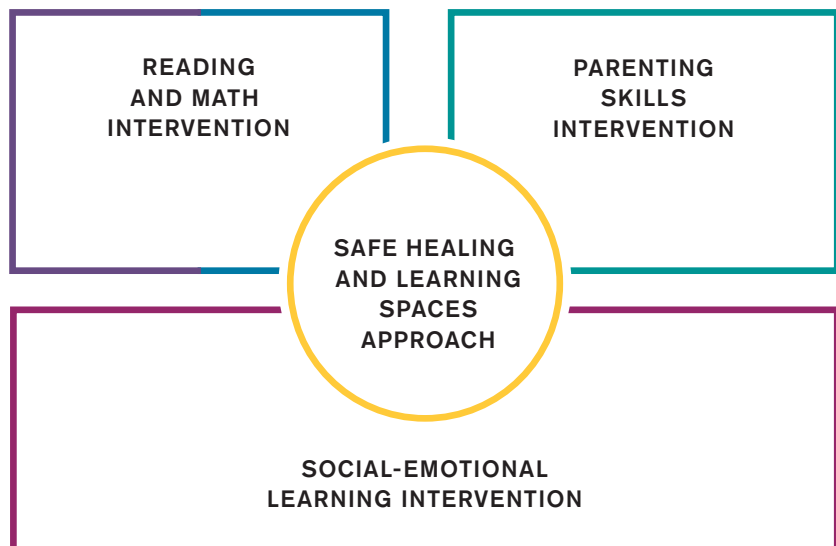
|                                                                           |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Handout 13:</b> Steps of Family Meetings                               | <b>210</b> |
| <b>Handout 14:</b> Puberty for Boys and Girls                             | <b>211</b> |
| <b>Handout 15:</b> Early Marriage                                         | <b>213</b> |
| <b>Handout 16:</b> Safety in the Community                                | <b>215</b> |
| <b>Handout 17:</b> Impact and Symptoms                                    | <b>217</b> |
| <b>Handout 18:</b> Ignoring Symptoms of Stress – A Vicious Cycle          | <b>218</b> |
| <b>Handout 19:</b> Parent Tips for Helping Adolescents<br>After Disasters | <b>223</b> |
| <b>Handout 20:</b> Mandala                                                | <b>225</b> |
| <b>Handout 21:</b> Referral Pathway                                       | <b>226</b> |



# Introduction

Welcome to the Safe Healing and Learning Spaces Parenting Skills Curriculum for caregivers of adolescents! This resource is to be used by a Facilitator to deliver the Parenting Skills sessions to caregivers in the Safe Healing and Learning Space (SHLS).

The Parenting Skills Intervention is one of the 4 components of the SHLS Toolkit. As illustrated in the diagram below, the SHLS Approach, the Reading and Math Intervention, the Social-Emotional Learning Intervention, and the Parenting Skills Intervention are complementary and contribute to the overarching goal, that **children are safe, well and learning in emergencies**.



## PART 1

# Information for the Facilitator

The first part of the Parenting Skills Curriculum provides you, the Parenting Skills Facilitator, with information to understand the content and prepare for the Parenting Skills sessions with parents and caregivers of adolescents. It is divided into 2 sections:

- 1 Background Information** – This section provides information about the approach to parenting in the Parenting Skills Intervention, and the research evidence to support this approach.
- 2 Delivering the Parenting Skills sessions** – This section provides guidance for the Facilitator to contextualize the training, select a venue, collect the required resources and understand the approach necessary to deliver the training with fidelity.



# 1

## Background Information

### What are ‘Parenting Skills’?

The Parenting Skills Intervention in the SHLS Toolkit aims to promote the well-being of children and adolescents through improving parents' stress management skills, positive parenting practices, and strategies for supporting children and adolescents with psychosocial needs. It is adapted from the *International Rescue Committee's Families Make the Difference* program. This program was developed on the premise that every parent and child deserves to have a healthy, mutually enjoyable relationship that fosters optimal child growth and development. It is focused on preventing and decreasing violence against children in the home and improving positive developmental outcomes for children in developing contexts and conflict settings, with a particular interest in investing in young children.

As part of this intervention, parents and caregivers receive the following information through discussion, skills practice and handouts:

- How children's brains develop within the context of relationships.
- Ways to promote children's positive development and behavior through positive attention and play.
- Ways to decrease children's misbehavior.
- The effect of household violence and stress on children's development and ways of decreasing parental stress and anger.
- School readiness.

To date the *International Rescue Committee* has completed 3 randomized impact evaluations in Burundi, Liberia and on the Thai–Burma border, and has ongoing parenting programs in Burundi, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Syria and Tanzania. The impact evaluations revealed that parenting programs are feasible and applicable in various contexts and that short-term parenting interventions can be effective in decreasing harsh punishment and improving positive parenting practices.



## What is the evidence to support the Parenting Skills Intervention?

The Parenting Skills Intervention tools have been developed based on more than 3 decades of research on the effectiveness of parent training programs to improve child behavior, eliminate behavior problems and prevent and mediate child abuse and neglect. Specifically, the Parenting Skills Curricula draw on the following elements, found to be particularly effective in changing parenting behaviors and attitudes:

1. Teaching positive parent–child interaction skills.
2. Increasing emotional and empathetic communication skills.
3. Helping parents to support problem-solving skills and children's healthy choices.
4. Teaching parents non-violent discipline strategies.<sup>1</sup>
5. Psychosocial support for parents and children.

We will go into more detail about each of these elements below.

1. **Teaching positive parent–child interaction skills:** Teaching parents how to positively interact with their children is one of the most effective components of parenting programs. Researchers have found that teaching parents to practice child-directed play for school-age children, to praise desirable behaviors, and to provide positive attention to children and adolescents decreases aggression and other misbehaviors as well as parents' self-efficacy.<sup>2</sup> The Parenting Skills Curriculum focuses on how parents can interact with their children in positive ways to support healthy parent–child relationships and mediate the effects of violence on children.

- 
1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2009. Parent Training Programs: Insight Practitioners.
  2. The Center on the Developing Child. 2007. *The science of early childhood development: Closing the gap between what we know and what we do*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University. Retrieved from: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/the-science-of-early-childhood-development-closing-the-gap-between-what-we-know-and-what-we-do> [Accessed 27 March 2016]; ; Kaminski W.J., Valle, L.A., Filene, J.H., and Boyle, C. 2008. A meta-analytic review of components associated with parent training program effectiveness. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*. 36:4. pp. 567–589.



- 2. Increasing emotional and empathetic communication skills:** This type of communication helps parents to listen actively and encourages children to regulate and express their emotions appropriately. Empathetic communication helps children feel valued, which can decrease misbehavior due to frustration and anger and increase problem-solving skills. In the Parenting Skills Curriculum, parents will learn how to sensitively respond to children's emotions. Parents will also learn to manage their own anger and frustration in order to communicate more effectively with each other and their children.
- 3. Helping parents to support problem-solving skills and guiding children's healthy choices:** Helping parents learn to be consistent as they follow through with developmentally-appropriate expectations and limitations is an effective component of parenting programs. When children understand what is expected of them at home, at school and in the community, they have a better chance of complying with rules and decreasing behavior problems.<sup>3</sup> As children grow, they need support to make healthy choices. The Parenting Skills Curriculum for caregivers of children aged 6–11 years specifically focuses on helping parents set these expectations for their children and provides supportive guidance. There is also a Parenting Skills Curriculum for parents of adolescents, which focuses on their unique needs.
- 4. Teaching parents non-violent discipline strategies:** Research indicates that, when children are subjected to harsh physical and verbal punishments, it can have lasting negative effects on their social-emotional development and well-being – for example, causing poor school performance, poor physical health, depression, anxiety, poor impulse control and, ultimately, poor job performance and economic outcomes. The use of non-violent discipline strategies, including ignoring minor misbehavior, using logical consequences such as the loss of a privileges, and time-out to decrease annoying, aggressive and oppositional behaviors, can also increase responsible behaviors by teaching children how to manage difficult feelings and safely solve problems.<sup>4</sup> The Parenting Skills Curriculum provides explicit guidance for parents on how to use these strategies with their children.

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3. Barth, R. 2009. Preventing child abuse and neglect with parent training: Evidence and opportunities. *The Future of Children*. 19:2. p 95.
4. McGroder, S.M. and Hyra, A. 2009. Developmental and economic effects of parenting programs for expectant parents and parents of preschool-age children. *Partnership for America's Economic Success*. Paper #10.



**5. Psychosocial support for parents and children:** Neuroscience research suggests that, in contexts where communities have experienced trauma, it is essential to focus on both the parent's and child's psychosocial needs to foster a healthy parent–child relationship. Drawing from this research, the Parenting Skills sessions in this curriculum teach parents relaxation techniques and ways to help their children cope with current issues and prepare for possible future difficulties. Children who have learned and practiced these types of techniques will be less likely to need specialist treatment services in the future.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Children and War Foundation. 2010. *Teaching recovery techniques*, Bergen, Norway. Retrieved from: <http://www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt/>.



## 2 Delivering the Parenting Skills Sessions

### The SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum

The Parenting Skills Curriculum includes **13 sessions** for caregivers. These sessions focus on teaching parents how their adolescents are developing, positive parent–adolescent interaction techniques, stress responses and management strategies, and non-violent discipline practices. Facilitators are expected to adhere to the training received to deliver the Parenting Skills Intervention and accurately follow each session of the curriculum in order to deliver the most effective program and ensure fidelity. In addition to detailed and scripted parenting sessions, this curriculum includes a Fidelity Checklist ([Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity](#)) to help facilitators and their managers monitor their fidelity.

### Structure of the Parenting Skills sessions

All 13 sessions for parents and caregivers follow the same structure. Each session plan is divided into 2 parts – the 'Parenting session summary' and the 'Steps to follow'.

- 1. Parenting session summary:** The 'Parenting session summary' at the beginning of each Parenting Skills session provides a quick reference for key information about the session, including: objectives, duration, materials required, preparation required, session overview, timing and attendance.
- 2. Steps to follow:** The 'Steps to follow' section under the Session plan summary provides the script you must follow to deliver the Parenting Skills session. Every session follows the same pattern:
  - i. An opening activity, like a game, song or activity to start every session
  - ii. A brief review of the previous session and homework
  - iii. Presentation of new content and practice of new skills
  - iv. Assignment of homework
  - v. An evaluation of the session at the end





## Facilitation techniques

The Parenting Skills Intervention uses a participatory, active learning approach that ensures that caregivers are actively engaged in the learning material. Information is presented through questions, discussions and hands-on activities. The approach is consistent with the belief that caregivers are likely to learn best through actively participating, rather than passively receiving information. Some key techniques of this approach are outlined below.

**Facilitating discussions:** Facilitators should foster a give-and-take environment during sessions by asking parents questions that encourage them to repeat key points in their own words. This curriculum will provide several such questions to encourage active participation and learning. This curriculum will also guide the Facilitator to encourage caregivers to generate ideas in collaboration with each other and the Facilitator through techniques like brainstorming.

**Practicing skills through role-plays:** Drawing on strong evidence suggesting the effectiveness of role-plays in parenting programs, caregivers in the Parenting Skills Curriculum will learn several new skills and practice them through role-plays. Parenting Skills Facilitators must adhere to the following guidelines to employ the role-play strategy with success:

- Select parents and give them appropriate roles. Provide them with descriptions of their roles.
- Ask for parents to volunteer or select them. Praise them for their willingness to participate in the role-play.
- Make sure all caregivers in the role-play understand the skills they are demonstrating. Have the entire group offer suggestions about what parents can do and say.
- Stop the role-play if the caregivers use the skills incorrectly, then offer further instruction to help them practice the skill correctly.
- Once the role-play is complete, discuss it with parents and exchange feedback.
- The Facilitator can offer detailed, descriptive praise of the role-play and what was learned.



**Encouraging peer learning:** By using group work, pair work, open discussions, debriefs and peer feedback in the Parenting Skills sessions, caregivers can learn from each other. This promotes group unity and communication and enhances the rapport in the sessions while allowing trainees to learn from each other's advice, experience and questions.

**Using both action and reflection:** This curriculum provides facilitation strategies to ensure that parents think critically about the concepts and techniques discussed, have ample opportunities to practice applying them for themselves, and reflect on their experiences.

## Preparation for the Parenting Skills Sessions

- 1. Get to know the parents and caregivers:** Prior to the Parenting Skills sessions, gather relevant information to understand the community and the caregivers. The SHLS Manager or the person who designed the SHLS Program should be able to provide you with background information about the caregivers to ensure that the content is aligned with their context and culture, and is sensitive to their identities, abilities and experiences.
- 2. Study and contextualize the Parenting Skills Curriculum:** In order to deliver a high-quality intervention, study the Parenting Skills Curriculum thoroughly and familiarize yourself with the content of the sessions. While studying the resource, use what you have learned about the caregivers to contextualize the content and delivery to the profile of the caregivers and the local context. Look out for specific guidance on adapting the sessions below.
- 3. Select an appropriate venue:** Select a venue that ideally has:
  - Space for all the caregivers to sit comfortably so they can see each other and the screen or flipcharts to be used for presentations.
  - Space for whole-group and small-group activities, or for caregivers to talk privately in pairs.
  - Privacy, so caregivers can participate undisturbed.
- 4. Gather materials required:** Gather all necessary materials for the Parenting Skills sessions in advance. Use [Resource 2: Lists of Materials for Parenting Skills Sessions](#) for this purpose. You may need to adapt some of the materials to the context or substitute them with local alternatives that are more readily available or more appropriate for the activity.



- 5. Plan facilitation:** Sessions will be held by 2 Facilitators. It is recommended that you have a male and female Facilitator and, if appropriate in your context, encourage both male and female parents/caregivers to attend. Decide which parts of the session each of the Facilitators will be responsible for. It is recommended that you divide the facilitation equally.



## Proposed Agenda for the Parenting Skills Sessions

| Session                                                                                                                                                  | Session overview<br><i>By the end of these sessions, parents will be able to:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 1:<br/>Introduction to the Parenting Skills Intervention</b>                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate the foundational principles of nurturing and positive parenting.</li> <li>▪ Explain the difference between sex and gender.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 2:<br/>Understanding Parent Stress</b>                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify their own psychosocial and emotional needs.</li> <li>▪ Articulate the impact of their stress on their adolescents' well-being.</li> <li>▪ Name techniques to manage their stress.</li> </ul>                                                                                              |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 3:<br/>Coping and Healing Strategies</b>                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify their own positive coping strategies.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 4:<br/>Adolescent Brain Development –<br/>A Work in Progress</b>                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate the key concepts of brain development and the impact of toxic stress.</li> <li>▪ Explain ways to support their adolescents' education and guide them towards safe decision-making and good judgment.</li> </ul>                                                                         |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 5:<br/>Building Positive Relationships<br/>and Creating Spaces for Dialogue</b>                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Name and use techniques to build positive parent–adolescent relationships such as spending quality time and positive attention.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 6:<br/>Empathy - Respecting your Teen's<br/>Opinions, Thoughts and Feelings</b>                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate the key principles of effective communication.</li> <li>▪ List and use the 4 steps of empathetic communication</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 7:<br/>Guiding Healthy Choices</b>                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate how to support their adolescents to make good decisions and be responsible family members.</li> <li>▪ Name positive parenting techniques such as praise, consequences, and family agreements and rules.</li> <li>▪ List and use the steps of family meetings and agreements.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 8:<br/>Respecting Adolescents<br/>and their Changing Bodies</b>                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate why it is important to talk to their adolescents about their changing bodies.</li> <li>▪ List key information about puberty to share with their adolescents.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 9:<br/>Protecting the Health,<br/>Well-being and Dignity of<br/>Adolescents – Reproductive<br/>Health and Early Marriage</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List key information to share with their children about reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases.</li> <li>▪ Articulate the negative effects of early marriage using empathetic communication skills.</li> </ul>                                                                      |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 10:<br/>Healthy Relationships<br/>and Community Safety</b>                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate the risks their adolescents may face in relationships and in the community.</li> <li>▪ List and use the steps to helping their teenagers make safe, healthy decisions.</li> </ul>                                                                                                       |



|                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 11:<br/>Understanding Adolescents'<br/>Psychosocial Needs</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate the psychosocial impact of a crisis on adolescents.</li> <li>▪ List psychological symptoms of adolescents affected by a crisis.</li> </ul>                                                                                                    |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 12:<br/>Providing Psychosocial Support<br/>to Adolescents</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List and use techniques to provide support to their adolescents affected by a crisis, such as talking, listening and engaging them in activities.</li> <li>▪ Identify severe psychosocial needs, and make appropriate referrals if necessary.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Parenting Skills Session 13:<br/>Review and Celebration:<br/>Commitment to Positive Parenting</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate key ideas and demonstrate their understanding of the assigned Parenting Skills session.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                            |



## PART 2

# Parenting Skills Sessions



# Parenting Skills Session 1: Introduction to the Parenting Skills Curriculum

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**Parenting session summary** | Duration: 2 hours, 10 minutes

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## OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Articulate the foundational principles of nurturing and positive parenting.
- Explain the difference between sex and gender.

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

- SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum for Caregivers of Adolescents
- [Resource 1: Session Topics and Calendar for Parenting Sessions](#)
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- [Resource 5: Parent Support Groups Guide](#)
- Handouts:
  - [Handout 1: Session Topics and Calendar for Parenting Sessions](#)
  - [Handout 2: Showing Interest](#)
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pen

## PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Read through all the materials for this session.
- Adapt [Resource 1: Session Topics and Calendar for Parenting Sessions](#)
- Make copies of the handouts and give one to each parent at the end of the session.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

## ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



## SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session, Parenting Skills Facilitators get to know parents and caregivers, and their goals for their children. They also develop some 'group guidelines' for how the group will be structured and how they will interact with each other every week. Parenting Skills Facilitators explain the Parenting Skills Curriculum to parents and caregivers of adolescents, and briefly introduce the concept of nurturing and supportive parenting. Participants will complete a skills practice on listening and showing interest in their teenagers.

| Session activity                              | Time       |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                   | 20 minutes |
| 2. Parents' hopes and expectations            | 20 minutes |
| 3. Parenting Skills Intervention overview     | 15 minutes |
| 4. Co-creating rules                          | 15 minutes |
| 5. What is positive parenting of adolescents? | 15 minutes |
| 6. Sex vs gender: Why is it important?        | 25 minutes |
| 7. Skills practice: Listening and supporting  | 15 minutes |
| 8. Home assignment                            | 5 minutes  |
| 9. Evaluation                                 | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring      |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Welcome parents and praise them for attending.



2. **SAY >** *Welcome and thank you for coming to our first parenting session! We are so happy you are here today! We are excited to be able to share information about parenting that is based on biological and social science research from all over the world. This will be a collaborative process where we will all share information and learn from each other!*

3. Introduce yourself. Briefly tell parents and caregivers about your experience working with other parents and, if applicable, speak a little about your own children.
4. Ask parents to share information about their families, and their roles in their families and communities.





## 2. Parents' hopes and expectations

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**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. Have parents sit in the circle and share their expectations of the program, and one hope and one worry they have for their children.
2. Write each parent's name on a flipchart or on a piece of paper with their expectations and hopes.



- 3. **SAY >** *I will keep this list to review halfway through the program, and at the end of the program to ensure that your needs are being met.*

## 3. Parenting Skills Intervention overview

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**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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- 1. **SAY >** *This intervention is called the Parenting Skills Intervention for parents of adolescents. It is part of the Safe Healing and Learning Spaces, or SHLS, program.*



- 2. **SAY >** *This Parenting Skills Curriculum is based on research and experiences of parenting programs around the world.*

3. Explain to parents that:
- There will be **13 sessions** and parents are expected to attend all of them.
  - **Each session will last around 2 hours.** Parents will sign-in at the beginning and sign-out at the end of each session. At the end of each session they will receive handouts that review important information from that session. These handouts will help them practice the skills learned in the group with their adolescents.
  - In each session we will talk about many important parenting topics, such as brain development, guiding healthy choices and parent and child stress management and coping.
  - In addition to these topics we will explore gender differences and ways to promote gender equality for boys and girls.



**TIP >** More information about setting up parent support groups and home visits can be found in [Resource 5: Parent Support Groups Guide](#).

- Gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making, and when the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued.
4. Distribute [Handout 1: Session Topics and Calendar for Parenting Sessions](#), discuss with parents, and have everyone enter appropriate dates for each session.
  5. Explain to parents that:
    - They should not hesitate to ask questions or raise concerns. Everything they say is important!
    - Everyone will have the opportunity to belong to a parent support group. These are small groups (4 to 6 parents per group) formed so everyone can support each other and help those who missed sessions to catch up, if necessary.
    - Family and community members can join these sessions as well. Agree with members on what day is convenient for them, so that you can:
      - Support each other beyond the sessions.
      - Share ideas and feelings with other parents.
      - Encourage each other to practice new parenting techniques.
      - Inform other parents.
    - Parenting Skills Facilitators may also visit parents at home periodically throughout the program to learn about how they are using their new skills with their children.
  6. Ask parents if they have questions.

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## 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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## 4. Co-creating rules

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**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. **SAY >** *In any group, it is helpful to have guidelines to help us manage ourselves and our time, and to remind us to respect one another. What rules do you think are important for us to follow in these sessions?*



2. List rules on a flipchart or piece of paper. Usually up to 5 rules are enough, but allow parents to determine the number. For example, the group may decide to list:
  - Punctuality and attendance (a certificate will be given to those who attend all 13 sessions.)
  - Respect and listen to each other.
  - Confidentiality (information shared in the group is not exchanged outside of the group.)

## 5. What is positive parenting of adolescents?

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**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. Distribute Handout 2: Showing Interest.

**TIP >** Encourage parents to speak freely and share their ideas.



### 2. ASK >

- *In the picture, what do you think is happening between this parent and their teenager?*
- *What do you think positive, supportive parenting of adolescents looks like?*



### 3. SAY >

- *We are going to spend the next several weeks talking about positive, supportive parenting.*
- *We are going to talk about how you can support your adolescent's healthy development by enjoying time with them, praising them and loving them!*
- *Research tells us that parenting that is characterized by a high degree of parental warmth and support, firm limit-setting, open communication and high levels of supervision helps set adolescents on a healthy, productive life course.<sup>6</sup>*
- *We will also spend the next 2 sessions talking about and practicing ways for parents to care for their own social, emotional and physical health in order to have the energy needed to parent adolescents – because parenting is hard work!*

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<sup>6</sup> DeVore, E.R., and Ginsburg, K.R. 2005. The protective effects of good parenting on adolescents. *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*. 17(4), pp. 460–465.



**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** Today, focus on the positive, nurturing aspects. In this first session, you do not need to focus on painful memories like abuse, neglect, violence or harsh physical discipline. It is important that parents have a positive, supportive experience in this first session. We want to emphasize how they can contribute to the healthy development of their children by being supportive!

4. Give parents instructions for the **'When I was an adolescent...'** activity.



5. **SAY >**

- Recall experiences that were nurturing or positive for you when you were an adolescent.
- Think about and complete the following statements:
  - One good memory I have of my adolescence is...
  - The positive feeling I had then was...
  - The feeling I have remembering this today is...
- Imagine what your children might say about you several years later.
- Think about and complete the following statement:
  - One memory I want my children to have of me is...

**TIP >** Listen in as parents share their thoughts in pairs.

6. Discuss your responses in pairs for 5 minutes.



7. **SAY >** Share the memory you want your children to have of you with the whole group.

8. Write each parent's desired memory next to their name on a flipchart or paper, and come back to them around Session 5 or 6 and during the last session of the program to see if they are making progress towards building these memories with their sons and daughters.

## 6. Sex vs gender: Why is it important?

**Time:** 25 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Pairs



1. **ASK >** What is the difference between sex and gender?

2. Give parents a few minutes to talk in pairs about this and then bring everyone back together to share in the larger group.



- Add the following information, if needed:
  - ‘Sex’ refers to the body differences between males and females.
  - Women and men have different body parts because they are 2 different sexes – the male sex and the female sex.
  - ‘Gender’ refers to the social and cultural differences between men and women. For example, the social status, opportunities, and the restrictions faced by girls/women, are different from boys/men. Also, certain activities that girls/women are each supposed to do within a community are different from the ones boys/men are supposed to do.
  - The idea of gender roles and responsibilities can be supportive in some ways but, at other times, gender may restrict people’s talents, abilities and choices in life, as well as create specific risks of violence and abuse.

 → **3. ASK >** What are the expectations or roles in your culture for:

- Adolescent girls?
- Adolescent boys?

 → **4. ASK >** Do you agree with these roles and expectation? Why or why not? How do they influence the ways you parent your daughters and sons?

 → **5. SAY >** Gender roles are created in our cultures. Boys and girls are first introduced to gender roles in our homes. As parents and caregivers, sometimes we may treat boys and girls differently by giving boys more opportunities for education, sports and leadership, and giving girls fewer opportunities.

## 7. Skills practice: Listening and supporting

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Pairs

 → **1. SAY >**

- In the coming weeks we will talk about many parenting and self-care techniques. In this first session we want to ask you to do something for yourself and your teenager between now and our next meeting. We are going to ask you to go home and enjoy some time with your teenager.
- One way you can do this is to listen to and support them in something they are interested in. You can also have fun together by doing an activity like playing soccer or making the family dinner.



- *We are going to provide you with an example of this and then we will all practice.*
- *We are going to talk more about communication with adolescents in coming sessions, but this is just to get a little practice with positive, supportive ways of parenting.*

2. Tell parents that you will be doing a demonstration for them. One Facilitator will play a 14-year-old girl who has recently done well on her exams and has decided she wants to be a doctor. The other Facilitator will play the parent who will listen to the child and be supportive of her goal.

**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

**Adolescent:** [Enters the room.] Guess what? I just scored the highest marks in my class and the teacher says I am really smart! I want to help other people in our village and become a doctor!

**Parent:** Wow! I am so proud of you! Tell me more about your dream to become a doctor.

**Adolescent:** Well, I think if I study really hard I can do it. I want to help pregnant women in our village/town/city safely have their babies.

**Parent:** You really have thought about this and I will support you the best I can.

**TIP >** After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:

3. Brainstorm with the whole group the skills you modeled in the demonstration.
  - Looking at the other person while talking.
  - Putting down other things you are doing and giving your full attention.
  - Showing genuine interest and curiosity.
  - Matching the other person's emotions. For example, if the other person is happy, you are happy with them.
4. Divide parents into pairs and help them practice the skill of listening supportively through a similar role-play.

**TIP >** Walk around and listen to the parents practicing their listening skills through role-play.

5. Tell them that they can use the demonstration as an example, and create their own role-play. The role-play should last no more than 3 minutes.





6. **ASK >** all the parents who played the 'adolescent':
  - *How did it feel to have the 'parent' listen supportively to what you were saying?*

7. Thank everyone for participating and remind them to practice listening with their adolescents.

## 8. Home assignment

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**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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**TIP >** Use Resource 5: Parent Support Groups Guide for this purpose.

1. **SAY >** *This is the first session, so the assignment is an easy one. Until the next session, you should try to enjoy the company of your teenagers, spend time with them, listen to them, nurture them and love them as much as possible.*
2. Explain the parent support groups to caregivers and help them form such groups.

## 9. Evaluation

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. The evaluation of this first session should also be simple.
2. **ASK >**
  - *What did you like best about the session?*
  - *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*
  - *How was this session helpful?*
  - *Do you have any other comments or suggestions for improving this session?*
3. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.
4. Make sure each parent signs the Attendance Form (Resource 3). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.



## Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#). If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.





# Parenting Skills Session 2:

## Understanding Parent Stress

Parenting session summary | Duration: 2 hours. 5 minutes

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Identify their own psychosocial and emotional needs.
- Articulate the impact of their stress on their adolescents' well-being.
- Name techniques to manage their stress.

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

- SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum for Caregivers of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- Handouts:
  - [Handout 2: Showing Interest](#)
  - [Handout 3: Identification of Parents' Psychosocial and Emotional Needs](#)
  - [Handout 4: Feeling and Action Drawings](#) (optional)
  - [Handout 5: Relaxation Exercise](#)
  - [Handout 6: Relaxation Techniques](#) (adapt to your context)
- Flipcharts and markers
- Tape
- Colored pencils

### PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Read through the session to acquaint yourself with the content.
- Be in the room 15 minutes before the session to prepare the room, to ensure that there are no disturbances during the session, and to make the space conducive for the session.
- Learn the names of parents, children and spouses.
- Adapt the scenario under Activity 2: Identification of parents' psychosocial and emotional needs.

### ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



## SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session parents learn about their own psychological, social, and emotional needs and how, when those needs go unmet, stress is created. Parents then learn how their stress, if unmanaged, can negatively impact on their adolescents. Finally, parents learn and practice relaxation techniques.

| Session activity                                               | Time       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                    | 10 minutes |
| 2. Identification of parents' psychosocial and emotional needs | 30 minutes |
| 3. The impact of parents' stress on adolescents                | 30 minutes |
| 4. Relaxation techniques to cope with stress                   | 40 minutes |
| 5. Home assignment                                             | 5 minutes  |
| 6. Evaluation                                                  | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                       |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Welcome the parents. Be positive and smile! You will need all of your energy to conduct this session successfully!
2. Ask parents to remember and talk about what was learned in the previous session.
3. Ask parents about the parent support groups.
4. Ask parents to volunteer to share a way they spent time with their adolescents since the last meeting.



- **5. ASK >** *Did you do something to spend time with your adolescents? What was that? How did you feel?*



## 2. Identification of parents' psychosocial and emotional needs

Time: 30 minutes | Arrangement: Whole group; Individual

**ADAPTATION** > Adapt this paragraph to your context.



1. **SAY** > *The situations that refugees in conflict settings are currently experiencing are very difficult. Most of you had to leave your house, your job, your life behind to come here. Living in a tent or limited space with other family members can be difficult. There is not enough space and tension can happen frequently. Your adolescents are bored, can be disrespectful, and it is easy to lose patience with them.*



2. **ASK** > *Have you experienced a similar situation or emotion?*

3. Let parents share experiences if they want to, but do not spend too much time on negative feelings and experiences. Follow up by asking about ways they coped with this situation.



4. **SAY** >

- *This is normal! Anybody would experience a high level of stress in a similar situation. Crisis affects emotional comfort; it causes irreversible material and family losses, physical exhaustion, psychological breakdowns, and makes all everyday routines futile. This is why your body reacts to cope with the high level of stress.<sup>7</sup>*
- *There are 3 types of stress. **Positive stress, tolerable stress and toxic stress.** These levels of stress are valid for adults and for children.*
- ***Positive stress response** is a normal and essential part of healthy development. Indicators of positive stress include brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels. Some situations that might trigger a positive stress response are taking an exam or receiving an injection.*
- ***Tolerable stress response** activates the body's alert systems. It is caused by more severe, longer-lasting difficulties, such as the loss of a loved one, a natural disaster, or a frightening injury.*
- ***Toxic stress response** can occur when an individual experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity – such as physical or*

<sup>7</sup>. Flögel M. and Lauc G. 1998. War stress – Effects of the war in the area of former Yugoslavia. Croatia, Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry, University of Zagreb.



*emotional abuse, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of economic hardship.*<sup>8</sup>

**TIP >** Remind parents that they can ask questions at any time. Take time to make sure they understand the concepts properly.

5. Explain that the following are examples of reactions that people can experience in highly stressful situations:
- Changes in behavior (aggressiveness, confinement, silence)
  - All kinds of diseases (eczema, somatic pain, diarrhea)
  - Hormonal impairments (cessation of menstruation)
  - Neurological disorders (muscle weakness, poor coordination, loss of sensation, seizures, confusion)

**Parent activity: Understanding our social-emotional needs**

6. Distribute Handout 3: Identification of Parents' Psychosocial and Emotional Needs.



7. **SAY >**

- *Now we are going to talk about your individual level of stress and how it affects your daily life.*
- *What are the emotions and feelings that you are experiencing since you arrived in the camp/country?*

8. Brainstorm examples with the parents and write their responses on a flipchart:

*Example answers:*

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| – Sadness              | – Stress           |
| – Sickness             | – Depression       |
| – Aggressiveness       | – Sense of control |
| – Tiredness/exhaustion | – Happiness        |
| – Anger/hatred         |                    |

8. Center on the Developing Child. Harvard University. <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress>





9. **SAY >** *What are the things that you do as a result of these feelings? It can be positive or negative.*

10. Brainstorm examples with the parents and write their responses on a flipchart:

*Example answers:*

- *I do not sleep, I do not eat*
- *I shout at my children, I beat my children*
- *I eat a lot*
- *I am obsessed with cleaning*
- *I have a very clear daily schedule*
- *I invite neighbors for tea to talk*

11. Remind parents to ask questions at any time. Make sure they understand the material well and use examples for difficult concepts.

**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR :**

- If the parents are not comfortable writing, you can use Handout 4: Feeling and Action Drawings, which represents various feelings and actions to cut and paste. Print enough copies in color (if possible) for all parents. Parents can choose to combine drawing, collage and writing as they prefer.
- You can also do the exercise with the whole group by drawing the table on the flipchart and using basic drawing to represent parents' answers.

**TIP >** Parents do not need to share what they wrote if they do not want to.



12. **SAY >** *In Handout 3, fill out the first 2 columns of the table by trying to be as honest as you can. This is a personal exercise that you do not need to share if you do not want to. You have 10 minutes for this. Leave the third column for now.*



13. **ASK >** *Who wants to share what they wrote?*



14. **ASK >** *How did you feel writing down your feelings?*



### 3. The impact of parents' stress on adolescents

**Time:** 30 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Individual

**TIP >** You can use the metaphor of a sponge to explain that children are like sponges, they absorb their parents' emotions and feeling.



**1. SAY >** *A parent's stress affects the entire family. When you feel calm it's more likely that your children and spouse will feel calm. When you feel stressed it's more likely your family will feel tense.*

**2.** Explain how parents' stress affects children:

- Research has shown that there are a number of undesirable behaviors associated with parenting stress. This means that the more stress parents feel, the more children may misbehave and show disrespect.
- The more children misbehave, the more stress parents feel. This is like a vicious cycle and perhaps one of the most important reasons for parents to address and deal with their stress.
- Without telling them anything, children know deep inside that their parents are stressed. They also listen to what parents are saying when they discuss adult issues and this creates stress and insecurity. Do not underestimate the capacity of a child to experience tension.
- Parents are allowed to feel sad or depressed but they should try to limit the impact on their family.

**TIP >** Take the table you filled out during the previous session and see if you can link some of your feelings and actions with changes in your children's behavior.



**3. ASK >** *How can children be affected by their parents' stress?*

**4.** Write parents' answers on a flipchart.

*Example answers:*

- Aggressiveness, disrespect
- Scared, refuse to leave the tent/house
- Depressed, cry often, and so on



**5. SAY >** *You have 10 minutes to **fill out the third column: Impact on children** individually. You can also use drawings to represent the impact of parents' stress on children.*

#### 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)



## 4. Relaxation techniques to cope with stress

**Time:** 40 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Individual

### Parent activity: Relaxation exercises

1. Give caregivers instructions for the 'Relaxation exercise' activity.
2. Distribute Handout 5: Relaxation Exercise.



#### 3. ASK >

- *What do you think is happening in the pictures?*
- *How do you think this parent is feeling? What do you think they are doing and why?*



#### 4. Explain the pictures to the group. SAY >

- *In the first image, the woman is counting backwards from 20 to zero. This is a relaxation technique that we will learn today.*
- *In the second image, the woman is thinking of a nice place where she feels safe. The man is thinking of a nice song, a happy moment. They both have their hands on their stomachs practicing deep breathing, another relaxation technique that we will learn today.*



#### 5. SAY >

- *Stress is necessary for life. It helps us to respond when we are in danger and need to act quickly.*
- *We need to distinguish between healthy stress that helps us to survive as human beings and 'toxic stress', repeated or intense stress that overwhelms our systems to the point that it is harmful and becomes a problem for us and the ones around us, including children.*
- *We need to be aware of it and cope with it.*
- *Stress is only harmful when it becomes overwhelming and interrupts the healthy state of equilibrium that your nervous system needs to remain in balance.*
- *When stressors throw your nervous system out of balance, relaxation techniques can bring it back into a balanced state by producing the 'relaxation response', a state of deep calmness that is the opposite of the stress response.*



#### 6. ASK > *What is relaxation?*



7. Explain what relaxation is. **SAY >**

- *We define relaxation as a mental and physical state in which the individual is able to feel relieved from strain or tension. Reaching a relaxed state means to control our emotions.*
- *When stress affects a person's normal functioning, relaxation may help to restore it.*



8. **SAY >**

- *We are going to experiment with some relaxation exercises that you can practice at home when you feel stressed. When you feel the stress coming, when you feel that tension in your stomach or when you feel you are about to lose your temper, there are some things you can do to help yourself calm down. Here are a few techniques that are easy to use.*
  - *Step away from the stressful event or situation.*
  - *Deep breathing.*
  - *Center yourself.*
  - *Count backwards from 20 to zero.*
  - *Practice muscle relaxation by visualizing each part of your body getting relaxed: the right foot, the left foot, the right leg, the left leg, and so on.*



9. **SAY >**

**TIP >** Say "Inhale deeply... and exhale" 10 times.

- *Let us start with the **breathing technique**.*
  - *Take 10 deep abdominal breaths.*
  - *You should see your stomach moving back and forth.*
  - *Inhale deeply... and exhale.*



10. **ASK >** *How does it feel?*

11. Have parents volunteer to share their experiences.



12. **SAY >** *Now try to **center yourself**:*

- *Locate your physical center of gravity.*
- *It's usually around your belly button. Once you've found your center, breathe in and out deeply at least 5 times.*
- *Focus on your center. Feel the sensation of being stabilized and on the ground. Imagine all the negative energy in your body is collecting in one place. Find imagery that works for you.*
- *This could be a ball of energy that will suck in all the negative feelings. Visualize this ball of negative energy.*





- As you inhale, say “Let.” As you exhale, say “Go.”
- If your energy is a ball, identify a spot across the room and imagine yourself throwing the ball to hit that spot.
- If your energy is a balloon, imagine it floating away above your head. Let go of everything that is stressing you.
- Now imagine your center filled with calm.<sup>9</sup>



13. Using a quiet voice, very slowly with a voice of love, **SAY >**
- To conclude this session, let us do a relaxation exercise.

14. Read Handout 6: Relaxation Techniques and guide the relaxation.

**ADAPTATION >**  
Adapt this activity depending  
on the sensitivity of  
religion in your context.

15. Distribute Handout 6 to the parents and explain that they can do this exercise with their spouse – one of them can read and guide the exercise and the other can close their eyes and listen.

## 5. Home assignment

**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group



1. **SAY >** As homework, you have to practice breathing and centering exercises from the handout at least once a day before the next session. You must practice relaxation and meditation exercises from the handouts at least twice before the next session. Also, take some time to do something to take care of yourself.

## 6. Evaluation

**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group



1. **ASK >**
- What did you like best about the session?
  - What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?

<sup>9</sup>. Mind Tools. Centering: Maintaining focus in stressful situations. Retrieved from: [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS\\_83.htm#sthash.NUQBTmov.dpuf](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_83.htm#sthash.NUQBTmov.dpuf).



- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Have you any other comments or suggestions to improve the session?*

2. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.
3. Make sure each parent signs the Attendance Form (Resource 3). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.

### Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report. If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 3:

## Coping and Healing Strategies

Parenting session summary | Duration: 2 hours, 10 minutes

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Identify their own positive coping strategies.

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

- SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum for Caregivers of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 2: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- [Resource 6: Coping and Healing Cards](#)
- [Handout 7: Visualization exercise – The safe place](#)
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pens
- Tape
- Notebook
- Large envelopes (9 x 12 inches is ideal; one for each parent) – preferably brightly-colored
- Colored pencils
- Glitter
- Feathers
- Fun stickers
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Stapler
- Index cards, or paper cut into smaller pieces

### PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Read through the session to acquaint yourself with the content.
- Adapt the examples in the coping and healing cards.
- Obtain the required materials before the training.
- Be at the site 15 minutes before the session.
- Learn names of parents and their family members.
- Prepare the room so it is conducive to discussion, without noises or interruptions.
- Print and cut out the cards for [Activity 3](#) (one set for each caregiver).

### ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



## SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session parents learn 2 new strategies, writing and talking, in order to cope with and manage stress. Parents are also introduced to the idea of coping and healing kits and create their own kit.

| Session activity                              | Time       |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                   | 15 minutes |
| 2. Talking and writing                        | 50 minutes |
| 3. Making your own coping and healing toolkit | 50 minutes |
| 4. Home assignment                            | 5 minutes  |
| 5. Evaluation                                 | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring      |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Smile and be positive! Put all of your energy into the session, as this day can improve the lives of the families attending. Welcome the parents and praise them for being there.



2. **ASK >** *Who can remind us what we discussed in the last session?*

3. Have parents voluntarily share their experience of the home assignment from the previous session.



4. **ASK >**

- *Did you do the assignment? Was it easy or difficult to find time and space to do the relaxation exercise? Why?*
- *Did you see any change in the way you felt during the past week? Did you notice any change in your children's behavior?*
- *Does anyone have any thoughts or reflections they want to share?*



5. **ASK >** *Did you do something for yourself as we agreed in the previous session? What was that? How did you feel?*



6. **SAY >** *We saw during the last session how your stress can affect not just the mood but also the behavior of your adolescents. Without being told anything, they know deep inside that their parents are stressed. They also listen to what parents are saying when they talk to other adults.*



## 2. Talking and writing

**Time:** 50 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Individual



### 1. SAY >

- *Most of you experience stress, which has various sources. The purpose of this activity is not to address the source of stress but to learn techniques to cope with the stress.*
- *We learned some relaxation and breathing techniques during our last session. In this session we will learn how writing or talking can help you to process all your emotions and traumatic memories from stressful events.*

**ADAPTATION >** If writing is not an option or people feel uncomfortable with writing, you can replace this activity with the **'Safe space'** activity (see page 44).

### Parent activity: Writing

2. Distribute a notebook and pen to parents, or colored pencils and markers if they prefer to draw.

3. Give parents instructions for the **'Writing' activity**:



### 4. SAY >

- *One way of getting the stress and memories out is to write them down. Spelling and grammar do not matter. The most important thing is to get all the details of the stressful situation or event out.*
- *I want you to write or draw about a particular stressful event or situation by asking yourself certain questions. This exercise is very personal. We will not read what you have written. You have 15 minutes.*
- *Here are some questions to think about:*
  - *What happened before the stressful event or situation?*
  - *How did I first know something was wrong?*
  - *What happened next?*
  - *What did I do?*
  - *How did I know it was over (if applicable)?*
  - *What did I do afterwards?*
  - *What did others do afterwards?*
  - *What was the very worst moment?*

**TIP >** Write these questions on a flipchart as you share them with parents.



5. Give parents instructions for the 'Writing' activity (continued):



6. SAY >

- *Now you've written about your stressful event or memories. Afterwards, you can reread the story when you feel relaxed and comfortable. You may want to rewrite it later, with more details as you remember.*
- *You may want to keep the book as a kind of diary where you can write down your feelings on a regular basis.*
- *If writing stressful events helps to release stress, it is also important to identify some positive experiences as well. So each time you write down something negative, make sure you note down a positive event, too. It can be something related to your children, your family or yourself.*

**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** Most of the parents have experienced very traumatic events. It is important to acknowledge it, but this session is not a therapy group. We do not have the time and the human resources to address the psychological needs of all the parents. If parents need more help, find other resources in the community to help them. If participants are showing signs of distress, you should provide emotional comfort (as culturally appropriate) such as hugging, telling the participant that he/she is very brave to have come here to share, and so on.



7. ASK > *What are some examples of a positive event?*

8. Have parents share their responses with the larger group.

*Example answers:*

- *My daughter had good marks at school and I was very proud of her.*
- *My neighbor came yesterday. She has a good sense of humor and we laughed all afternoon.*
- *I received a call from my sister. She is safe.*

**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** It is easy to fall into the trap of negativity. Try to stay focused on the positive and encourage parents to identify positive and cheerful moments. You can do this by acknowledging and empathizing with negative events parents are telling you about, and then asking them to talk about even a small positive moment, such as sharing a laugh with their children or having a quiet cup of tea in the morning.



#### ADAPTATION >

Use this activity if parents are not comfortable writing or drawing.



#### Alternative activity: 'Safe space'<sup>10</sup>

#### 9. SAY >

- *Imagine a place or scene that makes you feel calm, secure and happy. This could be somewhere real that you remember, (maybe from a holiday); or it could be somewhere you've heard about (maybe in a story); or it could be somewhere that you invent and make up yourself.*
- *Take a few deep, steady breaths. Close your eyes and carry on breathing normally. Bring up a picture of your safe place and imagine that you are standing or sitting there.*
- *Can you see yourself there? In your imagination, take a look around. What do you see? What can you see close to you? Look at the details and see what it is made of. See the different colors. Imagine reaching out and touching it. How does it feel?*
- *Now take a look further away. What can you see around you? See what's in the distance. See the different colors and shapes and shadows.*
- *This is your special place and you can imagine whatever you want to be there. When you are there, you feel calm and peaceful.*
- *Imagine your bare feet on the ground. What does the ground feel like? Walk around slowly, and notice the things there. See what they look like and how they feel.*
- *What can you hear? Maybe the gentle sounds of the wind, or birds, or the sea. Can you feel the warm sun on your face? What can you smell? Maybe it's the sea air, or flowers, or your favorite food cooking?*
- *In your special place, you can see the things you want, imagine touching and smelling them, and you can hear pleasant sounds. You feel calm and happy.*
- *Now imagine that someone special is with you in your place.*
- *This is someone who is there to be a good friend and to help you – someone strong and kind. They are there just to help you and they will look after you. Imagine walking around and exploring your special place slowly with them. You feel happy to be with them. This person is your helper and they're good at sorting out problems.*
- *Just look around in your imagination once more. Have a good look. Remember that this is your special place. It will always be there. You can always imagine being there when you want to feel calm, secure*

**TIP >** With younger groups especially, this might be a fantasy figure or a cartoon superhero.

<sup>10</sup> Children and War Foundation. 2010. *Teaching recovery techniques*. Bergen, Norway. Retrieved from: [www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt/](http://www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt/)



and happy. Your helper will always be there whenever you want them to be. Now get ready to open your eyes and leave your special place for now. You can come back when you want. As you open your eyes, you feel more calm and happy.

### Parent activity: Talking

#### 10. Give parents instructions for the 'Talking' activity.<sup>11</sup>

**TIP >** Write their answers on a flipchart.



#### 11. SAY >

- Talking, like writing, can help get stressful events or bad memories out of your system. Sharing problems with others helps to release stress.
- What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of talking?

*Example answers:*

##### *Advantages*

- Makes me feel better
- Helps me clarify what happened
- Can find out if others' experiences are same or similar
- Helps get it all out
- Someone can help if I tell them
- I can get advice on what to do
- I can help other people

##### *Disadvantages*

- People might laugh
- I do not have anyone to talk to
- I might upset the other person
- I do not know what to say
- It is difficult to talk about my feelings
- People might tell others about my problems



#### 12. SAY >

- It is sometimes difficult to talk about our problems and difficulties to people who have their own problems or people we do not know well. It can be hard at times but, in the end, it helps if you can trust the person you are talking to.

<sup>11</sup>. Children and War Foundation. 2012. *Workbook for the child and war manual*. Bergen, Norway.





- *Some of you have friends or relatives to talk to. They listen to you or they make you laugh. They are your support network. You can also use the parent support groups to share ideas and problems. Mothers can meet on a fixed day of the week and invite each other for tea. You can also organize daycare for your younger children, where each mother takes care of other children once a week. This will help free some time for yourself. Even 2 people can coordinate and do it!*

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## 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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### 3. Making your own coping and healing toolkit<sup>12</sup>

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**Time:** 50 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Individual

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**TIP >** Encourage parents to express their creativity by praising their ideas and providing as many materials for them to work with as you can!

1. Prepare for the **'Making a coping and healing kit' activity**:
  - On a table, set out prepared cards that represent tangible items that can reduce stress (see [Resource 6: Coping and Healing Cards](#)), as well as some blank index cards.
  - Distribute large envelopes and pens to all the caregivers.
  - Display an assortment of stickers depicting positive images (like smiling faces, hearts, flowers, cars) glitter, feathers, and so on, that parents can use to decorate their cards and their envelopes.
  - The large envelope becomes the container for each parent's kit.

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<sup>12</sup> Session inspired by Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. 2006. *IPSV support group guide: A guide to psychoeducational support groups for survivors of intimate partner sexual violence*. Olympia, WA.



2. Give parents instructions for the **‘Making a coping and healing kit’ activity**:



3. SAY >

**ADAPTATION >** Adapt the examples for each card to your context.

**ADAPTATION >** Remove if participants are not literate.

- *Walk around the table and pick out the cards that appeal to you. Personalize the cards. These cards have titles. You can add other categories if you have creative ideas.*
  - *My favorite place – a picture or description of a place (past, present or imagined) where you feel or felt a great sense of peace and safety*
  - *Gratitude list – things for which I am grateful.*
  - *Drinks that I enjoy – examples should be non-alcoholic beverages available in your environment*
  - *My favorite books – books that lift my mood*
  - *My favorite music – music that makes me feel good – not sad*
  - *Humorous or positive sayings or pictures*
  - *Peak moments from the past – a brief reminder of a wonderful memory*
  - *Fun activities – playing sports, playing with children*
  - *My support network – a list of people I can visit, call and who always lift my spirits*
  - *Comfort foods – examples should be food that you like and is easily accessible. Nothing that will make you feel bad because you ate it!*
  - *Reminders of other things you can do to relieve stress: adapt examples to your context (taking a warm shower, taking the time to wash your hair)*
  - *Relaxation exercises that work for you. It can be deep breathing, center yourself, muscle relaxation, praying, and so on*
- *Choose those cards that represent items you would actually like to have in a Coping and Healing Kit, and then write something about your personal choices. For example, on the Gratitude List card, you can write down some things that you are grateful for, such as “My health”, or “My daughter’s smile”.*
- *You can make a kit with real items in it, such as some pictures clipped from a magazine or some packages of your favorite tea. You can also just use the cards as reminders of the things that you might turn to when you are feeling stressed.*
- *After you have assembled your kits, take a few minutes to look at them.*



4. Invite parents to talk about the contents of their kits. Tell parents that they can also choose not to talk, or to keep some of the items private.
5. Ask if someone would like to share how they could use their kit to help cope with traumatic memories, current stresses, or troubled emotions.
6. Ask if someone would like to share what they want to do with their kit.

*Example answers:*

- Take them home
- Leave them at the group site
- Destroy them

**TIP >** If parents want to destroy their kits, remind them to consider safety issues.



7. Tell parents that just having gone through the process is useful, even if they do not take anything tangible home.

8. **SAY >** *Everyone needs self-care and self-nurturing.*

9. Reinforce the points from the previous sessions, about the process of healing and finding strength. Remind parents that sometimes the process of facing their situation or their past experiences can cause emotional turmoil and pain, but this is part of the healing process.



10. **ASK >**

- *How can you participate in self-care, even when it feels like you do not have the time or space to do so?*
- *What do you need to do to stay safe and healthy?*
- *What are some ways in which you have successfully coped with difficult situations?*
- *What resources do you have to turn to when you feel overwhelmed?*
- *What are 1 or 2 items from your Coping and Healing Kit that you are really looking forward to using soon?*

**TIP >** If parents chose to destroy their kit, encourage them to use the memory of the objects and images they chose.



## 4. Home assignment

**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. **SAY >** *This week, use at least 1 of the tools you have in your kit.*
2. Practice 1 relaxation or breathing technique.
3. Take 10 minutes to do the visualization exercise in Handout 7.



## 5. Evaluation

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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### 1. ASK >

- *What did you like best about the session?*
- *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*
- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Have you any other comments or suggestions to improve the session?*

2. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.

3. Make sure each parent signs the Attendance Form (Resource 3). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.

## Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report. If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 4:

## Adolescent Brain Development – A Work in Progress

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Parenting session summary | Duration: 2 hours

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### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Articulate the key concepts of brain development and the impact of toxic stress.
- Explain ways to support their adolescents' education and guide them towards safe decision-making and good judgment.

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

- SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum for Caregivers of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- [Resource 7: Brain Development and Toxic Stress](#)
- [Handout 8: Brain Development](#)
- Small items such as coins, rocks or beans for the 'Concentration game'
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pen to record parents' ideas
- Video explaining toxic stress (if video facilities are available): <https://rescue.box.com/s/9cl0pg32gernlp0sr7zqtkgiwv6dvbnh>

### PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Read through the materials for this session
- Make copies for each parent. Give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- Print copies of [Resource 7: Brain Development and Toxic Stress](#). Trainees can share 1 copy amongst 3 or 4 people.
- Gather information about local education resources to provide to parents.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

### ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



## SESSION OVERVIEW

Parents will learn about how teenagers' brains and bodies are developing and how they can support their interests and education.

| Session activity                                       | Time       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                            | 15 minutes |
| 2. What is happening in our teenager's brain and body? | 45 minutes |
| 3. Showing interest in your teen's life                | 20 minutes |
| 4. Other changes adolescents are experiencing          | 10 minutes |
| 5. Education and brain development                     | 15 minutes |
| 8. Home assignment                                     | 5 minutes  |
| 9. Evaluation                                          | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring               |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group



1. **SAY >** *We are so happy you are here today! We are excited to share information about adolescent brain development today and talk with you about how you are helping your adolescents grow into healthy adults.*

2. Ask about the parent support group from the previous session.

- Did you meet?
- How was it?
- What did you discuss?



3. **ASK >** *Who practiced at least 1 of the tools from the Healing and Coping Kit or one of the relaxation or breathing techniques? How did it feel?*

4. Praise parents and caregivers for any attempts they made to practice previously learned skills and techniques at home during the week.



### Parent activity: Body relaxation activity

**TIP >** One Facilitator should lead the exercise and another Facilitator should demonstrate the actions for parents.



**5.** Give parents instructions for the **'Body relaxation' activity**.

**6. SAY >**

- *In the last 2 sessions we talked about managing stress. So, to get us ready for our session today we are going to do another relaxation exercise, similar to the one you did in the last session.*
- *When your body is relaxed, you will also feel more relaxed and less stressed! Balance can help the body, beginning with breathing!*
- *To start, inhale for a count of 4 then exhale for a count of 4, all through the nose. The nose adds a natural resistance to the breath, helping you control your breathing.*
- *We will do this 5 times together.*
- *Now just relax for a minute.*



**7. ASK >**

- *How did that feel?*
- *Did it feel strange?*
- *Did it feel good?*

**8.** Remind them that this is a good exercise for whenever they feel stressed or angry, as it helps to calm the body and the mind.

## 2. What is happening in our teenager's brain and body?

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**Time:** 45 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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**1.** Distribute Handout 8: Brain Development.



**2. SAY >** *Today we are going to talk about your teenagers' brains. Teenage brains are a 'work in progress'.*



**3. ASK >**

- *When you look at this picture and see the brain in the middle, what do you see happening around the brain?*
- *What helps our teenagers' brains develop? Do boys' and girls' brains develop in the same ways? Why or why not?*

**4.** Have parents share their responses to the questions with the whole group.



5. Have parents look at the handout and describe each image.

*Example answers:*

- Top left corner – a mother encouraging her son to do his homework
- Top right corner – a father talking to his son who seems sad
- Bottom right corner – a mother talking to her daughter who seems preoccupied
- Bottom left corner – a father comforting his daughter who is crying



6. **ASK >** What helps our teenagers' brains develop? Do boys' and girls' brains develop in the same ways? Why or why not?



7. **SAY >**

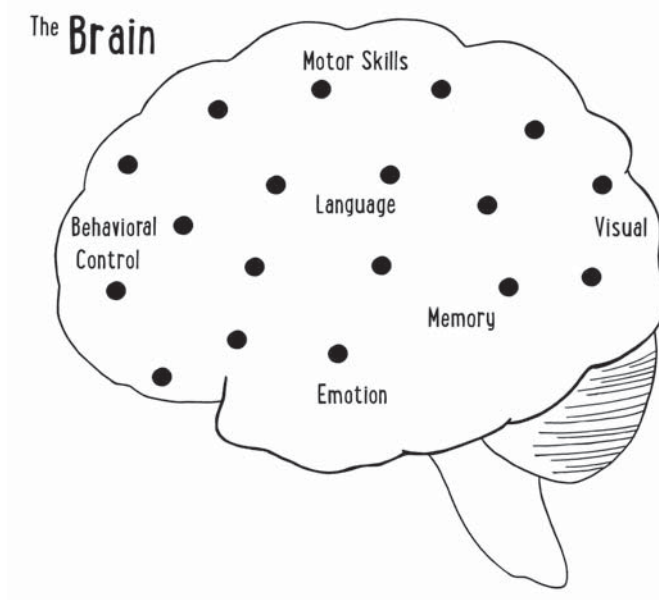
- Children's brains are built over time and much of their brain development depends on the care they receive from their parents.
- Child development refers to the biological, social and psychological changes that happen in children from conception through adulthood. These changes influence children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual capacities.
- We are born with more than 80 billion brain cells called **neurons**. These neurons make us human as they work to communicate between one another via small electrical impulses that travel through cell junctions called synapses.
- Some brain changes happen before puberty, and some continue long after.
- **Puberty** is the period of time when adolescents experience body changes associated with sexual and reproductive health, and we will talk about that in a future session. Brain change depends on age, experience and hormonal changes in puberty.
- So even though all teenagers' brains develop in roughly the same way at the same time, there are differences among individual teenagers. For example, if your child started puberty early, this might mean that some of your child's brain changes started early too.
- All adolescents, both boys and girls, have the brain capacity to learn, be smart, be kind, be gentle. Their capacity will depend on the ways their development is encouraged by their caregivers and communities.



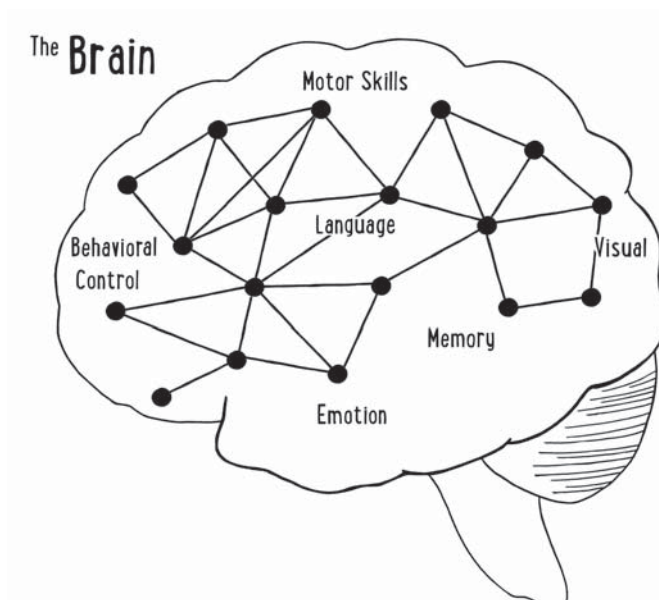


8. To explain brain development, have parents look at [Resource 7: Brain Development and Toxic Stress](#).

**Image 1: The brain with neurons**



**Image 2: The brain with 'electrical connections' via synapses**

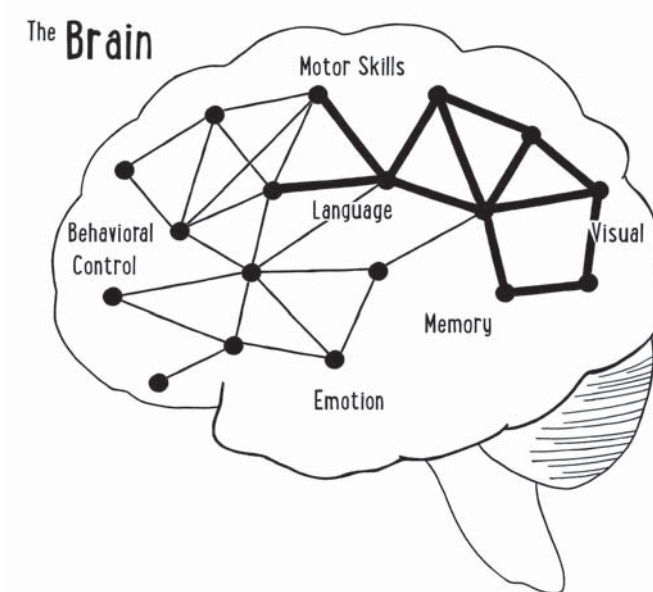




#### 9. SAY >

- Love, support and encouragement build strong, healthy brains. These synapses, or circuits, enable humans to learn language, think, walk, catch a ball, trust others, and manage emotions.
- They are like electrical wires that, when connected, enable the lights to turn on. If the synapses between neurons are used repeatedly, they become permanent and strong – like exercising a muscle!
- During adolescence the front part of the brain, called the 'prefrontal cortex' is making new connections. This is the part of our brain that is responsible for making good decisions, controlling impulses and using good judgment.
- Parents can help their adolescents continue to make connections between neurons in this area of the brain by supporting and helping them make good decisions and use good judgment.

**Image 3: The brain with stronger 'electrical connections' thanks to love and encouragement**



#### 10. SAY >

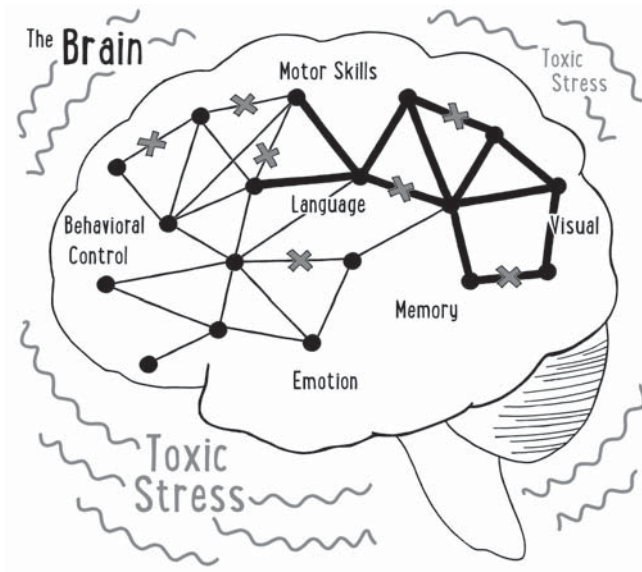
- Unused connections in the thinking and processing part of your children's brains (called the 'grey matter') are 'pruned' away. At the same time, other connections are strengthened.



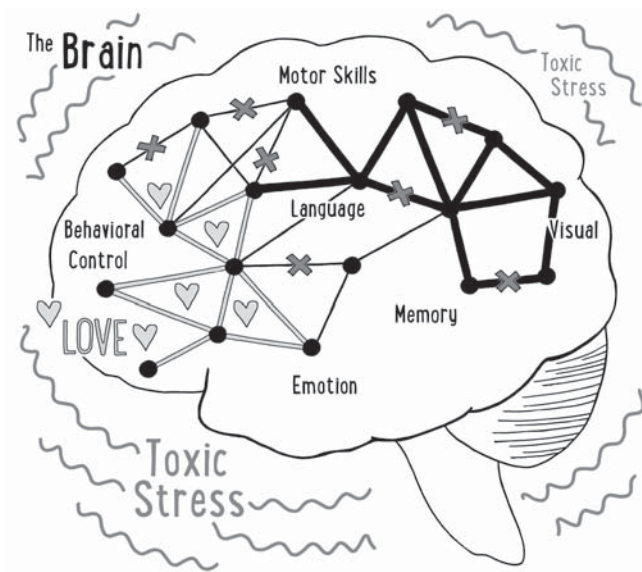
- *This is the brain's way of becoming more efficient, based on the 'use it or lose it' principle. Repeated stress, exposure to traumatic events and violence can all cause 'toxic stress'. Toxic stress can destroy connections and interfere with children's ability to make safe and healthy decisions.*
- *Love, guidance, problem-solving, and emotional support reinforce positive connections between neurons. This provides the foundation that children need to make healthy choices and become responsible family and community members.*
- *The front part of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, is wired or connected last. The prefrontal cortex is the decision-making part of the brain, responsible for your teenager's ability to plan and think about the consequences of actions, solve problems and control impulses. Changes in this part of the brain continue into early adulthood.*
- *Because the prefrontal cortex is still developing, teenagers might rely on a part of the brain called the **amygdala** to make decisions and solve problems more than adults do. The amygdala is a part of the brain that is associated with emotions, impulses, aggression and instinctive behavior.*
- Play the video of toxic stress or use the visual aids in Resource 7: Brain Development and Toxic Stress to explain these concepts.



**Image 4: The 'electrical connections' are destroyed due to toxic stress and violence.**



**Image 5: The 'electrical connections' are renewed with loving, nurturing and predictable adult relationships**



**TIP >** We want to engage parents in a dialogue about how our parenting skills and practices directly correlate with teenagers' brain development.

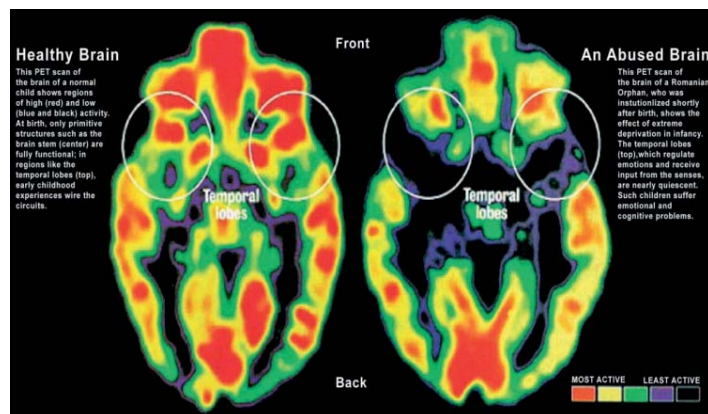


**11. SAY >** *Think about a path that is created and used for going to get water or going to the market. At first, the path may be a little bumpy and hard to stay on. It does not actually become a path until lots and lots of people have*



walked that same path over and over again. The path becomes smoother and easier to see where you are going. Our brains are built in this same way. The more time you spend teaching and showing children kindness and respect, the stronger the connections between the cells – or neurons – in their brains become! It is these strong connections that enable your children to be healthy, happy and responsible family and community members.

12. Show them the color print of the 2 brain scans below, and [Resource 7](#).



13. SAY > These pictures of brains were taken using scanners that produce detailed images using magnetic fields and radio waves.<sup>13</sup>
14. Discuss the image.
15. ASK > What do you notice about these images? What are the differences?
16. SAY >
- Notice how the nurtured child's brain has much more activity, while the brain of the child who was subjected to abuse and extreme deprivation shows less activity in the same areas.
17. Explain basic concepts of brain development to the parents, based on the following information:
- The image of the abused child's brain is of a child who suffered severe abuse and neglect.

13. Well Commons. 2011. *This is a child's brain on trauma; This is the life of that traumatized brain*. Retrieved from: <http://wellcommons.com/groups/aces/2011/jul/22/this-is-a-brain-on-trauma-this-is-the-li>.



- Our brains are not fully formed until we are in our early to mid 20s! Different parts of our brain form and mature at different rates. For example, the parts of our brain that control our senses and reflexes form when we are infants.
- The parts of our brain that help us control our impulses and use good judgment are the last to mature. This part of our brain is called the prefrontal cortex and it controls our 'executive function'. Executive function skills are mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions and juggle multiple tasks successfully.<sup>14</sup>

 → **18. ASK >** *Can you think of a time when you were an adolescent and you did not make the best decision or acted foolishly?*

**19.** Have parents turn to a partner and discuss the question for a few minutes. Then have a few parents share their responses with the rest of the group.

 → **20. SAY >**

- *Another unique ability our brain has is to change or re-create itself. This ability is called 'plasticity'. Brains start out in life with a lot of plasticity, but as we age it gets harder to change our brains.*
- *Scientists have learned that, in adolescence, like early childhood, if the brain is exercised with positive experiences, teenagers can learn to control impulses, order their thoughts and use good judgment. These are skills and abilities that will help them to become happy, healthy adults.*

 → **21. ASK >** *What kinds of skills do you think your teenagers will need to be happy, healthy adults?*

*Example answers:*

- *The ability to be kind*
- *The skills to be a hard worker*
- *The responsibility to be a community member*
- *The ability to learn*

**22.** Make a list of their responses on the flipchart.

 → **23. ASK >** *How can we help our sons and daughters develop these skills?*

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<sup>14</sup>. Center on the Developing Child. *Executive function and self-regulation*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University. Retrieved from: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function>.





**24. SAY >** *We will spend the next several sessions talking about how to help our children learn the skills needed to live safe, healthy, happy lives. We will talk about how to support their continued healthy brain development through **predictable, stimulating and nurturing parenting practices** such as:*

- *Showing an interest in your teen's life*
- *Being honest and direct about sensitive topics*
- *Helping your teen make healthy choices*
- *Respecting your teen's thoughts and opinions*

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## 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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**TIP >** Give parents and caregivers a few minutes to share their thoughts about their teenage lives.

### 3. Showing an interest in your teen's life

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**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; pairs

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**1. ASK >**

- *Do you remember a time when you were a girl or boy between the ages of 12 and 17?*
- *What kinds of things were happening in your life? Perhaps you were worried about exams or you were noticing a boy or girl in the village?*



**2. ASK >** *What does it look like to show interest in your teenager's life?*

- *After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:*
  - *Listening without interrupting*
  - *Affirming and validating feelings. For example, "I see why you would be upset about that."*
  - *Offer support, if needed*
  - *Praising good decisions, actions and character traits*

**TIP >** Make a list of responses from parents.



**3. SAY >** *We will talk about problem-solving and helping adolescents make good choices in the next few sessions, but for today you are going to focus on showing an interest.*



### Role-play for skills practice: Showing an interest in your teen's life

4. Pick 2 parents for the role-play. One will be the parent and the other will be a 16-year-old boy.
5. Present the scenario – A parent asks the teenager how their day is going. The teenager shares something going on in their life. The parent shows interest in the teenager's life.
6. Coach the 'parent' and the '16-year-old boy' on the role-play. You can adapt the sample script provided, or create your own.
7. Have the volunteers present the role-play in front of the group.

**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

The 16-year-old boy has just come in from school.

**Parent:** [Puts down work.] How was your day?

**16-year-old:** It was okay, but I am having a problem with one of my friends.

**Parent:** Oh, I am sorry to hear that! Tell me more about it.

**16-year-old:** Well, the other day we were walking home from school and went by the market and he stole some stuff.

**Parent:** Oh! You look like this is really bothering you. What did you do?

**16-year-old:** I just kept walking and didn't really say anything.

**Parent:** Well it sounds like you make a good decision not to steal, but you are still wondering what to do about your friend?

**16-year-old:** Yes, I am afraid if he gets caught while I am with him I could get into trouble too.

**Parent:** Well that sounds like pretty good thinking to me. What would you like to do?

**16-year-old:** I would like to tell him that, when I am with him, I would like him not to steal, but I am afraid that he will get mad at me or call me weak.

**Parent:** You have quite a hard decision. Is there anything I can do to help?

**16-year-old:** I just need some time to think about it.

**Parent:** Would it be all right if I ask you a little later what decision you came too?

**16-year-old:** Sure. Thanks Mom.





**TIP >** If you have time, give the parents a chance to practice the same scenario in pairs.

8. Discuss the role-play.
9. Ask the person playing the '16-year-old' how it felt for the 'parent' to show interest in them and their problem.
10. Ask parents and caregivers what skills the parent used in the role-play to show an interest in the teenager's life.

*Example answers:*

- Problem-solving
- Good judgment and decision-making

## 4. Other changes adolescents are experiencing

**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

**TIP >** Encourage them to notice differences between boys and girls.



1. **ASK >** What are some changes you are starting to see in your adolescents?

2. You may use the following questions to start a conversation if parents are not responding:

- Have you noticed changes in their attitudes and beliefs? For boys? For girls?
- Have you noticed changes in their bodies? For boys? For girls?
- Have you noticed changes in their relationships with peers and parents? For boys? For girls?

3. Explain:

- Adolescence is an amazing and challenging time! Children are going through so many changes cognitively (in their thinking and learning) and physically.
- Adolescents usually begin to rely on and identify more with peers during this time.
- This can be a challenging time emotionally, and you may notice that one minute they want your help and the next they would rather be autonomous.
- Adolescents often feel that their experiences are unique and that no one can possibly understand how they are feeling.
- They are changing physically. Chemical messengers in their bodies called '**hormones**' are fluctuating. These hormones affect things like our mood, sexual function and desires, and growth and development.



- This is a great time to talk to your sons and daughters about what they are going through physically, socially and emotionally!

## 5. Education and brain development

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** Strengthened executive functions enable teenagers to be more successful academically, be better able to cope with life's daily challenges, and improve their ability to relate to others!



- 1. ASK >** *What are the challenges and the worries you have for your children's education?*

*Example answers:*

- *Not enough schools*
- *Too many kids in one classroom*
- *Children feeling and being unsafe while traveling to and from school*
- *My family needs money and my children need work*
- *My daughter should just get married instead of going to school so she can be taken care of*

- 2. Explain:**

- Adolescence is the second most productive time of brain development, after early childhood.
- It is important that teenagers continue to have opportunities for learning to help their brains develop in a healthy way, to make good decisions, take appropriate risks and plan for their future.
- Teenagers need an education to have future opportunities of higher education and employment.
- Both girls and boys need the opportunity to make their own decisions, and have their own dreams and goals so they can lead healthy, productive lives.

**TIP >** Do not talk about education opportunities in the SHLS if they are not present in your SHLS program.

- 3.** Inform parents about how to enroll their children in whatever formal or informal education opportunities are available, such as basic reading and math activities at the SHLS, if relevant.





4. **SAY >** *We are going to talk about school and issues of safety in future sessions, but today we are going to do an activity focusing on supporting your children's continued education and learning in the home. This activity helps increase concentration and build stronger memory skills...and it is fun!*

#### Parent activity: Concentration game



5. Give parents instructions for the '**Concentration game**' activity. **SAY >**
- *Activities to improve memory and concentration are important for all of us!*
  - *I will place random objects in front of you for 10 to 15 seconds, then remove the objects and see how many you can remember.*

**TIP >** You can make the task harder by asking them to recall what order the objects were placed in, as well as what colors objects were.

6. Start out by placing 4 objects in front of the group for 5 seconds and then take them away.
7. Ask for volunteers to recall all the objects.
8. Continue the game by playing several rounds, increasing the number of objects in each round.



9. **SAY >** *You can play this game with your children! Start with 3 objects for younger children and with 5 for older children, and keep increasing the number as they master the task. You can also help auditory memory by reading out a random list of numbers or words and having them repeat the list.*

## 6. Home assignment

**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group



1. **SAY >** *For this week's home assignment, continue to practice relaxation exercises at home and find at least 1 opportunity to show an interest in your teen's life by asking them about school, friends, or other activities that are important to them.*
2. Remind parents about their support groups and encourage them to meet in between parenting sessions.
3. Ask parents who have both sons and daughters to think about how they treat their sons and daughters. Do they give their sons and daughters equal opportunities? Do they distribute household chores equally?





4. **SAY >** *In the coming weeks, we are going to talk more about gender equality in your homes and community and why this is important for men and women.*

## 7. Evaluation

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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### 1. ASK >

- *What did you like best about the session?*
- *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*
- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Have you any other comments or suggestions for improving the session?*

### Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report. If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 5:

## Building Positive Relationships and Creating Spaces for Dialogue

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**Parenting session summary | Duration:** 2 hours, 5 minutes

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### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Name and use techniques to build positive parent–adolescent relationships such as spending quality time and positive attention.

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

- SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum for Caregivers of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- [Handout 9: Spending Time With Adolescents](#)
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pens

### PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Read through the materials for this session.
- Make copies of the handouts for each parent. Give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

### ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



## SESSION OVERVIEW

Parents learn about how to use positive attention and praise with their teenagers to support self-esteem and encourage responsible behavior. Parents think about ways to spend quality time with their teenagers, providing positive attention and praise.

| Session activity                                      | Time       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                           | 10 minutes |
| 2. Mindfulness exercise: Game of 5                    | 15 minutes |
| 3. What have you learned about your teenagers so far? | 15 minutes |
| 4. Spending quality family time together              | 20 minutes |
| 5. Encouragement and praise                           | 20 minutes |
| 6. Showing an interest in your teenager's life        | 30 minutes |
| 7. Home assignment                                    | 5 minutes  |
| 8. Evaluation                                         | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring              |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

-  → **1. SAY >** *Welcome back and thanks for coming! How did the parent support groups go? Did you meet? How often? Were they helpful?*
- 2.** Have parents volunteer to share their thoughts with the group.
-  → **3. ASK >** *How did your home assignment of spending time respecting, listening and supporting you adolescents go? What did you notice while you were listening to them?*
- 4.** Have parents volunteer to share their thoughts with the group.



## 2. Mindfulness exercise: 'Game of 5'<sup>15</sup>

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Individual



### 1. SAY >

- *In this mindfulness exercise, all you have to do is notice 5 things in your day that usually go unnoticed and unappreciated. These could be things you hear, smell, feel or see.*
- *For example, you might see the walls of your front room, hear the birds in the tree outside in the morning, feel your clothes on your skin as you walk to work, or smell the flowers in the park, but think about the following questions:*
- *Are you truly aware of these things and the connections they have with the world?*
- *Are you aware of how these things really benefit your life and the lives of others?*
- *Do you really know what these look and sound like?*
- *Have you ever noticed their finer, more intricate details?*
- *Have you thought about what life might be without these things?*
- *Have you thought about how amazing these things are?*
- *Let your creative mind explore the wonder, impact and possibilities these usually unnoticed things have on your life. Allow yourself to fall into the world and fully experience the environment.*
- *By becoming mindful of who we are, where we are, what we are doing, for what purpose, and how everything else in our environment interacts with our being, we cultivate a truer awareness of being.*
- *This helps us learn to identify and reduce stress and anxiety, and address difficult, painful, and possibly frightening thoughts, feelings and sensations.*
- *Mindfulness exercises help center the mind and restore balance to our lives, tempering that 'monkey mind' that persistently leaps from branch to branch. Rather than being led by thoughts and feelings, often influenced by past experiences and fears of future occurrences, we are able to live with full attention and purpose in the moment.*

<sup>15</sup> James, A. 2016. Pocket mindfulness. Retrieved from: [www.pocketmindfulness.com](http://www.pocketmindfulness.com).



### 3. What have you learned about your teenagers so far?

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group



#### 1. ASK >

- *What have you learned about your sons and daughters, as you have been spending time with them and showing an interest in their lives? You can share their likes, dislikes, goals, dreams, talents, and so on.*
- *Did your sons and/or daughters have similar goals? Did this surprise you to hear?*
- *How does it feel to know these things about your adolescents and how has it felt connecting with them in a positive, loving way?*
- *How has this benefited you as parents and caregivers?*
- *How do you think it has benefited your adolescents?*



- #### 2. SAY >
- Today we will be talking more about spending quality time with adolescents in order to create positive relationships and open communication.*

### 4. Spending quality family time together

**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group



#### 1. ASK >

- *What does it mean to spend quality time with your teenagers?*
- *Why is it important for your daughters and sons to spend time within the family?*

- #### 2. Distribute Handout 9: Spending Time with Adolescents.



#### 3. ASK > *How is this father showing an interest in his son?*

*Example answer: The son is talking about becoming a teacher and the father is encouraging him.*



- #### 4. ASK > *How do you show your teenagers that you are interested in them and in what they have to say?*





- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points, if needed:
  - Be available
  - Be present
  - Be patient
  - Create space for dialogue
  - Sit near your teenagers and be present

 → **5. ASK >** When you talk to your teenagers, be present! What does it mean to be present?

*Example answer: Being present means giving your full attention to your sons and daughters.*

 → **6. SAY >** You should let them talk about what is important to them, or pick activities that are interesting to them. What kinds of activities do your adolescents like to do that you could do with them?

- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points, if needed:
  - Play games
  - Art projects
  - Read or tell stories
  - Watch movies
  - Go to the market or going shopping

 → **7. SAY >**

- Be sensitive to your adolescent's mood. One way to do this is to show concern when your adolescent is sad or worried, or enjoy it when they are happy, feel proud or excited.
- Avoid power struggles. A power struggle is an argument that takes place because the people involved are fighting about who will control and dominate the relationship.
- Encourage creativity.
- What are some ways you could encourage your teenagers' creativity?
- Is it different for boys and girls?

 → **8. ASK >** How could you encourage your adolescents to solve problems?



- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points, if needed:
  - Listen with full attention.
  - Reflect back what they think their teenager is saying. For example, “You are saying you are disappointed in your test scores.”
  - Offer to help them solve the problem, but don’t solve it for them.



9. **SAY** > We will work more on problem-solving in later sessions.



10. **SAY** > Give positive attention and approval to positive behaviors, such as using good judgment, being kind to others in the family, and being responsible. Create space for open, honest dialogue by being open to your teenagers’ thoughts and opinions.

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## 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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## 5. Encouragement and praise

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**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. Parental attention can reinforce both positive and negative behaviors.
  - When a parent or caregiver praises their son or daughter for responsible or respectful actions, like doing well in school or completing chores, those behaviors are reinforced.
  - As parents and caregivers we need to be strategic about what behaviors and actions we are giving attention to.
  - Praising involves providing positive attention for positive, pro-social actions or for just being who they are.
  - If you find it difficult to find something to praise, encouragement is a good alternative. You can encourage them for trying hard, or for responsibly facing the consequences of a mistake.



2. **ASK** > Why should we praise adolescents?

- After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:
  - Shows love and affection.
  - Helps your daughters and sons to feel good about themselves.



- When you praise your children, they learn that you value them as a person and you value their responsible, respectful actions.
- Praising helps adolescents' brains build healthy social and emotional connections! They often face a lot of criticisms all day for all the things they did wrong. Encouraging and praising the good things is very powerful!



**3. ASK >** What are the benefits of praising your daughters and sons?

- After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:
  - Helps parents feel good and positive about their children when they notice their positive attributes and contributions to the family.
  - Builds a positive relationship between parents and their sons and daughters.
  - Reinforces teenager's desirable, pro-social actions.



**4. SAY >** Praise is telling your child that you like something that he or she is doing. What are some examples you can think of?

- After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:
  - I am so proud of the way you are doing your homework so carefully.
  - Thank you for helping me work in the field today.
  - I am so happy you are my daughter!
  - I am proud you are my son!



**5. SAY >** Effective praise is specific and tells your adolescent what they did well or what you appreciate about them, with a positive tone of voice and expressions.

## 6. Showing an interest in your teenager's life

**Time:** 30 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Pairs; Small groups

1. Have parents partner with the person sitting next to them.
2. Have the pairs come up with a list of 5 or 6 activities that parents/caregivers can do with their children and together as a family.
3. Give parents about 5 minutes to generate their ideas, and then have them share their ideas with the rest of the group.



*Example answers:*

- *Cooking and eating dinner together*
- *Going for a walk*
- *Going shopping at the market together*
- *Telling or reading stories*

**4. Explain:**

- Spending time with their children does not mean asking a lot of questions about how they feel or expecting something from them.
- If they want to talk, then use the opportunity, but do not be the first one to ask.
- Spending quality time means being fully available and giving children the sense that they are the priority in your life.

**Role-play for skills practice: Showing interest in your teen's life**

- 5.** Pick 3 parents for the role-play. One will be the 'parent', one will be a '14-year-old girl', and one will be the parent's 'friend'.
- 6.** Present the scenario – A parent asks the teenager to do an activity together. The teenager agrees, and they start doing something together. The parent gets distracted by something else and forgets about the time they had decided to spend together.
- 7.** Coach the 'parent' and the '14-year-old girl' on the role-play. You can adapt the sample script provided, or create your own.
- 8.** Have the volunteers present the role-play in front of the group.

**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

**Parent:** Do you want to go shopping with me at the market today?

**Girl:** Okay.

[They begin walking to the market and talk along the way. The parent sees a friend in the market.]

**Parent:** Hi! How have you been?

**Friend:** Hello! It's so nice to see you!

[Parent and friend start talking. Parent forgets that the daughter is waiting. Daughter gets bored and starts doing something else.]



9. Discuss the role-play.

10. Ask the person playing the 14-year-old how it felt when the 'parent' started talking to the friend, and forgot about their time together.

*Example answers:*

- *Felt unimportant*
- *Felt hurt*
- *Felt angry*

11. Pick 2 parents for the next role-play. One will be the parent and the other will be a 17-year-old girl.

12. Present the scenario – A parent asks the teenager to do an activity together and lets the teenager decide what to do. As they do what the teenager suggested, the parent asks about what is going on in the daughter's life and listens with attention.

13. Coach the 'parent' and the '17-year-old girl' on the role-play. You can adapt the sample script provided, or create your own.

14. Have the volunteers present the role-play in front of the group.

**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

**Parent:** Hey, would you like to do something together?

**Girl:** Okay, but what are we going to do?

**Parent:** Why don't you choose?

**Girl:** Okay let's go for a walk.

**Parent:** Okay.

**Girl:** I had a really hard day at school today with my exams.

**Parent:** I am so proud of your hard work at school and I know it will pay off for you.

**Girl:** Thanks Mom, but I am little worried about the boys at school. They say that girls do not need to go to school and that girls who go to school won't be able to find a husband.

**Parent:** I am really glad you are telling me about this. What do you think?



15. Discuss the role-play.
16. Ask the person playing the 17-year-old how she felt during this interaction. What did she like, how did her parent/caregiver's attention make her feel?
17. Ask the 'parent' how they felt while they were giving their daughter their undivided attention.
18. Ask the group members what they think the benefits are for adolescents and parents spending quality time together and giving praise.
  - *After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:*
    - *Passing on cultural traditions and customs*
    - *Teaching life skills such as cooking and taking care of animals*
    - *Teenagers feel valued and important and this increases self-confidence and self-esteem*
    - *Parents and caregivers have the opportunity to learn about and help their teenagers solve problems*
19. Divide the large group into several small groups of 3 and practice the role-play. One person will be the teenage daughter, the second will play the parent, and the third will be the observer/coach. Have them switch roles in the group until everyone has had a chance to play all 3 roles.
20. Walk around and check in on the groups to make sure they are demonstrating the skills properly.

## 7. Home assignment

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**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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### 1. SAY >

- *This week's home assignment is to go home and spend some special time with your teenagers. Find at least one day to do something special together and let them choose the activity.*
- *Try to remember how you felt spending this special time and remember to praise your sons and daughters for their efforts, accomplishments, and who they are. You are creating spaces for dialogue and open communication!*



2. Remind parents about their support groups and encourage them to meet in between parenting sessions.

## 8. Evaluation

---

**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

---

### 1. ASK >

- *What did you like best about the session?*
- *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*
- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Do you have any other comments or suggestions for improving this session?*

### Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#). If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 6:

## Empathy – Respecting your Teen’s Opinions, Thoughts and Feelings

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**Parenting session summary | Duration:** 2 hours, 5 minutes

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### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Articulate the key principles of effective communication.
- List and use the 4 steps of empathetic communication.

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

- SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum for Caregivers of Adolescents
- [Resource 1: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 2: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- Handouts
  - [Handout 10: Empathy](#)
  - [Handout 11: The 4 Steps of Empathy](#)
- Flipchart and markers (if available)
- Pens and paper (enough for each parent to have a pen and piece of paper)

### PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Read through the materials for this session and if there is a parent handout, make copies for each parent. Give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

### ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).





## SESSION OVERVIEW

Participants learn about the benefits of effective, empathetic communication with their adolescents. Participants learn about steps to an empathetic conversation and practice these steps.

| Session activity                                    | Time       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                         | 15 minutes |
| 2. Game: Categories                                 | 10 minutes |
| 3. Effective communication takes time and respect   | 15 minutes |
| 4. The concept of empathy                           | 15 minutes |
| 5. Showing empathy: The steps technique             | 25 minutes |
| 6. Practicing the steps of empathetic communication | 30 minutes |
| 7. Home assignment                                  | 5 minutes  |
| 8. Evaluation                                       | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring            |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group



#### 1. SAY >

- *Welcome back and thanks for coming!*
- *Did you do your homework by spending time with your teens?*
- *How did you feel about spending time with your son or daughter?*
- *Did you praise them? How and for what reasons did you praise your children? Did you praise both your daughter and son?*
- *Do you remember some of the ideas discussed during the last session?*

#### 2. Have parents share their responses and praise them for their efforts.

3. If a parent is absent, encourage others in the group to reach out to that parent. They can do this through the parent support groups (if they have phones and are comfortable about it, they can exchange numbers). Encourage parents to meet beyond the sessions to share their ideas and parental strategies skills; encourage them to support and mentor each other; urge them to solve problems they might be having with their children peacefully and constructively; and most importantly, ask them to share



their happiness and accomplishments with the group when their parenting skills are working. Remind them that this is a support group, not a group for criticism or gossip. Parents are here to help each other, to nurture each other.

## 2. Game: Categories

**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Individuals

1. Distribute pens and paper to all the parents.
2. Give parents instructions for the **'Categories' activity**:
3. Divide the paper into 5 columns – 1 narrow column and 4 wide ones. Show parents the sample table below.



**TIP >** You can change these categories.

4. **SAY >**
  - *We have 4 categories in this game – name, place, animal and food. Write the names of these categories in the columns.*
  - *I will pick a parent, and when I say "Go!" that parent will start reciting the letters of the alphabet in their head, until someone else says "Stop!"*
  - *The parent who was reciting the alphabet will tell everyone which letter they stopped at, and everyone has to write down a name, a place, an animal and a food beginning with that letter.*
5. The person who completes all 4 categories correctly first, will win that round.
6. Play this game for as long as the time allows.

### SAMPLE

|   | Name | Place  | Animal | Food  |
|---|------|--------|--------|-------|
| A | Ali  | Africa | Ant    | Apple |
|   |      |        |        |       |
|   |      |        |        |       |



### 3. Effective communication takes time and respect

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Pairs; Small groups

1. Distribute Handout 10: Empathy.
2. Divide parents into pairs or small groups.
3. Have parents discuss the following question with their pairs/groups: What do you think is happening in this picture?
4. Ask for a few pairs/groups to share their ideas with the whole group.
5. Explain that the girl is telling her mother about an incident that happened to her. Two boys harassed her. The mother is showing empathy to her.



#### 6. SAY >

- *In the previous sessions we have talked about:*
  - *Spending special time with your teens.*
  - *Showing interest in your teens' daily lives.*
  - *Encouraging, praising and celebrating their accomplishments.*
- *These activities have been enhancing positive relationships, as well as creating spaces for dialogue and communication. Today we are going to talk more about the importance of communication between parents and teens, as well as the use of empathy when communicating with your teens.*



#### 7. ASK > What do you think is important when communicating with your teenager?

- *After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:*
  - **Finding the right time.** *When adolescents are very upset, or if you are very angry at their behavior, it is better to find the right time to talk, once parents/caregivers and adolescents have calmed down.*
  - **Asking about any problems** or concerns they may be facing.
  - **Recognizing our own mistakes and taking responsibility,** and apologizing if needed. *This lets your teenager know that you respect them enough to apologize. This promotes respect towards parents and encourages the adolescents to do the same. Remember that parents are role models for children.*



- **Noticing and talking about any changes in behavior** that parents might be observing.
- Respecting the need for **privacy**.
- **Listening to their opinions and concerns** before sharing your own opinions and concerns.
- **Guiding adolescents** to find solutions to their problems when needed.
- **Helping teens anticipate and plan** for challenging or uncomfortable situations with peers and others.

## 4. The concept of empathy

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** It is important to know the difference between empathy and sympathy. 'Sympathy' is to feel pity or sorrow for someone else's misfortune. Empathy, goes one level deeper than sympathy and joins us more to the person we are sharing with because we are feeling the same, rather than looking at what they are feeling. 'Empathy' is being able to step into another person's shoes and experience their feelings with them, and then helping them with those feelings. We all know what it feels like to be sad when someone hurts our feelings. Empathy is about letting the other person know that you understand their feelings. All children, boys and girls, in the family need their caregivers to show empathy.

1. Write the word "Empathy" on your flipchart or paper so parents can see the word.



2. **ASK >** What does the word 'empathy' mean?

- After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:
  - Empathy is the ability for one person to perceive the emotions, needs and desires of another person. It is the ability of one person to walk in the shoes of another person and feel what that is like.
  - As it relates to parenting, empathy is the ability to perceive the emotions, needs and desires of a child, and to be able to respond in a nurturing way, keeping the positive welfare of the child at the forefront.



- Empathy is the ability to understand and act with care.
- Both boys and girls need their parents to show empathy.



**3. ASK >** *Why is empathy necessary for being a parent/caregiver of a child?*

- After parents have responded, share the following answer, if needed:
  - If we show children empathy, they will be more likely to talk with us when they have a problem.
  - Empathy creates positive feelings and relationships.
  - When you are empathic with your child, you are modeling how they can be empathetic with others.
  - Teenage years are difficult years emotionally, physically and mentally, and teenagers still need parental support, love and help.

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## 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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## 5. Showing empathy: The steps technique

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**Time:** 25 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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**1. SAY >** *Being empathetic, and understanding the feelings and needs of others will help us understand why children behave in a certain way and help parents and caregivers react in a more healthy and constructive manner.*

**2.** Being empathetic with adolescents opens space for dialogue.

**3.** Here is a simple technique to help you to better understand your child's feelings and be able to respond sensitively:

**Step 1:** Identify the feeling

**Step 2:** Determine the reason

**Step 3:** Validate the feeling (honor the feeling)

**Step 4:** Help your child with their feelings. Take action and find a solution if appropriate.

**4.** Share the following as an example with parents, to explain these 4 steps. You can also use this to present a role-play in front of the parents.



**ADAPTATION >** In the example below, the child's name is Sarah. If needed, change the name to something more familiar to parents in your context.



## 5. SAY >

- *The first step is to try to identify or label what someone is feeling. When parents validate a feeling, they should first identify it or label it. Naming the adolescent's feeling helps them identify their own emotions. We know from research that adolescents are still struggling to identify their emotions, and the emotions of others. For example, you could say, "Sarah, you look like you are sad right now – are you?"*
- *What are the emotions that your teens are likely to feel?*
- *After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:*
  - Frustration
  - Sadness
  - Anger
  - Fear
  - Shame
  - Resentment
  - Joy
  - Disgust
  - Trust
  - Surprise
- *The second step is to understand why Sarah is feeling sad. For example, you could say, "**Why are you sad? I would really like to help if I can.**"*
- *Sarah can tell you or she may choose not to right now. You can say to Sarah, "**Feel free to come and talk to me when you are ready.**"*
- *The third step is to validate the teen's feelings. Sarah might have had a disagreement with a friend or felt rejected by her peers at school.*
- ***Do not dismiss that reason.** Acknowledge and respect the 'why'. If you belittle your daughter or son they might not talk to you about their feelings anymore.*
- *The **fourth step is to deal with those feelings with your adolescents.** You can brainstorm with your child what, if anything, needs to be done.*
- *Sometimes the situation may require the parent and the adolescent to come up with possible actions that may help remedy the situation.*
- *Guide the adolescent to find an appropriate solution. Refrain from giving options right away. This will help them to develop problem-solving skills. Sometimes the situation does not need an action other than just comforting your child or sharing in their joy.*



## 6. ASK > What are some examples of situation that would require adult help, and of situations that might just require listening?



- After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:

**Situations requiring adult help:**

- Problems at school
- Drug or alcohol use
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual activity, sexually transmitted disease

**Situations that may require help or just listening and supporting:**

- Argument with a friend
- Problems at school with peers
- Goals for the future

 → **7. ASK >** We have talked a bit about typically developing teenagers and the problems they may face, but what about teenagers experiencing a mental or physical disability?

 → **8. SAY >** Adolescents with disabilities need care and support just like any other girl or boy. There are different kinds of barriers in families and communities that can get in the way of providing adequate educational, social and physical opportunities for disabled teens. Can you think of some of these barriers?

- After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:
  - Walking to school for a blind teen
  - The inability to play games with other teens for a teenager who cannot walk
  - Attitudes of other children towards boys and girls with disabilities

 → **9. SAY >** Teens with disabilities need their caregivers to be empathetic in order to understand and help overcome barriers to participating in important family and community activities. This will help them feel more connected to the people and world around them.

 → **10. ASK >**

- Why is it important to teach boys, and not just girls, how to be empathetic?
- What are some ways that parents can teach their sons to be empathetic towards their sisters and other girls?



- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:
  - Parents (both mothers and fathers) can model empathy towards each other and their daughters.
  - Parents can stop inappropriate behavior towards girls like harassment, name calling and violence.

**11.** Distribute Handout 11: The 4 Steps of Empathy.

## 6. Practicing the steps of empathetic communication

**Time:** 30 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Pairs



**1. SAY >** Let's practice the 4 steps of empathy.

### Role-play for skills practice: The 4 steps of empathy

- 2.** Pick 2 parents for the role-play. One will be the parent or caregiver and the other will play the 13-year-old daughter.
- 3.** Present the scenario – the 13-year-old daughter is being sexually harassed in the community by teenagers much older than her.
- 4.** Coach the 'parent' and the '13-year-old girl' on the role-play.
- 5.** Have the volunteers present the role-play in front of the group.

**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

**Parent:** [Notices that the daughter looks sad.]

Oh, Sarah you look so sad, **[Step 1]** do you want to tell me what is making you sad? **[Step 2]**

**Girl:** On my way to school, some older boys have been making sexual comments and it makes me feel really uncomfortable.

**Parent:** I am so sorry that this is happening to you, Sarah and it is not okay. **[Step 3]** What can I do to help? Can we find an adult to walk you to school? **[Step 4]**





6. Discuss the role-play:
  - Ask the people playing the '13-year-old girl':
    - How did they feel to have their feelings acknowledged and validated?
    - How did they feel to know that their parent was going to help them?
  - Ask the people playing the 'parent' how it felt to respond to their daughter in this way.
7. Have parents get into pairs and practice the 4 steps. They can use this same scenario or create a new one.
8. Walk around and observe/coach parents while they are doing this. This will be a new skill for many of them. **Do not hesitate to make them practice as much as needed. This is very important session.**
9.  **ASK >** *How would you use the 4 steps of empathy with a boy who is disabled?*
10. Brainstorm some ideas about using the 4 steps in a scenario with a child with disabilities, and then have them practice in the same ways as above.

**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

**17-year-old boy in wheelchair:** Dad, some of the students at school are saying that I should just stay home and not take up a space at school. They say I can't do anything anyway because I am in this wheelchair. It is really hard to keep going day after day and listen to them say I can't do anything.

**Father:** Oh, son I am sorry and know this must make you feel sad. I know how hard you work at school and so I know you must be disappointed that they can't see the smart, capable person that you are.

**Boy:** Do you think I should drop out of school or do you think there is a job for someone like me?

**Father:** I will support you in whatever decision you make, but if you feel strong and capable and you work hard in school, I am confident we will find the right opportunity for you to have a meaningful future.



11. Discuss the role-play:

- Ask the people playing the 'father' how it felt to respond to their 'child' this way
- Ask the people playing the 'child' how it felt to have their 'father' respond in this way.

## 7. Home assignment

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**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. Ask parents to use the 4 steps of empathy with their children between now and the next session.

2. Review the 4 steps with them:

**Step 1:** Identify the feeling

**Step 2:** Determine the reason

**Step 3:** Validate the feeling (honor the feeling)

**Step 4:** Help your child with their feelings. Take action and find a solution if appropriate.

3. Tell parents that they can also follow the 4-step process to understand their own feelings, using questions and statements like:

- *What do I feel? Why?*
- *The way I feel is okay. I can accept the way I feel, no matter how illogical or inappropriate it is.*
- *I will honor my feelings. I will deal with those feelings safely and constructively.*

## 8. Evaluation

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. ASK >

- *What did you like best about the session?*
- *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*
- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Have you any other comments or suggestions to improve the session?*



2. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.
3. Make sure each parent signs the Attendance Form (Resource 3). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.

### **Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring**

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report. If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 7:

## Guiding Healthy Choices

Parenting session summary | Duration: 2 hours

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Articulate ways to support their adolescents to make good decisions and be responsible family members.
- Name positive parenting techniques such as praise, consequences, and family agreements and rules.
- List and use the steps of family meetings and agreements.

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

- SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum for Caregivers of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- Handouts:
  - [Handout 12: Family Meetings](#)
  - [Handout 13: Steps of Family Meetings](#)
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pens

### PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Read through the materials for this session and, if there is a parent handout, make copies for each parent. Give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

### ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



## SESSION OVERVIEW

Parents learn the steps to creating family agreements and practice guiding their teens to make healthy choices.

| Session activity                         | Time       |
|------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction              | 15 minutes |
| 2. Energizer: The picture game           | 10 minutes |
| 3. Back to the brain!                    | 15 minutes |
| 4. Family meetings and agreements        | 30 minutes |
| 5. Supporting good decision-making       | 35 minutes |
| 6. Home assignment                       | 5 minutes  |
| 7. Evaluation                            | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Welcome all the parents back and thank them for coming again!
2. Ask about the home assignment and praise parents for practicing their new skills. The home assignment was for parents to spend time communicating with their child using empathy.
3. Ask parents if they remember some of the ideas discussed during the last session. Ask them to share their experiences of using empathetic communication.
4. Thank and praise parents and caregivers for the efforts they made!

### 2. Energizer: The picture game

**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups

1. Divide your group of parents into 3 teams, with about 4 or 5 parents on each team.
2. Give each team a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.



3. Give parents instructions for the **'The picture game' activity**:
  - *Each team will choose one parent to draw a picture of the place, thing, or animal I tell them to draw.*
  - *Each team will draw the same thing.*
  - *The team that guesses what their artist is drawing wins!*
4. Play once or twice depending on time. If you play a second time, choose a new team member in each group to draw.
5. Emphasize to parents that this is a game they can play with their children at home after a family meeting.

### 3. Back to the brain!

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**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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#### Executive brain function



#### 1. SAY >

- *We have discussed previously that adolescence is a time of considerable brain and body development. Adolescents are generally more self-aware and self-reflective than younger children and they are moving towards being able to think in a more long-term, strategic way.*
- *Self-awareness and critical thinking happens in a part of our brain called the 'prefrontal cortex'. This part of our brain controls our executive function.*
- *Executive function allows us to coordinate our thoughts and behaviors. This means that we are able to think better as we get older!*
- *The key here is that this part of our brain is not fully developed until we are in our 20s!*



#### 2. ASK > *Do you remember when you were teenagers if you made impulsive decisions that were not thought out well?*



#### 3. SAY >

- *All of these brain and hormonal changes influence social cognition, which is the way we process information we receive from social interactions with others.*
- *Due to these changes, it may be hard at times for adolescents to take on the perspective of others, which is critical for successful social communication.*





- **4. ASK >** *Have you noticed your teenager's ability to be empathetic and social one day and then, on another day, they might not be as friendly to others or they might express their need to be alone?*



- **5. SAY >**
- *This is typical adolescent behavior!*
  - *Next, we are going to talk about some ways to guide and encourage responsible, respectful behavior in our adolescents while their brains are still developing.*

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### 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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## 4. Family meetings and agreements

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**Time:** 30 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups

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- 1.** Distribute Handout 12: Family Meetings and have parents look at the first image.



- **2. ASK >**
- *What is happening in this picture?*
  - *What do you think this family is discussing?*
  - *Why is it important to include all family members, including boys and girls, in important discussions?*

*Example answer: A family meeting including boys and girls. The parents are giving them compliments for the good things they have done in the past week.*



- **3. SAY >**
- *Regular family meetings are a great way to keep the lines of communication open between you and your teenagers.*
  - *During family meetings, spaces for dialogue are created, problem-solving skills can be encouraged and family agreements can be discussed, agreed on and revised as needed.*
  - *Ensure that all family members attend the family meeting.*



- The idea behind family meetings is to give teenagers and children space to voice their changing developmental needs as they get older, discuss household responsibilities and find solutions to improve family life.

### Creating time and space for family meetings<sup>16</sup>



4. **SAY >** *It can be hard to find time to meet together and talk as a whole family. Why is it important to create time to meet as a family?*

*After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:*

- Strengthens the sense of belonging to a family
- Makes adolescents feel valued and loved
- Creates and maintains positive parent-child relationships
- Create spaces for teenagers to express their points of view, frustrations and concerns in a positive way. This makes them feel listened to
- Promotes equality among family members and reduces power struggles



5. **ASK >** *When are some good times to meet together as a family?*

*After parents have responded, share the following answer, if needed:*

- At a regular day and time in the week
- When everyone is calm and peaceful
- Right after having dinner together
- Friday after mosque or Sunday after church (adapt as necessary)
- On a weekend when everyone is home

6. Explain that family meetings are more effective when:
- They are regular and not only set up to manage a family crisis.
  - You keep an open discussion until family consensus is found, even if it takes more than one meeting to find a solution.
  - All concerns and questions are welcomed, as common or extraordinary as they may be.
  - The meetings are not too long – 30 minutes is a good average time; one hour is too long.
  - Adolescents are genuinely able to talk and be listened to. It is important that a family meeting is not another 'lecture on life' from an adult.

<sup>16</sup> Nelson, J. and Lott, L. 2012. *Positive discipline for teenagers, revised 3rd edition: Empowering your teens and yourself through kind and firm parenting*. New York, Three Rivers Press.





**ADAPTATION** > Adapt the names in this section to ones that are familiar in your context.

7. Explain the 4 steps of organizing a family meeting:

- **Step 1:** Family meetings always start best with a round of positive feedback on family life. Ideally, each family member has a chance to say something positive about every other family member. This encourages teenagers to appreciate good times spent with each other, to express gratitude and appreciate other family members. For example, “Sara, thank you for preparing dinner yesterday. Michael, I appreciated how you looked after your younger brothers while I was at the market.”
- **Step 2:** The family follows up on the solutions adopted during the last meeting. For example, “We agreed during our last meeting that everybody should be home by 6 o’clock. How did it work this week? Did everybody arrive home on time?”
- **Step 3:** All agenda items are identified. Everyone gets a chance to say what they would like to talk about. All conflicts and issues will not be solved but this is to provide an opportunity to give space to anybody to share their thoughts and listen. Listening does not mean that we agree, but is an opportunity to better understand each other’s perspectives. Items on the agenda are not necessarily issues, they can also be family projects. For example, “Godiya, you expressed your frustration about not being able to come to the market with me. As you know, for security reasons we cannot let you go. Is there something else that you would like to do, that would be safer? Would you like to attend any activities at the youth/women’s center?”
- **Step 4:** Enjoy family time together. Have fun, plan family events together. For example, “Who has an idea for something fun we can do together? What about going to the park for a picnic together next Saturday?”



### Setting up family agreements<sup>17</sup>

8. Distribute Handout 12: Family Meetings – Images 2, 3 and 4.
9. Explain the images:
  - Image 2 – Follow-up on last week's agreement about homework.
  - Image 3 – The adolescent girl wants to go to the market but she is not allowed because of security.
  - Image 4 – The family generates other solutions for having fun together and agrees to go for a walk or to the park together.

### 10. Explain **Setting up family agreements**.

 **11. SAY >** *Many times we assume that adolescents know the rules of the house and community. Family rules or agreements are more likely to be followed if they are co-created between adolescents and parents or caregivers. Family rules need to be age-appropriate and followed by everyone in the family! Rules are not just for teenagers, but for adults too.*

### 12. Explain the 4 steps to set up an agreement:

- **Step 1:** The adolescent expresses their point of view and objectives. The parent/caregiver listens with goodwill and curiosity in order to understand the problem, before talking!
- **Step 2:** Parents share their points of view and objectives.
- **Step 3:** If the objectives and expectations are very different, both parents/caregivers and teenagers can discuss potential solutions acceptable by all. Negotiation and compromise are essential for this step.
- **Step 4:** Parents and the adolescent choose one solution that they can try during a short period of time. This option will be the basis of their agreement. The solution should be clear, well understood by the adolescent and parents, and include a specific timeframe.

### 13. Distribute Handout 13: Steps of Family Meetings.

### Agreement follow-up

 **14. SAY >** *All agreements should have an effective follow-up to help adolescents respect their commitments.*

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<sup>17</sup> Nelson, J. and Lott, L. 2012. *Positive discipline for teenagers, revised 3rd edition: Empowering your teens and yourself through kind and firm parenting*. New York, Three Rivers Press.



**15.** Explain that follow-up of agreements is more effective when:

- Comments are simple, short and respectful. For example, “I note that you have not done your homework before you went out to play. Can you do it now, please?”
- If the adolescent contests or argues back, ask them, “What was decided in our agreement?”
- If the adolescent is still not fulfilling the agreement, use non-verbal language like showing your watch, touching the shoulder, and so on. The calmer you stay, the more effective you will be. Shouting at and criticizing the adolescent will not solve the problem. You will only reinforce the conflict.
- If you find that your teenager is repeatedly not following through with agreements, then you may choose to issue a consequence that is logical, such as limiting spending time with friends until they can complete their home commitments.
- When the adolescent finally respects their commitment, thank them for their cooperation.

Some additional suggestions include:

- *Remind them of the agreement before the deadline.*
- *Adolescents' priorities are not the same as parents' priorities. They don't think like adults.*
- *Stay firm on the agreement – don't give up and don't change the agreement half way through.*



**16. SAY >** *Not following up on agreements teaches the adolescents that they don't need to respect their commitments, that the parent's word has no value, and that they can do what they want since adults don't make them face their responsibilities.*

**17.** Divide parents into groups of 3 and, in their groups, ask them to think of 3 agreements/rules that would be helpful in guiding teenagers to make good decisions and contribute to the family. Tell them that the rules should be **clear** and **concise**.



- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:
  - All homework must be done before you go out to play.
  - Everyone will be treated with respect in our house. We will use kind words with each other.
  - Everyone is expected to do their chores. If you choose not to complete your chores, then you will have to do an extra chore the next day.



#### 18. SAY >

- Here is an example of something you can say to your teenagers:
- “We are really proud of you and enjoy spending time with you! We want you to know that we value your opinions and ideas about how to spend your time and contribute to our household. From now on, we will have dinner and family time every Wednesday night. This will be a time when we can talk about life, have fun together, and review how things are running in the house. What do you think about this idea? Let's go ahead and think about some rules and agreements that are important for our family.”

**TIP >** Make sure you are walking around and listening in and helping when needed.

#### 19. Have participants turn to their neighbor and practice creating family rules.

They can reference the above rules or create their own. Make sure that parents first consult the adolescents on what family agreements they think are important.

## 5. Supporting good decision-making

**Time:** 35 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Pairs



#### 1. SAY >

- When family rules are set up and agreed on, you do not need to threaten, yell, or use harsh physical discipline because your child broke the rules or made a mistake. This is a normal part of being an adolescent. This is part of the learning process!
- Mistakes are opportunities for learning, so it is important that you keep your cool and help your teenager learn from their mistakes.



- *For example, suppose you agree with your teen that they need to come home before dark on the weekends. It is Friday night and they come home a few hours after dark. How should you react?*
- *You do not need to yell at or hit them.*
- *You can talk to them about what happened – maybe there is a good reason why they were late.*
- *You can tell them that you were worried about them.*
- *Then you can problem-solve with them so that, next time they are out with friends, they can make it home on time.*
- *Remember your empathetic communication and problem-solving skills from the last session.*
- *You can also let them know that, if it happens again, they will not be allowed to go out the following weekend. It is important that you give your children a chance to learn from their mistakes – if they make the same mistake again, you can give them a logical consequence such as the one above.*



## 2. SAY >

- *Let us brainstorm a few ideas for some logical consequences for the following rule violations:*
  - *Not completing homework*
  - *Not finishing chores*
  - *Being unkind or violent to other family members*
- *After parents have responded, share the following examples, if needed:*
  - *All homework must be done before dinner. If you do not complete your homework, you will not be allowed to go outside and meet your friends.*
  - *Everyone will be treated with respect in our house. We will use kind words with each other. If you are unkind or violent towards family members, you must apologize to the family member. You could also do the chores for the family member you were unkind to.*
  - *Everyone is expected to do their chores. If you choose not to complete your chores, then you will have to do an extra chore the next day.*

### Role-play for skills practice: Helping a teenager learn from mistakes



## 3. SAY > *Let us practice helping a teenager learn from their mistake.*



4. Pick 2 parents for the role-play. One will be the parent and the other will be a 13-year-old boy.
5. Present the scenario – A parent tells the teenager that the boy has broken an agreement. The boy explains why he broke the agreement. The parent reminds the boy why it is important to fulfill his agreement. The boy explains how he will fulfill the agreement. The parent praises the boy and says that they will see how the boy fulfills his agreement in the following week
6. Coach the 'parent' and the '13-year-old boy' on the role-play. You can adapt the sample script provided, or create your own.
7. Have the volunteers present the role-play in front of the group.

**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

**Parent:** Ahmed, when I came down to fix breakfast this morning, I noticed that you did not complete your family chore.

**Ahmed:** I know, I was really busy yesterday with my homework and I forgot about it.

**Parent:** I know you are working very hard in school, Ahmed and I am really proud of you for that, and it is important for our household that everyone does their part. How can you remember to do your chores?

**Ahmed:** Well, I suppose I can do it as soon as I come home from school and then do my homework.

**Parent:** Okay, Ahmed that sounds good. Should we give that a try for the rest of this week and see how it goes?

**Ahmed:** Yes, I think that will be okay.

8. Discuss the role-play:
  - Ask the person playing the 'child', how they felt about the conversation.
  - Ask the person playing the 'parent', how they felt about the conversation.



## 6. Home assignment

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**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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### 1. SAY

- You have to do 2 things between now and when we meet next:
  - Praise your sons and daughters for who they are and the ways they contribute to your family and their future.
  - Hold a family meeting to create some family guidelines.
- Remember that you are a powerful role model for your teens.

## 7. Evaluation

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

---



### 1. ASK >

- What did you like best about the session?
- What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?
- How was this session helpful?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions to improve the session?

2. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.

3. Make sure each parent signs the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.

## Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#). If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 8: Respecting Adolescents and their Changing Bodies

Parenting session summary | Duration: 2 hours, 5 minutes

## OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Articulate why it is important to talk to their adolescents about their changing bodies.
- List key information about puberty to share with their adolescents.

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

- SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum for Caregivers of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- [Handout 14: Puberty for Boys and Girls](#)
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pen
- Technology to play videos, if available

## PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Check whether the videos on puberty are relevant for your context. The videos are available in Arabic with English subtitles at:
  - Girls: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5SdRlq238k>
  - Boys: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jY30dgXT39E>

You will need a VLC multimedia player on a computer. VLC can be downloaded from <http://www.videolan.org/vlc>

- Read through the materials for this session and, if there is a parent handout, make copies for each parent. Give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- Gather information about local education resources to provide to parents.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

## ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).





## SESSION OVERVIEW

Parents discuss the process of puberty for both boys and girls, and explore ways to discuss puberty with their adolescents.

| Session activity                                            | Time       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                 | 15 minutes |
| 2. Energizer                                                | 10 minutes |
| 3. The experience of puberty                                | 20 minutes |
| 4. Responding to the needs, fears and challenges of puberty | 30 minutes |
| 5. Keeping your teenagers knowledgeable and informed        | 35 minutes |
| 6. Home assignment                                          | 5 minutes  |
| 7. Evaluation                                               | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                    |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Welcome all the participants back and thank them for coming again!

**TIP >** Give each parent a chance to share their answers

2. Ask if they were able to do any of the following since the last session:

- Praise their sons and daughters for who they are and the ways they contribute to the family and their own future.
- Hold a family meeting to create some family guidelines.
- Be a positive role model for their teenagers.
- Model or teach gender fairness in their home; if so, how?

### 2. Energizer

**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Give parents instructions to play 'Charades'.



2. **SAY >**

- One person will start by thinking of an animal or a profession and then acting it out in front of the group without using any words or sounds.



- *The others have to try to guess the animal or the profession.*
- *The first person who guesses correctly will get to come up and act out next.*

3. You, the Facilitator, can start the game by taking the first turn.

### 3. The experience of puberty

**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups

**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** Assess the mood in the room. Does anyone seem especially uncomfortable with the subject matter? Has anyone spoken out or left? If there seems to be significant discomfort, start a discussion around that. Try to encourage discussion around the reasons for feeling uncomfortable but continue to emphasize that this information is critical to know, both for parents/caregivers and for adolescents. It will help to keep teenage girls and boys healthy and protected.

1. Emphasize that it is very important for men and women to understand the process of puberty for both boys and girls.



2. **SAY >**

- *We are going to talk about puberty – the science behind it, the specific changes that happen during puberty, why these changes happen, and how you can support your girls and boys as they transition through this difficult stage of life.*
- *Some of the material may be a bit uncomfortable or strange to talk about. That reaction is normal. We don't talk about these things in a large group every day. But by learning about this process here in a safe space, you will be more comfortable talking about the changes of puberty with your teenagers.*
- *It is important that your sons and daughters get accurate information about the changes they are going through.*



3. **ASK >** *What is puberty?*

- After parents have responded, share the answer, if necessary: *Puberty is defined as the period in life when people are approaching sexual maturity and are becoming capable of reproduction.*

**TIP >** Have parents volunteer to answer each question.





#### 4. ASK >

- *How many of you remember what it was like to go through puberty?*
- *Do you know some of the signs that show puberty is beginning for a girl?*
- *Do you know some of the signs that show that a boy has entered puberty?*
- *Not all boys and girls going through puberty will display all of these signs.*

#### 5. If possible, show the videos on puberty for boys and for girls.

- Please note: Check first if these videos are relevant to your context.  
The videos are available in Arabic and English at: <https://rescue.app.box.com/shared/9cl0pg32gernlp0sr7zqtkgiww6dvbnh/1/5128813266>.  
You will need a VLC multimedia player on a computer.

#### 6. After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:

- *Changes in girls –*
  - *Growth of breasts*
  - *Monthly menstruation or a 'period'*
  - *Growth of hair in genital region and under arms*
  - *Changes in mood or disposition*
  - *Hormonal changes*
  - *Possible interest in sexual intercourse and sexual activities*
  - *Wanting to spend less time with family and more time with friends*
  - *Engaging in sexual activity*
- *Changes in boys –*
  - *Growth of hair in genital region and under arms*
  - *Changes in voice – it gets deeper*
  - *Facial hair*
  - *Changes in mood or disposition*
  - *Hormonal changes*
  - *May want to be alone more*
  - *Possible interest in sexual intercourse and sexual activities*
  - *Wanting to spend less time with family and more time with friends*
  - *Engaging in sexual activity*

**TIP >** Note that this increases the risk of early pregnancy and contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

**TIP >** Note that this increases the risk of early pregnancy and contracting sexually transmitted diseases.



#### 7. ASK > *Why is it important to talk to your teens about puberty?*



- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:
  - Teens know that something is happening to their bodies and they will look for information. As a trusted adult, it is up to you to communicate the right information upfront to avoid myths and misinformation.
  - Communication builds trust and positive relationships with your teens so they feel comfortable talking to you about their problems.
  - Puberty can be challenging. Having a loving parent who shows understanding and gives comfort will help your teen to go through this difficult time more easily.



#### 8. SAY >

- Everything mentioned on this list is both a typical and natural result of puberty. Some teenagers may have an easier time going through puberty than others.
- Some teenagers have a hard time during puberty. This is also normal and, most often, not a sign that something is going wrong.
- You, as their parent and caregiver, can be a source of support and strength as they go through this stage of life.
- Your teenager may seem like a completely different person during this stage but, remember, it is only a stage in life and the process of puberty allows each adolescent to grow into a healthy, happy adult.



#### 9. SAY > We are going to talk about what is going on inside adolescent girls and boys as they go through these changes of puberty. We are going to discuss hormonal changes which happen in both boys and girls, and about menstruation in girls.



#### 10. ASK > Who knows what hormones are?

- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:
  - Hormones are chemical substances produced in our bodies. They control and regulate the activity of certain cells or organs.
  - We all have hormones, even as adults, that can affect our health and well-being.
  - It is a change in these hormones that causes menstruation to begin and they initiate the other symptoms of puberty we have talked about.



- Hormones are responsible for the increased feelings of sexual attraction we begin to feel when we are teenagers. This is why teenagers think about and want to have sex.
- Hormones are also responsible for changes in mood, which sometimes leads to mood swings in teenagers.



#### 11. SAY >

- Menstruation means that a girl is now physically capable of becoming pregnant. This is important for both boys and girls to know.
- In addition to early pregnancy, menstruation often poses some other challenges for most girls, including how they can stay clean and how they can handle some of the side effects of menstruation.
- There are many ways you can help your daughters manage their monthly cycle in a way that is hygienic, dignified and supportive.

#### 12. Distribute Handout 14: Puberty for Boys and Girls.

#### 13. Divide parents into small groups of 3 or 4.

#### 14. Ask parents to discuss the question: *What are some of the issues or challenges for girls in your community when they are menstruating?*

#### 15. Give parents 5 minutes to discuss the question and then have them share their responses with the rest of the group.

- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:
  - **Light to severe abdominal pain** – This is caused by the shedding of the uterine wall, which is the source of monthly bleeding.
  - **Emotional changes** – Some women and girls feel sad or irritable during menstruation. However, this is not universal. Individual women and girls respond differently.
  - **Public or private stigma** – In many homes and societies women and girls are shunned or discriminated against while they are menstruating. In many contexts, they may be considered 'impure' and therefore isolated, and not permitted to participate in educational or social activities.
  - **Missing school** – If girls do not have a method or adequate resources for keeping their clothes protected, they will often opt out of going to school during days of their menstruation each month. This

#### ADAPTATION >

Group parents by gender if you feel they will be uncomfortable talking about menstruation with members of the opposite sex.



- leads to girls falling behind in their lessons and, ultimately, may lead to them dropping out of school if they feel inadequate in their studies.*
- *Girls are forced to miss school because they feel ashamed, do not have the appropriate hygiene and sanitation facilities at their school, or they do not have the supplies to manage their periods in a safe and clean way.*
  - **Not having the proper sanitary products to keep her clothes clean** – *Many girls do not have access to sanitary napkins or pads that can keep blood from staining her clothes. This is often the primary reason that girls do not leave the house during their 'time of the month'. This does not need to happen! There are sanitary pads, washable cloths, and other means to protect clothing.*



#### 16. SAY >

- *Women and girls often feel ashamed about something that is a natural part of being a woman and eventually becoming a mother.*
- *In most cases, a woman must be old enough to menstruate in order to conceive a child. Menstruation is a sign that an adolescent girl is healthy and growing!*
- *It is not a disease or a sickness.*
- *The local economy suffers when women or adolescent girls are required to stay at home and discontinue work or their education.*



#### 17. SAY >

- *Girls do not need to stay at home during menstruation unless they feel so unwell that it disrupts their daily activities.*
- *There are tools to help your daughter stay clean, healthy and keep her dignity.*



#### 18. ASK >

- *Which feminine products and practices can your daughters use for managing menstruation?*
- *How well do they work?*

**19.** Have parents share locally accepted ways for women and girls to manage menstruation. Write each method on flipchart paper.

**20.** After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if culturally appropriate:



**Clean pieces of cloth** – These are cut to fit in the panty area by sewing several layers of cotton cloth on top of each other. These must be clean.

**Pads or sanitary towels** – These are designed to fit the panty area, close to the body. They have strips of tape that keep them attached to the panties, and the panties help to hold the pads close to the opening of the vagina. Pads must be disposed of in a pit latrine, buried or burned after use. They should not be left in the garbage pile or flushed down the toilet.

**Tampons** – These are small, compressed cotton objects, formed into solid, tube-like shapes, which are pushed up into the vagina during menstruation to absorb the blood. Attached to the tampon is a strong, soft cotton string, which hangs out of the vagina. Pulling this string removes the tampon. Tampons need to be changed often; they could cause infection if left in. One should never leave a tampon in for more than 8 hours.

**During menstruation it is important to stay clean and healthy.** These are some things girls can do:

- Bathe with soap and water once a day.
- Wash panties/underpants with soap and water to avoid stains.
- Change the pad or cloth regularly to avoid soiling clothes and bad odor.
- Wash hands after changing sanitary pads, tampons or cloth.

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## 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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## 4. Responding to the needs, fears and challenges of puberty

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**Time:** 30 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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-  → **1. ASK >** *What can you as a parent or caregiver do to support your daughter or female family members during this time?*

*Example answers:*

- *Listening*
- *Empathy*
- *Making time*



- Taking a non-judgmental approach and using a non-judgmental tone of voice
- Having confidence in them
- Believing them if they say they being abused or exploited, and getting them the right help when they need it



## 2. SAY >

- Through your consistent support and love, your sons and daughters will be able to:
  - Tell you about the changes their bodies are going through, including when your daughter starts menstruating.
  - Learn from you about the options for managing menstruation safely, cleanly and with dignity.
  - Confide in you if they are feeling confused about the changes of puberty or need more information.
  - Let you know if there is anyone stigmatizing them at school, at home, or in the community.

## 5. Keeping your teenagers knowledgeable and informed

**Time:** 35 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Pairs



### 1. ASK >

**TIP >** Have parents volunteer to answer.

- What are your fears about boys and girls knowing about their bodies, and about what is happening with each others' bodies?
  - What are the possible benefits for adolescents of understanding the changes that their bodies are going through?
- 2.** Place a flipchart in front of the group and make a list of the experiences of puberty they discussed:
- The physical and emotional changes of puberty
  - The impact of hormones
  - The process of menstruation for girls
  - Managing menstruation with the right protection
- 3.** Have parents brainstorm the benefits of talking to their adolescents about these issues at an early stage. List their answers on the flipchart.







#### 4. SAY >

- *It is critical that boys and girls know and understand the changes in their bodies and how their bodies work. It will make them more confident, less fearful and better able to protect themselves.*
- *You can reduce the risk of misinformation and abuse by sharing this information.*
- *In the next session we will talk about pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and some other risks for adolescents.*
- *Now, we are going to talk about how best to share this information with your teenagers and how you can support their learning at home.*



#### 5. SAY > *We will brainstorm about talking to teens about 5 topics related to puberty.*



#### 6. ASK > *What can you tell adolescents about puberty and the changes they can expect in their bodies during this time?*

*Example answers:*

- *It is the time in life when people reach sexual maturity and become capable of having children.*
- *Teenage boys and girls begin to develop hair under their arms and in their pubic areas.*
- *Girls grow breasts.*
- *Boys can grow facial hair and their voices change and become deeper.*



#### 7. ASK > *What can you tell adolescents about taking care of their bodies during puberty?*

*Example answers:*

- *Bathe and wash daily*
- *For girls, change sanitary materials regularly and wash hands after changing*
- *Wash face regularly to help with acne*

**ADAPTATION >**  
Adapt your guidance for this topic to the resources available to parents and teens in your context.





8. **ASK >** *What would you tell adolescents about making wise and healthy decisions about their bodies?*

*Example answers:*

- *Getting enough sleep*
- *Exercise*
- *Use relaxation methods to help with stress*
- *Eat good, healthy foods*



9. **ASK >** *What would you tell adolescents about understanding sexual feelings and attraction?*

*Example answers:*

- *Hormones are chemical substances produced in our bodies. They control and regulate the activity of certain cells or organs. We all have hormones, even as adults, that can affect our health and well-being.*
- *It is a change in these hormones that causes menstruation and they initiate the other symptoms of puberty we have talked about.*
- *Hormones are responsible for the increased feelings of sexual attraction we begin to feel when we are teenagers. This is why teenagers think about and want to have sex.*

10. Tell parents that, in the next session, you will talk about the potential consequences of sexual activity.

### **Role-play for skills practice: Showing interest in your teen's life**

11. Pick 2 parents for the role-play. One will be the 'parent' and the other will be a 'teenager'.
12. Present the scenario – A parent talks to the teenager about changes taking place in their bodies during puberty. The parent also conveys how important it is to have this conversation, despite the teenager being uncomfortable with it.
13. Coach the 'parent' and the 'teenager' on the role-play. You can adapt the sample script provided or create your own.
14. Have the volunteers present the role-play in front of the group.



**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

[**Mohammad** – a 13-year-old boy – walks into the house after school and the parent asks to speak with him. Mohamed and the parent are both calm while they talk.]

**Parent:** Mohammad, how was your day at school?

**Mohammad:** It was okay. We have a new teacher and he seems nice.

**Parent:** Well Mohammad, I would like to talk to you today about some of the changes you have started to go through and will continue to go through for the next few years. I know these things can be hard to talk about, but they are important.

**Mohammad:** Do we really have to talk about this now?

**Parent:** Yes, Mohammad, it is important. Have you started to notice the changes that are happening with your body? These changes are normal and are called 'puberty'.

**Mohammad:** Do you mean changes like my muscles getting bigger, because I have noticed that.

**Parent:** Right, Mohammad and have you noticed other changes like getting hair under your arms and around your private area?

**Mohammad:** Yes, but I don't want to talk about this.

**Parent:** I know it is uncomfortable Mohammad, but it is important that you are bathing regularly to keep yourself clean. You can get some uncomfortable fungus and rashes if you do not. Do you understand?

**Mohammad:** Yes.

**Parent:** The other thing, Mohammad, is I notice you have been staying up very late and it is important that you get enough sleep and rest so you can do well in school and stay healthy.

**Mohammad:** I know I have been up late. I just don't feel tired some nights.

**Parent:** Okay Mohammad, but I want you to tell me if your sleep becomes a problem or if you are feeling stressed out or worried about something.

**Mohammad:** Okay.



15. Discuss the role-play:

- Ask the 'parent' how it felt to have this conversation?
- Ask parents and caregivers if they would be comfortable having this conversation with their adolescents.



16. **SAY >** *In the next session we will talk about sex, and how to talk to your teens about it.*

## 6. Home assignment

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**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. Assign the following homework tasks until the next session:

- Parents should talk to their adolescents about a way for them to let them know when they need to talk about something privately. Remind them to use the empathetic communication skills discussed in previous sessions. Some ways to do this may include:
  - A request to take a walk
  - A special time of each day/week where the adolescent and parent can talk one-to-one
  - Telling the teenager how they can let the parent know if they need to talk



2. **SAY >**

- *It is better for teenagers to talk in confidence to a knowledgeable family member than for them to receive wrong information from peers or other adults.*
- *In the next session, we will talk about helping teenagers to lower their risks of sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and other risks to their safety and well-being.*

## 7. Evaluation

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. **ASK >**

- *What did you like best about the session?*
- *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*



- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Have you any other comments or suggestions to improve the session?*

2. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.
3. Make sure each parent signs the Attendance Form (Resource 3). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.

### Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report. If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 9: Protecting the Health, Well-being and Dignity of Adolescents – Reproductive Health and Early Marriage

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Parenting session summary | Duration: 2 hours, 5 minutes

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## OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- List key information to share with their children about reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Articulate the negative effects of early marriage using empathetic communication skills.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.
- You may want to bring in a health worker who can talk in-depth about the physical risks of early pregnancy for girls.

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Parenting Skills Intervention Curriculum for Parents of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- [Handout 15: Early Marriage](#)
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pens

## PREPARED REQUIRED

- Draw or find pictures of 4 girls.
- Read through the materials for this session and make copies of the handout for each parent. Give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.

## ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



## SESSION OVERVIEW

Parents understand sexual and reproductive health risks, including early marriage, and practice talking to teenagers about these issues. Parents and caregivers explore the risks of early marriage and the benefits to girls of allowing them to wait until adulthood for marriage.

| Session activity                                           | Time       |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                | 15 minutes |
| 2. Relaxation exercise: Stretching                         | 5 minutes  |
| 3. Sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies | 30 minutes |
| 4. Protection and tradition                                | 10 minutes |
| 5. Early or forced marriage                                | 20 minutes |
| 6. Who is ready to get married?                            | 15 minutes |
| 7. Practicing empathetic responses                         | 15 minutes |
| 8. Home assignment                                         | 5 minutes  |
| 9. Evaluation                                              | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: fidelity monitoring                   |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Welcome all the parents back and thank them for coming again!
2. Ask parents about the home assignment from the previous session, and whether they talked to their teens about creating spaces and discussed ways for their sons and daughters to talk to them about private, sensitive issues.
3. Ask if any parents had private discussions with their teenagers. If they did, ask them how it went.
4. Ask parents if they remember some of the ideas discussed during the last session.
5. Ask them how the parent support groups are going. Are they meeting? Are the groups helpful? Do they plan to continue meeting as a group, even after this program ends?
6. Thank and praise parents and caregivers for the efforts they have made!



## 2. Relaxation exercise: Stretching

**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Lead parents through the following stretches and tell them that stretching is good for muscles and can help with relaxation.



### 2. SAY >

- *Stand up and put both arms above your head and reach your fingers as far toward the sky as you can. Do this for about 30 seconds.*
- *Bend your waist and touch your toes, or reach as far as you can towards your toes.*
- *Stand back up, bend your heads forward so your chin goes down towards your chest, and roll your neck slowly from left to right.*

3. Ask parents if they have any other stretches they do at home that they could share.

## 3. Sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies

**Time:** 30 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Pairs



### 1. SAY >

- *Today we are going to continue to talk about health and well-being during adolescence. During this time in life, the risk of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases increases.*
- *Sexual activity often begins during puberty and, when teenagers become sexually active, their risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases increases. It may feel uncomfortable thinking about your son or daughter being sexually active.*
- *Preparing your teenagers to protect themselves and make safe decisions is critical to their overall well-being and reproductive health. This will affect their ability to have healthy children in the future.*



### 2. ASK >

- *What questions do adolescents have about sex?*
- *Have your adolescents already asked you questions about sex?*





- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:
  - What are condoms and how do we use them?
  - How do girls get pregnant?
  - What happens when people have sex? Does it hurt?
  - How do you get HIV/AIDS?



### 3. ASK >

- If you have been asked some of these kinds of questions, how have you answered or handled them?
- Why is it important for adolescents to be able to get accurate information about their sexual health from parents and caregivers?
- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:
  - Your teenagers may get inaccurate or misleading information from their peers.
  - Your teenagers may experience peer pressure to engage in risky sexual behaviors.
  - Teenagers can make better and safer decisions when they have accurate information about their bodies and sexually reproductive health.



### 4. SAY >

- Now we are going to talk about sexually transmitted diseases and then practice how to communicate with boys and girls when they have questions about sex, pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.
- Some of the most common sexually transmitted diseases are chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, genital herpes, pubic lice and HIV.



### 5. SAY > Unfortunately when people have a sexually transmitted disease, they might not know they have one. This means a person can feel healthy but still have an infection, which is why they are so easy to catch and pass to others.



### 6. ASK > What are some ways of preventing sexually transmitted diseases and/or early pregnancy?

7. After parents have shared their responses, explain the 'ABC method':
  - The 'ABC method' can help prevent sexually transmitted diseases.



- The ABC method can also help to avoid pregnancy, especially early pregnancy during adolescence when a girl's body is still growing and not ready to have a baby.
- Many people only discover that they have a sexually transmitted disease when a person they had sex with tells them, or they are examined by a doctor.
- The 'A' in ABC stands for 'Abstinence', which means not having sex. This is the only 100 per cent certain way to prevent sexually transmitted disease and pregnancy.
- The 'B' stands for 'Be monogamous' – the risk of sexually transmitted diseases decreases significantly if a person only has sex with the same person and not with multiple partners.
- The 'C' stands for 'Condom', because condoms can prevent many sexually transmitted diseases and help to avoid unwanted pregnancy.

**8. ASK >** *Do you have any questions about sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancy and how to prevent them?*



**9. SAY >**

- *Now that we have talked about unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, let's think about some questions that your adolescents might ask you about sex.*
- *Think about how you would answer these questions and discuss them with your partner.*

**ADAPTATION >** Adapt the questions to your context.

**10.** Have volunteers share their responses to both questions with their partner.



**11. ASK >** *What would you tell your adolescent if they asked you what they should do if someone was sexually harassing them?*



**12.** After parents have responded, explain what parents can do about sexual harassment. **SAY >**

- *Various factors like peer pressure, curiosity and loneliness, to name a few — steer some teenagers into early sexual activity. Sexual harassment includes calling someone an inappropriate name, making inappropriate comments about their body, inappropriate touching, or showing pornographic pictures or videos. Sexual harassment is unacceptable! Praise your teenager for reporting it to you and discuss together how to empower your teenager to protect themselves. For*



example always walking with peers, reporting misbehavior of other teenagers to the school principal, and so on.

 **13. ASK >** What would you tell your adolescent if they asked you what they should do if their boyfriend or girlfriend wants to have sex, but they don't.

 **14.** After parents have responded, explain the steps they could take. **SAY >**

- If you teenager comes to you to discuss this issue, you have built a solid relationship with him or her based on trust. This is an amazing achievement!
- First, praise your teenager for coming to you.
- Second, explain that no one should have sex out of a sense of obligation or fear. Any form of forced sex is rape, whether the perpetrator is a stranger or someone your teen has been dating or is engaged with. Impress upon your teen that 'no' always means 'no'. Emphasize that alcohol and drugs impair judgment and reduce inhibitions, leading to situations in which date rape is more likely to occur.<sup>18</sup>

**TIP >** Date rape is a form of rape perpetrated by a person who is known to the victim and in which there has been some sort of romantic or potentially sexual relationship.

## 4. Protection and tradition

**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

 **1. ASK >**

- What are some examples of cultural practices that involve adolescents?
- What are some of the ways you protect your teens from dishonor?
- Why are they important?
- What do they represent?
- Can some of these practices be harmful, particularly to adolescent girls?

**TIP >** Write down or draw the suggestions on a flipchart.

 **2. SAY >**

- As we talk about safety and protection for adolescent girls, we need to look at all aspects of the community that could be unsafe for adolescent girls.
- Many people, including community leaders, health providers and government officials, believe that some long-standing traditions are

<sup>18.</sup> Mayo Clinic. Sex education: Talking to your teen about sex. Retrieved from: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/sexual-health/in-depth/sex-education/art-20044034?pg=1>



*harmful to adolescent girls and have negative effects on their healthy development and future well-being.*

- *Today we are going to talk about early marriage.*

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## 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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### 5. Early or forced marriage

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**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. Distribute Handout 15: Early Marriage.



2. **ASK >** *What is happening in this picture? How do you think the girl in this picture is feeling?*

*Example answers:*

- *She is too young to get married.*
- *She is jumping from childhood to adulthood too fast.*
- *She doesn't feel ready for this commitment.*
- *She is scared about what will happen to her.*
- *She wants to keep studying.*
- *She feels like this may be the end of her life.*
- *She feels really sad.*



**TIP >** Write the responses on a flipchart.

3. **ASK >**

- *Why do people marry?*
- *At what age do you think people can start thinking about marriage?*
- *What skills or context is necessary for a long-lasting marriage?*
- *After parents have shared their responses, add the following points to the list, if needed:*
  - *Ability to collaborate with your spouse in decision-making for the family.*
  - *Being able to recognize when a marriage is dangerous or harmful to oneself.*
  - *Being sufficiently developed physically so that the body is prepared for safe sexual intercourse and pregnancy.*





**4. SAY >** According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'child marriage' is defined as marriage that occurs before the age of 18.



**5. ASK >**

**TIP >** Write the responses on a flipchart.

- How do you feel about this statement?
- At what age do most women get married in this community?
- If girls marry under the age of 18, why do they do so?
- How could marrying below the age of 18 potentially be harmful to girls? And for girls below 15?
- After parents have shared their responses, add the following points, if needed:
  - Girls who marry young are often pulled out of school and miss important years of their education.
  - Because of this, as a wife, they will have limited knowledge, skills and experience needed to negotiate adult marital roles.
  - Girls married at young ages tend to have larger age differences with their husbands than those who marry later, and it is more likely their marriages were arranged, often without their knowledge.
  - Entering into a marriage with someone you don't know, who you didn't have a role in choosing, and who is much older, can be traumatic for young girls. Often, they have very little information about 'adult relationships' and sexual reproduction.
  - Childbearing is frequently expected after marriage, with early first births being the most risky.
  - Girls who bear children before the age of 15 are 5 times more likely to die of pregnancy-related causes compared to older mothers.<sup>19</sup>
  - Girls under the age of 18 have bodies that are still changing and growing. Pregnancy at this time is very dangerous. Doctors recommend that girls finish puberty and adolescence before attempting to have children.
  - Having a much older husband can compromise a girl's role within the marital relationship. For example, they may have having no say in decisions about childbearing and family planning, or in those decisions related to her own body.
  - Girls married before the age of 15 are often sexually initiated by force, through rape, and many before they begin menstruation. Again, this can be extraordinarily traumatic and can cause health problems.

<sup>19</sup> Girls Not Brides. Retrieved from: <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org>.



**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** Parents and caregivers may have questions about the above statements and facts. It is okay if you do not know the answer to those questions. Tell parents and caregivers that you will make note of their questions and discuss with your supervisor, and then get back to them the following week.

## 6. Who is ready to get married?

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups

1. Tape drawings or pictures of 4 girls on the wall.

**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** Please adapt the names of the girls, and the details in the following stories, to suit your context.

2. Tell stories of the 4 girls, each of whom is looking at the possibility of being married.



**ADAPTATION >** Adapt these names (and currency) to your context.

### 3. SAY >

- **Story 1** – 12-year-old Mariam's father wants her to marry an older man who promised 1,000JD to the father for the marriage.
- **Story 2** – 18-year-old Jamila, who has a healthy relationship with her fiancé, wants to wait until she has finished her studies and has a job before getting married.
- **Story 3** – 15-year-old Asmaa, loves her 16-year-old boyfriend who says he will leave her if she does not promise to marry him.
- **Story 4** – 20-year-old Najoua just came back from college and her boyfriend of 2 years asks her to marry him.

**TIP >** Write these questions on a flipchart so parents remember that they have to discuss all of them.

4. Have the participants break into small groups, talk about the different stories and answer the following questions:
  - Which girl is in the best position to get married now?
  - Which girl should wait?
  - Who is making good decisions?
  - Which girl needs help and support in avoiding a marriage decision that could be harmful?
  - Why would the decision to marry now be harmful?



## 7. Practicing empathetic responses

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups

**TIP >** Walk around and observe the groups to ensure they are practicing the 4 steps of empathy correctly.

1. Have participants go back into their groups and complete role-plays using the 4 steps of empathy:
  - **Step 1** – Identify the feeling
  - **Step 2** – Determine the reason (the problem)
  - **Step 3** – Validate the feeling (honor the feeling)
  - **Step 4** – Help your child with their feelings. Take action. Help your teenager think of a good solution

**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

**Jamilia:** Mom can I talk to you?

**Mother:** Sure Jamilia. What is it?

**Jamilia:** I am really worried. Lately Hassan has been telling me that I don't need to finish school and that I should just marry him.

**Mother:** Oh, Jamilia, I am sorry for this and I can see why this would worry you. You have been working so hard in school and I know you really want to look for a job. What can I do to help?

**Jamilia:** Thanks for listening, Mom. It is good to know that you are here for me.

2. Discuss the role-play:
  - Ask the person playing the 'adolescent' how it felt for the 'parent' to show an interest in them and their problem.
  - Ask parents and caregivers how the 'parent' used the 4 steps of empathy in the role-play.



## 8. Home assignment

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**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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### 1. SAY >

- *For homework, continue the conversation about early marriage in your parent support groups. Generate some ideas with other parents about how you might begin a larger discussion about early marriage and its harmful effects in your larger community.*
- *Also keep practicing the 4 steps of empathy with your sons and daughters if they are struggling with something or going through a difficult time.*

## 9. Evaluation

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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### 1. ASK >

- *What did you like best about the session?*
- *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*
- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Have you any other comments or suggestions for improving the session?*

### 2. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.

### 3. Make sure each parent signs the Attendance Form (Resource 3). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.

## Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report. If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.





# Parenting Skills Session 10: Healthy Relationships and Community Safety

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Parenting session summary | Duration: 2 hours

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## OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Articulate the risks their adolescents may face in relationships and in the community.
- List and use the steps to helping their teenagers make safe, healthy decisions.

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Parenting Skills Intervention Curriculum for Parents of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- [Handout 16: Safety in the Community](#)
- Flipcharts and markers
- Tape

## PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Read through all the materials for this session make copies of the parent handout for each parent. Give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

## ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



## SESSION OVERVIEW

Parents will learn problem-solving skills to teach their adolescents to help them develop safe peer relationships and increase safety in the community.

| Session activity                                        | Time       |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                             | 15 minutes |
| 2. Safety and healthy relationships in the family first | 20 minutes |
| 3. Problem-solving skills for healthy relationships     | 35 minutes |
| 4. Safety in the community (expanding the STEP process) | 35 minutes |
| 5. Home assignment                                      | 5 minutes  |
| 6. Evaluation                                           | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: fidelity monitoring                |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Welcome all the parents back and thank them for coming again!
2. Ask parents about the home assignment from the previous session.
3. Ask parents whether they discussed early marriage in the parent support groups. How did it go? Does anyone want to share their experiences of the week, testimonies, any thoughts or reflections?

### 2. Safety and healthy relationships in the family first

**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Explain:
  - Families experiencing stress can often experience violence within their homes.
  - This can negatively affect the physical, emotional and psychological development of adolescents.



- Even witnessing violence between adults, including parents, can traumatize children. Such violence also acts as a negative example of how people should communicate and problem-solve.
- As discussed, violence, neglect and abuse affect how children's brains work and decrease the prospects for a healthy, happy adulthood.
- Violence and abuse at home also increases the possibility that boys and girls will enter into abusive relationships or marriages, and that they might use violence themselves against their own children in the future.
- Parents can be powerful models for safe and healthy relationships!



**2. ASK >** *What are some important aspects of a healthy, safe relationship between a male and female or husband and wife?*

- *After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:*
  - *Talking to each other in kind ways without shouting or calling names.*
  - *Allowing both mothers and fathers to have opinions about raising children, educating children, and how to spend the family's money.*
  - *Listening to each other and showing empathy.*
  - *Respecting each other as people and supporting each other's goals, hopes and dreams.*



**3. SAY >**

- *If anyone here has concerns that they themselves or someone they know is in an unsafe or dangerous relationship or marriage, we as Facilitators are available for further help and consultation.*
- *Some skills we learned in earlier sessions can help us reduce risks in our homes:*
  - *Listening*
  - *Believing*
  - *Taking time to talk with girls and boys on a daily basis.*
  - *Knowing what makes girls and boys feel unsafe.*
  - *Knowing what best comforts your girl and boy.*
  - *Paying attention to the clues your daughter or son may be sending you that they are being hurt.*
  - *Not tolerating violence between any family members.*
  - *Keeping adult arguments and issues away from adolescents. It's not their responsibility to solve family problems, particularly those issues between parents or adult family members.*





4. **ASK >** *What are some of the ways you can keep your home peaceful and safe and model healthy adult relationships?*

5. Give participants about 10 minutes to share ideas.

### 3. Problem-solving skills for healthy relationships

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**Time:** 35 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups

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1. Ask parents and caregivers to discuss the following in 2 or 3 small groups:
  - What are the characteristics of a healthy friendship?
  - What are the characteristics of an unhealthy friendship?
2. Explain some of the features of healthy friendships to the group:
  - Healthy friendships are not one-sided. Both people benefit from knowing each other. In unhealthy friendships, one person always seems to give a lot more than the other.
  - Healthy friendships are based on mutual respect. In unhealthy friendships, people ridicule one another, gossip or spread rumors, or are mean to one another.
  - Healthy friendships allow each other to grow and change. Unhealthy friendships are threatened when one person grows or changes.
  - Healthy friendships are not possessive. In unhealthy friendships, one person is threatened by other people.
  - In healthy friendships you are accepted you for who you are. Unhealthy friendships require you to act the way someone else wants you to in order to be accepted.
  - Healthy friendships allow you to have your feelings. Unhealthy friendships only accept certain feelings.
  - Healthy friendships respect differences. Unhealthy friendships demand conformity.<sup>20</sup>



3. **SAY >**

- *We will now learn a process for problem-solving, so that we can teach adolescents how to make good decisions about friendships and other life issues.*

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<sup>20</sup> Excerpt adapted from Bluestein J. and Katz E. 2007. *High school's not forever*. Deerfield Beach, FL, Health Communications, Inc.



- This problem-solving process is called STEP.
  - **S** – State the problem – what is the problem?
  - **T** – Think of possible solutions
  - **E** – Evaluate possible solutions
  - **P** – Pick the best solution
- Let's use the STEP problem-solving process in the following scenario.



**ADAPTATION** > Please choose the story that matches the situations of children in your community.

#### 4. READ ALOUD > one of the stories below

##### Story 1

*Timothy is a 15-year-old boy and he has been depressed since moving to the camp 4 months ago. Nothing seems to be going right in his life. Timothy's mother is working all the time. Timothy has not seen his dad since coming to the camp and he does not know if his dad is still alive. Timothy feels really lonely and does not seem to have a lot of friends. Timothy has decided that he does not want to attend school as he sees no future for himself.*

##### Story 2

*Ahmed is 15 years old and he has been really feeling depressed since moving to the camp 6 months ago. Nothing seems to be going right in his life. His parents are fighting all the time and he is doing poorly in school. Ahmed spends a lot of time alone and does not have many friends. Recently Ahmed met some older boys in the camp and they have been talking about joining armed groups. Ahmed is seriously considering running away with them. Ahmed thinks it might be better to fight and die with dignity than to live feeling humiliated.*

5. After you have read the story, ask parents and caregivers to identify each of the STEP processes.
6. Ask parents to work through each of the STEP processes to help Ahmed/Timothy to safely solve his problem. Use the examples below to guide their discussion.

##### **S – State the problem, for example:**

- *Ahmed is feeling humiliated and hopeless and is considering joining armed forces.*
- *Timothy is feeling depressed and hopeless and no longer wants to attend school.*



**T – Think of possible solutions, for example:**

- Seek help for Ahmed's/Timothy's depression. Spend positive time with the boy's parents and caregivers.
- Ahmed could return to Syria/Timothy could drop out of school.
- Help Ahmed/Timothy to do better in school. Communicate with his teacher about the help he needs.
- Find opportunities in the family and community to engage Ahmed/Timothy in positive, peaceful and meaningful activities.

**E – Evaluate possible solutions, for example:**

- Work through the pros and cons of each of the above solutions. For example, a pro (positive) of getting Ahmed/Timothy help for his depression could be that he would feel better and the con (negative) could be that he may refuse the help.

**P – Pick the best solution, for example:**

- From the choices above, a parent may pick spending more positive time supporting Ahmed/Timothy.

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**10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)**

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**4. Safety in the community (expanding the STEP process)**

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**Time:** 35 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Pairs

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1. **ASK >** What are some risks your children face in the community?

2. Give them about 5 minutes discuss the question with their neighbor.

*Example answers:*

- Sexual abuse by adults or older children
- Violence on the way to or from school
- Violence in public spaces like latrines
- Sexual harassment for teenage girls and boys
- Bullying gangs controlling camp supplies
- Physical violence or fighting



3. Distribute Handout 16: Safety in the Community.



4. **ASK >** *What do you think is happening in this picture?*

5. Explain that in the first image, an adolescent girl is talking about her fear of going to the latrine alone. Her mother offers to accompany her.



6. **ASK >** *If you were this child's parent, how would you help? What would you say?*

7. Explain:

- Children aged 12 to 17 are equally at risk of violence in the community and family as young children.
- At the same time you are giving your older children more freedom, make sure they understand important safety rules as well.



8. **ASK >** *What are some important safety rules for teens?*

*Example answers:*

- *Walking in pairs to the latrines or walking with a trusted adult at night.*
- *Walking in pairs, or groups of children, to and from school. If a parent is available, they could also accompany the children.*
- *Yelling for help if you are in danger of physical or sexual violence.*
- *Asking an adult for help if you see someone being bullied or hurt.*



9. **SAY >**

- *When you speak to your teenagers, do so in a calm and non-threatening manner. Teenagers do not need to be frightened to get the point across.*
- *Speak openly about safety issues. Teenagers will be less likely to come to you if the issue is shrouded in secrecy and shame. If they feel that you are comfortable discussing the subject matter, they may be more forthcoming with you.*
- *Practice the things you talk about. You may think your teenagers understand your message, but until they can incorporate it into their daily lives, it may not be clearly understood. Find opportunities to practice 'what if' scenarios.*
- *Teach your children that it is more important to get out of a threatening situation than it is to be polite. They also need to know that it is okay to tell you what happened.*



### Role-play for skills practice: Helping adolescents problem-solve

1. Pick 2 parents for the role-play. Two caregivers will play 'parents' and one will play the 'adolescent', Ahmed or Timothy. Change the adolescent's name to one that is familiar in your context.
2. Present the scenario – Ahmed/Timothy knows that some other boys are harassing some younger girls and boys on the way to school. Ahmed/Timothy sometimes hangs around with these boys and lately they have been pressuring him to bully and harass these younger boys and girls. Ahmed/Timothy knows that he is not comfortable participating in the harassment, but he is not sure what to do.
3. Coach the 'parents' and the 'adolescent' on the role-play. You can adapt the sample script provided, or create your own.
4. Have the volunteers present the role-play in front of the group.





**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

**Parent:** Ahmed, how was school today?

**Ahmed/Timothy:** [Looking sad.] Fine, I guess.

**Parent:** Is there something you would like to talk about?

**Ahmed/Timothy:** I just have some friends who are doing some things that are bothering me.

**Parent:** Like what kind of things? I have heard concerns about some younger children being bullied and harassed on their way to school. Is that what you are talking about?

**Ahmed/Timothy:** Well, I don't want to get my friends in trouble.

**Parent:** Ahmed/Timothy, it is really important that children feel safe in our community and, if you know of a situation that is not safe, it is important that you do the right thing so these children can safely get to school.

**Ahmed/Timothy:** There are some guys who have been threatening and making fun of some of the younger kids on their way to school. I have seen some little kids crying and I feel bad. I have not been doing any of that.

**[This is the S in STEP – State the problem]**

**Parent:** Well I am glad you are telling me, Ahmed/Timothy, but being silent can be as harmful to those kids.

**Ahmed:** I know, but I don't know what to do.

**Parent:** Well let's think of some possible solutions.

**[This is the T in STEP – Think of possible solutions]**

5. Stop the role-play here and have the whole group complete the STEP process.
6. Brainstorm possible solutions using the STEP process.

*Example answers:*

- *S – State the problem – the boy's friends are bullying younger children.*
- *T – Think of possible solutions – stop being friends with these boys, tell the boys to stop harassing the younger kids, walk with the younger kids and help protect them.*



- *E – Evaluate possible solutions – then talk about the pros and cons for each solution.*
- *P – Pick the best solutions – ask the group to pick the best solution.*

7. Thank all the parents and caregivers for their hard work in this session today!

## 5. Home assignment

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**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. **SAY >** *For this week's home assignment:*

- *Listen for problems your adolescents may be facing with friends or others in the community.*
- *Help them problem-solve using the STEP process.*
- *Remember to use your empathy skills as well.*

## 6. Evaluation

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

---



1. **ASK >**

- *What did you like best about the session?*
- *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*
- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Have you any other comments or suggestions to improve the session?*

2. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.

3. Make sure each parent signs the Attendance Form (Resource 3). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.



## Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#). If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 11: Understanding Adolescents' Psychosocial Needs

Parenting session summary | Duration: 2 hours, 15 minutes

## OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Articulate the psychosocial impact of a crisis on children.
- List psychological symptoms of children affected by a crisis.

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Parenting Skills Intervention Curriculum for Parents of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- [Resource 8: Impact and Symptoms – Answer Key](#)
- Handouts
  - [Handout 17: Impact and Symptoms](#)
  - [Handout 18: Ignoring Symptoms of Stress: A Vicious Cycle](#)
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pens
- Tape

## PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Read through all the materials for this session and make copies of the handouts for each parent. Give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions. For the relaxation exercise, it would be good if there is space for everyone to lie down.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

## ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).



## SESSION OVERVIEW

Parents understand how war has an impact on children psychologically and discuss several ways to support their children's psychosocial needs, including supporting their education.

| Session activity                                                     | Time       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                          | 15 minutes |
| 2. Understanding the psychosocial impact of crisis on adolescents    | 75 minutes |
| 3. Relaxation exercise                                               | 15 minutes |
| 4. Education and learning to support adolescents' psychosocial needs | 15 minutes |
| 5. Home assignment                                                   | 5 minutes  |
| 6. Evaluation                                                        | 10 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                             |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Welcome parents back and praise them for attending.
2. Ask participants to volunteer to share their experience of the home assignment from the previous session, talking to their adolescents about problems they may be facing.



### 3. ASK >

- Did anyone use the STEP problem-solving process with their teenagers?
- How did it go?
- Does anyone want to share their experiences of the week, testimonies, any thoughts or reflections?



## 2. Understanding the psychosocial impact of crisis on adolescents<sup>21</sup>

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**Time:** 1 hour, 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups

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### 1. Explain:

- Crisis affects adolescents in all the same ways as it affects adults, but also in different ways.
- Even under normal circumstances, the changes in adolescents' bodies, a lack of self-control, and developments in their brains can generate stress.
- The impact of traumatic events increases during the teenage years. Their developing brain is more vulnerable to stress factors than the adult brain.<sup>22</sup>
- Adolescents are still dependent on the care, empathy and attention of adults who love them. Their attachments are frequently disrupted in times of war, due to the loss of parents, extreme preoccupation of parents in protecting and finding subsistence for the family, and emotional unavailability of depressed or distracted parents.
- As we saw in Session 2, adolescents feel what their parents and caregivers feel: their stress, their emotions, and so on.
- Adolescents are often exposed to very traumatic events during war. Losses of loved ones and disruptions in their lives and routine can lead to depression and anxiety.
- Research has shown that the earlier we start helping adolescents to cope with the stresses of war, the more likely we are to prevent more serious psychosocial problems from developing.<sup>23</sup>

### 2. Remind the participants of Session 4 on brain development and how toxic stress can affect the brain and neuron connections.

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21. Children and War Foundation. 2010. *Teaching recovery techniques*. Bergen, Norway. Retrieved from: <http://www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt>.

22. Raising Children Network. *Your teenagers' developing brain*. Retrieved from: [http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/brain\\_development\\_teenagers.html#stress](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/brain_development_teenagers.html#stress).

23. Children and War Foundation. 2010. *Teaching recovery techniques*. Bergen, Norway. Retrieved from: <http://www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt>.



3. Distribute Handout 17: Impacts and Symptoms to all the participants.
4. Divide the parents into 4 groups and ask them to answer the following questions:
  - *What is the impact of a war on adolescents?*
  - *What are the psychological symptoms that can be observed?*
5. Give the groups about 15 minutes to brainstorm and 15 minutes to present their work.
6. Refer to Resource 8: Impacts and Symptoms – Answer Key for example answers.



7. **ASK >** *How have your adolescents have been affected by what has happened to them?*

**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** Parents will hear that they are not the only ones whose adolescents have been affected. They will understand their adolescents' reactions and begin to make the links between adult and adolescent reactions, and can start to develop ways to help adolescents.



8. **SAY >**
  - *These are common reactions! They are normal in the sense that most adolescents will experience some of them at some point, although most adolescents will recover.*
  - *Every adolescent responds differently, according to their age, gender, background or temperament, and there are no right or wrong reactions.*
  - *It can sometimes be helpful for you to discuss positive changes you have seen in your adolescents' behavior as well.*
  - *Adults are very good at noticing changes in behavior, but it is much harder for them to know about adolescents' internal distress.*
  - *To better understand their internal distress, it is helpful for you to make the links between adults' and adolescents' distress.*



9. **ASK >**
  - *Do you have distressing memories yourselves, and do you think your adolescents have some as well?*
  - *Have your adolescents told you about distressing memories?*
  - *Have you noticed any behavior that would suggest that they have distressing memories?*



**NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR >** Adolescents commonly have distressing intrusive memories after exposure to the stresses of conflict and crisis. This may be in the form of nightmares, waking intrusive pictures or thoughts. Use case examples of your own, or ask for examples from the group. As with adults, the natural reaction of adolescents is to try to push these thoughts away, or to avoid reminders of the event that can trigger them.



**10. ASK >**

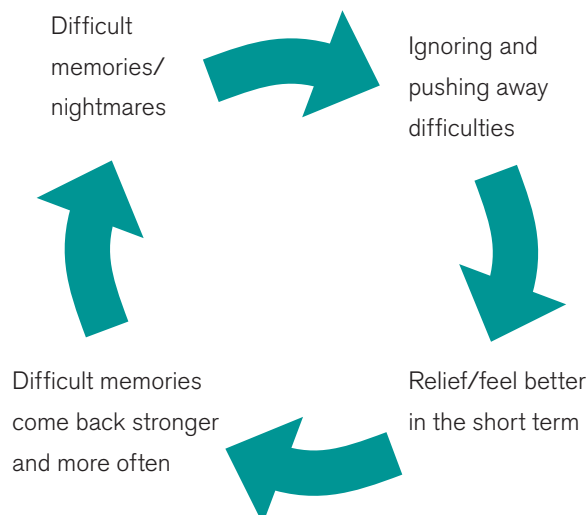
- *What are the ways you push away or avoid difficult memories in yourself or in your adolescents?*
- *Do you have ways to avoid repetitive thoughts about a specific event?*

**11.** Distribute Handout 18: Ignoring Symptoms of Stress – A Vicious Cycle.

**12.** Explain the diagram, that pushing away or avoiding difficult memories may provide temporary relief, but in the long term, it prevents recovery.

- **Difficult memories/nightmares** – Some thoughts, difficult memories and nightmares of traumatic events that keep coming to your mind.
- **Ignoring and pushing away** – The immediate reaction is to push away or ignore these difficult memories.
- **Relief in the short term** – Feeling better for a short period of time.
- **Difficult memories/nightmares come back stronger and more often** – Bad memories coming back more frequently and with a greater intensity, thus continuing the vicious cycle.

**Ignoring stress symptoms: A vicious cycle**







### 13. SAY >

- Look at the first image in this handout. Can you see the effect of ignoring the symptoms of stress?
- To break the cycle, talking about a traumatic event and finding comfort is the key!
- We will discuss in detail in the next session how to address symptoms of stress for adolescents.



### 14. Explain the second image in the handout. SAY >

- The first picture in the second image shows that you should not let your children watch violent images of the conflict on TV or listen to adult discussions about the conflict.
- The second picture in the second image shows that you should answer children's questions about the current situation using appropriate and reassuring language.

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## 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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## 3. Relaxation exercise

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**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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### 1. SAY >

- We are now going to do a relaxation exercise.
- Remove your shoes, loosen your clothing and find a comfortable position.
- Take a few minutes to relax, breathing in and out in slow, deep breaths.
- When you are relaxed and ready to start, shift your attention to your right foot. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.
- Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.
- Relax your right foot. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.
- Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.
- When you are ready, shift your attention to your left foot. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.

#### ADAPTATION >

Adapt this to something that is appropriate for your context and space.



- *Slowly tense the muscles in your left foot, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.*
- *Relax your left foot. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.*
- *Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.*
- *When you are ready, shift your attention to your right leg. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.*
- *Slowly tense the muscles in your right leg, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.*
- *Relax your right leg. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your leg feels as it becomes limp and loose.*
- *Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.*
- *When you are ready, shift your attention to your left leg. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.*
- *Slowly tense the muscles in your left leg, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.*
- *Relax your left leg. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your leg feels as it becomes limp and loose.*
- *Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.*
- *When you are ready, shift your attention to your stomach. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.*
- *Slowly tense the muscles in your stomach, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.*
- *Relax your stomach. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your stomach feels as it becomes limp and loose.*
- *Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.*
- *When you are ready, shift your attention to your chest. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.*
- *Slowly tense the muscles in your chest, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.*
- *Relax your chest. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your chest feels as it becomes limp and loose.*
- *Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.*
- *When you are ready, shift your attention to your right shoulder. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.*
- *Slowly tense the muscles in your right shoulder, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.*



- Relax your right shoulder. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your shoulder feels as it becomes limp and loose.
- Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.
- When you are ready, shift your attention to your left shoulder. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.
- Slowly tense the muscles in your left shoulder, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.
- Relax your left shoulder. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your shoulder feels as it becomes limp and loose.
- Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.
- When you are ready, shift your attention to your back. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.
- Slowly tense the muscles in your back, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.
- Relax your back. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your back feels as it becomes limp and loose.
- Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.
- When you are ready, shift your attention to your neck. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.
- Slowly tense the muscles in your neck, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.
- Relax your neck. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your neck feels as it becomes limp and loose.
- Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.
- When you are ready, you can sit up.

## 4. Education and learning to support adolescent's psychosocial needs

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups



### 1. ASK >

- Do you remember when we talked about education and brain development in Session 4?
- Do you remember what we talked about?



- *After parents have responded, share the following answers, if needed:*
  - *Adolescence is the second most productive time of brain development.*
  - *It is important that teenagers continue to have opportunities for learning in order to help their brains develop in a healthy way, in order to make good decisions, take appropriate risks and plan for their future.*
  - *Teenagers need an education to have opportunities for higher learning and employment in the future.*
  - *We also played the 'Concentration game'.*



## 2. ASK >

- *Are your adolescents attending school?*
- *Are you supporting your children's learning at home with games and relaxation activities?*

3. Praise parents for helping to prepare their teenagers for a successful adult life.

4. Explain the following principles of how children learn:

There are 5 principles parents can follow to keep their child's brains developing in healthy ways in order for them to succeed in school and life.

- i. **Make time to talk about school and learning.** For example, say, "David, tell me about what you learned in school today!"; "David, we are going to the market. Can you keep track of how much all of our items cost today?"
- ii. **Make time to talk about children's goals and dreams.** For example, say, "Fatima, how are your studies going? Are you still thinking about being a teacher?"
- iii. **Take school attendance seriously.** Children need to attend school in order to learn and have future opportunities.
- iv. **Get involved.** Visit your child's school, ask them about what they are learning, talk to their teacher, and so on.
- v. **Offer to help** adolescents with studying and educational games.



**ADAPTATION** > If some caregivers cannot read and write, use the alternative game: 'Our cat'.

### Vocabulary game: A to Z race

5. Divide the group into 2 teams. Give each team a paper and pen.
6. Choose a topic like food and drink, sports, countries, and so on. They must be very broad categories.
7. Give parents instructions for the **'A to Z race' activity**:<sup>24</sup>



#### 8. SAY >

- *Each team will start with one person who will write a word with the letter 'A', related to the category. For example, if the category is 'food' they could write 'apple'.*
- *The paper and pen will then be passed on to a second person, who will write a word with the letter 'B', related to the category, and so on.*
- *The first team to reach 'Z' will win.*
- *If you cannot think of a word beginning with a particular letter, you can leave a space, but the team with most words at the end is the winner.*

9. Have the parents play this game and tell them to play it with their families.

**ADAPTATION** > If cats do not exist in your context or if cats are seen as negative animals in your community, change the animal.

### Alternative game: Our cat

10. Have parents sit in a large semi-circle
11. Draw a simple picture of a cat on a flipchart and tell the parents/caregivers that this is our cat. Tell them that we will find words to describe the cat.
12. Give the group instructions for the **'Our cat' activity**:



#### 13. SAY >

- *Each parent/care-giver has to think of a word to describe the cat and the word must begin with the first sound of his or her name.*
- *Pick a parent to start the game. He or she will say "Our cat is..." and complete the sentence with a word to describe the cat.*
- *For example, if a parent's name is Nina, she will say "Our cat is ... neat!"*
- *The parent to the right will add a word describing the cat, by saying "Our cat is ... neat and [word to describe cat]."*
- *For example, Ali will say, "Our cat is neat and angry!"*

<sup>24</sup>. One Stop English. No date. Teenagers: game 3: A-Z race. Retrieved from: <http://www.onestopenglish.com/teenagers/skills/games/teenagers-game-3-a-z-race/146731.article>.



14. This will continue with each parent remembering and repeating all the words used to describe the cat and adding their own word at the end.
15. The parent who started has to end the game by remembering all the words.
16. At the end, ask a few others in the group if they can also remember all the words.

## 5. Home assignment

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**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. Give parents the following tasks for homework:
  - Observe your adolescents and identify signs of stress.
  - Show them that you love them.
  - Practice relaxation exercises.

## 6. Evaluation

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

---



### 1. ASK >

- *What did you like best about the session?*
- *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*
- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Have you any other comments or suggestions for improving the session?*

### 2. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.

3. Make sure each parent signs the Attendance Form (Resource 3). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.



## Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#). If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 12: Providing Psychosocial Support to Adolescents

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**Parenting session summary** | Duration: 2 hours. 5 minutes

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## OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- List and use techniques to provide support to their adolescents affected by a crisis, such as talking, listening and engaging them in activities.
- Identify severe psychosocial needs, and make appropriate referrals if necessary.

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Parenting Skills Intervention Curriculum for Parents of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- Handouts:
  - [Handout 19 Parent Tips for Helping Adolescents After Disasters](#)
  - [Handout 20: Mandala](#)
  - [Handout 21: Referral Pathway](#) (adaptation required)
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pen

## PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Gather necessary information about the referral pathway of the SHLS program and adapt this session's [Activity 5: Referral](#) accordingly.
- Read through the materials for this session and, make copies of the handouts for each parent. Give each parent the handout at the end of the session.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.
- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

## ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).





## SESSION OVERVIEW

Parents learn about using talking and listening to help their adolescents manage stress. Parents also practice a mindfulness exercise they can use themselves and with their adolescents. Parents learn about using the SHLS referral mechanism to refer children demonstrating severe signs of stress, to appropriate professionals.

| Session activity                         | Time       |
|------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction              | 20 minutes |
| 2. Talking and listening                 | 45 minutes |
| 3. Youth activities                      | 15 minutes |
| 4. Relaxation and mindfulness exercises  | 10 minutes |
| 5. Referral                              | 20 minutes |
| 6. Home assignment                       | 10 minutes |
| 7. Evaluation                            | 5 minutes  |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Individuals

1. Welcome parents back and praise them for attending.
2. Start by asking parents to volunteer to share their experience of the home assignment from the previous session.



#### 3. ASK >

- *Did you do the assignment?*
- *Did you identify any new symptoms of stress?*
- *Did you practice any relaxation techniques? How did it feel?*
- *Does anyone have any thoughts or reflections they can share?*

4. Remind parents that talking about the stress caused by traumatic experiences does not mean they are sick, mad or crazy!



#### 5. SAY >

- *In this session, we will learn, as parents and caregivers, how to address the psychosocial needs of our children.*
- *As we saw during the last session, children and teenagers are resilient. They do not necessarily need to be referred to a psychologist.*
- *As parents, there is a lot that you can do!*



6. Have one parent summarize the last session and give examples of symptoms of psychosocial distress.



**TIP >** Write the responses to these questions on the flipchart.

**7. ASK >**

- *Since the last session, did you notice changes in behavior or symptoms of psychosocial distress in your teenagers that you haven't noticed before?*
- *How did you help your adolescents with their difficulties?*
- *Which methods worked?*
- *What are the most difficult problems to deal with?*
- *What are the obstacles to helping children?*

## 2. Talking and listening<sup>25</sup>

**Time:** 45 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups



**8. Explain:**

- During and after war, children can feel vulnerable, frightened and insecure. Families are commonly split up and normal daily life seems impossible.
- Children can become confused as well as scared at what is happening around them. They often become afraid of their own reactions, fearing that they are going crazy or losing control. They may worry about the future and about their own safety as well as the safety of those closest to them.
- Although children, like adults, need to have time to switch off from thinking about war, they will not be able to forget what has happened to them.
- Talking about what has happened in the past, and about their worries for the future with someone they trust, will help children to make sense of what is happening around them and their memories will become less distressing.
- Children need to make sense of what is happening around them, at a level appropriate to their development and age, if they are to feel safe and secure.

**TIP >** It is important to remind parents that they should not encourage violence or revenge towards 'the enemy'. Maintaining a culture of revenge prevents recovery and increases stress.

25. Session inspired by Children and War Foundation. 2010. *Teaching recovery techniques*. Bergen, Norway. Retrieved from: [www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt](http://www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt).



- They need time to talk about what has happened to them, and to express their feelings associated with bad memories. This requires parents to be ready to listen to children.
- *Sensitive listening means finding the right time to talk, and leaving enough time for children to talk and express difficult things fully.*
- *It means showing that you are attending to what the child is saying, and that you are interested, by making encouraging comments and questions, and showing interest through your body language and tone of voice.*
- *It means accepting all of the child's feelings as natural and normal in this crisis situation, even if these are difficult for a parent to hear.*
- *Sometimes parents are not ready to hear their children and may say, 'Do not cry now' or 'we do not need to talk about that'.*
- *If the children are willing to talk, it's important to give them the opportunity to do so. If you are busy at that particular moment, fix a time when you will be available to listen and answer questions.*



#### 9. ASK >

- *Have you already tried to talk to your adolescents about the war and what is happening?*
- *What was their reaction?*
- *Did some of you experience the opposite, where the child refused to talk?*



#### 10. SAY >

- *Sometimes children are unable to or refuse to talk. They cannot be forced to talk! But you can show them and tell them that you are ready to listen and help whenever they want to talk.*
- *Children may respond to physical comfort or hugs. Writing in a diary can also help them express their feelings.*

**11.** Brainstorm with the group on the following questions. Write their answers on a flipchart and include the example answers.

- **Why is it important to talk with children?**

*Example answers:*

- *Gets things out in the open*
- *Parents understand their children better*
- *Relieves tension between parents and children*
- *Makes the child feel better*
- *Talking makes it easier to forget*



- Children can start to distance themselves from painful memories
- Puts their fear in perspective
- Means they do not bottle everything up
- We can help children if we listen to their problems
- The child can get a different perspective on things
- They can hear that their feelings are normal and confirm that they are not going crazy

▪ **Why is it hard to talk with children?**

*Example answers:*

- It is too painful
- Children do not have the words
- They feel guilt and confusion
- They are afraid of not being heard
- They are afraid of losing control
- They do not feel the need to talk
- They talk to others, like their friends

▪ **Why parents sometimes do not want to listen?**

*Example answers:*

- It is too painful to hear their child's distress
- They fear the child will get more upset
- They fear they will get upset themselves
- They do not know what to say to the child
- It reminds them of their own traumatic experiences
- It is too exhausting
- They do not have the time
- They believe it can be harmful for them to talk in that way

▪ **When the child is silent, what should we do?**

*Example answers:*

- Respect their silence
- Be patient and look for appropriate occasions
- Set aside a special time each day to talk and the child will use it when they are ready
- Do not push for more than they want to tell
- Find ways other than talking to communicate, such as writing and doing things together



12. Divide parents into 3 groups.

13. Have each group prepare a role-play about talking to their child about a difficult experience. Two parents in the group should play the 'parent' and 'child' respectively, and the third person should observe and note what fostered better communication between the 2, and what hindered it. Remind parents about the 4 steps of empathy from Session 6.

**This is a sample script. Please adapt to your context or create your own. Please change the names to ones that are familiar in your context.**

**Parent:** I notice recently that you were getting very upset easily and that you are fighting a lot with your brother. Is there something that bothers you that you would like to talk to me about?

**Adolescent:** [Silence ... then cries.]

**Parent:** [Gives the child a hug and comforting touch.] You can always talk to me, today or whenever you want.

**Adolescent:** I'm fed up of this situation. I don't like it here! I want to go back to my previous life.

**Parent:** I understand your frustration. I'm frustrated too. But we are here because it's safer. We have to make the most of it while we are here. You can always talk to me when you feel sad.

14. Distribute Handout 19: Parent Tips for Helping Adolescents After Disasters.

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#### 10 MINUTE BREAK (OPTIONAL)

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### 3. Youth activities<sup>26</sup>

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

**1. Explain:**

- During and after very stressful crisis events, normal life can seem chaotic. To develop adolescents' sense of security, safety and stability, it is important to re-establish, as much as possible, a normal daily routine. This includes allowing adolescents to attend clubs or SHLS activities, and ensuring that they get enough sleep. At home, it might mean regular family meal times and bedtime.
- Adolescents also need time to meet friends and to do enjoyable activities, even in times of war. This is part of normal development. In times of war, it can also help to distract and relax them. Keeping them inside the tent or house will not solve the problems. They will become frustrated and will lack respect for their parents.
- You can inform your teenagers of the risks and ways to protect themselves and trust them to make the right choices.
- Empowering youth and showing them that you trust them is the first step towards autonomy.



**2. SAY >**

- *Sometimes parents think that they are protecting their adolescents by keeping them inside the tent or house. Adolescents need to interact with other children of the same age.*
- *Allowing your teenagers to attend organized and structured activities will help them recover. You can ask me for more information about SHLS activities after this session if you want. If children are afraid to go outside, they can take the first step by accompanying you when you go to town or to the market.*

<sup>26</sup> Session inspired by Children and War Foundation. 2010. *Teaching recovery techniques*. Bergen, Norway. Retrieved from: [www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt](http://www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt).



3. Brainstorm with the group on the following questions. Write their answers on a flipchart.

- What sorts of things would you like to see your children doing?

*Example answers:*

- Reading
- Drawing
- Listening to music
- Playing sports
- Getting involved in clubs

- How can parents encourage this?
- Can parents get together to set up activity groups for children or explore safe available opportunities?

4. Suggest the following additional activities:

- Writing all their negative and positive thoughts in a diary.
- Art therapy, such as coloring mandalas, to help children focus their attention. For a sample of a mandala, see [Handout 20](#).

## 4. Relaxation and mindfulness exercises<sup>27</sup>

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

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1. **SAY >** *Encourage your children to practice the relaxation techniques that you have been taught during this training. This will help them to manage their emotions and feelings. Can you name those techniques?*

*Example answers:*

- Deep breathing
- Count backwards from 20 to zero.
- Center yourself
- Muscle relaxation (read the text for your family)
- Coping and Healing Toolkit (create a toolkit with your children)
- Safe space

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<sup>27</sup>. The Guided Meditation Site. *Mindfulness exercises*. Retrieved from: <http://www.the-guided-meditation-site.com/mindfulness-exercises.html>



### Exercise: A minute of mindfulness



#### 2. SAY >

- *This is an easy mindfulness exercise, and one that you can do anytime throughout the day. Take a moment right now to try this. Check your watch and note the time. For the next 60 seconds your task is to focus all your attention on your breathing. It's just for one minute, but it can seem like an eternity. Leave your eyes open and breathe normally. Be ready to catch your mind from wandering off – because it will – and return your attention to your breath whenever it does so.*
- *Keep in mind that this mindfulness exercise is not a contest or a personal challenge. You can't fail at this exercise; you can only experience it.*

3. After 60 seconds, bring everyone back to the whole group and ask them how it felt. Tell them to use this exercise many times throughout the day to restore your mind to the present moment and to restore your mind to clarity and peace.

**ADAPTATION >** Adapt this section for the referral system in your context.

#### 5. Referral

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**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

---

##### 1. Explain:

- When parents feel that, despite all their efforts, their children are still showing signs of psychosocial distress, they should contact the SHLS focal point for psychosocial cases.
- If adolescents are showing any of the following signs, parents should refer the case immediately to the appropriate focal point.
  - Suicidal
  - Self injuries
  - Violence towards others
  - Loss of speech ability
  - Anorexia
  - Bulimia
  - Fainting





2. Draw the referral pathway for the SHLS on a flipchart and explain it to the parents.
3. Distribute Handout 21: Referral Pathway (adapted to context).

## 6. Home assignment

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**Time:** 10 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Small groups

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### 1. SAY >

- *This next week, try to implement some of the techniques taught during this session, such as talking to your children and identifying relevant activities.*
- *You can also try to implement some of the tips from the handout.*
- *Find some time to talk to your child.*
- *Prepare a 5-minute presentation on one of the Parenting Skills sessions. We will divide into groups and I will assign each group one Parenting Skills session to do a presentation on during the next session.*

2. Divide the parents into 11 groups and assign one session to each group, from Session 2 to Session 12. Distribute one flipchart paper and markers to each group to use for the presentation in the next meeting.

List of Parenting Skills sessions:

- Session 2: Understanding parent stress
- Session 3: Coping and healing strategies
- Session 4: Adolescent brain development – a work in progress
- Session 5: Building positive relationships and creating spaces for dialogue
- Session 6: Empathy – respecting your teen's opinions, thoughts and feelings
- Session 7: Guiding healthy choices
- Session 8: Respecting adolescents and their changing bodies
- Session 9: Protecting the health, well-being and dignity of adolescents – reproductive health and early marriage
- Session 10: Healthy relationships and community safety
- Session 11: Understanding adolescents' psychosocial needs
- Session 12: Providing psychosocial support to adolescents



## 7. Evaluation

---

**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

---



### 1. ASK >

- *What did you like best about the session?*
- *What questions would you have liked to ask but did not have the opportunity to ask?*
- *How was this session helpful?*
- *Have you any other comments or suggestions for improving the session?*

2. Praise all parents and thank them for their participation.

3. Tell parents for the next session (which is the last session) they can invite their family members and other community members.

4. Tell parents that in the next session they will have the opportunity to present their commitment to positive parenting. They should think about a creative way to do this, perhaps through song, a story or a group pledge.

5. Make sure each parent signs the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#). If there is someone else attending (a mother with a baby on her back, for example), indicate this on the Attendance Form. If someone left or came in during the session, note this as well. If someone misses a session, remind them that they can catch up in the parent support groups or through home visits.

## Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#). If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



# Parenting Skills Session 13:

## Review and Celebration – Commitment to Positive Parenting

---

**Parenting session summary** | Duration: 2 hours, 10 minutes

---

### OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, caregivers will be able to:

- Articulate key ideas and demonstrate their understanding of the assigned Parenting Skills session.

- Arrange for a space that is conducive to learning and free of interruptions. Please make sure the space is large enough to fit extra people, as family and community members will be invited to attend.
- Sit in a circle to encourage interaction with parents.

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Parenting Skills Intervention Curriculum for Parents of Adolescents
- [Resource 3: Attendance Form](#)
- [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#)
- [Resource 9: SHLS Parenting Skills Certificate Template](#)
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pens

### ATTENDANCE

The **date and place of the session must be written on the Attendance Form**. Each participant **must** sign the [Attendance Form \(Resource 3\)](#) with their name, age and sex. All parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend all 13 sessions together, as parenting is a shared responsibility. Indicate if there is someone else attending with a parent or parents (such as a child or other family member).

### PREPARATION REQUIRED

- Print Parenting Skills certificates for distribution.
- Help parents set up their presentations and inform them that they will be called on in the session to speak about their favorite Parenting Skills strategy from the program.
- Read through the materials for this session.
- Arrive for the session 30 minutes before the start time.



## SESSION OVERVIEW

- Parents will celebrate their completion of the program with friends, family and other community members.

| Session activity                                                            | Time       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction                                                 | 15 minutes |
| 2. Energizer, game, song or relaxation exercise                             | 5 minutes  |
| 3. Presentation of curriculum                                               | 30 minutes |
| 4. Sharing time                                                             | 20 minutes |
| 5. Praise for parents and feedback from guests                              | 20 minutes |
| 6. Presentation of certificates and public commitment to positive parenting | 40 minutes |
| Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring                                    |            |

## Steps to follow

### 1. Welcome and introduction

**Time:** 15 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Welcome everyone and praise everyone for attending this celebration. Smile and be positive: parents have completed the Parenting Skills Curriculum!
2. Both Facilitators should introduce themselves as there will be new people attending this session.
3. Ask the participants to introduce themselves and their children.
4. Ask guests to introduce themselves.

### 2. Energizer, game, song or relaxation exercise

**Time:** 5 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Let the parents choose an energizer from the sessions, and facilitate the activity.



### 3. Presentation of curriculum

**Time:** 30 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

1. Read the title and description of each session and then have parents explain some of the skills and information they learned. Have one parent speak **briefly** about every session. This will not only be a presentation to community and family members, but a good review for parents in the program.



#### 2. SAY >

- *The SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum was developed for families with adolescents. The evidence-based program was intended to increase parents' knowledge about child development, give them some techniques they can use to communicate with children, help them manage their own and their children's stress, and support their child's well-being.*
- *The SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum is based on the International Rescue Committee's parenting programs in Liberia, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and Thailand. The International Rescue Committee responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises in over 40 countries and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives. This curriculum consists of 13 parent group sessions. Each session lasts approximately 2 hours. As part of the program, parents create support groups outside of class to encourage each other and help each other practice new parenting skills.*

3. Introduce each of the sessions and invite the parents to explain what was discussed and learned during those sessions.

List of Parenting Skills sessions:

- Session 2: Understanding parent stress
- Session 3: Coping and healing strategies
- Session 4: Adolescent brain development – a work in progress
- Session 5: Building positive relationships and creating spaces for dialogue
- Session 6: Empathy – respecting your teen's opinions, thoughts and feelings
- Session 7: Guiding healthy choices
- Session 8: Respecting adolescents and their changing bodies



- Session 9: Protecting the health, well-being and dignity of adolescents – reproductive health and early marriage
- Session 10: Healthy relationships and community safety
- Session 11: Understanding adolescents' psychosocial needs
- Session 12: Providing psychosocial support to adolescents

#### 4. Sharing time

---

**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

---

1. Ask each parent to share their favorite relaxation, communication or other positive parenting strategy.

#### 5. Praise for parents and feedback from guests

---

**Time:** 20 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group

---

1. Thank guests for attending the final session. Ask them to share words of encouragement and support. Ask if they have noticed some of the positive changes parents have made. You can also ask guests to talk about how they will continue to support nurturing parents.
2. Emphasize to parents and guests that parents must support each other in their positive parenting efforts to raise happy, healthy children.
3. Urge parents to continue to gather in their parent support groups to help and encourage each other.

#### 6. Presentation of certificates and public commitment to positive parenting

---

**Time:** 40 minutes | **Arrangement:** Whole group; Individuals

---

1. Invite parents to present their commitment to positive parenting in front of the guests. They will have chosen a song, story or a group pledge.



## Post-session report: Fidelity monitoring

After the session, both Parenting Skills Facilitators need to check-off all completed activities in [Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report](#). If there were activities that were not completed, explain why. Facilitators also need to record parent feedback on the Fidelity Forms. This report should be attached to the session attendance record.



## PART 3

# Resources



### Parenting Skills

CURRICULUM (ADOLESCENT)

### SHLS TOOLKIT

Resources





# Resource 1: Session Topics and Calender for Parenting Skills

| SESSION TOPIC                                                                                            | MEETING DATES |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Introduction to the Parenting Skills Curriculum                                                       |               |
| 2. Understanding parent stress                                                                           |               |
| 3. Coping and healing strategies                                                                         |               |
| 4. Adolescent brain development – a work in progress                                                     |               |
| 5. Building positive relationships and creating spaces for dialogue                                      |               |
| 6. Empathy – respecting your teen’s opinions, thoughts and feelings                                      |               |
| 7. Guiding healthy choices                                                                               |               |
| 8. Respecting adolescents and their changing bodies                                                      |               |
| 9. Protecting the health, well-being and dignity of adolescents – reproductive health and early marriage |               |
| 10. Healthy relationships and community safety                                                           |               |
| 11. Understanding adolescents’ psychosocial needs                                                        |               |
| 12. Providing psychosocial support to adolescents                                                        |               |
| 13. Review and celebration – commitment to positive parenting                                            |               |



## 2

## Resource 2: Lists of Materials for Parenting Skills Sessions

The following materials are required for the SEL Training:

- SHLS Parenting Skills Curriculum for Caregivers of Adolescents, including Parenting Skills Resources and Handouts
- Flipcharts and markers/Paper and pen
- Small items such as coins, rocks or beans for the 'Concentration game'
- Colored pencils
- Tape
- Notebook
- Large envelopes (22cm x 30cm is ideal; one for each parent) – preferably brightly-colored
- Glitter
- Feathers
- Fun stickers
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Stapler
- Index cards, or paper cut into smaller pieces
- Technology to play videos, if available
- Drawings or pictures of 4 girls, for Session 9



# 3 Resource 3: Parenting Skills Sessions – Attendance Form

Date: .....

Session number: .....

Facilitators: .....

Location: .....

| First name | Last name | Did a child join you today? | Did anyone else join you today? If so, who?<br>(e.g. friend, husband, sister) | Signature |
|------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1          |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 2          |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 3          |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 4          |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 5          |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 6          |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 7          |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 8          |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 9          |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 10         |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 11         |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 12         |           |                             |                                                                               |           |
| 13         |           |                             |                                                                               |           |

>



## 4

## Resource 4: Parenting Session Feedback and Fidelity Report

Name: .....

Affiliation: .....

Position/Job Title: .....

1. Please provide a brief description of the material covered in today's session:

.....  
.....

Please describe any changes made and why these changes were made:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

| Activity                            | Total | Male  | Female | Comments |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|----------|
| Total no. of participants           | _____ | _____ | _____  | _____    |
| Total no. of children in attendance | _____ | _____ | _____  | _____    |
| Total no. of others present         | _____ | _____ | _____  | _____    |

2. Was the activity conducted on the scheduled day/time?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If no, please explain:

.....  
.....

3. Was the activity carried out according to the manual?

YES ☐

NO ☐

PARTIALLY ☐

4. Were you able to complete the entire session today?

YES ☐

NO ☐

5. At the start of the session, did you ask participants to reflect on what they learned or took away from the last session?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If yes, please list key lessons learned or 'take aways' that participants mentioned (please do not write names):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



6. Did you ask participants to share any things that they tried with their children since the last session (e.g. homework).

YES ☐

NO ☐

What worked and what didn't?

.....  
.....  
.....

If yes, please list some examples that participants mentioned (please do not write names):

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Did all participants actively participate in today's session?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If no, please explain (e.g. are some participants hesitant to speak, did people seem distracted, etc.)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. Please describe any things that went well during today's session (e.g. participants took part particularly actively to one session, good experience sharing, etc.)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9. Please note any things that did not work well, or challenges you faced during today's session: (E.g. aggressive reactions, reluctance from participants, disturbance of the session, etc.)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

10. Please note any other reflections you have about the session, including changes you are seeing, any concerns you have, or any feedback received from participants).

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11. Please describe any suggestion of amendments to the training module (e.g. allocate more time to a particular session, add more practical examples or activities to a particularly difficult session, remove exercises that are too difficult or too long). Please mention the session/exercise and page number.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

---

**Facilitator(s) Signature:**

.....

**Area Officer: Date of reception and supervision:**

.....

.....



## 5

## Resource 5: Parent Support Groups Guide

### Introduction

Research related to parent support groups and other self-help groups has found that participants benefit from these groups in several ways: parents draw social and emotional support from each other, they exchange ideas and coping mechanisms, and they serve as role models for their peers. Self-help groups can also be a way to sustain positive parenting changes in communities with limited resources and are based on empowerment approaches.

While IRC parenting programs have witnessed parents form support groups spontaneously, Facilitators often play a critical role in encouraging parents to come together in order to reinforce their newly acquired parenting skills. When support groups are well established initially, they can continue long after the parents have completed the 12-session Parenting Skills training program (without further direct support from the parenting Facilitators). However, research indicates that the most successful groups are those facilitated by a person trained to guide discussions.

### Guidelines and Tips for Facilitators Setting Up Parent Support Groups

At the end of the first session, take 15 minutes to introduce the idea of parent support groups and help interested participants decide how they will form their groups. Parent support groups are typically small, about 4 to 6 parents per group.

#### Some suggestions for explaining the purpose of parent support groups:

- Parent support groups help strengthen new parenting skills by allowing discussion and practice of those skills.
- Support groups allow opportunities for mutual praise and encouragement.



- Support groups facilitate the exchange of experiences relating to children and family members in the home, and they generate solutions to ongoing problems.
- Support groups extend the benefits of *IRC's Families Make the Difference* program beyond the 12-session program. Parenting is hard work and parents need to support each other over the long run!

**Some suggestions for forming parent support groups:**

- Group parents according to where they live, so it will be easy for them to get together. Group parents according to the age of their children.
- Allow parents to offer their own criteria and ideas about forming groups.

**Some suggestions for creating a positive environment for parent support groups:**

- Have 1 or 2 parenting Facilitators support or lead the first 2 or 3 sessions.
- Have the parents choose, nominate or volunteer a member of their group to co-lead the second or third group session.
- Have parenting Facilitators check in and provide support to the elected co-leader on a weekly basis for the duration of the program.





## 6

## Resource 6: Coping and Healing Cards

**My support network** (a list of people you can visit or call and who always lift your spirits):

**My favorite places** (a picture or description of a place (past, present or imagined) where you feel or felt a great sense of peace and safety):

**My favorite books** (especially books that lift your mood):

**Comfort foods** (foods such as snacks or pastries that you could put in your kit or something you can easily obtain or make – nothing that will make you feel bad because you ate it!):

**Gratitude list** (things for which you are grateful):

**Reminders of other stress-busters** (such as cooking or doing a craft project):



**Humorous or positive sayings or pictures:**

**Childhood favorite toys** (things you loved playing with – if you no longer have the toy, a picture or a description will do):

**Ways to write down my thoughts** (a notebook or journal and pen):

**Non-alcoholic drinks that I enjoy:**

**Best moments from the past** (write down a brief reminder of a wonderful memory):

**Relaxation exercise** (deep breathing, praying, muscle relaxation, center yourself):

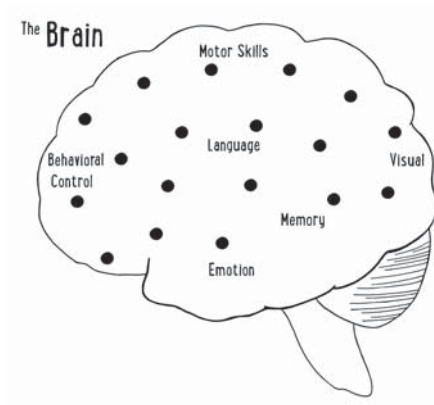


## 7 Resource 7: Brain Development and Toxic Stress

### Brain development

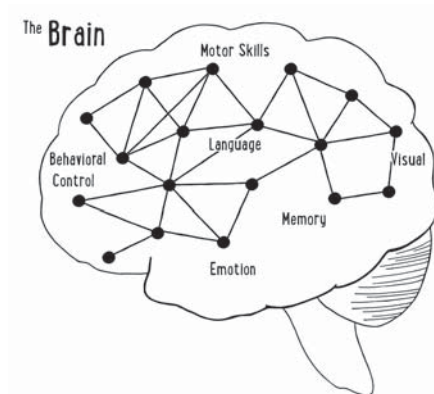
**Image 1:**

The brain with neurons



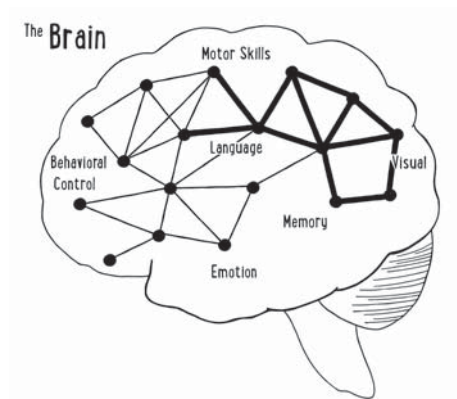
**Image 2:**

The brain with 'electrical connections' via synapses



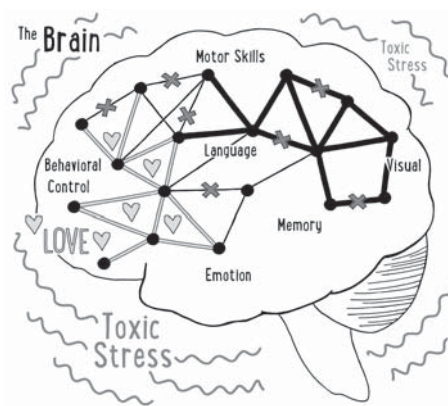
**Image 3:**

The brain with stronger 'electrical connections' thanks to love and encouragement



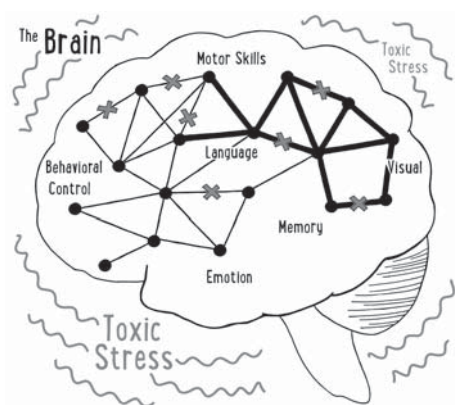
**Image 5:**

The 'electrical connections' are renewed with loving, nurturing and predictable adult relationships



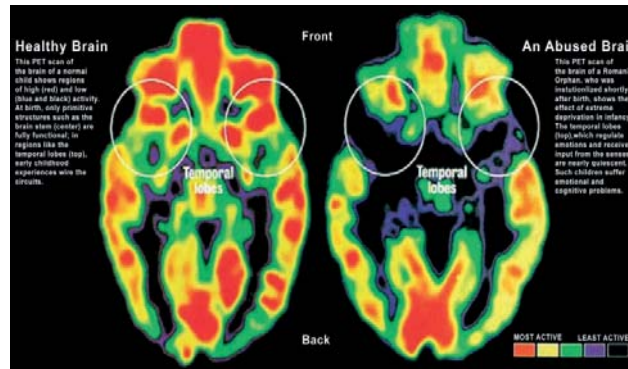
**Image 4:**

The 'electrical connections' are destroyed due to toxic stress and violence



## Brain scan images<sup>1</sup>

The images below were taken using scanners that produce detailed images using magnetic fields and radio waves.

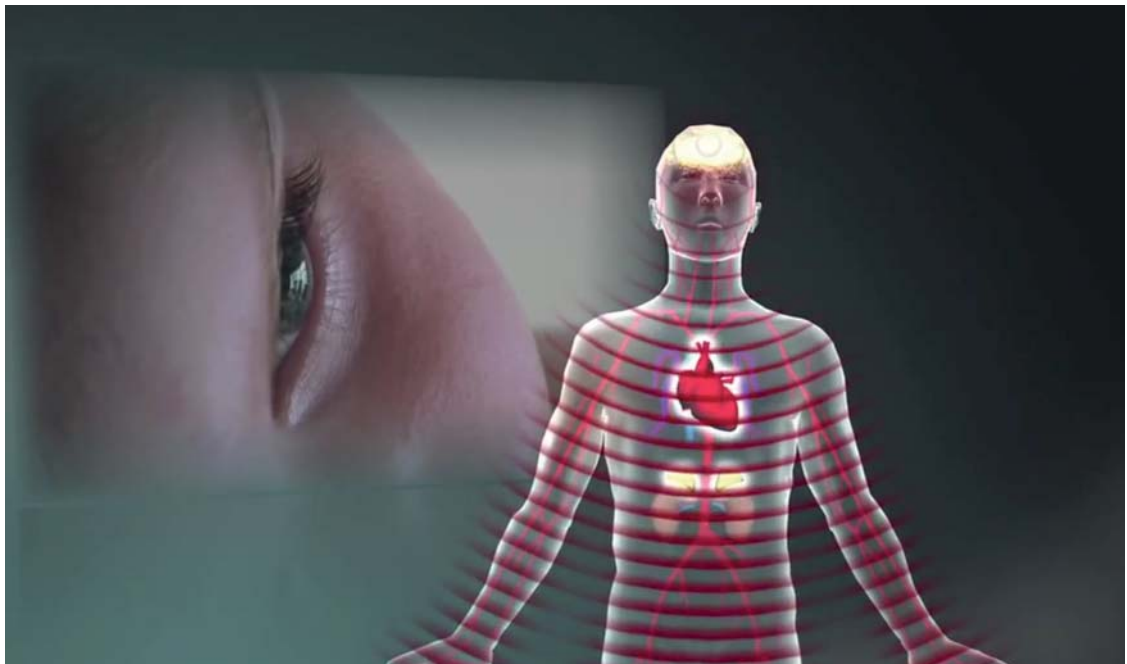


## Toxic stress<sup>2</sup>

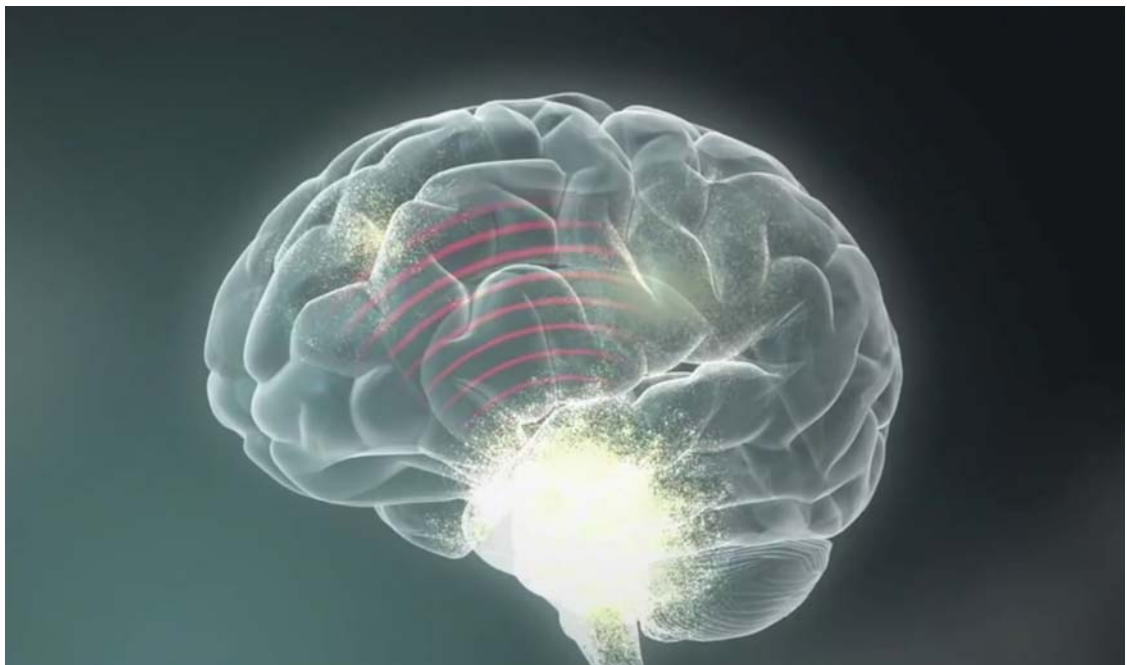
Learning to deal with stress is an important part of healthy development. When a person experiences stress, the body's stress response system is activated. The brain and body go into high alert, increasing the heart rate and blood pressure, and releasing stress hormones such as cortisol. If the stress is relieved after a short period of time or a young child receives support from caring adults, the body's stress response system is brought back down and the body returns to normal. In situations of ongoing abuse and neglect where a child does not have supportive adult relationships, the stress response system remains activated. Even without apparent physical harm, the lack of responsive relationships with caring adults can cause a prolonged stress response in a child. Constant activation of the stress response system in the absence of protective relationships is called toxic stress. Toxic stress in childhood disrupts the development of the brain. This can result in serious lifelong consequences, from learning delays in the short-term to a higher risk of disease in the longer-term.

1. Well Commons. 2011. *This is a child's brain on trauma; This is the life of that traumatized brain.* Retrieved from: <http://wellcommons.com/groups/aces/2011/jul/22/this-is-a-brain-on-trauma-this-is-the-li>.
2. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. 2011. Toxic stress derails healthy development. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVwFkcOZHJw>.





Toxic stress has a direct effect on a child's brain architecture; we see that the areas of the brain dedicated to learning and reasoning have fewer and weaker connections across neurons.



Science shows that the prolonged activation of stress hormones in early childhood can actually reduce neural connects in these important parts of the brain, right at the time in a child's development when these connections should actually be growing. The image shows that toxic stress is damaging the neural connections.

The negative effects of toxic stress can be prevented and reversed if children have supportive, responsive relationships with caring adults as early in life as possible.





## 8

## Resource 8: Impact and Symptoms – Answer Key

| Age                 | What are the ways that war and crisis impact your adolescents?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | What are the psychosocial symptoms that can be observed?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>12 years old</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Loss of friends, education opportunities, toys, clothes, marks of identity, change of food, of environment, loss of routine.</li> <li>▪ Less attention from their parents, less interaction, less stimulation.</li> <li>▪ Loss of hobbies, pastimes (TV, books, games, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Memories of the war, exposed to a violent environment.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crying</li> <li>▪ Depressed</li> <li>▪ Jumpiness, especially at loud noises</li> <li>▪ Difficulty falling asleep</li> <li>▪ Nightmares</li> <li>▪ Refusing to eat</li> <li>▪ Eating too much</li> <li>▪ Isolation</li> <li>▪ Refusing to leave the house or tent</li> <li>▪ Scared of everything</li> <li>▪ Eczema</li> <li>▪ Stomach aches</li> <li>▪ Feeling sick</li> <li>▪ Starts smoking</li> <li>▪ Fighting</li> <li>▪ Playing war games</li> <li>▪ Loss of empathy</li> <li>▪ Moodiness or rapid mood changes</li> <li>▪ Problems concentrating</li> </ul> |
| <b>15 years old</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Loss of friends, education opportunities, change of environment, lack of privacy, less control from the parents, loss of hobbies and pastimes.</li> <li>▪ Memories of the conflict, exposed to a violent environment.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Depression</li> <li>▪ Difficulty in falling asleep, nightmares</li> <li>▪ Isolation, no energy, thinking too much</li> <li>▪ Eczema</li> <li>▪ Stomach aches</li> <li>▪ Feeling sick</li> <li>▪ Starts smoking</li> <li>▪ Fighting</li> <li>▪ Loss of empathy</li> <li>▪ Feeling attracted to weapons</li> <li>▪ Impatience</li> <li>▪ Anger</li> <li>▪ Violence towards siblings</li> <li>▪ Moodiness or rapid mood changes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           |





## 9

## Resource 9: SHLS Parenting Skills Training Certificate Template

Adapt the following certificate to your program, and have it signed by the relevant authorities, such as the Facilitator or Leader..



**Certificate of Participation**  
**Safe Healing and Learning Spaces –**  
**Parenting Skills Training**

This is to certify that

---

Has completed all Parenting Skills sessions for  
caregivers, as part of the Safe Healing and Learning Spaces  
Parenting Skills Intervention

---

SHLS Facilitator

Date

## 10 Resource 10: Parenting Skills Glossary

### **ADOLESCENT**

Defined by the World Health Organization as any person between ages 10 and 19.

### **AGE-APPROPRIATE**

An activity or responsibility suitable for a particular age or age group.

### **CAREGIVERS**

Any person that provides care for the physical, social and emotional needs of a child. The word 'caregiver' is used interchangeably with the word 'parent' in the SHLS Toolkit.

### **CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE**

The technique of teaching children by following through and responding to misbehavior in the same ways over time.

### **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE**

Suitable for a particular social-emotional, cognitive and emotional level.

### **EMPATHY**

The ability of one human being to understand and identify with the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of another human being.

### **EMPOWERMENT**

The process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

### **EVIDENCE-BASED**

Research-informed, based on data that is both valid and reliable.

### **EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIORS**

Behaviors such as physical aggression or property damage that children direct towards a person or thing in their environment.

### **FAMILIES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE**

Evidence-based parenting program designed by the *International Rescue Committee*.

### **FIDELITY**

The process of ensuring that a program's protocol and methods are being followed to ensure that core elements are maintained throughout its delivery.

### **PARENTS**

Any person that provides care for the physical, social and emotional needs of children. The word 'parent' is used interchangeably with the word 'caregiver' in the SHLS Toolkit.

### **PARENTING**

The process of caring for the social, emotional and physical needs of children until they are old enough to take care of themselves.



### **PARENTING SKILLS FACILITATORS**

Professionals and paraprofessionals using the Parenting Skills Curriculum with groups of parents in order to foster learning about how to support children's healthy growth and development in Safe Healing and Learning Spaces.

### **IGNORE**

#### **(ALSO CALLED A 'PLANNED IGNORE')**

The technique of intentionally removing all attention from non-violent misbehaviors.

### **PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR**

Social actions or interactions that benefit other persons or all of society.

### **REINFORCEMENT**

A consequence, positive or negative, that increases the likelihood that a behavior, positive or negative, is repeated in the future. For example, if a parent thanks a child for doing their chores, they increase the likelihood that the child will repeat this behavior.

### **SOCIAL CONTINGENCY-BASED**

When a parent agrees to pay or reward a child in some way for completing a task.

### **TEACHING LOOP**

A method for helping young children learn new skills, which includes an instruction/modeling phase by the adult, then a practice phase for the child, and finally a feedback phase where the adult gives both positive feedback and suggestions for improvement, if needed.

### **TIME-OUT:**

A strategy to deal with misbehavior, in which a child goes to a quiet place by themselves for 3 to 5 minutes, in order to decrease behaviors like physical aggression and tantrums. A time-out is a consequence of misbehavior which teaches children to self-regulate.



# PART 4

# Handouts



# 1 Handout 1: Session Topics and Calender for Parenting Skills

| SESSION TOPIC                                                                                            | MEETING DATES |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Introduction to the Parenting Skills Curriculum                                                       |               |
| 2. Understanding parent stress                                                                           |               |
| 3. Coping and healing strategies                                                                         |               |
| 4. Adolescent brain development – a work in progress                                                     |               |
| 5. Building positive relationships and creating spaces for dialogue                                      |               |
| 6. Empathy – respecting your teen’s opinions, thoughts and feelings                                      |               |
| 7. Guiding healthy choices                                                                               |               |
| 8. Respecting adolescents and their changing bodies                                                      |               |
| 9. Protecting the health, well-being and dignity of adolescents – reproductive health and early marriage |               |
| 10. Healthy relationships and community safety                                                           |               |
| 11. Understanding adolescents’ psychosocial needs                                                        |               |
| 12. Providing psychosocial support to adolescents                                                        |               |
| 13. Review and celebration – commitment to positive parenting                                            |               |



2

## Handout 2: Showing Interest



2

## Handout 2: Showing Interest





## Handout 3: Identification of Parents' Psychosocial and Emotional Needs

| I feel<br>(Emotions) | I do<br>(If applicable, what are the changes in your behavior, things that you do or do not do?<br>It can be positive or negative) | Impact on children<br>(Possible consequences for my health/family/children.) |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                              |
|                      |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                              |
|                      |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                              |
|                      |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                              |



## 4

## Handout 4:

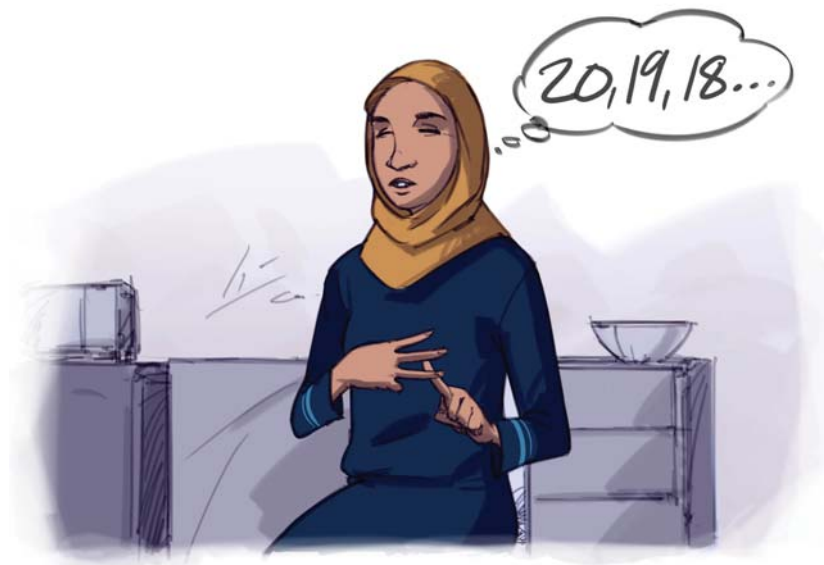
## Feeling and Action Drawings



## 5 Handout 5: Relaxation Exercise



## 5 Handout 5: Relaxation Exercise



## 6

## Handout 6: Relaxation Techniques

**ADAPTATION** > Adapt this relaxation exercise to your context. Replace 'the Universe' by relevant religious representation. In case of multiple religions in one caregivers' group, keep 'the Universe' (or equivalent in the local language) as a generic term.

- 1. Settle yourself in a quiet place, in a comfortable position. Imagine yourself to be in the most relaxing, secure, peaceful place you have ever known. Breathe deeply in and out, breathing into your stomach. Recite the following to yourself, with a quiet voice, very slowly, but imagine it is being spoken to you by a voice outside yourself, by a voice of love. If you do this with your spouse, let one read and the other close their eyes and listen:**

Your breath is warm and soothing. As it spreads through your body it makes you warm. It brings peace and tranquility to every cell in your body.

- 2. Let every cell in your body know and feel that you are loved. *The Universe* loves you. Many people love you. You are surrounded by love and caring. The love is all around you like warm light, comforting you, taking away all your pain.**

The air that you are breathing in is warm and soothing. That warmth is spreading all through your body. As it spreads through your body, it causes your muscles to relax.

Now the warmth spreads to your head. Relax the top of your head. Relax your mind. There is nothing to think about right now, nothing to worry about. Release the burdens that you carry in your mind.

As you breathe deeply, the warmth spreads to your face. Let your face relax. Relax your eyes. Whatever your eyes have seen that is unhappy or that causes you pain, let it go. Release it with your breath.



Relax your cheeks and your mouth. Whatever you have spoken that you regret, let it go, release it with your breath. It's in the past and is gone now with your breath.

Relax your ears. There is nothing for you to listen to right now except the peacefulness of your own breath. Whatever you have heard that has hurt you, at any time in your life, let it go now. You don't need it anymore. Release it with your breath.

Relax your jaw. Any tension that you are holding in your jaw, let it go, release it. Feel the warmth spread through your mind, your face, your neck. Relax your neck.

- 3. Know that you are safe. You are protected. You are in a place of shelter. You are in *the Universe's* care. You are in a safe place, a good place. You have nothing to fear, nothing to regret. The past is gone, and the future has not arrived. All that exists is this peaceful moment, this safe place where you are protected and warm.**

Continue to breathe deeply and softly. Your breath warms you. The warmth spreads now into your shoulders and relaxes your shoulders. Whatever burden you have been carrying on your shoulders, let it go. Give it to *the Universe* to hold until you are ready to take it back. For now, let it go with your breath. Relax your shoulders.

- 4. Let go of your fear and your worry. You are following *the Universe's* guidance and that is peaceful. You are in harmony with the entire universe and that is peaceful.**

Breathe deeply and softly. The breath spreads now into your back and warms your back. Relax your shoulder blades, and the middle of your back. Relax your lower back. As you breathe out, release the burdens that you have borne on your back. All the troubles, all the weight on your back, release them with your breath, and let them disappear. You don't need them anymore.

- 5. *The Universe* is on your side and will always be with you. You are strong. Know that whatever challenges you face in life, you are strong and capable.**



As you breathe, warmth continues to spread through your body, now moving into your chest and your stomach. Relax your chest. Whatever fears you have for the future, let them go. Release them with your breath. Trust in *the Universe*; it is with you right now, at this moment, and will protect you. Relax your stomach. Whatever tightness you have in your stomach, whatever tension you carry there, release it, let it go with your breath.

**6. Know that *the Universe* created you pure. That purity is always inside you, like a light. Allow yourself to feel it, to be in touch with it; let that purity come out, and with it comes peace.**

Your breath is warm and soothing. As it spreads through your body it makes you warm. It brings peace and tranquility to your mind, to your soul, and to your heart. Feel it now spreading into your arms. Relax your upper arms, and your forearms. Relax your hands and your fingers. Relax your thumbs. Your hands work hard for you every day, but right now let them relax. Whatever burdens you carry in your hands, release them. Whatever private pain or shame your hands have witnessed, release it. You don't need it anymore. Let it escape with your breath, let it go.

**7. Know that *the Universe* created you beautiful with the best of forms. That beauty is inside you. Let yourself feel it and believe it.**

Breathe deeply now and let it flow into your legs. Relax your thighs. Relax your knees. Relax your calves. Relax your feet. Relax your toes. Your legs work hard for you every day, they have earned a rest. Relax your legs and let the tension flow out of them; release the tension with your breath.

Now all of your body is relaxed and warm. Every cell in your body, every part of you inside and out is soothed and peaceful. All of your body is pure and light and warm.



## 7

## Handout 7: Visualization Exercise – The Safe Place

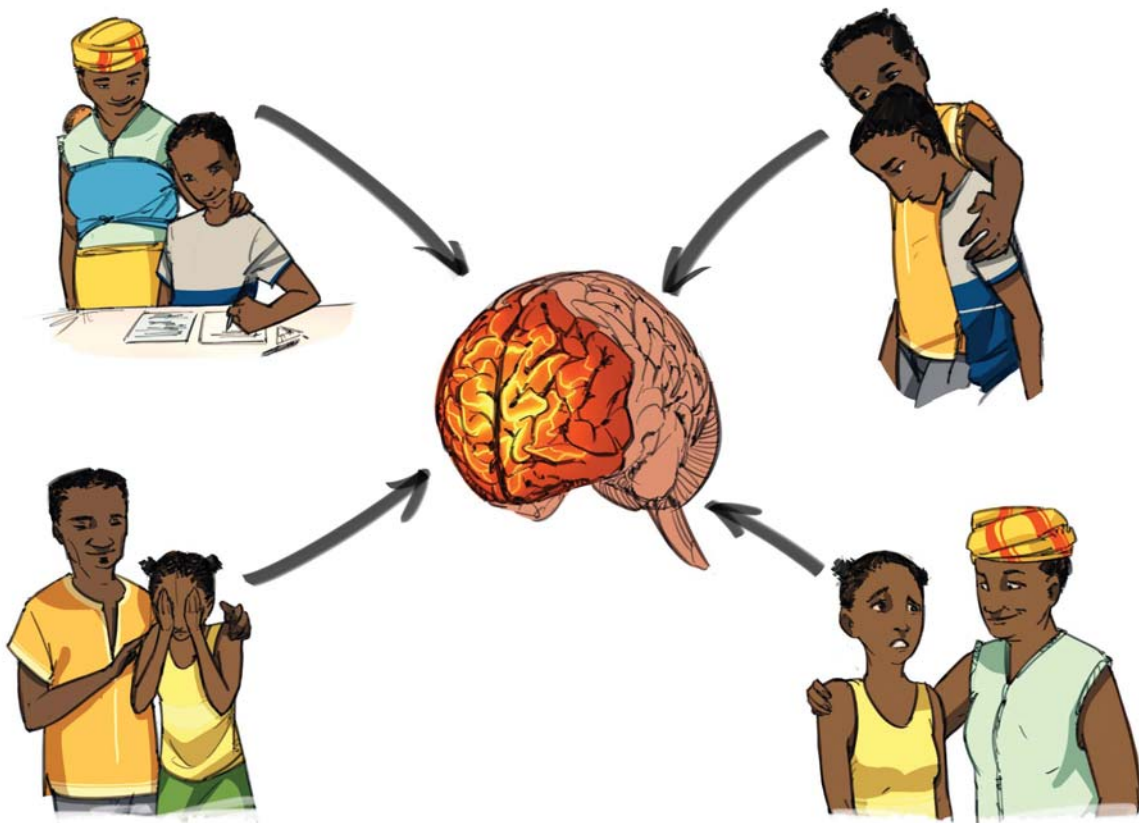
1. Take a few deep steady breaths. Close your eyes and carry on breathing normally. Bring up a picture of your safe place and imagine that you are standing or sitting there. Can you see yourself there? In your imagination, take a look around. What do you see? What can you see close to you? Look at the details of it and see what it is made of. See the different colors. Imagine reaching out and touching it. How does it feel? Now take a look further away. What can you see around you? See what's in the distance. See the different colors and shapes and shadows. This is your special place and you can imagine whatever you want to be there. When you are there, you feel calm and peaceful. Imagine your bare feet on the ground. What does the ground feel like? Walk around slowly, noticing the things there. See what they look like and how they feel. What can you hear? Maybe the gentle sounds of the wind, or birds, or the sea. Can you feel the warm sun on your face? What can you smell? Maybe it's the sea air, or flowers, or your favourite food cooking? In your special place, you can see the things you want, and imagine touching and smelling them, and hearing pleasant sounds. You feel calm and happy.
2. Now imagine that someone special is with you in your place. This is someone who is there to be a good friend and to help you, someone strong and kind. They are there just to help you and they'll look after you. Imagine walking around and exploring your special place slowly with them. You feel happy to be with them. This person is your helper and they're good at sorting out problems.
3. Just look around in your imagination once more. Have a good look. Remember that this is your special place. It will always be there. You can always imagine being here when you want to feel calm and secure and happy. Your helper will always be there whenever you want them to be. Now get ready to open your eyes and leave your special place for now. You can come back when you want. As you open your eyes, you feel more calm and happy.





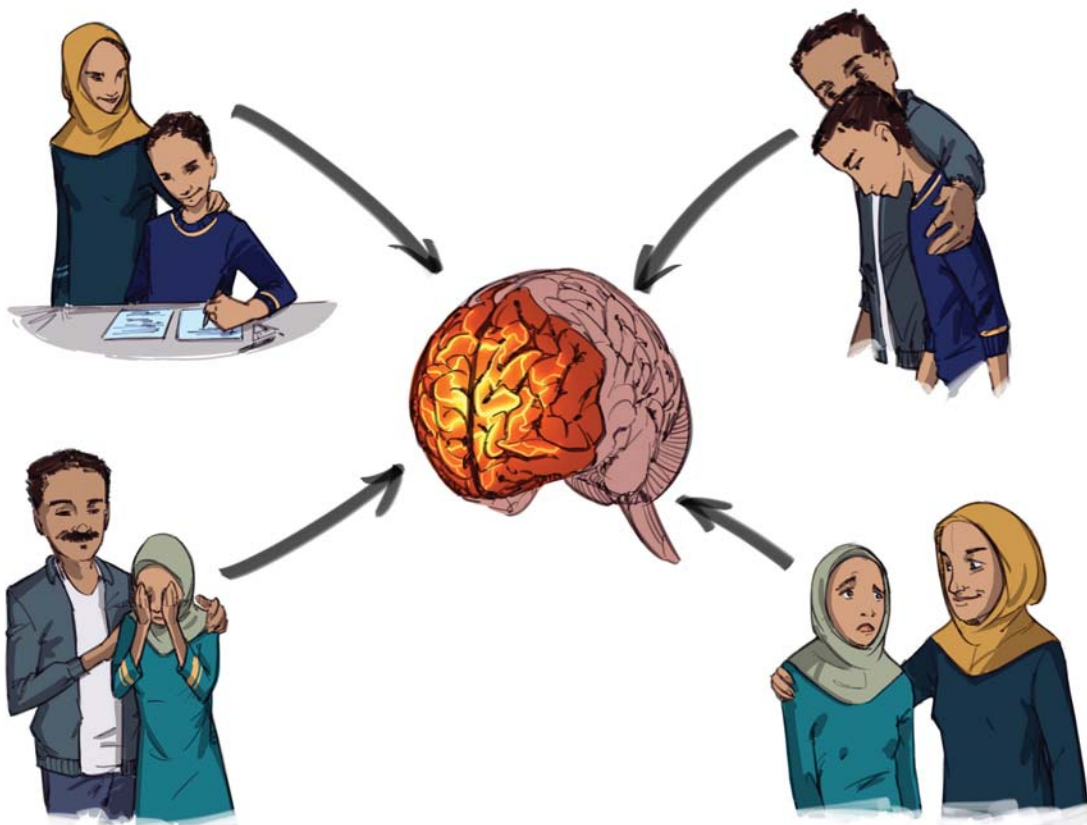
## 8

## Handout 8: Brain Development



## 8

## Handout 8: Brain Development



## 9 Handout 9: Spending Time With Adolescents



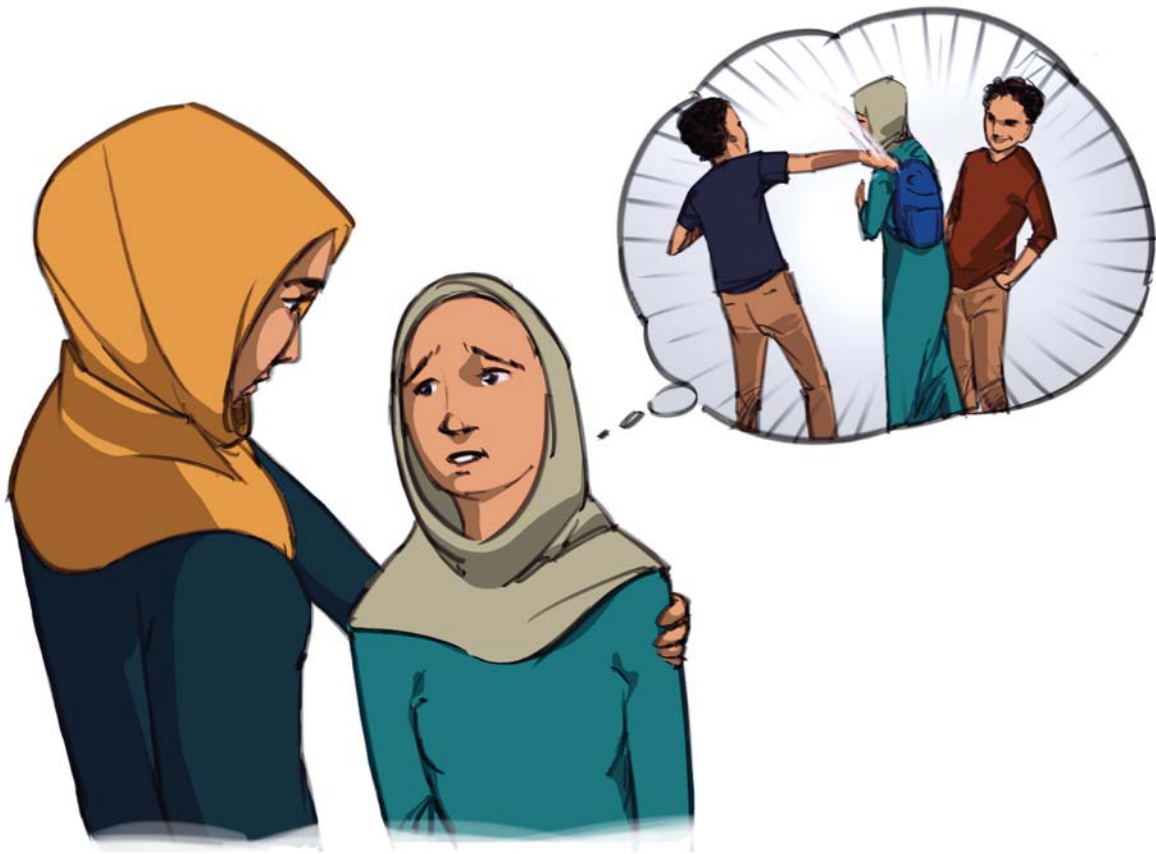
## 9 Handout 9: Spending Time With Adolescents



## 10 Handout 10: Empathy



## 10 Handout 10: Empathy



11

## Handout 11: The 4 Steps of Empathy

### Step 1

Identify the feeling.

### Step 2

Determine the reason.

### Step 3

Validate the feeling (honor the feeling).

### Step 4

Help your child with their feelings.  
Take action and find a solution if appropriate.





## 12 Handout 12: Family Meetings





## 12 Handout 12: Family Meetings



## 13

## Handout 13: Steps of Family Meetings

### Step 1

Family meetings always start best with a round of positive feedback on family life. Ideally, each family member has a chance to say something positive about each family member. This encourages children to appreciate the good times they spend with each other, to express gratitude and identify what they appreciate in other family members' behaviors.

**For example, Sara, I thank you for preparing dinner yesterday and Ahmed, I appreciated how you looked after your younger brothers while I was at the market.**

### Step 2

The family follow up on the solutions adopted during the last meeting.

**For example, We agreed during our last meeting that everybody should be home by 6 o'clock. How did it work this week? Did everybody come home on time?**

### Step 3

All agenda items are identified. Everyone gets a chance to say what they would like to talk about. All conflicts and issues won't be solved but this is to give an opportunity to give space to anybody to share their thoughts and to listen. Listening does not mean that we agree but this is to give a chance to better understand somebody else's perspective. Items on the agenda are not necessarily issues; they can be also family projects.

**For example, Jamila, you expressed your frustration at not being able to come to the market with me. As you know, for security reasons we cannot let you go. Is there something else that you would like to do that would be safer? Would you like to come with me to...[insert activity at the youth/women's center]?**

### Step 4

Enjoy family time together. Have fun, plan family events together.

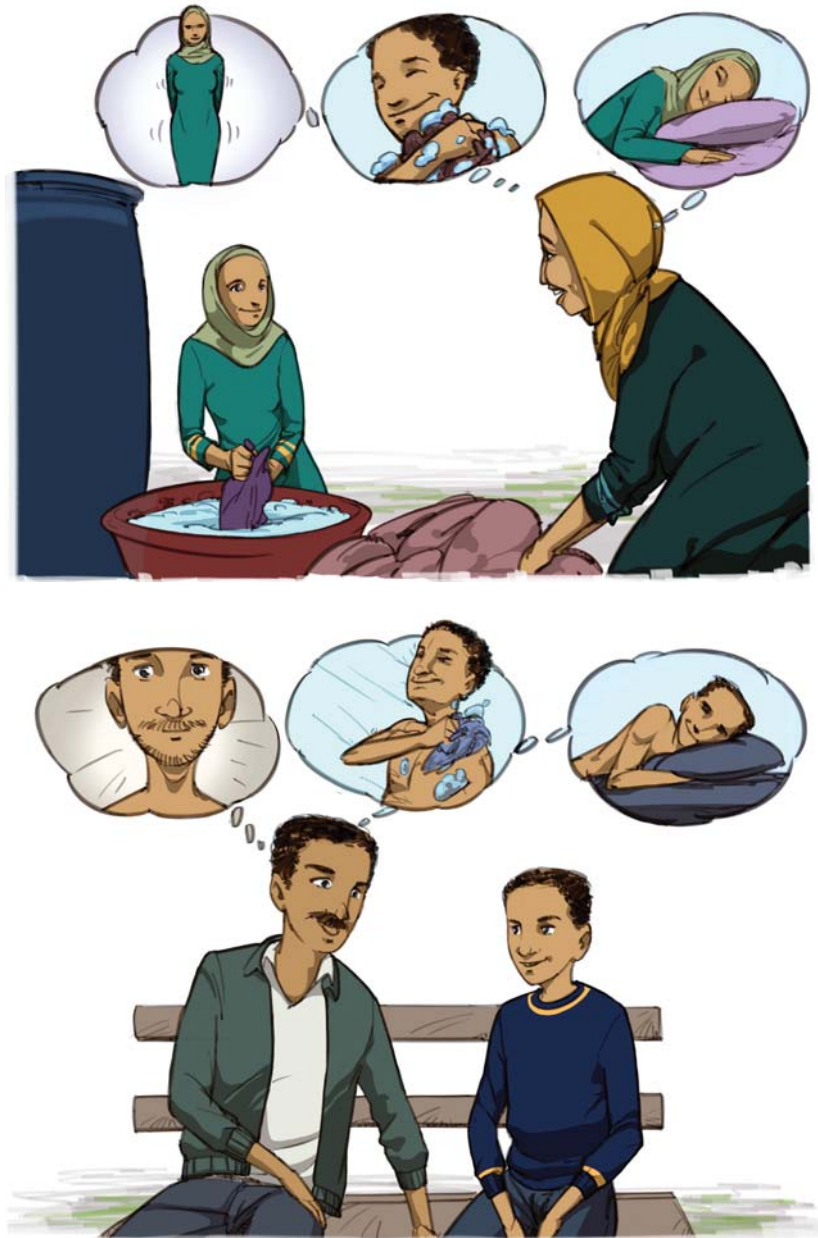
**For example, Who has an idea? What about going to the park for a picnic together next Saturday?**



## 14 Handout 14: Puberty for Boys and Girls



## 14 Handout 14: Puberty for Boys and Girls



## 15 Handout 15: Early Marriage





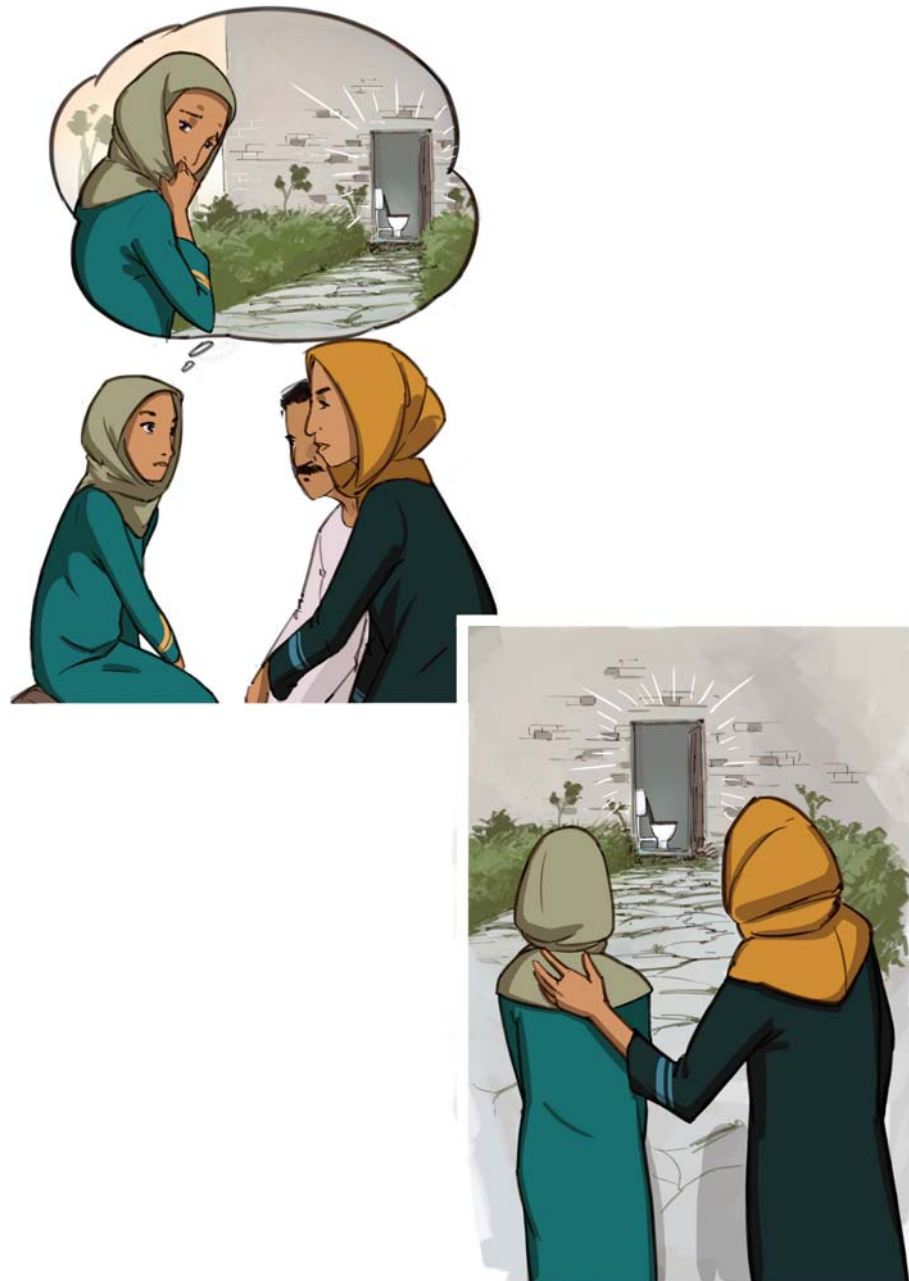
## 15 Handout 15: Early Marriage



## 16 Handout 16: Safety in the Community



## 16 Handout 16: Safety in the Community





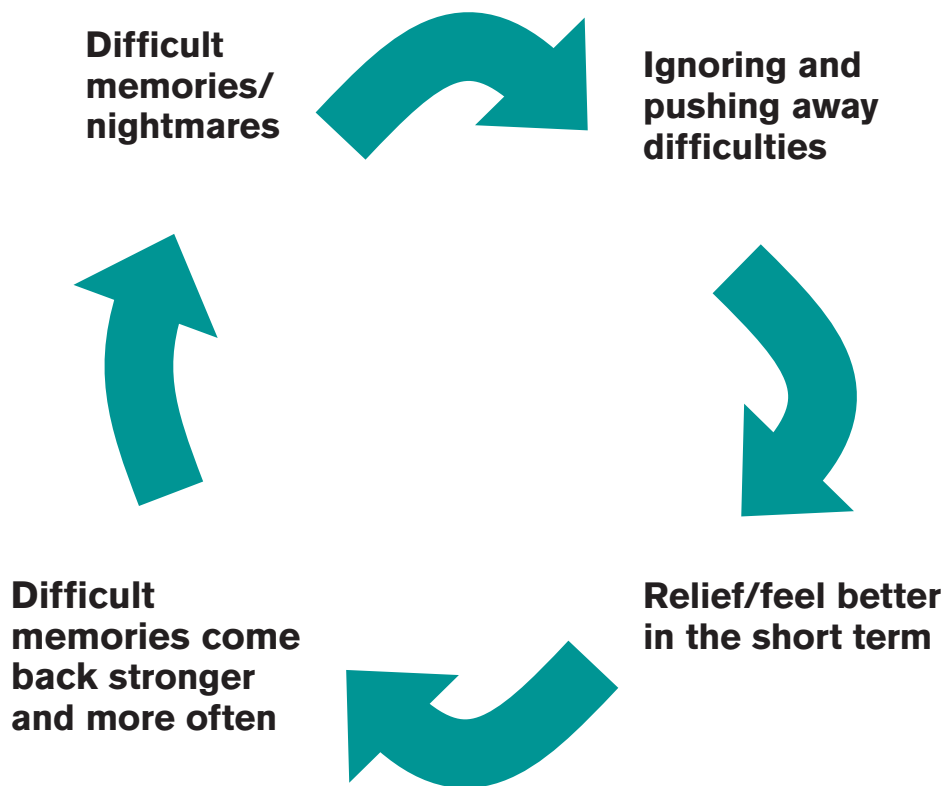
# 17 Handout 17: Impact and Symptoms

| Age          | What are the ways that war and crisis impact your adolescents? | What are the psychosocial symptoms that can be observed? |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 12 years old | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>                | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>          |
| 15 years old | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>                | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>          |



**18**

## Handout 18: Ignoring Symptoms of Stress – A Vicious Cycle



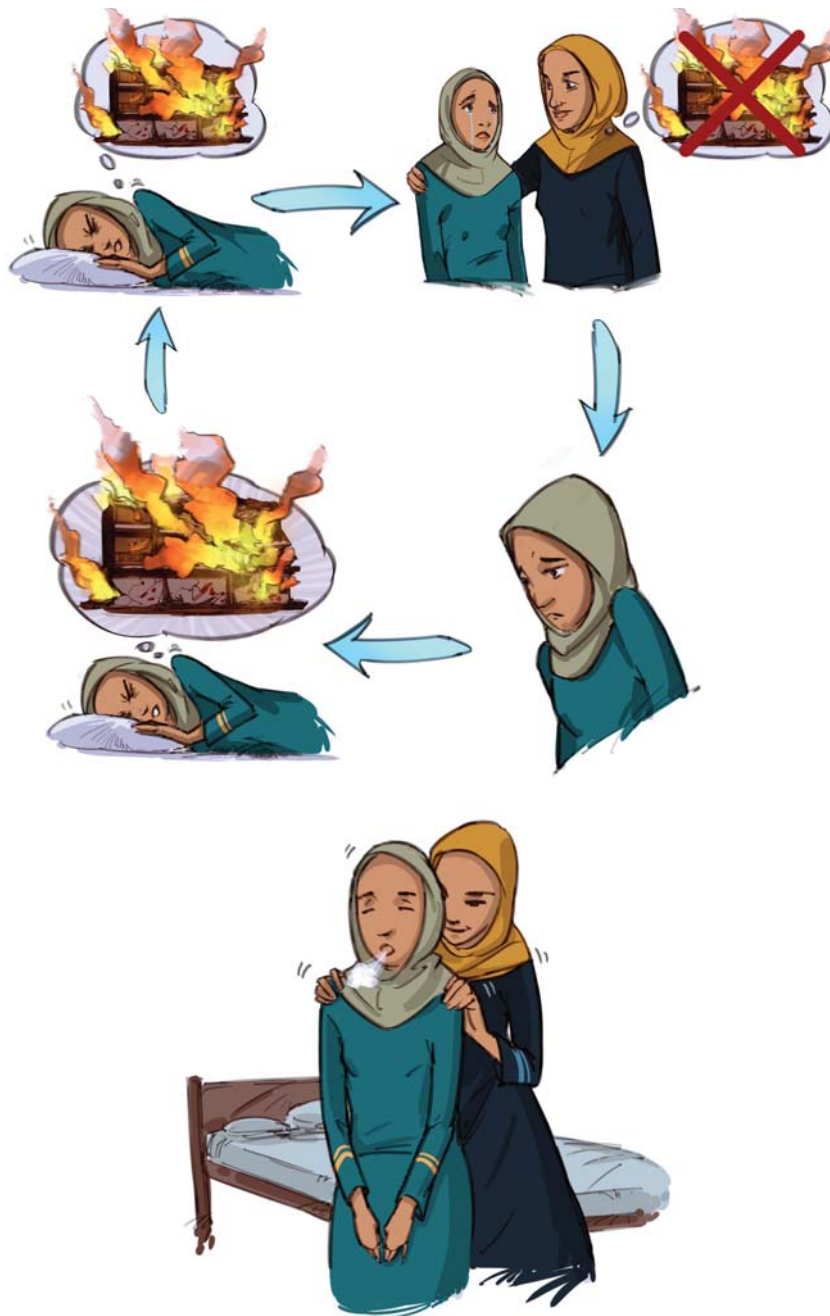
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## 18 Handout 18: Ignoring Symptoms of Stress – A Vicious Cycle



## 18 Handout 18: Ignoring Symptoms of Stress – A Vicious Cycle



## 18 Handout 18: Ignoring Symptoms of Stress – A Vicious Cycle



## 19

## Handout 19:

# Parent Tips for Helping Adolescents After Disasters<sup>1</sup>

| Reactions                                                                                            | Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Examples of things to do and say                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Detachment, shame and guilt</b>                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a safe time to discuss with your teen the events and their feelings.</li> <li>Emphasize that these feelings are common, and correct excessive self-blame with realistic explanations of what actually could have been done.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Many teens – and adults – feel like you do, angry and blaming themselves, thinking that they could have done more. You're not at fault. Remember even the firefighters said there was nothing more we could have done."</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Self-consciousness: About their fears, sense of vulnerability, fear of being labeled abnormal</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help teens understand that these feelings are common.</li> <li>Encourage relationships with family and peers for the necessary support during the recovery period.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"I was feeling the same thing. Scared and helpless. Most people feel like this when a disaster happens, even if they look calm on the outside."</li> <li>"My cell phone is working again, why don't you see if you can get hold of Pete to see how he's doing."</li> <li>"And thanks for playing the game with your little sister. She's much better now."</li> </ul>                                                           |
| <b>Acting out behavior: Using alcohol or drugs, sexually acting out, accident-prone behavior</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help teens understand that acting out behavior is a dangerous way to express strong feelings (like anger) over what happened.</li> <li>Limit access to alcohol and drugs.</li> <li>Talk about the danger of high-risk sexual activity.</li> <li>On a time-limited basis, keep a closer watch on where they are going and what they are planning to do.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Many teens – and some adults – feel out of control and angry after a disaster like this. They think drinking or taking drugs will help somehow. It's very normal to feel that way – but it's not a good idea to act on it."</li> <li>"It's important during these times that I know where you are and how to contact you." Assure them that this extra checking-in is temporary, just until things have stabilized.</li> </ul> |

<sup>1</sup>. Retrieved from: [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/3-appendix\\_a\\_through\\_e.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/3-appendix_a_through_e.pdf).



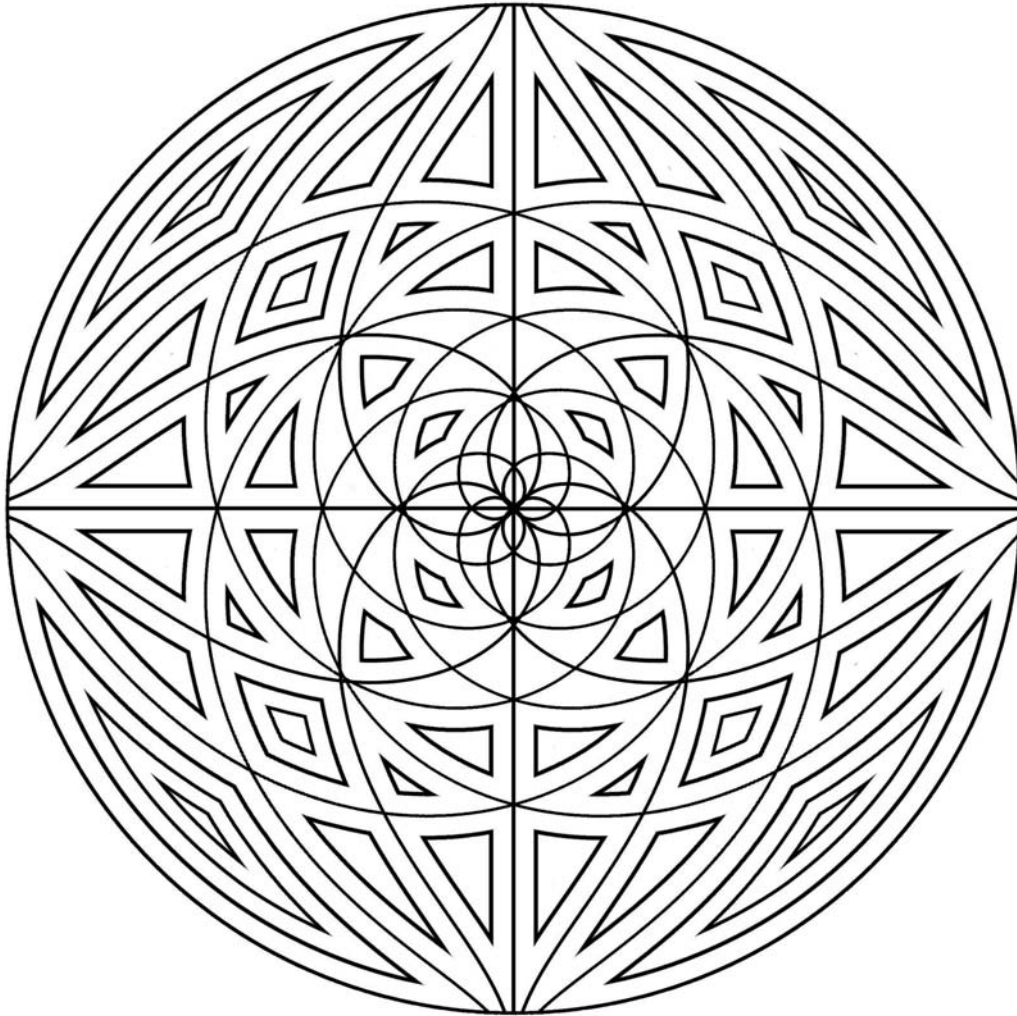


| Reactions                                                                                                                                                                          | Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Examples of things to do and say                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Fears of recurrence and reactions to reminders</b>                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help to identify different reminders (people, places, sounds, smells, feelings, time of day) and to clarify the difference between the event and the reminders that occur after it.</li> <li>▪ Explain to teens that media coverage of the disaster can trigger fears of it happening again.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "When you're reminded, you might try saying to yourself, 'I am upset now because I am being reminded, but it is different now because there is no hurricane and I am safe.'"</li> <li>▪ "Watching the news reports could make it worse, because they are playing the same images over and over. How about turning it off now?"</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Abrupt shifts in interpersonal relationships: Teens may pull away from parents, family, and even from peers; they may respond strongly to parents' reactions to the crisis.</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explain that the strain on relationships is understandable. Emphasize that everyone needs family and friends for support during the recovery period.</li> <li>▪ Encourage tolerance for different family members' courses of recovery.</li> <li>▪ Accept responsibility for your own feelings.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Spend more time talking as a family about how everyone is doing. Say, "You know, the fact that we're crabby with each other is completely normal, given what we've been through. I think we're handling things amazingly. It's a good thing we have each other."</li> <li>▪ "I appreciate your being calm when your brother was screaming last night. I know he woke you up, too."</li> <li>▪ "I want to apologize for being irritable with you yesterday. I am going to work harder to stay calm myself."</li> </ul> |
| <b>Radical changes in attitude</b>                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explain that changes in people's attitudes after a disaster are common, but often their attitude returns to normal back over time.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "We are all under great stress. When people's lives are disrupted this way, we all feel more scared, angry – even full of revenge. It might not seem like it, but we all will feel better when we get back to a more structured routine."</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Premature entrance into adulthood (wanting to leave school, get married)</b>                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage postponing major life decisions. Find other ways to make the teens feel more in control.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "I know you're thinking about quitting school and getting a job to help out. But it's important not to make big decisions right now. A crisis time is not a great time to make major changes."</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Concern for other survivors and families</b>                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage constructive activities on behalf of others, but do not let them burden themselves with undue responsibility.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help teens to identify projects that are age-appropriate and meaningful (clearing rubble from school grounds, collecting money or supplies for those in need).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |





## 20 Handout 20: Mandala<sup>1</sup>



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1. Retrieved from: [www.printmandala.com](http://www.printmandala.com); [www.coloring-pages-adults.com/coloring-mandalas](http://www.coloring-pages-adults.com/coloring-mandalas).



## 21 Handout 21: Referral Pathway

**ADAPTATION** > Adapt to your context.

### SAMPLE SHLS REFERRAL PATHWAY

