

# STEP UP

**Building Respectful  
Family Relationships**

Lily Anderson and Greg Roult





# **Facilitator Manual**

**Third Edition**

Lily Anderson and Greg Routt

## Step-Up: Building Respectful Family Relationships

### Facilitator Manual

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

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

Edited by Sakson and Taylor Consulting

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Greg Routt and Lily Anderson

Seattle, Washington

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To request permission to duplicate any part of this curriculum contact:

Greg Routt [gbroutt@protonmail.com](mailto:gbroutt@protonmail.com) 206-214-8004

Lily Anderson [lilyanderson521@comcast.net](mailto:lilyanderson521@comcast.net) 206-755-8286

Step-Up website: <https://kingcounty.gov/en/court/superior-court/courts-jails-legal-system/court-programs-children-families/juvenile-court-services/programs-services-juvenile-court/for-families-experiencing-violence/step-up>

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We want to acknowledge Sakson and Taylor Consulting for editing the first edition of the curriculum in 2004. We could not have completed this curriculum without their hard work and dedication. Special thanks to Noelle Robertson who stuck with us through many changes and revisions.

The Step-Up Program has evolved and improved over the years with the wisdom and input of group facilitators and student interns who bring their unique skill sets and creative ideas to group sessions. We are grateful for their fresh perspectives that keep Step-Up unfolding and growing into a better program. We want to acknowledge Francesca Peila-Phariss for her wisdom and skill in working with youth in Step-Up with mental health issues, trauma, and attachment disorders who struggle with dysregulation. Francesca has contributed a variety of self-calming and emotion regulation techniques, along with specialized skills for the parents of these youth. Krystal Correa is a Step-Up facilitator who is highly skilled in creative and interactive ways to facilitate groups. Her inspiration and creativity have made Step-Up groups more engaging and fun through warm-ups, games, and connecting activities. Our newest Step-Up facilitator, Fahmia Ali, brings compassion, heart, and joy to Step-Up groups. We are so grateful for her presence in our groups.

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Finally, we are grateful to the teens and parents who have participated in the Step-Up Program since 1998. They have taught us more than anyone about how to create an effective program. We field tested the exercises in this curriculum with many families over the course of its development. We have learned the most from their hard work and effort to improve their family relationships.

# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Step-Up History

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

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

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

# Design and Structure of the Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to be a 21-session program, with one session per week. Sessions are intended to be between 90 minutes and two hours, depending upon the group size. There is an addendum of optional additional sessions at the end of the curriculum. Group facilitators can, of course, change the number of sessions to suit time limitations and select session material they find useful.

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

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

The first edition of the Step-Up curriculum had more separate teen and parent sessions. However, we found it helpful to include parents in some of the teen skill sessions so that parents are able to learn the same skills. Parents can better support their teens' use of new skills at home when they have learned along with them. This change in the curriculum left extra parent sessions that are now in the addendum at the end of the manuals and workbooks. Facilitators are welcome to select parent sessions from the addendum after they have covered the key parent sessions (see Training Manual for more information about key sessions).

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

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

- **Background Information:** Notes and guidelines for teaching the session
- **Goals:** What the participants should learn when they complete the session
- **Important Messages:** Key points for teaching the session
- **Session Overview:** Schedule for the session
- **Group Activities:** Skill-building exercises for the session
- **Take-Home Activities:** Activities to work on at home

## Check-In

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

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

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

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

## Step-Up Training Manual

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

## Quality Assurance

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

# Outline of Sessions

SESSION	TEENS	COMBINED	PARENTS
1		Orientation to Step-Up	
2		Making a Safety Plan	
3		Understanding Warning Signs	
4	Understanding Violence and Abuse		Introduction to Parent Group: Strengths, Challenges, Changes
5		Understanding Self-Calming	
6		Assertive Communication	
7	Understanding Power		How to Respond When Your Teen Is Violent
8	Making Amends		When Your Teen Is Abusive: Effects on Parenting
9		Accountability Through Restorative Practice	
10		Understanding Feelings	
11		Understanding Self-Talk and Beliefs	

SESSION	TEENS	COMBINED	PARENTS
12	Hurtful Moves/Helpful Moves		Guiding Change in Your Teen with Restorative Parenting
13		Safety Plan Review/ Open Session	
14		Using "I" Statements	
15	Understanding Responsibility		Empowering Teens to Be Responsible for Their Behaviors
16	Understanding Empathy		What Kinds of Messages Are You Giving Your Teen
17		Guidelines for Respectful Communication	
18		Problem Solving Together	
19		Problem Solving Together	
20		Open Session	
21		Moving Forward	
<b>Extra Sessions</b>	My Family Relationships My Core Self	How We Change	Listening to Your Teen Making Changes Encouraging Your Teen Supporting Positive Changes in Your Teen

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## NOTES





## Background Information

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

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

## Goals

- To introduce participants to the program and discuss the purpose and goals of the program
- To begin to establish a safe and respectful climate in the group by discussing the Agreements for the Group and the Communication Agreement
- To set participants' expectations about the new skills they will learn and the behavioral changes they will make to improve their relationships with their family members
- To begin to engage youth in talking about their behavior with others and start to experience the value of being honest and accountable
- To help families recognize that they are not alone and to begin to experience support from other group members
- To facilitate the first Check-In with youth and parents and help them begin to experience accountability as a positive experience where they are encouraged and supported by others
- To teach youth how to plan a personal goal for behavior change and use the Weekly Goal Planning worksheet to plan their first goal



# Group Activities

## Introduction

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


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


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

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



## Suggested Introductory Statement

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

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

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

We want the youth to be honest and direct about the behaviors that brought them to the program and to avoid the tendency (common to youth, parents, and professionals) to speak indirectly about it. When youth become accustomed to talking about their behaviors, they begin to let go of their denial and develop empathy and accountability. This is a restorative practice theory and a key to helping youth change.

# Group Member Introductions

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

TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS	PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS
This appears on page 3 in teen workbooks.	This appears on page 3 in parent workbooks.
<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p>Introduce yourself to the group by answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your name?</li> <li>• What behavior brought you here?</li> <li>• What would you like to learn to help you get along better with your family, or, if this is not your first time coming to the group, what have you learned that is helping you get along better with your family?</li> </ul>	<p>Parents will introduce themselves to the group by saying their names and what they would like to accomplish in the program.</p>

## Warm-Up Exercise

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

- ▶ Have parents and teens spend a few minutes writing down responses to the *Warm-Up Exercise* questions in their workbooks. When they are finished, go around the group and have each parent and teen share their responses with the group.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 4 in teen workbooks, page 3 in parent workbooks.

**Warm-Up Exercise**

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions.

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

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



# The Three R's

▶ Refer group members to the *Respect* page in their workbooks and explain the following.

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

▶ Write the following on the board:

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

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 5 in teen workbooks, page 4 in parent workbooks.

### Respect

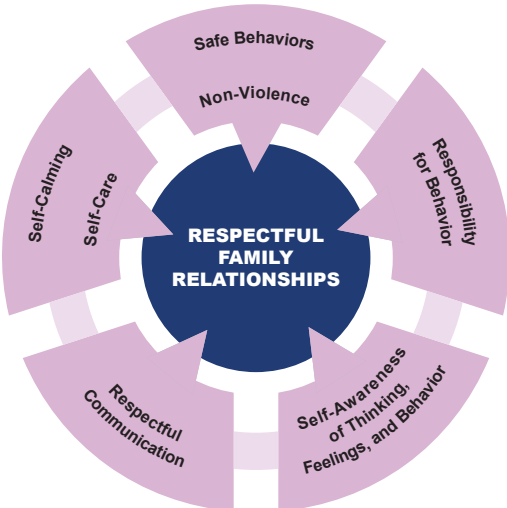

Respect is at the heart of everything you will learn. We will be talking about respect in many different ways.

### The Three R's



# Step-Up Group Components

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

TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS	PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS
<p>This appears on pages 6–7 in teen workbooks, page 5 in parent workbooks.</p>	<p>This appears on pages 6–7 in parent workbooks.</p>
<h3>Step-Up Teen Components</h3>  <p><b>Safe Behaviors</b> Safety of family members is the first concern of the program. Stopping violence and abuse toward family members is your most important task. The first and most important skill you will learn in Step-Up is making a plan about what you will do when you are getting upset and angry and might become hurtful to family members. We call this a Safety Plan because it keeps your behavior safe.</p>	<h3>Parent Group Components</h3>  <p><b>Responding to Abuse and Promoting Safety</b> Safety of family members is the first concern of the program. The first and most important skill teens learn in Step-Up is making a Safety Plan about what they will do when they are getting upset and angry and might become hurtful to family members. Parents learn how to support their teens in identifying early warning signs and using their Safety Plan. Parents will make their own plan about responding to hurtful behaviors and how to talk with their teens about it in a meaningful way.</p>



**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

**Self-Calming**

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

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

**Setting Boundaries/Regaining Leadership**

When parents are fearful of their teen responding to limit-setting with abuse or violence, it can interfere with their leadership in the family. Accepted parent/adolescent boundaries are ruptured and guidelines set by parents are disregarded. Often, conventional consequences are either ignored or become the fuel for more abuse. Parents struggle with establishing and holding effective consequences for hurtful behavior toward family members. In Step-Up, parents will learn how to use a restorative practice model that is also used in the group to address violence or abuse at home to help their teens take responsibility for their behavior in a meaningful way.

## Goals for the Teens

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 8 in teen workbooks, page 8 in parent workbooks.

**Goals for Teens**

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

- Keep your behavior safe and prevent yourself from hurting others by using a personal Safety Plan
- Talk respectfully even when you are upset or angry
- Change unhelpful thinking into thinking that supports you in staying safe and respectful
- Manage difficult thoughts and emotions, de-escalate yourself, and calm down
- Understand your feelings and how to communicate them in respectful ways
- Resolve conflict with family members in a respectful way
- Understand the meaning of accountability and use the Six Restorative Steps to take responsibility for harmful behavior
- Realize you have choices about your behavior

# How the Sessions Work

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 8 in teen workbooks, page 8 in parent workbooks.

**How the Sessions Work**

The program includes sessions with the parents and teens together, as well as separate teen and parent sessions. Every week when you come to the group, we will begin with parents and teens together for Check-In. After Check-In, there is a skill-building session, either with parents and teens together or in separate teen and parent groups.

# Communication Agreement


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

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



# Step-Up Acronym

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

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

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 10 in teen workbooks, page 10 in parent workbooks.

<b>S</b> top all the action	Take a time-out and calm yourself
<b>T</b> hink	What am I feeling? What am I thinking?
<b>E</b> valuate	What is the problem? What are my choices?
<b>P</b> lan	How can I deal with this problem and stay on the Respect Wheel?
<b>U</b> se skills	"I" statements, listening, assertive communication...
<b>P</b> atience	... and lots of it, is what makes this work



# The Wheels

- ▶ Refer group members to the *Abuse/Disrespect Wheel* and the *Respect Wheel* on pages 12 and 13 of their workbooks. Explain the following.

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

- ▶ Go around the wheels and review each of the sections, discussing the behaviors listed and giving some examples of each to broaden their understanding. Ask the group for some examples, such as for the category of emotional abuse.

- ❓ Ask them if they can think of other kinds of emotional abuse, and ask them for other examples of respectful communication.

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

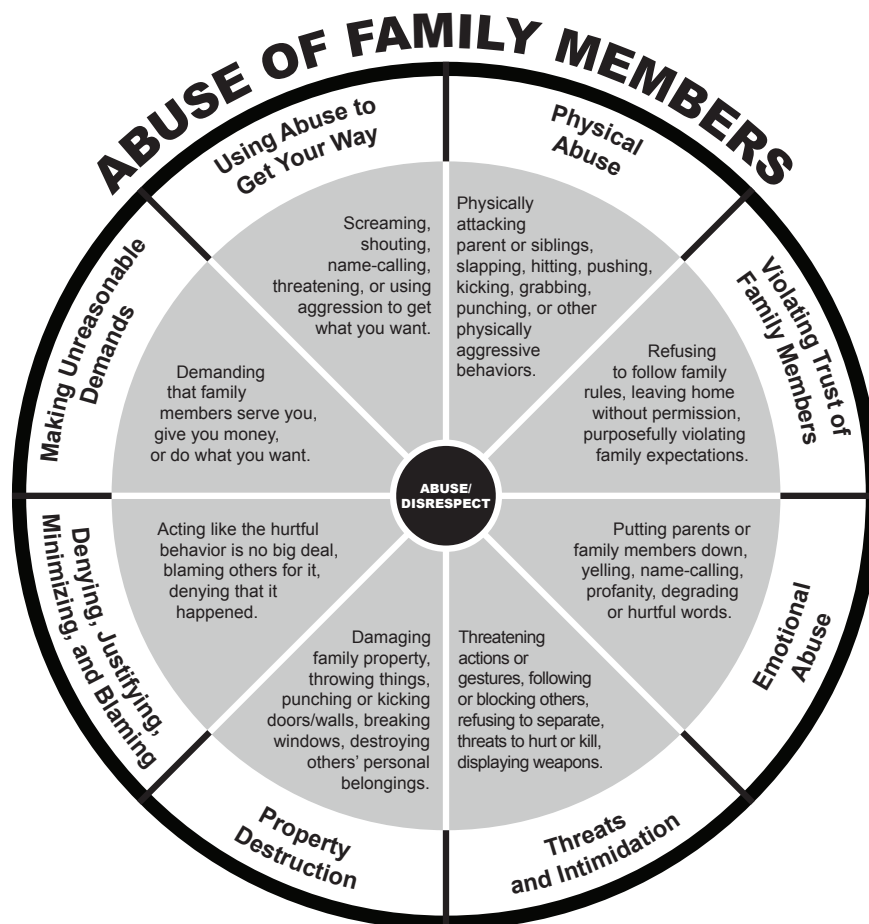
This appears on pages 12–13 in teen workbooks, pages 12–13 in parent workbooks.

**The Wheels**

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

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

**Abuse/Disrespect Wheel**





**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 14 in teen workbooks, page 14 in parent workbooks.

**Check-In: How It Helps**

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

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

- Refer teens to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbook on Page\_\_\_. Point out that it includes the information about Check-in, the Wheels along with Check-In and Goal worksheets for every week of group.
- Let them know that when they come to group every week, they will turn to the end of their workbook to the Check-In section and fill out their check-in and goal sheets at the start of group.
- At the beginning of every group session, you will fill out the Check-In worksheet and we will go around the group. Every teen will take a turn sharing what they wrote. Parents will add any important behaviors you might have missed, especially respectful behaviors.
- If you have been physically violent or threatening, you will answer some restorative questions, to be discussed shortly.
- After Check-In on the wheels, you will plan a goal for the following week using the goal planning questions on the back of the *Check-In* worksheet.

## Your First Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

#### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT


RESPECT

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

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


## Addressing Violence: Taking Responsibility for My Behavior Using Six Restorative Steps

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

 In Step-Up, you will learn a meaningful way to be accountable to your family when you have been violent or abusive.

If you have been physically violent or abusive toward people or property, or threatened to do so, we will guide you through a “restorative” process for taking responsibility for your behavior as you answer these questions.

 Read the questions. Then explain the following.

 These questions are called “restorative inquiry” and they guide you in a step-by-step process that helps you:

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


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

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

# Goal Planning and Self-Evaluation

 Refer the group to the *Weekly Goal Planning* worksheet on the back of the *Check-In* sheet.

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

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

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


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

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


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


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

 Now ask the group:

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

 Write some ideas on the board.

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

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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 18 in teen workbooks, page 18 in parent workbooks.


### Weekly Goal Planning

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

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

#### Tips to Succeed with Your Goal

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

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

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



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

**Facilitator Tips**

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 19 in teen workbooks, page 19 in parent workbooks.

**Goal for the Week**

The behavior I will work on is:

**STEPS**


1. When do you usually use (or not use) this behavior?
2. What is the new behavior you will use?
3. What can you say to yourself that will help you do this?
4. My self-statement is:
5. Is there a skill you can use to help you succeed with your goal?

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

**HOW DID I DO?**

1. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = worst, 10 = best): \_\_\_\_\_
2. If you had some success, how did you do this?
  - What did you do that was different?
  - What skill did you use?
3. If you were not successful, what got in the way?
4. What can you do this week so you will be more successful?

## Agreements for the Group

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 20 in teen workbooks, page 20 in parent workbooks.

**Agreements for the Group**

To make this group a safe and respectful place for everyone, I agree to:

1. Do my best to follow the Communication Agreement when I talk.
2. Keep information shared in the group confidential.
3. Not identify group members to anyone outside the group.
4. Come to each session sober, not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
5. Show respect to those who are speaking in the group by avoiding side conversations.
6. Put away phones and other electronics while the group is in session.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

**Closing**

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

# Take-Home Activity

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 21 in teen workbooks, page 21 in parent workbooks.

### Take-Home Activity or Closing Exercise

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

My personal strengths:




## Background Information

In this session, teens will learn how to make a step-by-step plan for keeping their behavior safe when they are angry or upset and might use hurtful words or behavior. We call it a Safety Plan because it helps their behavior stay safe and non-violent. Using this terminology helps teens understand the goal of the plan: keeping family members safe from harm.

For youth who have already set up a Safety Plan at their intake or orientation, this session is a review and gives them time to problem-solve any challenges they have had using their plan. It includes details about where they will go when they separate and what they will do to calm themselves down. Rules are included to address some of the barriers to success. Parents can support their teens by letting them know if they see that the teen is escalating and hasn't made the choice to separate.

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

## Goals

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

## Important Messages

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

## Session Overview

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

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**

**RESPECT**

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


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



# Group Activities

## Introduction


 Begin by saying the following:


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

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

## Discussion: What Is a Safety Plan?

 Explain the following:

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


 It's like a time-out in basketball or football. The game stops. The teams separate from each other to figure out a plan. The game restarts when the team members have a plan. It is not about taking off from home

without telling anyone. It isn't just about leaving. A time-out is a way to try to solve problems within families.

Taking a break from heated arguments is one of the best ways to prevent hurtful behavior. Teens and parents tell us the Safety Plan was the most useful skill they learned in the program. It is a lifelong skill people can use in many different situations to prevent saying or doing things they might regret.

Using your Safety Plan with your family will:

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

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

## Discussion: Overview of the Safety Plan

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 25–26 in teen workbooks, pages 25–26 in parent workbooks.

#### Discussion Questions

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

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2. How was it helpful?

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3. What was difficult about it?

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

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5. What makes it work?

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# Exercise:

## Make Your Personal Safety Plan

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

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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 28 in teen workbooks, page 28 in parent workbooks.

### MY SAFETY PLAN

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

1. **I will separate from my family members when:**

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



If you catch yourself before you start to say or do things that are hurtful, it is much easier to separate, and it prevents harmful behavior.

Do you know the feeling inside when you are getting upset or angry in a conversation before you lash out at the person?

What does that feel like? Invite the group members to share how they feel before they say or do something that is hurtful. Examples may include: angry, agitated, annoyed, frustrated, or irritated. Others may identify physical sensations or thoughts.

We call these feelings, thoughts, or sensations “red flags.” They let you know that you could be headed in the direction of becoming hurtful. You will learn more about this in the next session.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

- I start to use any hurtful behaviors, including the following:
  - » Yelling or shouting
  - » Name-calling/profanity
  - » Threats/intimidating behavior
  - » Property damage
  - » Any unwanted physical contact



Before people become physically violent, they usually start with verbal or threatening behaviors. It commonly starts with raised voices, put-downs, or swearing. If you don't catch yourself when you have the feeling (as we just talked about), the next place to catch it is when your voice raises or you start to put the person down, call names, or swear.

The minute you start to act mean, threatening, or demanding, it is time to stop and separate.

If it gets to the point of becoming physical toward people or property (for some people, it happens very fast), stop immediately and separate.

In order to make your Safety Plan work best, separate the minute your voice is raised or disrespectful words are used. After you gain more Step-Up skills, you will be able to catch yourself and change your behavior without separating.



**Note for parents:** A family rule can be that the moment voices are raised or hurtful words are said, everyone stops and separates until things are calm. Then, see *What to Do After Your Time-Out*.

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



It is important to let your parent know you are using your Safety Plan so that they will respect this and allow you to separate.

When you separate without saying anything, others do not know you are using your Safety Plan.

Think of something short and respectful to say using an "I" statement, such as: I'm using my Safety Plan; I need a break right now; I need space; I am going to go calm down; I'm taking a time-out.

The moment you let others know you are separating, all talking should stop to prevent continued escalation.



**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 28 in teen workbooks, page XX in parent workbooks.



*I will separate from my family members when:*

- *I start to feel angry or upset and might become hurtful*
- *I start to use any hurtful behaviors, including the following:*
  - > *Yelling or shouting*
  - > *Name-calling/profanity*
  - > *Threats/intimidating behavior*
  - > *Property damage*
  - > *Any unwanted physical contact*

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




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**My Safety Plan**

**After your time-out:**

- **Let it go**
- **Put it on hold**
- **Discuss it**

Your Safety Plan is a time to be alone.

Your Safety Plan is a time to calm down and think, "How can I deal with this problem without being abusive?"

You are responsible for your own Safety Plan, not other people's.

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

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



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

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Read the final part of the Safety Plan.


**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 29 in teen workbooks, page 29 in parent workbooks.

I agree that:

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

I agree to follow this plan to help me stay non-violent, non-abusive, and respectful to my family members.

 It can be tempting to use the Safety Plan any time you are in an uncomfortable conversation, such as discussions about grades, rules, or chores. Reserve your Safety Plan for the times you really need it.

Anyone in your home can use this tool. Every family member should respect each other's time alone when they are in a time-out.

Returning to the conversation after your time-out is important so that you can decide what to do next and so there is closure to the interaction that was interrupted by the time-out.

## What to Do After Your Time-Out

 Explain the following.

 **The Safety Plan has a beginning, middle, and end.**

1. Separate from the person or situation and go to a place where you can take a time-out and be alone.
2. Do something to calm down. Once you are calm, think about how

you can talk about the problem respectfully.

3. Go back to the person and talk about what to do next.

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



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



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

#### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 30 in teen workbooks, page 30 in parent workbooks.

### What to Do After Your Time-Out

#### Let it go

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

#### Put it on hold

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

#### Discuss it

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



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



**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 31 in teen workbooks, page 31 in parent workbooks.

**Safety Plan Rules**

**Your Safety Plan is a time to be alone.**

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

**Your Safety Plan is a time to calm down and think, “How can I deal with this problem without being abusive?”**

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

**You are responsible for your own Safety Plan, not other people’s.**


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

**Exercise:  
Share Safety Plans with the  
Group**

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

Lined writing area for notes or additional information.

# Take-Home Activity

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

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 32–33 in teen workbooks, pages 32–33 in parent workbooks.

### Safety Plan Log

During the next week, use your Safety Plan whenever you are starting to feel upset or angry during a conflict. After your Safety Plan, write down how it went in the log below.

Situation:

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1. When did you decide that you needed to separate? What were your warning signs?

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

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3. How was your Safety Plan helpful?

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4. How was it challenging or difficult to do?

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5. What can you do differently next time so that it works better?

---

6. Make changes in your Safety Plan, if needed, to make it more successful.

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## Background Information

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

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

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

## Goals

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

## Important Messages

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

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activity
2. Discussion: Red Flags
3. Exercise: Identifying Red Flags in Teens
4. Exercise: Identifying My Own Red Flags (Parent Exercise)
5. Discussion: Self-Calming Thoughts
6. Exercise: My Self-Calming Thoughts



# Group Activities

## Discussion: Red Flags

- ▶ Start by reviewing the definition of red flags listed under *Red Flags* in the workbook.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 37 in teen workbooks, page 37 in parent workbooks.

#### Red Flags

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

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

Everyone has their own red flags. Here are some examples.

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

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

# Exercise: Identifying Red Flags in Teens

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

## TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 38–39 in teen workbooks.

### My Red Flags

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

Situation:

---

What were your red flags?

**Negative thoughts:**

---

**Difficult feelings:**


---

**Body signs:**

---

**Actions:**

---

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

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 38–40 in parent workbooks.

**Identifying Red Flags in Your Teen**

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

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

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

Some examples are:

Body signs: Facial expressions, moving closer to you, pacing, red face.

Verbal signs: Raised voice; pressured voice; starting to put you down, criticize, swear, or name-call.

Actions: Slamming doors, cupboards.

When you see warning signs in your teen, let them know that you are seeing red flags and it is time to use the Safety Plan. Give your teen the opportunity to separate, but if they refuse, say that you are going to use the Safety Plan and separate.

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

**Teen Red Flags**

What are signs you notice in your teen that let you know they may become abusive?

---

**Negative thoughts:**

---

**Difficult feelings:**

---

**Body signs:**

---

**Actions:**

---



**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS****Parent Exercise: Identifying My Own Red Flags****Body signs**

(Examples: Feeling tense, stomachache, headache, shoulder tension)

**Feelings**

(Examples: Anger, frustration, revenge)

**Thoughts**

(Examples: "He's not going to get away with this." "She's a selfish brat.")


**Verbal signs**


(Examples: Saying hurtful things, put-downs, criticism, threats)

**Actions**

(Examples: Pointing your finger, getting too close to the person, slamming your fist)

 Have them share their responses in small groups or with the whole group.

 As group members share their red flags, ask each teen to try to figure out what their earliest red flag is. Let them know that it's important to use your Safety Plan at the earliest red flag.

 When you see warning signs in your teen, let them know that you are seeing red flags and it is time for the Safety Plan. Give your teen the opportunity to separate, but if they refuse, say that you are going to use the Safety Plan and separate.

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

## Discussion:

# Self-Calming Thoughts

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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 40 in teen workbooks, page 41 in parent workbooks.

#### My Self-Calming Thoughts

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


You should use self-calming thoughts when:

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

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

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

# Exercise: My Self-Calming Thoughts

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

TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS	PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS
<p>This appears on page 40 in teen workbooks, page 41 in parent workbooks.</p>	<p>This appears on page 42 in parent workbooks.</p>
<h3>Self-Calming Thoughts for Teens</h3> <p>Self-calming thoughts help you to not get abusive.</p> <p>Here are some examples of self-calming thoughts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm not going to let this get to me.</li> <li>• I can stay calm.</li> <li>• Stop. Let it go.</li> <li>• I'm going to take a time-out now.</li> <li>• If I stay calm, things will work out better.</li> <li>• I can take charge of how I act.</li> <li>• I don't have to get mad.</li> <li>• Step away. Stay calm.</li> <li>• I'm going to go chill out. We can talk later.</li> <li>• I'm not going to yell.</li> <li>• I can talk calmly about this.</li> <li>• I'll go take a walk around the block.</li> <li>• I'm not a little kid. I don't have to throw a temper tantrum.</li> <li>• This is no big deal.</li> <li>• I can handle this.</li> <li>• I can talk without yelling.</li> <li>• I can talk about how I feel without being abusive.</li> <li>• I will take three deep breaths and sit down quietly.</li> </ul>	<h3>Self-Calming Thoughts for Parents</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He is responsible for his behavior.</li> <li>• Let it go for now. I can talk about it later when we are both calm.</li> <li>• I am calm and in control.</li> <li>• I will go in another room and take some deep breaths.</li> <li>• I cannot control his behavior, but I can control my behavior.</li> <li>• I don't have to deal with this right now; it will only make it worse.</li> <li>• He is responsible for his feelings.</li> <li>• She is upset and mad, and she can deal with that on her own.</li> <li>• I don't have to engage in this battle. I can take a time-out, calm down, and think about how I want to communicate.</li> <li>• I don't have to "win."</li> <li>• The strongest influence I can have with my child is to model the behavior I want her to learn.</li> <li>• I will disengage now and go do something relaxing.</li> <li>• She can figure this out on her own. I will let her be.</li> </ul>

**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

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

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

- I can't "make" him do anything. I can provide choices and consequences, and then it is his decision.
- My behavior is not helping the situation. I will stop and be quiet for a while. Later, I will talk about it calmly with her.

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


**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 41 in teen workbooks, page 42 in parent workbooks.

**My Self-Calming Thoughts**

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

# Take-Home Activity

 During the following week, pay attention to your red flags and add them to the *My Red Flags* (teen) or *Identifying My Own Red Flags* (parent) worksheet. Try to notice your earliest signal that you are becoming angry or upset.

Use your self-calming thoughts when you notice your red flags and see if it makes a difference.



## Background Information

The goal of the Step-Up program is for teens to choose behaviors on the Respect Wheel rather than the Abuse/Disrespect Wheel when they are in conflict with their family members. In this session, teens will explore the definitions of abuse and violence, and their impact on those harmed, the relationship, other family members, and the person who used the violent/abusive behavior.

The impact of emotional abuse is sometimes challenging for teens. They often don't view name-calling, yelling, and put-downs as abusive. It is important to spend time defining verbal and emotional abuse and their impact on others, including siblings. The group will brainstorm on the board different kinds of physical violence and verbal/emotional abuse. They will also identify the behaviors they have done, witnessed, or experienced. This exercise helps them remember the impact these behaviors had on them. It is important to let them know that this is confidential, and they do not have to share their answers on the worksheet.

An important step toward choosing non-violent and non-abusive behavior is to recognize the results of violence and abuse. When people are violent or abusive, they are usually acting without thinking ahead about the reality of what will happen afterward. You will help the group explore the immediate payoffs, short-term results, and long-term outcomes of violence and abuse. At the end of the session, they will apply what they have learned to a recent time when they were violent or abusive toward a family member and think about the impact and results of their behavior. When teens realize how they are negatively impacted by their violent and abusive behavior, it motivates them to begin to engage in changing their behavior.

Throughout the program, you can help group members continue to reflect on the impact of their behavior when they have been abusive or violent by asking, "What was the payoff? What were the results of your behavior? What might the long-term outcomes be if you continue using violence and abuse in your relationships?"

## Goals

- To define violent and abusive behaviors
- To identify violent and abusive behaviors you have used, that have been done to you, and that you have seen
- To understand the impact of violence and abuse on yourself, others, and relationships
- To explore the immediate payoffs, short-term results, and long-term outcomes of violence and abuse

## Important Messages

- Violence is any behavior that physically harms, or intends to harm, a person or property. It also includes making someone feel threatened or scared that you will physically harm them. Physical violence is also emotionally abusive.
- Verbal and emotional abuse are words or behavior that intend to emotionally hurt, control, threaten, scare, or make someone else feel bad. It may include yelling, using profane language, name-calling, saying mean things, humiliating, criticizing, or doing things to emotionally hurt another person.
- Violent and abusive behavior has negative impacts on the person who is abusive, as well as the person targeted. Family members are all impacted by violence and abuse in the home.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activity
2. Separate into parent and teen groups
3. Discussion: Defining Violence and Abuse
4. Discussion: Payoffs, Short-Term Results, and Long-Term Outcomes of Violence and Abuse
5. Exercise: Payoffs, Outcomes, and Consequences
6. Discussion: Choices

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**

**RESPECT**


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

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



# Group Activities

## Discussion: Defining Violence and Abuse

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

### **What are violent and abusive behaviors?**

- List their responses on the board in two columns, one titled **Physical Violence** and the other titled **Emotional/Verbal Abuse**.
- Have them write the behaviors on the *Discussion Questions* worksheet in their workbooks on the grid titled *Violent and Abusive Behaviors*.
- At the end of the brainstorm, have group members check which behaviors they have used, which have been done to them, and which they have seen. Let them know that this is confidential – they do not have to share it with anyone.
- When everyone is finished, proceed with the following discussion questions.

### **Where or how do people learn to use violence and abuse?**


### **How do violence and abuse affect:**

- The person who is the target of the abuse or violence?
- The person who is abusive or violent?
- Their relationship between these two people?
- Other family members?



# Discussion:

## Payoffs, Results, and Outcomes of Violence and Abuse

-  Write the following three terms on the board and discuss the definition of each one. Then have them think of examples for each one, writing them on their worksheets. This can be a full-group brainstorm on the board or the group can break into small groups to come up with ideas that they bring back to the large group to share.

### TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 48 in teen workbooks, page 52 in parent workbooks.

### Payoffs, Results, and Outcomes of Violence and Abuse

**Payoffs:** The immediate result of being abusive or violent. It is what you get out of being violent or abusive that makes you more likely to do it again – for example, a feeling of power, release of pent-up emotion, or scaring someone so they'll leave you alone or let you do what you want.

**Short-term results:** How being violent or abusive affects a situation. It is what happens afterward and its impact on you, other family members, and relationships. Usually, the outcome is not what you wanted – for example, an injured family member, police or court involvement, loss of trust, siblings being afraid of you, loss of phone or other privileges, or going to counseling or Step-Up.

**Long-term outcomes:** What happens or what may happen if you continue being violent or abusive to others. What could be the outcome if you continue acting this way? How will it affect you? Your relationships? Your life? Your own family in the future? Some examples of long-term outcomes include continued court involvement, loss of ability to live at home, or loss of important relationships.

# Exercise: Payoffs, Results, and Outcomes

## TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 49 in teen workbooks, page 52 in parent workbooks.


As you come up with examples with the group, write them in the boxes below.

PAYOFFS	SHORT-TERM RESULTS	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Now, think of a time when you were abusive or violent (you could use the incident that brought you to Step-Up), and write down the payoffs, short-term results, and long-term outcomes of it (or guess what it will be if you don't change your behavior).

PAYOFFS	SHORT-TERM RESULTS	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

## Discussion: Making Choices

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



## Background Information

An important part of the parent group is for parents to get support from other parents who have similar struggles with their teens. Many parents come into the program feeling isolated and alone in their experiences with their abusive teenagers. Many believe that no one else has a teen like theirs and that they are to blame for their difficult situations. When parents learn that others are facing similar challenges, they feel a sense of relief. Parents can give each other support, empathy, and reassurance. They can work together to help find solutions to difficult problems with their teens. During this session, parents will begin the process of getting to know each other and building supportive relationships. An important role of the facilitator is to encourage open discussion while keeping the group focused on the goals of the session.

Many parents are feeling powerless and hopeless. A critical function of the parent group is to give parents information and ideas about what they can do. When parents leave the group with a plan about something they can do, whether it is about their own self-care or something in their relationships with their teens, it gives them a sense of having some control in their lives. It also gives them some hope and renewed energy.

During this session, parents will talk about their strengths, challenges they face with their teens, and changes they would like to make in their own behavior. At the end of the session, they will brainstorm together about what kinds of information and skills they feel they need in order to effectively face their challenges. Usually, the list of skills and information generated by the parents includes much of the content of the parent curriculum. If there are skills and information listed that are not covered in this curriculum, you may want to bring in other curriculum materials or exercises to address these topics.

It is important throughout the curriculum to communicate to parents that they are not to blame for their teen's violent behavior. When we talk about parents making changes in their own behavior, it is not to imply that teens' violent or abusive behavior is a result of parents' behavior. Parents focus on their own behavior because it is the only behavior they have control of. The purpose of making changes in their own behavior is to help them deal more effectively with their teen's difficult behavior.

Some parents may come to the group feeling like they do not need to change their own behavior, and this may be true. It is important to respect this (unless they are being violent or abusive – see *Introduction to Parent Group* for more information about this).

The teens are coming to the program to change their violent and abusive behavior. Parents are here to support the teens in making changes. Many

parents learn over the course of attending the program that they have been responding to their teen's behavior in ways that are not helpful to themselves or their teen, and they welcome ideas for change.

## Goals

- To begin the process of building supportive relationships in the group
- To be introduced to the parent group and begin to get to know other parents
- To understand the goals and ground rules of the parent group
- To identify strengths and challenges as a parent

## Important Messages

- You are not alone.
- You can talk about your challenges safely in this group.
- The group is here to listen and support you.
- We can help each other make positive changes.
- You all have strengths as parents.
- You are not to blame for your child's abusive behavior.
- You are not powerless; there are things you can do.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activity
2. Separate into parent and teen groups
3. Introduction to the Parent Group
4. Discussion: Safety
5. Exercise: Strengths, Challenges, and Changes

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**

**RESPECT**

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

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



# Group Activities

## Introduction to the Parent Group

- ▶ Begin by passing out parent workbooks. Have group members introduce themselves to each other, if they were not part of the introductory teen and parent group the previous session. Refer the group to *Goals for Parent Group* in the workbook and go over each goal.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 47 in parent workbooks.

#### Goals for Parent Group


- To learn skills for safety when your teen is violent or abusive
- To learn how to support your teen in using skills learned in Step-Up
- To learn how to respond when your teen is violent or abusive
- To learn ways to build a more positive relationship with your teen
- To understand the importance of modeling respectful behavior for your teen
- To learn parenting skills that promote cooperation and responsible behavior in teens
- To support each other as parents

- ▶ Let parents know that the focus of the Step-Up program is to help teens stop using violent and abusive behavior. The purpose of the parent group is to give parents information and support while their teens are working on changing their behavior. We have found that parent involvement in the program increases its effectiveness for teens. Explain that when parents come to the group, it helps their teens in several ways.

- Teens are more accountable for their behavior when parents are there for Check-In.
- Parents and teens learn some skills together.
- Parents are able to better support their teen in changing when parents are aware of what teens are working on in the group.


- Parents learn how to respond to their teen’s difficult behaviors in ways that help them change.
- Parents learn that they are not to blame for their teen’s violent behavior.
- This knowledge helps parents give their teen responsibility for their behavior.

 Tell the group:

 Parents come to the program from a variety of backgrounds and with diverse situations and perspectives. We want to respect these differences and acknowledge that every family has their own values and beliefs about what is most important and what they need. Every child is different and has different needs as well. What will work with one teen may not be a good solution for another teen. We do not have pat answers or single solutions that fit everyone. We offer a variety of tools that you can choose from. Some may work and some may not. We work as a team in the parent group to learn skills and brainstorm a variety of solutions for different situations. We want to support you to find the best way for you and your family.

What we all have in common is the goal to stop our teen’s violent and abusive behavior. The Step-Up program does not support violent or abusive behaviors by any person in the home. It is difficult for a teen to stop using violence and abuse when others in the home are using these behaviors, particularly if it is an adult. It is essential that adults in the teen’s life model respectful relationship skills.

If you have concerns about an adult in the home using violent and abusive behaviors, please talk with one of our staff. We are mandated by state law to report any incidents of abuse of a minor *[adapt this statement to fit your state laws as needed]*.

 Ask if there are any questions or concerns about the program or the parent group. Before moving on, take the group through *Ground Rules for the Parent Group* in the parent workbook.

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 47 in parent workbooks.

**Ground Rules for Parent Group**

**Maintain confidentiality:**

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

**Show respect for each other:**

This includes not interrupting or talking while someone else is talking, respecting each other’s feelings and opinions, and acknowledging that our comments are our own opinions.

**Show respect for your child:**


This includes not labeling the child, putting them down, or calling them names. When discussing difficulties with your child, talk about the behavior, not the person.

**Stay on topic as much as possible:**

If you take the discussion in another direction, make a connection with the topic at hand.

**Discussion: Safety**

 Tell the group:

 Step-Up’s most important concern is the safety of family members. We will be talking a lot about safety in the parent group. The focus of every intervention with the teen is to keep family members safe from violence. Please let us know if you have safety concerns at any time, such as if your teen’s abusive or threatening behavior is escalating at home, your teen is violent with a family member, you are feeling more fearful of your teen, or your teen makes any suicidal comments or behaviors that concern you.

During Check-In each week, you have the opportunity to report abusive or violent behavior by your teen from the previous week. If you feel uncomfortable or fearful talking about your teen’s behavior when your teen is present, please let us know. If your teen retaliates about something you talk about in the group or pressures you not to talk in the group, let us know. We want you to feel safe talking in the group, and we will discuss how you can be part of Check-In without compromising your safety. (For more information, see *Safety Issues* within *Facilitator Notes for Parent Curriculum in the Introduction*).

During the parent group, you can bring up additional information about your teen's behavior that you did not feel comfortable discussing in the larger group.

## Exercise: Strengths, Challenges, and Changes

- ▶ Refer the group to *Strengths, Challenges, and Changes* worksheet in the parent workbook.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 48 in parent workbooks.

#### Strengths, Challenges, and Changes

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

---



---

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

---



---

3. The one **change** I will make is:

---



---

- ▶ Have parents answer the questions on their own. Ask them to think about their own behavior when they answer the questions (as opposed to their teen's behavior). When everyone has finished, go around the group and have each parent share their answers.

As they do this, list their answers on the board under the headings *Strengths, Challenges, and Changes*.







## Background Information

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

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

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

## Goals

- To gain some understanding about how the brain and nervous system function in relation to emotion, anxiety, and stress
- To recognize that when they are escalated and angry, they have options that really work to calm the high emotion and prevent abusive and violent behavior
- To realize that they have some ability to influence their brain and nervous system functioning
- To make their own Self-Calming Plan that they will use when they begin to feel escalated, angry, or anxious to keep their behavior safe
- To learn specific strategies to calm the nervous system and improve mood



## Important Messages

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

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Introduction/Discussion Questions
3. Discussion: You Can Change Your Brain
4. Discussion: Understanding Your Brain and Nervous System
5. Discussion: Calming Strong Emotions
6. Exercise: How can we activate our Pre-frontal Cortex? How can we activate our Parasympathetic Nervous System?
7. Exercise: My Self-Calming Plan
8. Alternate Exercise: Meditation
9. Alternate Exercise: Mindfulness

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**

**RESPECT**

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion Questions



Ask the group:

- How many people feel like they go from feeling upset to rage really fast?
- What does it feel like?
- Does anyone experience this more slowly, like a gradual build-up?
- What does that feel like?



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

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

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

## Discussion: You Can Change Your Brain



Explain the following referencing the *Neural Networks* picture in the workbook.



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

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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 54 in teen workbooks, page 56 in parent workbooks.

## Neural Networks in the Brain

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

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


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


When you do your goal planning each week, as you make a plan about how you will respond to a situation in a new way, you are strengthening the part of your brain that helps you react less impulsively and think through what the outcomes might be for your actions.

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

At the same time, the pathways for the old behaviors are “pruned” away, like pruning branches off a tree.

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

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


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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 55 in teen workbooks, page 57 in parent workbooks.


### Three Steps to Rewiring Your Brain to Change Your Behavior

1. **LEARN:** Gain information so that you understand how and why it works. Learn skills to actually do a new behavior.
2. **PLAN:** Figure out how and when you will use the new skill or behavior.
3. **PRACTICE:** Do the new behavior or skill over and over.


 You are doing this every week in Step-Up.

## Discussion: Understanding Your Brain and Nervous System


### A Handy Model of Your Brain

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

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

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

(quoted from Dan Siegel, *Mindsight*).

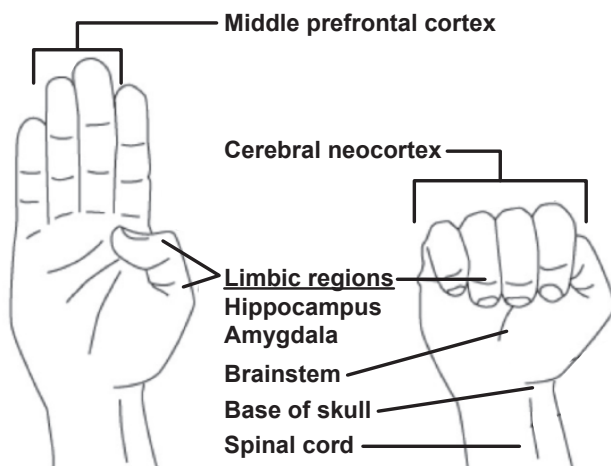
 As you read the copy from the workbook aloud, point out the picture of the brain in their workbooks so they can reference the brain areas on the picture as well. (You are welcome to use other visual aids during this session, such as coloring book images for them to color, plastic models, or posters.)

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 55 in teen workbooks, page 57 in parent workbooks.

## Understanding Your Brain and Nervous System

### *A Handy Model of Your Brain*



You can make a model of your brain with your fist. Put your thumb in the middle of your hand and close your fingers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

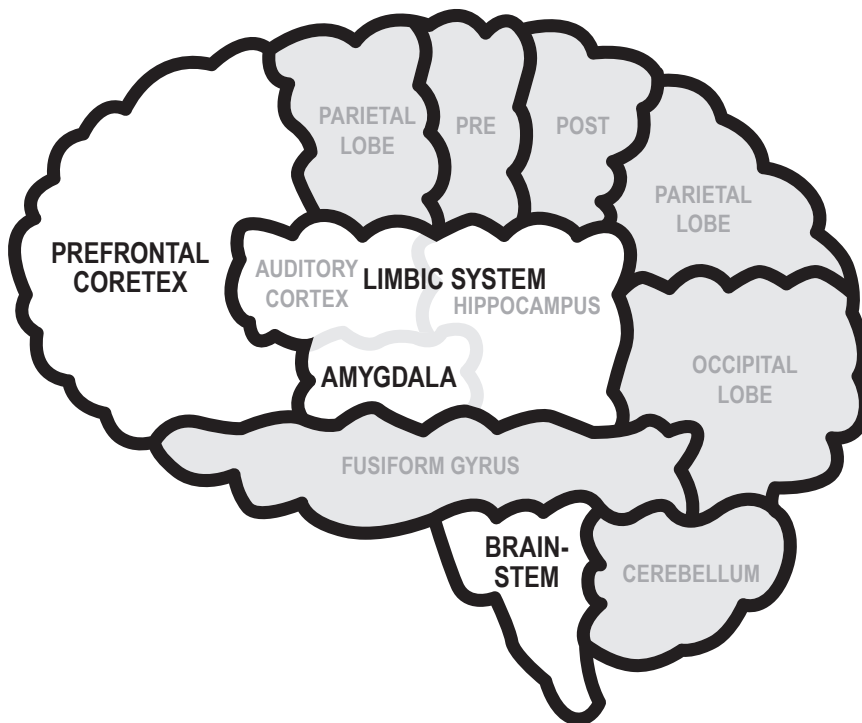
Brain studies show that the amygdala and limbic system can be become overactivated, particularly for people who have had ongoing stress or who have had experiences producing high levels of fear or anger. This can result in overreacting to things that are not worthy of such strong emotions or behaviors.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

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 56 in teen workbooks, page 58 in parent workbooks.

**Pre-Frontal Cortex: Thinking, Reasoning, Calming**



**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

**Brainstem:** Basic drives, food, sleep and safety.

**Limbic System:** Instinct, survival, and seat of our emotions.

**Amygdala:** An almond-sized part in the limbic system that takes in information and evaluates, “Is this good, or bad?” It perceives danger and triggers the nervous system into “fight or flight.”

The amygdala is a good thing, except it can be activated when we don’t really need it. It can become overactivated for people who have had a lot of stress or fearful experiences.

This can result in overreacting to things that are not worthy of such strong emotions or behaviors. This is because our bodies and the limbic system hold memories of events that can be unconsciously triggered by another event that produces a similar type of emotion.

When people’s limbic systems are overactivated, they might overreact to situations that cause feelings similar to a past distressful or fearful event in their lives.

Brian’s story on the next page is an example of this.

 Read the following story.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 57 in teen workbooks, page 59 in parent workbooks.

**Brian’s Story**

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

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

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

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

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



**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**


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

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

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

As he calmed down, he began thinking about what happened. When he entered the house, he looked at his mom and brother and felt terrible about what he had done.

 Discuss the following.

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

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 58 in teen workbooks, page 60 in parent workbooks.

**What Was Happening to Brian?**

Brian had a past experience of fear for his safety when he was bullied. His limbic system activated when this happened, and then he continued to experience stress and anxiety about whether it might happen again. His amygdala and limbic system probably stayed on high alert while he was at school or walking home.

This sensitized his system to any possible threat. While his 10-year-old brother was probably not a big threat, it still might have triggered his amygdala to send him into a fight-or-flight reaction because it brought up the same emotions he felt when the bullies called him fat.

# Discussion:


## Calming Strong Emotions

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 58 in teen workbooks, page 60 in parent workbooks.

#### What helped Brian calm down?

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

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

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



Ask the group:

- Does anyone have any ideas about what helped Brian calm down?



Explain the following.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 58 in teen workbooks, page 60 in parent workbooks.


#### Why did this happen?

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

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

Adolescence is a time when the pre-frontal cortex is not completely developed, but the brain is working hard on it. There are times when your cortex is beginning to function at a higher level and you are really on top of it. Other times, not so much.

The good news is that you have the ability activate your cortex.


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

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

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

## Exercise: How to Activate Your Pre-Frontal Cortex and Calm Your Nervous System

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

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

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 59 in teen workbooks, page 61 in parent workbooks.

**Move and Breathe**

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

**The sympathetic nervous system**

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

**The parasympathetic nervous system**

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

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



Ask group members:

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 60 in teen workbooks, page 62 in parent workbooks.

**Body Movement**

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

What are some other types of body movement?

1.

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2.

---

3.

---

**Deep Breathing**


Deep breathing is one of the fastest ways to trigger your parasympathetic nervous system and settle anxiety and stress.

It can be difficult for some people to sit down and focus on breathing when they are in a highly activated state, so running or fast walking are good ways to get started.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

Body movement gets you breathing and helps to move the emotions through. As you settle down, you can begin to focus on slowing and deepening the breath.

It is the breath out that kicks in the parasympathetic nervous system. So, doing something that helps you emphasize your breath out is the best, such as blowing up a balloon or blowing bubbles.


 What else?

 Generate ideas from the group and list them on the board.


Deep breathing usually happens automatically when you move your body. So, if it is hard for you to sit and breathe when you are in a highly activated state, just move!

## 4 Square Breathing Exercise

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

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

 Facilitate the 4 Square Breathing Exercise.

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 61 in teen workbooks, page 63 in parent workbooks.

**4 Square Breathing Exercise**


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

Try this:

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


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

**Enhancement Activity**


-  Pass out bottles of bubbles or pinwheels. Have participants blow bubbles or blow the pinwheels. After a few minutes, ask if they noticed that in order to make big bubbles or make the pinwheel spin well, you need to take a deep breath in, followed by a long, slow breath out.

Point out that this is the same kind of breathing that calms your nervous system. It requires a deep breath in and a long, slow breath out. You can use bubbles or pinwheels to help you do this any time you notice yourself becoming anxious or stressed. Notice how you feel after doing this.

Give them the bubbles or pinwheels to take home and begin creating a self-calming kit they can have on hand for when they feel themselves becoming agitated or when they are using their Safety Plan.


 At the end of the next exercise, *Ways to Calm Your Nervous System*, you can add more ideas for their self-calming kits (or supply them, if possible) such as fidget spinners, playdough, squishy balls, coloring books, notebooks, markers, colored pencils, and any other self-calming tools you think of. These can be part of the Self-Calming Plan they will be creating.

## Ways to Calm Your Nervous System

 Ask the group:

- What helps you feel calm?

 Brainstorm some ideas and write them on the board.

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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 62 in teen workbooks, page 64 in parent workbooks.

### Ways to Calm Your Nervous System

- Deep breaths
- Physical exercise
- Listen to music
- Dance
- Draw/color
- Write in a journal
- Relaxation exercises
- Meditation
- Rub your feet
- Put your attention on your core center of your body – 2” below naval, 1” inside – breathe into it slowly 12 times
- Feel the inside of your heart or inside of your abdomen – breathe into it slowly 12 times
- Use a squishy ball, play dough, or a rock to keep in your pocket and rub
- Get outside and walk, run, or kick a ball
- Touch grass with your bare feet
- Sit down near a tree
- Write down the feelings you are having or say them out loud
- Press your fingers above your upper lip. This is a pressure point that has a calming effect.
- Wrap your arms around yourself so your hands are holding each shoulder, like you’re hugging yourself. This also has a calming effect.
- Take a warm shower or bath
- Drink warm tea
- Play with a fidget spinner
- Do something that makes you laugh (like watching animal videos)
- Eat food, especially protein
- Do something fun (that does not violate house rules)

# Exercise:

## My Self-Calming Plan

- ▶ Have the group members make their own Self-Calming Plan, using their *My Self-Calming Plan* worksheet. Have them make a list of self-calming ideas they would really do. Then fill in the plan with a list of self-calming behaviors they will use when they have strong emotions, such as anxiety or anger, and those they will use preventatively to regulate their mood and reduce anxiety overall.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 63 in teen workbooks, page 65 in parent workbooks.

#### My Self-Calming Ideas

What helps you calm down when you feel angry, upset, or anxious?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_


#### My Self-Calming Plan


The next time I am feeling angry, anxious, or stressed, I will do the following to calm myself down:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ Ask everyone to do at least three self-calming behaviors in the following week and report back to group during Check-In about how it went.



 Close the session by explaining that we will be teaching a variety of different self-calming techniques over the remainder of our sessions.

 Every week from now on, we'll be doing a relaxation exercise or meditation practice at the beginning of group. We want to provide you with different types of techniques so you can find what works best for you. If you have other calming practices you use and would like to share with the group, feel free to bring them to group for us to try.

Beginning group with a calming practice is also a way to help us let go of the stresses of the day and feel more relaxed as we begin.

Next week, we'll begin by talking about mediation and mindfulness. Then, we'll do a mindfulness meditation together.

All the relaxation exercises and meditations are in the back of your workbooks under *Relaxation and Meditation Practices*, so you can practice at home once you find the ones you like best.

**Note to Facilitator:** The relaxation/meditation practice can be done either before or after Check-In. If it's done after the Check-In, it provides the opportunity to calm emotions that may have been brought up during Check-In. However, a calming practice before Check-In may increase the ability to manage difficult feelings during the Check-In process. Try it both ways and see what works best for your group.

## Take-Home Activities

 Tell the group:

- This week, practice three of your self-calming skills.
- This week, take 10 minutes to practice mindfulness.

# Alternate Exercise: Meditation

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 64 in teen workbooks, page 66 in parent workbooks.

### Meditation

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

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

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

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

# Alternate Exercise: Mindfulness

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 65 in teen workbooks, page 67 in parent workbooks.

### Mindfulness

What is mindfulness?

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

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



**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

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

What do you feel like now?

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

# Additional Self-Calming Resources

## Emotion Shifting Activity

Here is something you can do to help change or 'shift' your emotional state when you are feeling irritable, annoyed or grumpy.

1. Swing both of your arms at thigh level one side to the other, across your midline. This motion helps break up postural patterns and muscular tension.
2. Using the momentum of swinging your arms, begin to rotate your trunk, from one side to the other, in a fluid, gentle way.
3. Then add in gently moving your head from side to side, rotating your head slowly from side to side and front to back.
4. This movement helps to connect both sides of your body, which calms the nervous system and helps you feel better.
5. As you continue the exercise, add in taking slow deep breaths, in and out. Your breath further moves you from "grumpy" to "emotional neutral" and helps you become more in the present moment.
6. Find your own breathing, pace, duration and movement rhythm. Do what feels comfortable for you.
7. When you feel ready, allow yourself to get playful with your movement, and imagine your cranky feelings inside melting away. Feel them melt down your body and dissolve away. After you let those grumpy feelings go, notice the difference in how you feel.

## Grounding Exercise

1. Sit comfortably in your chair. Put everything down, hands relaxed in your lap. Put both feet flat on the floor.
2. Take a deep breath in, and breathe out slowly, letting go of all your tension.
3. Feel your feet on the floor. Feel the inside of your feet. Feel the bones and muscles - each toe, your arch and heels. Feel the bottom of your feet against the floor.
4. Imagine you have roots growing out of the bottom of your feet into the ground. Imagine and feel them as big, thick roots as if you are a tree. Be inside of these roots as you feel them grow deep into the earth. Feel them dig through the soil, down further and further into the earth.
5. Once you feel your roots deep down in the earth, imagine a big solid rock. This rock can be whatever you imagine, as long as it is solid and strong. It might be in the center of the earth. What is most important is the felt sense of it, and your connection to it through your roots.
6. Now, wrap your roots around that rock.
7. Once you have your roots securely wrapped around your rock – feel the sense of how the earth and the rock are supporting and anchoring you. How does your body feel? If it feels relaxed and securely held, just breathe and relax into this feeling. If it feels too heavy or anchored, you can loosen the roots around the rock, so it feels lighter.
8. Now, as you feel the sense of being ‘grounded’, and as you breathe in and out, send any tension or stress in your body down to your feet and dump it down into the ground through your roots.
9. After you have released tension into the ground, imagine breathing calming energy from the earth up through your roots and into your body. Breathe in earth energy from below, and breathe out back into the earth.
10. Anytime you feel stress or anxiety, or escalated and angry, this grounding exercise can help you feel calmer. Once you practice it for a while, you will learn how to adjust it to work best for you. You will become familiar with what it feels like to be ‘grounded’ and your body will start to automatically respond when you begin the exercise. After awhile, you can just think about your rock in the earth, and your body will relax and ground. Try out different ways and to see what works best for you.



# Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise

The following relaxation exercise will help you feel calm and relaxed. You can do this exercise when you take a time-out from a tense situation, or anytime you are feeling stressed or anxious and want to calm down. Practicing this regularly will help you feel calmer overall in your daily life, so you can deal with stressful situations better.

## Facilitator Note

As you lead this exercise, speak slowly and allow about 5 seconds between each line. When asking them to hold their muscles tight for a count of 7, you can count slowly for them out loud, or be silent for a slow count to 7. The visualization at the end, should be for about 2–3 minutes.

## Relaxation Steps

1. Get into a comfortable position with both feet flat on the floor and your hands empty.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Let go of all your thoughts. Imagine them drifting away in bubbles until your mind is clear.
4. Take three deep breaths. Inhale slowly through your nose, letting the air fill up your whole torso, then release the air out again through your nose. With each breath feel your body relax.
5. Imagine your body is full of sand, and as you relax, let the sand flow down through your body and out the bottom of your feet into the ground.
6. Now, clench your teeth and tighten the muscles around your eyes and across your forehead. Hold it tight and count to seven. Then release it, and feeling your whole head and face relax.
7. Drop your chin to your chest and slowly roll your head around to your left shoulder, your back, your right shoulder and your front.
8. Take a deep breath in, and as your breath out, imagine the sand flowing down from your head and neck, through your body, into your legs and feet, and out deep into the ground.




9. Draw your shoulders up, and roll them around up and down for a count of seven. Then release and relax.
10. Now, clench your fists and tighten your hands and arms and count to seven. Then release and relax.
11. Take a deep breath in, and as you breathe out, imagine sand leaving your shoulders, arms and hands, out your finger tips into the ground.
12. Tighten the muscles between your shoulder blades and down your back. Count to seven, then release and relax.
13. Tighten your chest and stomach muscles, count to seven, and then release and relax.
14. Take a deep breath in, and as your breathe out, feel the sand flow down from your torso through your legs and feet, deep into the ground.
15. Tighten your leg muscles, and then curl your toes under so your feet are tight, count to seven, then release and relax.
16. Take a deep breath in, and imagine the sand flowing down your legs into your feet and release it into the ground.
17. Take one last deep breath in, and breathe out releasing all of the last bits of sand and tension from your body, sending it down into the ground.
18. Let yourself feel completely relaxed.
19. Imagine a place you find safe, warm and relaxing. Perhaps a place you've been on vacation or a childhood memory. A place that is peaceful and calm. Allow yourself to "see" the place. Remember the sounds, smells and sights here. Just stay in this place for a moment.
20. Slowly open your eyes.

Try to carry the feeling you have now with you. Remember how your body feels right now. Later, you can try to call back that feeling by going to the special place in your mind. This is something you can always carry with you to do when you are feeling stressed or anxious, or when you know you are heading into a stressful situation.

## ‘Gentle’ Meditation

This meditation can be used with any word that is positive. Try different ones each group. You can ask the group to think of the word they would like to start the session with.


 Write the word **GENTLE** on the board. Then say:

 Close your eyes. Put both feet flat on the floor. Put everything down so your hands are empty. Relax. Breathe in, breathe out.

Think the word ‘gentle’.

Say it over and over in your mind. (


 Say the word a couple of times slowly for them, then be quiet for about 30 seconds.


 Now, feel the word gentle as you say it to yourself over and over, softly in your mind. (Quiet for 10 – 15 seconds) .

Now try to feel the word ‘gentle’ in side of your whole body as you say it. What does it feel like inside your body? Feel the resonance of ‘gentle’ as you say it over and over.... gentle.....gentle..... gentle..... (quiet).


Take the word gentle into your feet. Say it over and over, feeling it spread and fill your feet.


 Quiet.


 Now, bring the feeling of gentle up into your legs.... Saying it over and over, filling your legs with the feeling of gentle. Quiet.


 Now, bring it into your abdomen and stomach.... Filling the whole space with the feeling of gentle... gentle... gentle..... Then move it into your chest.... Filling your whole heart with the feeling of gentle..... gentle.... gentle....


Move it down your arms, and into your hands.... Gentle, gentle.....

 Keep it slow, with pauses for them to say it quietly to themselves for at least 10 seconds after each one.


 Now move it up to your neck, filling your whole neck with gentle, then up into your mouth, nose, eyes, deep in your head, filling your whole brain with gentle.

 Now go back to your heart, and feel it again- imagine what color it is- any color- it might just be a white or yellow light or blue or green....

 Imagine the color is glowing out from your heart- like sunshine, glowing out and spreading and spreading.... filling every cell in your body with the feeling of gentle.

 Keep saying gentle, as you imagine the color spreading into all of your cells, and feel the feeling of your whole body immersed in gentle.


 Stay quiet for a minute.

 Now, feel the glow of gentle spread out from your body.... Glowing and spreading out about 3 or 4 feet around you. Keep saying and feeling gentle as you emanate the feeling from your heart and body....


 Stay quiet for another minute.

 Now open your eyes.

 How do you feel?

 This is a tool you can use when you are upset, tense, mad, or any uncomfortable feeling. You can use other words- calm, quiet, peaceful, joy, love.... any word that feels good to you, or that is the opposite of how you don't want to feel. We used gentle because most people do not feel gentle when they are angry. You can do it before you are about to talk to someone about something difficult and you want to come across in a positive way, or in a way that helps them hear you.


Doing it together with someone at the same time, before a conversation or a problem solving session, can work wonders in helping you both stay away from getting negative or attacking.

 You can do it when you are just feeling down, and use the word joy, or happiness. It only works if you can muster up the feeling from somewhere inside. If it isn't working try another word until you find one you are able to feel the resonance of.

One more trick – if you are sitting in a room where others are getting negative, tense, agitated, not nice to each other, etc. Try just sitting and feeling a word, such as calm, or understanding, or love. Feel the word inside just as we did (you can do a short version) – just feel it, filling up your whole body. Then resonate it out into the room. Imagine filling the whole room with the feeling. See what happens to the interactions in the room.

## Relaxation/ Self-Calming Exercises

 Begin with the following discussion:

 Learning to calm and sooth yourself is important for many reasons. When you are calm your body feels better. It also functions in a healthier way. When you are relaxed, your heart beats more slowly and your blood pressure lowers. Your body becomes calmer, as opposed to being in a state of emergency, preparing to either confront a stressful situation or run away from it. When your body is relaxed it is easier for your brain to think more clearly, so you make wiser decisions and can communicate better.

Being calm helps you:

- Communicate respectfully
- Listen
- Problem solve
- Think things through
- Deal with conflict better
- Have more patience
- Feel better about yourself and others
- Become more 'present' with yourself and others

## Relaxation Exercise Practice

- ▶ Let the group know you are going to lead them through a relaxation technique.
- ▶ Ask participants to pay attention to how their body/mind feels right now. Rate how they feel on a scale of 1–10, 1 being completely relaxed and calm, 10 being very tense and anxious. Have them write down the number.
- ▶ Do one of the relaxation exercises / meditations with the group.
- ▶ Afterwards ask everyone to notice how they feel now on the scale and write down the number.
- ▶ Have participants share the difference in how they feel before and after the exercise.
- ▶ Ask for feedback about what they liked, or did not like, about the exercise. Ask for suggestions to improve it.
- ▶ Let the group know we will be starting every session with a relaxation or meditation exercise. This will help them learn different techniques so they can try them at home and see what works best for them.
- ▶ Beginning group with a relaxation exercise gives group members a time to calm down from the rush and tension of their day, and become more relaxed and present for the group.





## Background Information

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

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

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

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

## Goals

- To examine different styles of communication
- To learn skills for assertive communication





# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**

**RESPECT**


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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Styles of Communication

 Begin the group with the following explanation.

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

The second way to respond is just the opposite of aggressive communication and is called **passive** communication. The passive communicator does not say what they think or feel and tries to act like they are not bothered by the situation. The person usually acts like this to avoid conflict.


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

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

 Guide the group to come up with ideas by asking:

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

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

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

When someone communicates assertively, that person shows respect for the other person and self-respect. An assertive person talks

about their feelings and thoughts in a way that shows respect and consideration of the other person. An assertive person is respectful to themselves by being direct and honest.

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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 75 in teen workbooks, page 77 in parent workbooks.

## Styles of Communication

### Aggressive Style

- A person communicating in an aggressive style expresses their feelings in a way that violates the rights of another person. The aggressive person uses humiliation, criticism, sarcasm, insults, or threats to get their point across.
- The goal of aggressive communication is to dominate the situation and win at the other person's expense.
- The aggressive person is giving the message "I'm right and you're wrong. Your feelings are not important. I don't need to listen to what you have to say. My view is the only one that matters."

### Passive Style

- A person communicating in a passive style does not say what they are feeling or thinking. The passive person gives in to other people's requests, demands, or feelings, and does not acknowledge their own feelings, concerns, or wants. When the person does express their feelings, it is usually in an apologetic or timid way so that it's easy for other people to ignore them.
- The goal of passive communication is to play it safe, not rock the boat, put everyone else's needs first, and avoid conflict at all costs.
- The passive person is communicating the message that "I don't count. What I need is not important. You don't have to take my feelings into account."

### Passive-Aggressive Style


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

### Assertive Style

- A person communicating in an assertive style stands up for their personal rights and expresses thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in direct, honest, and appropriate ways. The person conveys their message without dominating, criticizing, or degrading the other person.
- The goal of assertive communication is to honestly state your feelings and show respect for the other person's position as well. The assertive person is communicating the message that "the feelings and needs of both of us are important. I am telling you what I need, and I also want to know what you need so that we can both be satisfied."

# Exercise:

## Styles of Communication Scenarios

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

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

### WORKSHEET COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 76–77 in teen workbooks, pages 78–79 in parent workbooks.

### Styles of Communication Scenarios

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

- Selene's 15-year-old son, Jackson, is supposed to be home by 9 p.m. He shows up at 11:30. Selene has been waiting up for him, and she is upset and worried. She could:
  - Not say anything to him about being late.
  - Start shouting at him when he comes in and telling him he's irresponsible and worthless.
  - Not say anything, but the next morning, leave for work without giving him a ride to school as she usually does.
  - Say, "I've been really worried about you. I need you to come home on time, and if you're not going to do that, I need you to call me and tell me what you're doing."

**WORKSHEET COMPONENTS**


2. Noah made plans to go to the beach with his girlfriend. He'd asked his parents about it the day before, and they said it was fine. He's getting ready to leave when his dad comes in and tells him to mow the lawn. Noah could:
- A. Say, "I already told you I'm going out with Denise. Why are you always trying to mess with my life?"
- B. Not say anything about it and go out to mow the lawn, feeling stressed and frustrated.
- C. Say, "I guess you don't remember that you told me I could go out with Denise today. How about if I mow the lawn at 10 a.m. tomorrow?"
- D. Go out to mow the lawn and run the mower over a rock, ruining the blade.
3. Rita is getting ready for work one morning. She picks out her favorite white silk blouse, which her daughter Lucy had borrowed over the weekend. She notices a big, brown stain on the front of the blouse. Rita could:
- A. Put on something else and send the blouse to the cleaner without saying anything about it.
- B. Wake Lucy up and say, "I can't trust you with anything! Get out of bed right now and take this to the cleaner!"
- C. Say, "When you borrow my clothes, I need you to return them clean."
- D. Not say anything and refuse to give Lucy the \$5 that she promised to give her.
4. Your friend has borrowed money for lunch from you three times without repaying it, and now he asks you for another loan. You could:
- A. Say, "I don't want to lend you anything now because you haven't paid me back from the last three times."
- B. Just hand the money over without saying anything.
- C. Say, "I'll never help you out with anything again! I don't care if you starve!"
- D. Lend him the money and then tell all your mutual friends what an idiot he is.

**WORKSHEET COMPONENTS**

5. Olivia and her friend are sitting and talking in the living room. Olivia's son, Ethan, is playing a video game. Ethan shouts the "f" word very loudly. Olivia is embarrassed. She could:
- A. Tell Ethan, "Shut up! How many times have I told you: NO SWEARING IN THIS HOUSE!"
- B. Keep talking to her friend like nothing happened.
- C. Say, "Ethan, I need you to speak respectfully in our house."
- D. Walk over and unplug Ethan's computer.

## Exercise:

# Practicing Assertive Communication

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

**WORKSHEET COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 78–80 in teen workbooks, pages 80–82 in parent workbooks.

**Practicing Assertive Communication**

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

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

**WORKSHEET COMPONENTS**

2. Tanaya is in her room working on math homework that is due the next day, and she doesn't understand it. She's feeling really anxious and frustrated about it because she's trying to get her grade up. She calls a friend for help. As her friend explains the homework to her and Tanaya is just starting to understand it, Tanaya's mom comes in and tells her she needs to babysit her two-year-old brother while she goes to the store. What assertive statement could Tanaya make?

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

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

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

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

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

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# Take-Home Activity

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

## WORKSHEET COMPONENTS

This appears on page 81 in teen workbooks, page 83 in parent workbooks.

### **My Assertive Communication**

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





## Background Information

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

But there are non-violent and non-abusive ways to achieve a positive kind of power. This kind of power uses negotiation and compromise. When teens identify their strengths, skills, knowledge, and resources, they can begin to recognize that they can use their personal power to make non-violent and non-abusive choices.

## Goals

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

## Important Messages

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


## Session Overview


1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Power
3. Discussion: Ways We Have Personal Power
4. Exercise: Identifying our Personal Strengths and Skills
5. Exercise: Ways We Have Personal Power
6. Exercise: What Personal Power Do You Have?




# Group Activities

## Discussion: Power

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

 **What is power?**  
(Examples: To be able to get your way; to have whatever you want; to have people look up to you; to have people want to be like you)

 **What are some different ways that people have power?**  
(Examples: To threaten to hurt someone when they don't get what they want; to be skilled at doing something, like football; to be able to persuade people to a point of view)

 **What are some things people do to have power?**  
(Examples: Act threatening; coerce; develop a skill)

 **What are some destructive ways to show power?**  
(Examples: Threaten; coerce)


 **What are some respectful ways to show power?**  
(Examples: Develop a skill; stand by your friends)

 **Think of someone you know who has a lot of power. In which of the above ways do they have power? How does the person use their power?**

# Discussion:

## Ways We Have Personal Power

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


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

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

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

# Exercise: Identifying our Personal Strengths and Skills

## Personal Strengths and Skills

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

### TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 87 in teen workbooks, page 99 in parent workbooks.

### Personal Strengths and Skills

All of us have personal strengths that give us the power to make changes in our lives. Match each personal skill with the definition of the skill.

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



# Personal Skills

**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 88 in teen workbooks, page 100 in parent workbooks.

## Personal Skills

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

*Listening*

*Compromise/  
Negotiation*

*Respectful  
Communication*

*Empathy*

*Problem-Solving*

*Coping with Difficult  
Emotions*

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

# Exercise:

## Ways We Have Personal Power

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

### TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 89–90 in teen workbooks, page 101 in parent workbooks.

### Ways We Have Personal Power


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

1. Neko is failing her math class and her mother is upset. Neko is grounded until she brings her grade up. She agrees to stay after school to get some extra help and makes a list of special assignments that she can do to improve her grade. Neko knows it will take time before her grade gets better and doesn't think she should be grounded. What should Neko do? What skills and strengths could she use to resolve this issue?
2. Jason is babysitting his little brother, who is watching a show on TV. Jason wants to watch a baseball game on a different channel. What can Jason do? What skills and strengths could he use with his brother?
3. Lucia has a 10 p.m. curfew. She has had problems with keeping to her curfew and forgetting to call when she will be late. She wants a later curfew because most of her friends can stay out until 11 p.m. What skills or strengths could she use?
4. Zachery just had an argument with his girlfriend, Lindsey, about their plans for the weekend. Zachery wants them to go to his friend's party. Lindsey wants to go to a free concert. They keep arguing about it. What skills or strengths could they use?

**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

5. Sophia’s parents have been checking on her a lot lately because she’s been going places she’s not supposed to go and often not letting them know where she is after school. Sophia is supposed to call or text her mom if she wants to go somewhere after school. Sophia’s mom texts her when she hasn’t come home to find out where she is. Sophia is getting really annoyed by this. She wishes her mom would trust her. What skills or strengths could Sophia use?

## Exercise: What Personal Power Do You Have?

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

**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 91 in teen workbooks, page 101 in parent workbooks.

### What Personal Power Do You Have?

STRENGTHS	SKILLS

# Take-Home Activity

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



## Background Information

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

It is important to let parents know that the most effective response depends upon many variables: the teen's reaction to different approaches, past incidents of violence, and the parent's view of the situation. The most important consideration is the safety of everyone in the home. The most important goal of this session is to have parents think about safety before anything else when they are deciding how to respond to their teen's violence or abuse.

Most teens in Step-Up will have already developed a Safety Plan for themselves with a plan for separating and calming down when they become escalated. The goal is for the teen to learn to follow their own plan and take a break instead of the parent separating. The first step for parents is to remind teens of their Safety Plan. If the teen refuses, parents should tell their teen that they are using the Safety Plan and separating from the teen.

We provide specific steps for parents to follow when their teens start to use violent or abusive behavior. These steps are based on what we consider to be the safest thing to do when someone is being violent or abusive. Separating from the violent or abusive person is usually the best way to prevent harm. Some parents will say that they have found other ways that are more effective; for example, some parents state that when their teen is escalating and becoming violent or abusive, the worst thing to do is to leave the room because the teen escalates more. Some parents state that they are able to calm their teen down by talking with them. If parents have found effective and safe ways to respond to the violence and abuse, they may not need to change their responses.

Encouraging discussion in the group about the effects of different responses can be helpful. It is important to emphasize that one of the reasons we advocate separating from a violent or abusive teen, in addition to safety, is that it gives the teen the message that you will not engage with them when they are using violent or abusive behavior. Engaging with the teen in any way, even if it is to calm them down, may be a reward that strengthens the behavior for some teens. Parents should be aware of this when they plan their responses.

If the teen's behavior is escalating and they are physically hurting people or damaging property, calling the police is a way to get immediate help.

Calling the police is not easy, particularly when it is about your own child. We do not want to pressure you regarding this decision or to indicate that you are doing something wrong by not calling the police. We want to support you in making your own choices about how to respond. The objective of the parent group is to provide information to help you make decisions and provide the opportunity for you to think through and discuss the possible outcomes of the choices you make.

## Goals

- To help parents think about their priorities when their teens are becoming violent or abusive
- To understand that safety is the first concern when anyone is using violent or abusive behavior
- To know how to stay safe and address the issue of the use of violent or abusive behavior
- To know what steps to take when there is violence or abuse in the home
- To make a Safety Plan for the home
- To learn how to disengage from power struggles with their teens as a way to prevent escalation that could lead to violence and abuse
- To know effective ways to address the violence and abuse after the incident

## Important Messages

- Safety is the most important thing to think about when your teen starts to use violent behavior.
- There are steps you can take to stay safe during the violent episode.
- It is more effective and safe to address the problem of the violent behavior with your teen after they have calmed down.
- There are things you can do to make your home more safe and to reduce the risk of serious harm.
- Writing down a Safety Plan will help you think through the details of risk and safety in your home and take action to reduce the risks and make your home a safer place.
- A plan it makes it easier to separate from your teen because you know the behavior will be addressed later.
- Disengaging from power struggles with your teen may help prevent escalation, violence, and abuse.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Your Priorities When Your Teen Becomes Violent
3. Discussion: How to Respond When Your Teen Becomes Violent
4. Discussion: What to Do After: Addressing Violent Behavior
5. Discussion: Safety Planning
6. Exercise: Safety Plan for Our Home
7. Discussion: Prevention Strategies – Disengaging from Power Struggles with Your Teen



# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT


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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Your Priorities When Your Teen Becomes Violent

 Explain the following.


 We are going to talk about how to respond when your teen is violent. There is not a right or wrong way to respond, and there is not one response that always works. Every teen, parent, and household is different. And one situation is different from the next.

Two important things to think about are:

- Safety. What can I do to keep myself and my family safe?
- What message am I giving my teen? How can I let my teen know that violence and abuse are not okay and are not tolerated in our home?

These two goals do not always go hand in hand.

- For example, telling your teen that violence and abuse are not tolerated and giving them a consequence for the behavior at the time they are being violent or abusive can escalate the behavior and compromise your safety.
- Likewise, if you separate from your teen when they are violent to keep yourself safe, but then never talk with the teen about it later or establish consequences for the behavior, the teen gets the message that this behavior is no big deal.

 How can you stay safe and let your teen know that violence and abuse are not tolerated?

# Discussion:

## How to Respond When Your Teen Becomes Violent or Abusive

- ▶ Refer the group to the *How to Respond When Your Teen Becomes Violent or Abusive* worksheet in the parent workbook. Read through the information and discuss it.

Include the following in your discussion.

- Always start by reminding them to do their Safety Plan. The goal of Step-Up is for teens to use their own Safety Plan when they need it. If the parent always separates first, they do not have the opportunity to use their skills. If the teen refuses, tell them that you are using the Safety Plan.
- The earlier the separation, the better. This plan should be used for verbal abuse, threats, or other warning signs that the teen is beginning to escalate, unless you are able to help your teen shift their behavior back to the Respect Wheel in other ways. (See *Tips to Disengage from a Power Struggle with Your Teen.*)

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 89–90 in parent workbooks.

#### How to Respond When Your Teen Becomes Violent or Abusive

When your teen starts to threaten you, to break things, or to do anything physically violent, do not try to physically intervene. This can increase their violence. The most important thing is to keep yourself and your other children safe.

##### Steps to Take When Your Teen Becomes Violent or Abusive

1. If your teen has a Safety Plan, remind them of the Safety Plan.
2. Do not continue the argument or discussion. Don't argue or yell.
3. If your teen refuses to follow their Safety Plan, tell them that you are going to follow the Safety Plan. Separate yourself and your other children from the teen. Go to another room or, if necessary, bring your other children with you and leave the house.
4. Call 911\* if the violence or abuse is continuing and/or you want immediate help.

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

5. Do what you can to help yourself stay calm (take a walk, call a friend).
6. Don't talk to your teen again until they are calm.
7. When you do talk to your teen again and they are calm and you feel safe, give them the following messages:
  - "When you are violent or abusive, we need to use the Safety Plan and separate."
  - "Your behavior is not safe, and we need our home to be a safe place."
8. Don't get pulled into arguing about why they were violent or abusive or who is to blame. When the teen starts to deny, justify, or minimize their actions or blame you, don't engage in the conversation. Stay with the message that violence and abuse are not acceptable, no matter what.
9. Tell your teen that you will sit down together later to talk about what happened and how they are going to take responsibility by making a plan for preventing violence and abuse and staying on the Respect Wheel and making amends (see *What to Do After: Addressing Violent or Abusive Behavior*, later in this session).

**\*Calling 911**

Calling 911 is the fastest way to get immediate help if you are concerned for your safety or for the safety of others in the home. Officers respond in different ways depending on the situation. If your child has serious mental health issues, request a CIT officer (crisis intervention officer) who is specially trained to work with the mentally ill. The officer might just talk to your teen and give a warning or may arrest your teen and take them to the juvenile court. If your teen has calmed down, the officer may not arrest them but may file a police report and send it to the prosecutor's office to schedule a court hearing.

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

Although officers do not have to arrest the youth on a domestic violence call in Ohio, it is the preferred course of action by the Toledo Police Department. If an officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the offense of domestic violence has occurred and that the youth is the primary physical aggressor, the youth will likely be arrested and brought down to the Juvenile Court's Assessment Center or the detention center if the assessment center is closed.

After a youth is charged with domestic violence, they will be referred to the Family Violence Intervention Program, which will provide the family with crisis intervention, safety planning, and service referrals.

**In Ohio, domestic violence is defined as any one of the following:**

- Knowingly causing or attempting to cause physical harm to a family or household member
- Recklessly causing serious physical harm to a family or household member
- By threat of force, knowingly causing a family or household member to believe that the offender will cause imminent harm to the family or household member

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

# Discussion:

## What to Do After:

### Addressing Violent Behavior

#### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 91 in parent workbooks.

#### **What to Do After:** **Addressing Violent or Abusive Behavior**


When your teen has been violent or abusive to a family member, it is important to talk about what happened in a way that helps them learn and take active responsibility for harm that was caused.

- Use *Taking Responsibility for My Behavior Using Six Restorative Steps* (see Session 9) to guide a conversation with your teen about the effects of the violence and abuse on others and how they can take responsibility and make amends for harm done. You and your teen will be learning and practicing this in Session 9. We also use these questions during Check-In when a teen has been violent during the week. These questions are a valuable parenting tool for addressing violent or abusive behavior at home. As you and your teen become more familiar with them in the group, it will be easier to use them at home.
- Review your teen's Safety Plan and talk about what went wrong. Ask your teen: "What got in the way of using it?" Revise the Safety Plan if needed. Step-Up facilitators can help you with this at the next group, if needed.
- Put in place any other consequences that are part of your home plan for responding to violence and abuse. Some families have a rule, such as no going out with friends or no computer or phone if there was violence or abuse that day, or until the teen has completed the last two restorative steps ("making amends" and "making a plan to prevent the violence or abuse from happening again").

# Discussion:

## Safety Planning for Parents

 Tell the group:

 When you have a teen who has been violent in the home, it is important to think about ways you can prepare for safety. There are things you can do to plan ahead to prevent serious harm.

 Ask parents:


 What are some examples of things you can do for safety?

 Write their ideas on the board. Be sure to include the following.

- Remove all weapons from the home.
- Put cooking knives in a place that is not easily accessible.
- Put away anything that could be used as a weapon (bats, sticks, long pointy objects, crow bars, tools).
- Put locks on doors where you can go for safety (bedrooms, bathrooms, rooms with exit windows).
- Have phones accessible at all times.
- Have a plan about where you and your other children will go if you have to leave.
- Talk with your other children about where to go for safety if there is violence in the home.

# Exercise:

## Planning for Safety for Our Home

-  Refer parents to the *Planning for Safety for Our Home* worksheet in the parent workbook. Have them answer the questions and share it with the group. They can also break into small groups to work on this.


### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 92 in parent workbooks.

#### Planning for Safety for Our Home


1. What precautions (if any) have you taken for safety in your home?
2. What dangerous behavior are you most concerned about that your teen might use?
3. Is there anything you can do to prevent this behavior?
4. What is the safest response to this behavior?
5. What else can you do for safety in your home?

 After group members have shared their ideas, explain the following.

 With the information on your *Planning for Safety for Our Home* worksheet in mind, now it is time to make an action plan for safety for your home.

A plan of action should include prevention steps and intervention steps.

1. Intervention steps: What you will do the next time your teen is violent.
2. Prevention steps: What you will do now to prevent violence or reduce risk of harm.

 Have parents fill out the *Action Plan for Safety for Our Home* worksheet. If time permits, have group members share their plans with each other.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 93 in parent workbooks.

## Action Plan for Safety for Our Home

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

### Prevention

I will do the following things to reduce the risk of harm if there is violence or abuse:

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### Intervention

I will do the following if my teen is violent or abusive or begins to escalate and might become violent or abusive:

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# Discussion:

## Prevention Strategies During Interactions with Your Teen

 Parents say that the majority of violent episodes happen during a power struggle with their teens. Arguments about wanting something or not wanting to do something are the most common. There are times when the argument becomes more about the power struggle and winning or losing than the topic at hand. Learning to know when it is a power struggle and finding a way to disengage is the first step in preventing it from escalating.

Here are some tips for disengaging from power struggles with your teen.

 Refer parents to *Tips to Disengage from a Power Struggle with Your Teen* in their workbooks. Go over the tips and invite other ideas from parents.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 94–95 in parent workbooks.

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

1. **Learn to know when it is becoming a power struggle.**  
It is becoming a power struggle when you are feeling controlled or the need to control; when there is arguing, blaming, demanding, or being disrespectful; when you feel the need to win.
2. **Don't argue.**  
When your child starts to argue about the facts – when, why, where, etc. – don't get pulled in. Refuse to argue about details. Instead of arguing, just listen and say, "Oh, hmm...I see..." Agree to disagree. Let it go.
3. **Diffuse the power struggle by listening for feelings.**  
Listen for your child's feelings instead of arguing against them. Acknowledge their feelings by saying things that let them know you are listening and that you understand, such as, "Yeah, that sounds really frustrating that you feel left out," etc.

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS****4. Find out where you can agree in the conversation.**

Listen for what you agree on.

- “We both want to be able have a break from doing dishes. I wonder how we can both get what we want?”
- “I agree that you need time with your friends. It’s important. Let’s work together to see how we can make that happen.”

**5. Be clear and specific about what needs to happen and then stop talking. Use as few words as possible.**

Say exactly what needs to happen in a short and clear way; for example, “After your homework, you can go out with your friends.” Then stop talking. Go to another room or outside to prevent further arguments.

**6. Don’t take your child’s resistance or anger personally.**

Remember, your child is usually just trying to change your mind so they can have or do what they want. They are probably trying tactics that have worked in the past.

**7. Ignore attempts to get engaged.**

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

**8. Separate physically from your child.**

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

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

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


**10. Ask yourself: “Is this something I am willing to negotiate about?”**

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

**11. Most importantly, pay attention to your need to win the power struggle.**

The more we push, the more they push back. Take a break and calm yourself. Relax your defenses. Return to the conversation in a grounded, solid, and calm manner.

# Take-Home Activity

-  Ask parents to implement their *Action Plan for Safety for Our Home*. Invite them to report back to the parent group how their plans are working and ask for help from the group or Step-Up facilitators, if needed.



## Background Information

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

## Goals

- To learn how to take responsibility for your behavior when you have hurt someone by doing something to repair the harm that was caused
- To learn to show accountability by identifying specific things that can be done to make amends for abusive/violent behavior
- To identify ways to repair relationships harmed by abuse or violence

## Important Messages

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

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Making Amends
3. Exercise: Making Amends Scenarios
4. Exercise: How Can I Make Amends? Worksheet

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**


**RESPECT**

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Making Amends

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

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

 List responses under the following headings: Physical, Emotional, Relationship.

### TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 95 in teen workbooks, page 110 in parent workbooks.

#### Discussion Questions

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

Physical

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Emotional

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Relationship

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 **What are some ways to repair the damage or harm caused by the abusive/violent behavior?**



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



Explain to the group that there are many different ways to make amends. Invite them to brainstorm some different ways to make amends when someone has been physically or emotionally hurtful to a family member.

List their ideas on the board or invite a volunteer to write the ideas on the board. This can also be done in small groups. The groups can then come back together and make a list of all the ideas on the board.

Be sure to include the following:


- Acknowledge that you were wrong.
- Help fix the problem that was created by your actions.
- Repair something that has been damaged or pay to have it fixed.
- Help the person in some way.
- Do something special for the person that shows you care about them.
- Ask the person what you can do to make amends.



Discuss the following points.



Saying “I’m sorry” is not the same as making amends. People often apologize when they want the other person to forget what was done to them. Making amends involves taking concrete action to make things better. Most people who have been harmed feel better when action is taken to make things right.

 When you do something to make amends for an abusive or violent incident, it doesn't mean everything will be just fine and go back to the way it was before the incident. The victim probably won't say, "That's okay, I'm not mad anymore." They may be angry and upset with you for a while. The purpose of making amends is not to get the person to "forgive" you or tell you everything is okay. The purpose of making amends is to take responsibility for your behavior, take action to fix damage or resolve problems created by the behavior, and put effort into improving the relationship with the person.

It is not always clear what to do to make amends. When something has been broken, such as a door or wall, part of making amends is to fix it or contribute money to get it fixed. It is more difficult to come up with ideas about how to make amends when someone is emotionally hurt.

**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 96–97 in teen workbooks, page 111 in parent workbooks.

**Making Amends**

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

There are a lot of different ways to make amends. What are some different ways to make amends when someone has been physically or emotionally hurtful to a family member?

**Examples of Ways to Make Amends**

- Acknowledge that you were wrong.
- Help fix the problem that was created by your actions.
- Repair something that has been damaged or pay to have it fixed.
- Help the person in some way.
- Do something special for the person that shows you care about them.
- Ask the person what you can do to make amends.

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

- Saying "I'm sorry" is not the same as making amends.
- When you do something to make amends for an abusive or violent incident, it doesn't mean everything will be just fine and go back to the way it was before the incident.
- It is not always clear what to do to make amends.
- You should ask the person affected by the abuse what you can do to make amends.



# Exercise:

## Making Amends Scenarios

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

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

### TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 96–99 in teen workbooks, page 112 in parent workbooks.

### Making Amends Scenarios

How could the people in the following scenarios make amends?

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

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

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3. Antonio was supposed to be home at 4 to babysit so his mom could go to the doctor. He came home at 5 and his mom missed the appointment.

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

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

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

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# Take-Home Activity

- ▶ Refer the group to the *How Can I Make Amends?* worksheet in their workbooks. Ask teens to think of a time when they were abusive/violent to someone in their families and write down at least three things they could have done to make amends for the behavior.

## TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 100 in teen workbooks, page 113 in parent workbooks.

### How Can I Make Amends?

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

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



## Background Information

This session helps parents examine how their parenting has been affected by their teen’s abusive behavior and explores how to give and receive support around the challenges of parenting teens who respond to limit-setting with violence or abuse. Many parents believe they have failed as parents and that they are to blame for their teen’s behavior. This session provides an opportunity for them to hear that other parents have similar feelings and experiences, and to help each other learn how their parenting has been affected by their teen’s behavior.

Parents will learn how their negative thoughts influence how they respond to their teen’s behavior and how they can change their thinking to help them respond more effectively.

## Goals

- To understand how living with a teen who becomes abusive or violent can impact parenting
- To discuss challenges of parenting
- To give and receive support regarding parenting struggles
- To understand how feelings and thoughts affect behaviors
- To learn how to change negative thinking into thinking that supports more effective responses to the teen’s behavior

## Important Messages

- My teen is responsible for their behavior.
- My thoughts and feelings about my teen affect my parenting.
- I can change the way I think in order to make better parenting decisions.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Parenting a Teen Who Becomes Violent or Abusive
3. Exercise: Feelings, Thoughts, and Responses to Your Teen's Behavior
4. Exercise: Changing Your Thinking

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT

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

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

## Group Activities





### Discussion: Parenting a Teen Who Becomes Violent or Abusive

- ▶ Explain the following.

💬 Raising a teenager can be challenging all by itself. When your teen responds to limit-setting with abuse or violence, it is extremely difficult




to do your job as a parent. Bringing up a teen today takes a great deal of patience, understanding, firmness, and self-confidence. Each of these qualities is difficult to hold onto when your teen is putting you down, calling you names, threatening, or hitting you.

## Discussion Questions

-  Ask the following questions and write their answers on the board. (This can also be done in small groups. The small groups can reconvene when finished to share with the larger group.)
-  What are some of the feelings you experience when your teen is abusive or violent?
-  How does it affect your thinking? What kinds of thoughts do you have?
-  How do these feelings and thoughts affect the way you parent?


The following are some examples to include in your list.

- Make inconsistent rules and consequences because of fear of an outburst
- Don't ask teen to do things (chores, help)
- Take on responsibility for teen that should be theirs
- Walk on eggshells around them to avoid conflict
- Avoid your teen
- Lose ability to stay rational and "explode" with screaming, yelling
- Act abusively back – put-downs, name-calling, physical abuse
- Make threats
- Lose ability to see positive behavior
- Get into a pattern of expecting negative behavior

-  Ask the group:
-  How can your experiences, feelings, and thoughts strengthen your parenting?
-  Have parents share their ideas and list them on the board.

*Examples might be: It can motivate you to learn more parenting skills, seek parenting help, help you learn to grow as a parent, help you develop skills you would never learn with an easier child such as self-calming practices, assertiveness, and other skills that we learn in Step-Up.*

# Exercise: Feelings, Thoughts, and Responses to Your Teen's Behavior

 Refer parents to the *Feelings, Thoughts, and Responses to My Teen's Behavior* worksheet in the parent workbook. Ask them to think about times when their teens were abusive or violent and fill in the worksheet.

## PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS


This appears on page 105 in parent workbooks.

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

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

MY TEEN'S BEHAVIOR	WHAT I FELT/THOUGHT	HOW I RESPONDED


 Say to the group:

 Look at how you responded to your teen's behaviors in the exercise you just completed. How do you feel about how you responded? Do you wish you had responded in a different way? You do not need to answer these questions out loud; they are for you to think about.



What we *think* and how we *feel* about an event influences how we will respond to it. Sometimes we feel good about the way we respond. We know it was the best way to deal with the situation. Other times, we don't like the way we responded and wish we had handled it differently. You can help yourself change the way you respond to a situation by changing the way you think about it. Here is an example.

 Read the following scenario.

 Lydia told her son Shawn that he needed to do the dishes before he went over to his friend's house. Shawn started arguing with her about how he didn't have time and that he wasn't her slave. He argued that his brother never had to do the dishes. Lydia argued back about how he was nowhere near being a slave because he didn't do any work around the house and that his brother had done the dishes several times that week. Shawn started yelling at her, picked up one of the dishes, and threw it at the wall. It smashed into pieces. Lydia started screaming at Shawn and told him he couldn't go anywhere for a month. Shawn went to his room and slammed the door. Lydia did the dishes.

 Ask the group:

 What do you think Lydia was thinking and feeling during this incident?

**Thinking:**

- “He’s wrong about being a slave and that his brother never does the dishes. I have to convince him that he’s wrong and I’m right.”
- “I have to make him change his behavior.”
- “He could really hurt me.”
- “How could I have a child who is so mean? What have I done wrong?”
- “Forget getting him to do the dishes, I’ll just do them. I can’t deal with him anymore.”

**Feeling:**

- Scared, angry, frustrated, defensive, hopeless, responsible for his behavior, inadequate

**?** How do you think it affected the way she responded to him?

- Argued with him to convince him that she is right
- Screamed at him to try to make him change
- Impulsively gave him a consequence that may be difficult to follow through on
- Did the dishes for him

**?** How could she have changed her thinking? What could she have thought instead?

- “I’m not going to argue with him about this.”
- “I don’t need to try to convince him of anything; I don’t need to defend myself.”
- “I can let him know what he needs to do and then leave the room.”
- “He is responsible for breaking the dish. I will take time to think about a consequence and talk to him later when we are both calm.”
- “We need to do the Safety Plan right now. I’ll leave the dishes for him to do later.”
- “His behavior is not safe. I need to separate from him now.”
- “He made the choice to behave this way. He needs to know it is not acceptable. I will talk with him about it when we are both calm.”

**?** How would this thinking change how she responded to Shawn’s behavior?


# Exercise: Changing Your Thinking

 Explain the following:

 Negative thinking is often in one of the following categories:

- Negative thoughts about the other person (criticism, put-downs)
- Negative thoughts about yourself (self-blame, “shoulds,” self-criticism)

Let’s look at some examples of negative thinking and how we can change it to more realistic thinking.

 Refer parents to the *Changing Your Own Thinking* worksheet in the parent workbook and read the examples.

After going over the chart, have parents turn to the blank chart in the parent workbooks. Have them fill in their own negative thinking about their teens, and then change each one into more realistic thoughts. (This can also be given as a Take-Home Activity.)

## PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 106–107 in parent workbooks.

### Changing Your Own Thinking

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

Negative thinking often occurs in one of the following categories:

- Negative thoughts about the other person (criticism, put-downs)
- Negative thoughts about yourself (self-blame, “shoulds,” self-criticism)

Here are some examples:

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

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

**Changing My Thinking**

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

NEGATIVE THINKING	REALISTIC THINKING



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## NOTES



## Background Information

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

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

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

The restorative steps are introduced along with a scenario to help group members apply each of the restorative inquiry questions to a

situation where a teen is violent toward his mom.

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

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

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

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



## Goals

- To understand the true meaning of accountability
- To recognize how we avoid accountability
- To learn the six restorative steps for taking responsibility for behavior
- To understand how accountability for hurtful behavior is helpful to those harmed and oneself

## Important Messages

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

## Session Overview

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

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**


**RESPECT**

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

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

# Group Activities

 Introduce the session with the following statement.

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

## Discussion: What Is Accountability?

 Begin the group with the following discussion questions.

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

6. Who are you accountable to?  
**Examples: Friends, parents, teachers, probation officers.**
7. What makes it hard to be accountable when you've done something wrong?  
**Examples: Fear of punishment, shame, embarrassment.**
8. What feelings do you have when you've decided you've done something wrong?  
**Examples: Guilt, shame, embarrassment.**
9. What do people sometimes do instead of being accountable?  
**Examples: Deny, justify, minimize, blame.**
10. How does being accountable help someone change their abusive/violent behavior?  
**Example: Accountability shows that the person recognizes that they want or need to change.**

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 103–105 in teen workbooks, pages 118–120 in parent workbooks.


**What Is Accountability?**

1. What does it mean to be accountable? What do people do to be accountable for something they did?
2. Think of a time when you saw someone be accountable when that person did something wrong. The person could be a friend, a parent, a teacher, or anyone you know. What did you feel about this person?
3. What are some of the ways our society holds people accountable?
4. What is the difference between being accountable for yourself and having accountability imposed on you?
5. Who are you accountable to?
6. What makes it hard to be accountable when you've done something wrong?
7. What feelings do you have when you've decided you've done something wrong?
8. What do people sometimes do instead of being accountable?
9. How does being accountable help someone change their abusive/violent behavior?

# Discussion:

## What People Do Instead of Being Accountable


 Begin by explaining:

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

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

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

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

 **Deny:** Saying the behavior never happened.

**Justify:** Giving reasons for the behavior, such as, “I had to hit my brother; he wouldn’t be quiet,” or, “She made me really mad.”

**Minimize:** Saying the behavior is no big deal. Making it sound less serious than it was, such as, “I barely touched you,” or, “I was just moving you out of my way.”

**Blame:** Saying that the behavior was caused by another person or by something else besides you.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 106 in teen workbooks, page 121 in parent workbooks.

**What People Do Instead of Being Accountable**

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

It is human nature to want to try to explain our behavior because we don't want to feel like we are bad or mean or want to hurt others. It can be a natural reaction; however, it is not helpful because it does not provide a pathway to taking responsibility and making amends, and it leaves the other person feeling more hurt and upset. Acknowledging your behavior in a direct and honest way opens the door to move forward and talk about it and then take steps to repair the harm done and restore the relationship.

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


**Denying:** Saying the behavior never happened.


**Justifying:** Giving reasons for the behavior, such as, "I had to hit my brother; he wouldn't be quiet," or, "She made me really mad."

**Minimizing:** Saying the behavior is no big deal. Making it sound less serious than it was, such as, "I barely touched you," or, "I was just moving you out of my way."

**Blaming:** Saying that the behavior was caused by another person or by something else besides you.


 After going over the examples, ask the group:

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

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

# Exercise:

## Avoiding Accountability Scenarios

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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 107–108 in teen workbooks, page 122–123 in parent workbooks.

### Avoiding Accountability Scenarios

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

Alex has tryouts for basketball at 8 a.m. on Saturday morning. She asks her mom, Rita, to wake her up at 6:30 a.m. so she can get ready. Rita says, “I will wake you up once, but I have to leave for work at 6:45, so you better set your alarm.” Alex says, “Okay.” She stays up until 1 a.m. on her phone and forgets to set her alarm. Rita wakes her up at 6:30 a.m. and leaves for work.

Alex goes back to sleep and wakes up at 9 a.m. Then she calls her mom at work and yells at her, “Hey, what’s up! You didn’t wake me up – I missed tryouts! What the...?! You wanted me to do soccer so bad. Forget it – I’m not doing it!”

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

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

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**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

Pete spends a lot of time playing video games. He just downloaded a new game and has been playing for three hours. His mom told him it was time to stop and do his chores. He ignored her. She kept coming into his room and telling him he needed to take a break and come do chores. He got really annoyed by the fourth time she came into the room and he jumped up and screamed at her to get out of his room. He grabbed a hockey stick and swung it toward her. She yelled, "Pete, stop! Put that down! I'm leaving the room. Do your Safety Plan and calm down." She left the room. She gave him time to calm down. He came out about 15 minutes later. His mom was really upset by his behavior. He said, "I didn't hit you with it. I was just trying to get you to leave my room. You always barge in on me. I was going to do my chores at the end of the game. You know I can't talk in the middle of a game. You need to just calm down, Mom. It's not that big of a deal. I wasn't going to hit you with it."

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

---


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

---

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

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

Explain the following.

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



## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 109–110 in teen workbooks, pages 124–125 in parent workbooks.

## Taking Responsibility for My Behavior Using Six Restorative Steps

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

**1. Who was harmed by your behavior?** *This helps you understand the ripple effect of your behavior. Think of all of the people who were affected in any way by what happened, such as family members, friends, etc. It helps you understand the larger impact of your behavior.*

- **What was the harm done to them?** *Think of physical and emotional harm.*

- **How did it affect them?** *Think of how they might feel and how it impacted their life.*

- **What other harm or damage was caused?** *Think of physical, emotional, and other ways it may have caused a problem for family members.*

All of the above questions help you understand the impact to your behavior from others' perspectives and help you feel empathy. The person harmed should take part in answering these questions. This information can help you figure out how you can make amends.

**2. How did it affect my relationship with my family members?** *This helps you think about your relationship and how the behavior impacts trust and feelings in your relationships.*

**3. How did my behavior affect me?** *This helps you recognize that you are also impacted by your behavior. Think about how you feel and your sense of self-respect and competence. Think about the consequences you will experience. On the positive side, ask yourself, "What did I learn from this? How will it help me in the future?"*

**4. What could I have done differently?** *This helps you realize that you have a choice and that you have other options for responding to anger. Think about the skills you have learned in Step-Up. What skills could you have used so that you stayed on the Respect Wheel?*

**5. What do I need to do to make amends?** *How can I repair the harm or damage done? How can I fix the problems that were caused? What can I do to make things right?*

**6. What do I need to do so I don't repeat the behavior again?** *What is my plan to prevent repeating the behavior? The most important part of making amends is to make a commitment to changing my hurtful behavior. Tell the person about your plan. Make it a weekly goal in Step-Up – for example, using your Safety Plan.*

# Exercise: Applying the Restorative Steps to a Story

- ▶ Refer group to Jason’s story in workbook. Ask them to think about the restorative steps as they listen to the story.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 111 in teen workbooks, page 126 in parent workbooks.

### Applying the Restorative Steps to a Story

#### Jason’s Story


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

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

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

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

 After reading the story, tell the group:

 Now we are going to read each of the restorative questions and think about how Jason could answer them about what happened.

This exercise can be done in small groups or as a large group discussion. Group members should fill out the blank questions after Jason’s story.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 112–113 in teen workbooks, pages 127–128 in parent workbooks.

Answer these questions as if you are Jason.

1. Who was harmed by my behavior?

• What was the harm done to them?

• How did it affect them?

• What other harm or damage was caused?

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

3. How did my behavior affect me?


4. What could I have done differently?

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

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

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

This exercise can be done in the group or as a take-home activity, depending on the time.

 Refer teens to the second blank *Taking Responsibility for My Behavior Using Six Restorative Steps* in their workbooks. Ask them to answer the questions about their own behavior when they were violent toward a family member. This could be the incident that brought them to the group or a more recent incident of violence at home.

Teens' parents should participate with them as they answer the questions, sharing their input about how they and other family members were affected and their ideas for making amends. Group members should share their answers with the group. If time is limited, they can share during Check-In the following week.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 114–115 in teen workbooks, pages 129–130 in parent workbooks.

## **Taking Responsibility for My Behavior Using Six Restorative Steps**

Answer these questions about an incident when you were violent or abusive. It can be the situation that brought you to group or something more recent.

1. Who was harmed by my behavior?

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- What was the harm done to them?

---

- How did it affect them?

---

- What other harm or damage was caused?

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

3. How did my behavior affect me?

4. What could I have done differently?

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

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

# Take-Home Activity

- ▶ Participants should complete the *Taking Responsibility for My Behavior Through Restorative Steps* worksheet for their own behavior if they did not do so in the group. Teens and parents should work on this together if possible.



## Background Information

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

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

## Goals

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



## Important Messages

- Anger itself is not a bad thing. Anger is a feeling that lets us know that things are not right for us. When we feel anger, we know that we need to do something – to figure out a problem, make a change, talk to someone about our feelings, or make a decision to try to let it go. Anger can be a motivator to take respectful action toward a positive change.
- Anger has been the force that changed many injustices in our country's history and has brought communities together to create positive change.
- It's okay to feel angry; it's how we behave when we're angry that can be a problem. More specifically, anger should not be used to justify violence and abuse or to intimidate or make other people feel powerless. There are ways to express anger without violence and abuse.
- Anytime you are angry, you also have other feelings.
- When you express feelings other than anger, people are more likely to listen to you and understand you.
- You have a choice about what to do with your anger, and you are responsible for the way you choose to respond.
- You are not responsible for someone else who chooses to respond to their anger with violence. If you are the victim of someone else's violence, you are not to blame.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Using Anger to Justify and Gain Power
3. Discussion: Identifying and Talking About Feelings
4. Exercise: Identifying Feelings
5. Exercise: Anger Scenarios

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**

**RESPECT**


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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Using Anger to Justify and Gain Power


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


 How is anger used to justify violent or abusive behavior?

 How do people use anger to have power over others?

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

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

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

# Discussion:

## Identifying and Talking About Feelings

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

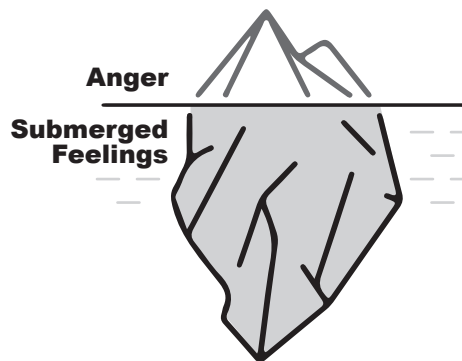
Tell students that anger is the tip of the iceberg. The part of the iceberg under the water is where all the other feelings are. Tell the teens that people often show only anger to the people around them. But just as a captain must know what lies beneath the water for the ship to successfully navigate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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 121 in teen workbooks, page 135 in parent workbooks.


### Iceberg of Feelings

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



## Why Does Putting Our Feelings into Words Help?


 Explain the following.


 In addition to anger, we have feelings that range in many different directions. When we communicate these other feelings to people, they understand us better. Talking about feelings can make our relationships stronger.

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

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

\*Lieberman, Matthew, et al. “Putting Feelings Into Words Affect Labeling Disrupts Amygdala Activity in Response to Affective Stimuli.” *Psychological Science*. 2007.

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

 Let’s say a seven-year-old boy gets punched and knocked down by a nine-year-old boy. If the seven-year-old starts to cry, what will the other kids say to him? What will they say about him? What will he learn about showing pain and fear?

If a five-year-old girl comes into the house crying and tells her mom that her brother said she couldn’t play with him because she was stupid, her mom may say, “Oh, he’s just being a boy. Stop crying.” What will the girl learn about feeling sad?

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

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

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

## Different Kinds of Feelings

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


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

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



# Exercise:

## Identifying Feelings

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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 126–127 in teen workbooks, pages 140–141 in parent workbooks.

### Identifying Feelings

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

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

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

Camila is angry. What else might she be feeling?

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

Jake is angry. What else might he be feeling?

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## Exercise:

# Anger Scenarios

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

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 128 in teen workbooks, page 142 in parent workbooks.

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

1. What happened?  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What did you say and do?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Besides anger, what feelings did you have?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Take-Home Activity

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

# Additional Activities for Identifying Feelings

- ▶ Fill a jar with different feelings written on folded pieces of paper. You can have group members write down feelings to put in the jar or they can bring them already written. Take turns having group members pick folded pieces of paper from the jar and, without telling the group the name of the feeling, act it out and have group members guess the feeling. Do this until everyone has had a turn.

One of the facilitators will tell a story where you experience several different feelings. Tell the story without actually identifying the feelings. Have the group listen and write down the feelings they imagine you must have felt at different points along the way. When the story is over, have them share the feelings they wrote down. Ask them if there were points in this story where the feelings could have turned into anger.

Here is an example.

- 💬 I went on a backpacking trip in the mountains last weekend with a friend. When we planned our hike, the forecast showed a sunny, beautiful weekend. I got all packed the night before with my backpack and food and all my stuff. I went to sleep imagining how fun it would be. I hadn't been to the mountains in a long time. I woke up in the morning and realized that I forgot to set my alarm. I needed to be up an hour earlier to pick up my friend on time. We had to catch a ferry that was leaving in 15 minutes. I had to call my friend to apologize and say we had to catch a later ferry. I wondered if we would get to our camping spot in the dark. Then I looked out the window and it was pouring rain. I imagined us setting up camp in the pouring rain in the dark. I grabbed my rain gear as fast as I could. I packed up my car and drove to pick up my friend. We got to the ferry line, and it was really long. We thought we had to wait for the next ferry, but then the line started moving, but it didn't look like we would make it on. I was wondering if we should give up and go back home.

We had been planning this trip for a long time. My friend had been so excited about this trip, too. Then, the line started moving again. We watched as each car ahead got onto the packed ferry. It didn't look like we would fit. We inched closer, and we saw a small space left on the ferry. We were the last car to fit on the ferry. The rain stopped as we crossed the bay, and the sun came out. We could see the clouds clearing, and soon the mountains appeared and looked so beautiful.





## Background Information

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

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

## Goals

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

## Important Messages

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

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Who Controls Our Feelings, Thoughts, and Behavior
3. Discussion: Self-Talk
4. Discussion: Beliefs
5. Discussion: Identifying and Changing Negative Self-Talk and Beliefs

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**

**RESPECT**


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

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



# Group Activities

 Explain the following:

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

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

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

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


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

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

## Discussion:

# Who Controls Our Feelings, Thoughts, and Behavior

 Explain the following:

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

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


We always have a choice about how we behave. No one can “make” us behave in a certain way. For example, no one is raising my hand for me to hit this person – I make the choice and act.

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

Here is an example of how a person’s thinking can affect the way they feel:


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

 Discuss the following questions:

 What kinds of things might Jon start to think?  
*Example: Jon might think, "What a jerk. This guy is just trying to make me mad. Who does he think he is? How rude!"*


 How would he feel?  
*Example: He might feel frustrated, irritated, impatient, and mad.*

 How might he behave?  
*Example: He might yell at the man to move out of his way.*

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

- Jon's thinking?
- Jon's feelings?
- Jon's actions?

 In the example above, what made Jon mad?

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

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

When we get angry about something that happens or something another person does or says, there are two things contributing to our anger:


- The event that happened, called an **external trigger**.
- The thoughts we have about what happened, called **internal triggers**.

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

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

## Discussion: Self-Talk

 Refer the group to *What Is Self-Talk?* in their workbooks and explain the following:

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

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

We talk to ourselves all the time and aren't aware of it. If you start paying attention to it, you will hear yourself. Here are a few examples.

- You hear your mom's car pull up in the driveway and you think, "Dang, I didn't do the dishes. She's going to yell at me about it."
- You get home and see that your little sister is using your laptop, and you think, "She's going to mess it up or get into my stuff."



If you listen to yourself carefully for a day, you will hear all sorts of things that you say to yourself.

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

#### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 132 in teen workbooks, page 146 in parent workbooks.

### What Is Self-Talk?

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

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

## Discussion: Beliefs



Refer the group to *What Are Beliefs?* in their workbooks and explain the following:

#### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 132 in teen workbooks, page 146 in parent workbooks.

### What Are Beliefs?


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

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

Some of our beliefs are about what we think is important and what we think is right or wrong. They are often “shoulds,” such as:

- “You should never show weakness.”
- “Children should never talk back to their parents.”
- “Boys should never cry.”
- “It’s not okay to speak up when you disagree.”
- “You should always stick up for your family.”

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

## Core Beliefs About Myself

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

 Explain the following:

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 133 in teen workbooks, page 147 in parent workbooks.

### Core Beliefs About Myself

Core beliefs are about who we are as people, our capabilities, our self-worth, and our personality. These beliefs are deep and we are often not consciously aware of them. They impact our thoughts and self-talk. For example, let’s imagine I have a core belief that I am powerless and incapable. When I’m faced with a challenge, I might say to myself, “I can’t do anything about it. It’s hopeless; nothing will ever change.”

Here are examples of negative and positive core beliefs people have about themselves:

**NEGATIVE CORE BELIEFS**

- I never do things right.
- I am not very smart.
- I am helpless.
- I am bad.




**POSITIVE CORE BELIEFS**

- I am a good person.
- I can succeed if I try.
- I am important.
- I am capable.

 Briefly discuss the following questions:

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 133 in teen workbooks, page 147 in parent workbooks.

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

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

Positive belief


Negative belief

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

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


Write on the board: **SOMETHING HAPPENS**

Describe the following scenario:

 Derrick's mom told him she would take him to the store after school so he could buy the new basketball shoes that just came out. He had been looking forward to it all week. He was getting even more excited about it as he walked home from school. He had told his friends he would wear them to his pick-up game that night.

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

 Explain to the group:

 When something happens that causes distress, there are usually a series of thoughts, beliefs, and feelings that occur as the person thinks it through. It happens really fast. The thoughts, beliefs, and feelings impact each other.

For this part of the exercise, we will think of all the possible unhelpful thoughts, self-talk, beliefs, and feelings Derrick might be having that could lead to more distress and hurtful behavior. We will start with the first thing he might say to himself when he learns that he won't be able to get the shoes today.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 134 in teen workbooks, page 148 in parent workbooks.

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

When something happens that causes distress, there are usually a series of thoughts, beliefs and feelings that occur as the person thinks it through. It happens really fast. The thoughts, beliefs, and feelings impact each other.


### Something Happens

Derrick's mom told him she would take him to the store after school so he could buy the new basketball shoes that just came out. He had been looking forward to it all week. He was getting even more excited about it as he walked home from school. He had told his friends he would wear them to his pick-up game that night.

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





Let's think of all the possible unhelpful self-talk, beliefs, and feelings Derrick might be having that could lead to more distress or hurtful behavior. We will start with the first thing he might say to himself when he learns that he won't be able to get the shoes today.



 Ask the group:

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 134 in teen workbooks, page 148 in parent workbooks.

-  What thoughts or self-talk might Derrick have right after his mom tells him she can't take him to the store?
-  What feelings might he have?
-  What beliefs support this self-talk?
-  How might he behave?

 Have the group turn to the *Something Happens chart* in their workbooks and go over the examples.

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

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 135 in teen workbooks, page 149 in parent workbooks.

**Something Happens**

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

THOUGHT “I want to wear the new shoes to the game tonight. I have to! I told everyone I’d be wearing them.”

BELIEF “I can’t wait for my new shoes. I don’t have the patience. I can’t deal with this.”

FEELINGS Disappointed, frustrated, helpless, angry, victimized



THOUGHT “She said she would take me. She lied.”

BELIEF “People should keep their word. She’s doing it on purpose.”

FEELINGS Betrayed, unimportant, let down



THOUGHT “She cares more about my brother. He gets all of the attention. She always does what he wants.”

BELIEF “I am not worthy of attention. I’m not good enough.”

FEELINGS Jealous, sad, hurt, angry



**BEHAVIOR Yells and swears at Mom, kicks the wall**

THOUGHT “She can’t do this to me.”

BELIEF “If someone makes me feel bad, I have a right to make them feel bad too. They deserve it if they make me feel bad.”

FEELINGS Revenge, hopeless, shame

# Discussion:

## Identifying and Changing Self-Talk and Beliefs

 Tell the group

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS




This appears on page 137 in teen workbooks, page 150 in parent workbooks.

### Identifying and Changing Self-Talk and Beliefs

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

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


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

-  Which of his thoughts and beliefs are really true and realistic?
-  Which ones are not true or are blown out of proportion?
-  What could Derrick say to himself instead that would shift his view to be more realistic and less negative to help him cope with the distress?


 Write their answers on the board under two headings:

- True/Realistic
- Not True/Unrealistic or Exaggerated

 Then ask:

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


 List ideas on the board.


 We're going to do more practice on figuring out unhelpful self-talk and changing it to more helpful self-talk.

## Changing My Thinking/Self-Talk

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

Tell the group:

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

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


### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 137 in teen workbooks, page 151 in parent workbooks.

### Changing My Thinking/Self-Talk

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


 First, ask:

 What does Jennifer need to do before she can figure out what she's thinking?

 Point out:

- First, Jennifer should use her Safety Plan to stop and do something to calm her strong emotions. She should use her self-calming skills to de-escalate so she is able to think clearly and focus.
- When Jennifer was throwing things around her room, she was too emotionally escalated to think about her thinking. Her self-calming skills will help her settle down and activate her cortex so she will be able to focus and figure things out.

## Steps to Change Thinking/Self-Talk

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

WORKBOOK COMPONENTS	
This appears on page 137 in teen workbooks, page 151 in parent workbooks.	
<b>Steps to Change Thinking/Self-Talk</b>	
<b>LISTEN TO MYSELF:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What am I saying to myself?</li> <li>• What might Jennifer have been saying to herself?</li> </ul>
<b>ASK MYSELF:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is what I’m saying to myself really true? Is it realistic? Is it really this horrible awful and bad?</li> <li>• Is my thinking helping me? Or making it worse?</li> <li>• How was Jennifer’s thinking affecting her feelings and behavior?</li> <li>• Was Jennifer’s thinking true or realistic?</li> </ul>
<b>CHANGE IT:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If what you are saying is not really true or realistic, or is exaggerated, look at the situation again and change it to something more realistic.</li> <li>• What kinds of self-statements could Jennifer make that are more realistic?</li> <li>• If you decide what you are saying to yourself is really true or parts of it are true, while you don’t have control over the problem, you do have control over how you think about it and what you do.</li> </ul>

## Handling Something I Cannot Change

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

Explain the following:

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 138 in teen workbooks, page 152 in parent workbooks.

### Handling Something I Cannot Change

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

#### FIRST: RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS TRUE.

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

#### SECOND: WHAT CAN I DO? WHAT ARE MY CHOICES?

- Keep thinking about how awful things are and ranting and raving, driving yourself and everyone else nuts and getting in more trouble.
- Accept it. Saying "it is what it is" can sometimes bring some relief because you realize there is nothing you can do to change the situation. Let it go. This alone can help you feel better because you stop fighting it. In Jennifer's case, she could say to herself: "Okay, I don't have my phone. All the screaming and yelling in the world is not going to change it. It will just make it worse."
- Switch from thinking about the problem to thinking about the solution. What does Jennifer need to do to get her phone back?
- Tell yourself something to help you cope with the distress. For example, use as your self-calming statements. Jennifer could say, "It's only a week. Time goes fast. I will see my friends at school and tell them what's going on."
- Stop thinking. Do a mindfulness activity to bring yourself present (as we have learned about in class) by breathing, being in your body, and focusing on your senses and what is happening right now in the room you are in. Go on a mindfulness walk, sit by a tree, or do any of the mindfulness exercises we've learned. When your thoughts come along, just observe and let them pass.
- Feel the feelings. Allow yourself to have your feelings. Cry, get mad, be sad – as long as your behavior is safe and respectful. Do something physical to move the emotions – walk, run, or play catch with the dog.
- Talk about your feelings. Talk in a respectful way about how you feel to someone who is able to listen. You could also just say them aloud to yourself or write them down.

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









## Background Information

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

## Goals

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

## Important Messages

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

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Exercise: Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves
3. Exercise: Turning Your Own Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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


ABUSE/DISRESPECT	RESPECT


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

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

# Group Activities

## Exercise: Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves

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

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

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

**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 143 in teen workbooks, page 165 in parent workbooks.

**Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves**

**(Part A)**

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

	HURTFUL MOVES	HELPFUL MOVES
<b>I THINK/ SELF-TALK</b>	<p><i>YOU SHOULD</i> "You should give me a ride."</p> <p><i>BLAMERS/PUT-DOWNS</i> "If you got me up on time, I wouldn't have missed the bus."</p>	<p><i>I CAN</i> "I messed up, but I can figure it out."</p> <p><i>TAMERS</i> "Mom isn't responsible for my being late; she needs to get to work on time."</p>
<b>I FEEL</b>	Resentful, helpless, controlled	Frustrated, anxious, worried, motivated, competent
<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	Jason yells at her and calls her a name.	Jason takes the city bus to school.
<b>I BELIEVE</b>	<p>Other people are responsible when things go wrong.</p> <p>I have the right to yell and call names when someone doesn't do what I want.</p>	<p>I am responsible for figuring out solutions to my own problems. I don't have the right to yell and call names when I don't get what I want. Other people's needs are important.</p>

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

**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 144 in teen workbooks, page 166 in parent workbooks.

**Turning Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves**


**(Part B)**

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

Complete the following worksheet as if you were Octavio.

	HURTFUL MOVES	HELPFUL MOVES
<b>I THINK/ SELF-TALK</b>	<p><i>YOU SHOULD</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>BLAMERS/PUT-DOWNS</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><i>I CAN</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>TAMERS</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<b>I FEEL</b>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<b>I BELIEVE</b>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

# Exercise: Turning Your Own Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves

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

Have group members share their answers with the group.

## TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 145 in teen workbooks, page 166 in parent workbooks.

### Turning Your Own Hurtful Moves into Helpful Moves

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

	HURTFUL MOVES	HELPFUL MOVES
<b>I THINK/ SELF-TALK</b>	<p><i>YOU SHOULD</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>BLAMERS/PUT-DOWNS</i></p> <p>_____</p>	<p><i>I CAN</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>TAMERS</i></p> <p>_____</p>
<b>I FEEL</b>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<b>I BELIEVE</b>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>







## Background Information

One of the most effective ways to help teens change their behavior is to give them ownership of problems caused by their misbehavior, guide them in recognizing the impact of their behavior on others and themselves, and learn how to repair harm and make amends. Teens explored these concepts in Session 8, *Making Amends*. In Session 9, *Accountability Through Restorative Practice*, parents and teens learned and practiced the six-step restorative process for helping teens take responsibility for violent and abusive behavior.

This restorative practice dialogue is a valuable parenting tool to use at home. It can apply to any behavior that impacts other family members in a significant way. It is particularly beneficial for dealing with hurtful behavior because it engages empathy, which naturally motivates a desire to help repair the harm that was done.

Parents will often say that they don't know how to address the violent and abusive behavior at home. They have tried all sorts of consequences and they don't work. Many parents have given up on consequences. This session reframes consequences to view them as responsibilities resulting from the problems caused by the behavior.

*Restorative parenting* uses the principles and practices of restorative justice to guide children in a conversation where they talk about their behavior in a meaningful way, take responsibility for harm done, and learn how to make amends and “put things right.”

## Goals

- To reframe consequences as a way of taking responsibility for behavior
- To learn about the restorative process and how it helps teens engage in taking responsibility for their behavior
- To learn about restorative parenting and role-play using it with real situations with teens

## Important Messages

- The manner in which consequences are delivered can take away a teen's sense of responsibility.
- The reframing of the concept of consequences as taking responsibility for behavior is a more helpful perspective for both teens and parents.
- Restorative parenting offers a way to help teens learn how to take responsibility for their behavior in a meaningful way.
- Restorative parenting builds relationship connection, empathy, accountability, and mutual understanding.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Reframing Consequences
3. Discussion: The Purpose of Consequences
4. Discussion: Restorative Parenting
5. Exercise: Practice Applying Restorative Parenting to Your Own Situation

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT


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

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

# Group Activities






## Discussion: Reframing Consequences

 Discuss the following:


 A common way to respond to misbehavior is for parents to say to their teen, “You’re grounded,” or “I’m taking your phone,” or, “You’re off the computer for a week – give me your laptop.”

These may be appropriate consequences for some behaviors, but let’s explore what’s happening for the teen when we deliver them in this way.

 Ask the following questions:


-  How might teens respond?
-  How does it impact their view of the situation?
-  How might they think about their misbehavior in relation to the consequence delivered?
-  How does it influence their sense of responsibility?
-  How do we feel as parents when we deliver a consequence in this way?

 Elicit responses from the group and discuss. Then point out:

 When parents give a consequence to their teens in this way, it takes responsibility away from the teen. The parent takes the responsibility and is doing all of the work, and the teen is passive and simply receiving it. It removes the opportunity for the teen to feel responsible for their behavior or to feel competent in taking responsibility for their behavior. There is no connection between the misbehavior and the consequence when it is delivered in this way.

## Discussion:

# The Purpose of Consequences


 Let's talk about the purpose of consequences for misbehavior. What is the purpose of consequences for misbehavior?

 List the group's answers on the board. Be sure to include:


- To help children change their behavior
- To help them learn that there are consequences for misbehaviors
- To motivate them to make different choices in the future
- To give them responsibility for their behavior
- To help them learn about cause and effect
- To help them be accountable for their actions

 Ask:

 What do you think teens would say the purpose of a consequence is?


 Have the group share ideas. Point out that most teens probably view consequences as a punishment that's done to them. Of course, this makes sense in the mind of a teen, because who likes consequences?

 Summarize the following for the group:

 If we reframe consequences to reflect the real purpose – taking responsibility for your behavior – it changes the perspective for our teens and for their parents.

For example, when your teen has been hurtful to a family member and you say, “We will talk about how you can take responsibility for your behavior,” as opposed to, “We will talk about consequences for your behavior,” what is the difference?

 After parents share their responses, say:

 We're going to talk about a restorative practice model for helping your teen take responsibility for their behavior.

# Discussion:

## Restorative Parenting

 Explain the following:

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 158 in parent workbooks.

#### Restorative Parenting


Restorative parenting is based on a restorative justice theory that wrongdoing results in an obligation to those who have been harmed or to fix problems that were caused by the behavior. The focus is on “harms and needs,” which means figuring out the harm that resulted and what’s needed to repair the harm. This is called “making amends” or “putting things right.”

Restorative parenting uses the restorative process as a way to address wrongdoing in a family. It is a meaningful way to help children learn how to take responsibility for their behavior. It is helpful to parents because it offers a way to talk to young people about their behavior in a way that teaches accountability for behavior.

#### Keys to Restorative Parenting

- Focuses on the effects of the misbehavior – how it caused a problem rather than the person or the misbehavior
- Focuses on the need to fix problems caused
- Teaches children the impact of their behavior on others and helps them develop empathy for family members
- Helps children think about their behavior in a new way
- Teaches the true meaning of accountability
- Making amends reduces shame and increases self-respect
- Is respectful to everyone

 Point out:

 Your teens learned about making amends in Session 8 (you can find it in your workbook on page XX). You and your teens also learned more about making amends in Session 9, *Accountability Through Restorative Practice*.

## Addressing Misbehavior Using Restorative Parenting

**Facilitator Note:** In Session 9, *Accountability through Restorative Practice*, parents and teens learned and practiced the six-step restorative process for helping teens take responsibility for violent and abusive behavior. This restorative practice dialogue is a valuable parenting tool to use at home. It can apply to any behavior that impacts other family members in a significant way, like violating house rules, not doing chores, coming home late, or not respecting other family members' needs. It's particularly beneficial for hurtful behavior because it engages empathy, which naturally motivates a desire to help repair the harm that was done.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 159 in parent workbooks.

### Taking Responsibility for My Behavior Using Six Restorative Steps

Answer these questions about an incident when you were violent or abusive. It can be the situation that brought you to group or something more recent.

1. Who was harmed by my behavior?

• What was the harm done to them?

• How did it affect them?

• What other harm or damage was caused?

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

3. How did my behavior affect me?

4. What could I have done differently?

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

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



## Example of Restorative Parenting Using Restorative Inquiry

-  Read the following scenario and restorative dialogue between a parent and teen:

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 160–161 in parent workbooks.

### Example of Restorative Parenting Using Restorative Inquiry

Tara had a daily chore of doing the dishes before her mom came home from work. Her mom needed a clean kitchen to make dinner. Tara had been slacking on this. Several days in a row, her mother came home from work to find a sink full of dishes, food left out, and dirty dishes all over the house. Mom was fed up. She had already told Tara that she couldn't go out with her friends until she did all the dishes. It didn't seem to be working.

Tara's mom decided to try using the restorative questions with Tara to see if it would help. She told Tara that instead of the consequence of Tara not being able to go out with her friends, she wanted her to have a talk with Tara about the dishes and figure out a plan to solve the problem.

She asked Tara if she would sit down with her after dinner and talk about the dishes problem.

**Mom:** "Tara, when you don't do the dishes, who do you think it affects?"

**Tara:** *(Thinks for a while before talking)* "Well, it makes you mad, I know that."

**Mom:** "How else do you think I feel?"

**Tara:** "Probably taken advantage of, because you make the dinner and all the dishes are in the way, so you have to either do them or pile them up for me to do later. You must be pretty angry by now. I guess I would be pissed. Yeah, sorry, Mom."

**Mom:** "Who else is impacted by it?"

**Tara:** "Dad and Alisha, cuz they have to wait longer for dinner and it's a mess for them to come home to, too. Alisha tries to help you do them. She must be annoyed by me. I would be yelling at her if she did that to me."

**Mom:** "How does it affect you?"

**Tara:** "Well, I feel pretty lame right now. I guess I feel selfish. I've just been really distracted and busy lately. I think I'm going to do them and then I have to leave. Sorry, Mom."

**Mom:** "I'm glad you recognize how hard it is on all of us. Are there any other problems caused by you not doing the dishes?"

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

**Tara:** “We run out of plates and cups. Everyone complains when they can’t find clean stuff. It gets really crabby around here. Everyone starts pestering me, and lately it feels like everyone is mad at me all the time.”

**Mom:** “It doesn’t sound very fun for you, either.”

**Tara:** “No, it’s not...”

**Mom:** “What do you think your responsibility is in this? What do you need to do?”

**Tara:** “I need to start doing the dishes and talk to Dad and Alisha and tell them I’m sorry.”

**Mom:** “That is good. Is there anything more you can do to make amends with me?”

**Tara:** “What do you want me to do to make amends?”

**Mom:** “It would feel really good if you would make dinner with me one night this week so we can enjoy each other’s company again. It’s been rough between us. I want to restore our relationship and feel good together again. Will you do that?”

**Tara:** *(Smiles at her mom)* “Sure, Mom. I would like that. Let’s make spaghetti like we used to and have chocolate sundaes.”



How is that for relationship restoration? This story might be a little sugarcoated, but this process does help to reconnect relationships and helps family members feel empathy, remorse, and forgiveness. It can be a very powerful process.

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 162 in parent workbooks.

**What helped engage and motivate Tara?**

- Mom’s attitude of respect and support for Tara
- Allowing Tara to have space to think and answer in ways that fit for her. Her mom did not push it or try to control it. She adapted the questions to how the conversation was going.
- Mom’s supportive attitude allowed Tara to not become defensive and to open up to feeling empathy and remorse, which motivated her to want to make amends.

**Restorative parenting teaches teens:**

- That their behavior is their own responsibility, not their parents’ responsibility
- That wrongdoing results in obligations to others
- That when their behavior creates a problem, it’s their responsibility to fix it or make amends
- The real consequences of their behavior and how to make decisions based on the knowledge of these consequences

# Exercise: Practice Applying Restorative Parenting to Your Own Situation

- ▶ Have the group divide into pairs and think of a real situation with their teens. Take turns role-playing as a the parent and the teen and use the restorative questions as a guide to discussion about a problem behavior.

## Take-Home Activity

- 💬 Talk to your teen about what they learned in the *Making Amends* session. Share what you learned with your teen. Invite your teen to practice using the restorative questions on a current problem behavior.

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## NOTES







## Background Information

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

## Goals

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

## Important Messages

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

## Session Overview

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



# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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


ABUSE/DISRESPECT	RESPECT

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: What Is an “I” Statement?

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

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

 Refer group to *What Is an “I” Statement?* page in their workbooks and discuss.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 151 in teen workbooks, page 171 in parent workbooks.

**What Is an “I” Statement?**

An “I” statement:

- Clearly and specifically describes the behavior or situation that is a problem using as few words as possible
- Describes how a person feels or how the situation affects them by using “I” sentences
- Does not blame, accuse, criticize, or put down the other person in the conversation

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

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

**How Do I Make an “I” Statement?**

*I feel* (feeling) *when* (behavior or situation)  
*because* (how it is a problem for you) .

**OR**

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

## Discussion:

# “You” Statements versus “I” Statements

- ▶ Refer the group to the *“You” Statements Versus “I” Statements exercise* in the workbook. Read each statement and ask group members what feelings they might have after hearing it and how they might respond. They can note this on the lines below the statement and share them with the group. This is intended to be a whole group discussion about the impact of our words and how changing the way we say things can help others understand us better and prevent conflict and escalation.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 152 in teen workbooks, page 172 in parent workbooks.

### “You” Statements Versus “I” Statements

The following are examples of “you” statements and “I” statements. Consider how you would feel after hearing each of these statements. How might you respond? Write down your feelings and responses under each one.

“YOU” STATEMENT	“I” STATEMENT
“Why do you always lock the door before I get home? You know I’m not home yet. You make me have to knock and knock, and you take forever to open it.”	“I feel frustrated when I come home and the door is locked. I don’t like knocking and knocking because I start to think no one is home and I won’t be able to get in.”
“You always pick me up late from school. You’re never on time. Don’t you know I have to be at practice by 3 o’clock? You always make me late.”	“I feel frustrated when I don’t get picked up by 2:30 because I worry about being late for practice.”
“You never listen to me. You are constantly interrupting and being rude. You really have no clue about how to have a conversation.”	“When you talk while I’m talking, I get really annoyed because I feel like you aren’t hearing anything I’m saying. I’d like to take turns talking so you can listen to me and I can listen to you.”

# Exercise: Changing “You” Statements into “I” Statements

- ▶ Refer group members to the next worksheet, *Changing “You” Statements into “I” Statements*. Tell them they will now practice changing “you” statements into “I” statements. This exercise can be done as a large group or in small groups or pairs. If done in small groups, come back together when groups are finished to share answers.

## WORKSHEET COMPONENTS

This appears on page 153 in teen workbooks, page 173 in parent workbooks.


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

Change the following “you” statements into “I” statements.

“YOU” STATEMENT	“I” STATEMENT
“You are always late. You are so slow in the morning. I’m going to be late again thanks to you.”	
“You ate all the chips! You’re such a pig!”	
“You always come barging into my room. Have you ever heard of the word ‘privacy’?”	

## Exercise:

# “I” Statement Practice

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

### WORKSHEET COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 154–155 in teen workbooks, pages 174–175 in parent workbooks.

### “I” Statement Practice

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

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


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


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3. Bridget is planning to paint a mural she sketched on her wall using the paint pens she received for her birthday. She opens the pens to find that they’ve clearly been used and are almost empty. She approaches her brother to ask if he used them. He casually responds that yes, he had a science project poster to make, and his group used the paint pens to make the poster. Bridget says to her brother:  


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4. Vanessa walks in the front door with an armful of groceries and trips over a pile of stuff (shoes, a backpack, and a coat) that her son Jackson left on the floor. Vanessa says to Jackson:  


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TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS	PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS
This appears on page 156 in teen workbooks.	This appears on page 176 in parent workbooks.
<p><b>“I” Statement Practice with Your Parent</b></p> <p>Think of something you would like to say to your parent using an “I” statement. Try to say something that you would normally say in a “you” statement. Take turns each saying something to each other in an “I” statement.</p>	<p><b>“I” Statement Practice with Your Teen</b></p> <p>Think of something you would like to say to your teen using an “I” statement. Try to say something that you would normally say in a “You” statement. Take turns each saying something to each other in an “I” statement.</p>

## Alternative Exercise for “I” Statement Practice

Another way to do this exercise that is more interactive:

 Have group members break into groups of three with their workbooks and write on the board:

- “I felt \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “...when \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “...because I \_\_\_\_\_.”

 Explain that after reading each scenario, the three members of each group will say one part of the statement. The first person will start with, “I felt \_\_\_\_\_” (say a feeling), the next person will say, “When \_\_\_\_\_” (referencing the incident that happened), and the last person will say, “Because I \_\_\_\_\_” (say how it caused a problem or affected them in some way).

Tell them to rotate answering different parts of the “I” statement and to write down their “I” statements to share with the group later.

Bring everyone back together to share their “I” statements with the group.

# Take-Home Activity

- ▶ During the next week, use "I" statements with your parent/teen when you want to express an opinion or feeling about something.





## Background Information

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

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

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

## Goals

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



# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: What Is a Responsibility Letter?

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

### TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 161 in teen workbooks, page 188 in parent workbooks.

#### What Is a Responsibility Letter?

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

Here's how you do it:

1. You decide what incident you are going to write about and let your counselor know about it. You may do this during group session time when everyone will talk about what they are going to write about, or you may talk about it to your counselor apart from the group.
2. After your counselor approves the incident you will write about, use the blank letter in the worksheet and answer the questions. The responsibility letter is not meant to be a writing assignment. If you have any problems with spelling or grammar, don't worry.
3. Give your letter to your counselor. They will read it and may ask you to make changes to it. After you make all the changes, you will read the letter to the group.

# Discussion:

## Sample Responsibility Letter

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

### TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 162–163 in teen workbooks, pages 189–190 in parent workbooks.

### Sample Responsibility Letter

Dear Mom,

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

I'm writing to you about what I did on May 5. The argument was about me coming home late. I came home at 11 p.m. and went to my room. You came into my room a couple minutes later. You asked me where I had been. I told you before I left that I'd be home at 10 p.m. I got loud and told you it was none of your business where I was. I told you to get out of my room. You said you were sick of me talking to you that way and you wanted more respect. Tommy (my seven-year-old brother) came out of his room and told me not to call you names. I told him to shut up. Then he said, "I hate you." I kicked my foot toward him and said, "You better get out of here." He left crying. Then I started pushing you toward the door and I raised my hand like I was going to hit you. You screamed, and I said, "Just shut up and get out." You were in the doorway and I pushed you down into the hallway. I slammed the door and locked it so you couldn't get back in. Then I turned on my stereo so loud that the windows were rattling. About 10 minutes later, the police came to my door.

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

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

*What were you feeling?*

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

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

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

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

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



# Discussion:

## Two Versions of Describing What Happened

- ▶ Refer the group to *Two Versions of Describing What Happened* in their workbooks. Have a group participant read these two versions of a responsibility letter. Both letters are about the same incident but are written based on two different ways of thinking about the incident.

### TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 164–166 in teen workbooks, pages 190–191 in parent workbooks.

### Two Versions of Describing What Happened

#### Version 1

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

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

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

#### Version 2


I'm writing to you about what I did on May 5. The argument was about me coming home late. I came home at 11 p.m. and went to my room. You came into my room a couple minutes later. You asked me where I had been. I told you before I left that I'd be home at 10 p.m. I got loud and told you it was none of your business where I was. I told you to get out of my room. You said you were sick of me talking to you that way and you wanted more respect. Tommy (my seven-year-old brother) came out of his room and told me not to call you names. I told him to shut up. Then he said, "I hate you." I kicked my foot toward him and said, "You better get out of here." He left crying. Then I started pushing you toward the door and I raised my hand like I was going to hit you. You screamed, and I said, "Just shut up and get out." You were in the doorway and I pushed you down into the hallway. I slammed the door and locked it so you couldn't get back in. Then I turned on my stereo so loud that the windows were rattling. About 10 minutes later, the police came to my door.





## Exercise:

# Writing the Responsibility Letter

 Now, tell the teens that you want each of them to write a responsibility letter to a family member about an incident in which the teen was abusive or violent to that family member. Ask each teen to give a brief description of the incident they are going to write about before they begin. They can begin the letter by answering the questions on the worksheet. Let them know you will be collecting their letters when they are through.

If possible, spend some time with each teen to discuss their letter. Give them some tips on how to revise it, if necessary.


Point out any denying, minimizing, blaming, or justifying in the letter.

Tell group members they will be reading their letters during a group session.

See *Background Information* regarding options for reading letters in the group.



# Take-Home Activity

-  Have group members continue to work on their responsibility letters at home.



## Background Information

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

## Goals

- To identify parent responsibilities and teen responsibilities
- To learn ways to help teens take responsibility for their behavior
- To identify ways that teens are affected when parents take responsibility for their them
- To identify ways teens feel when they take responsibility for themselves

## Important Messages

- Teens will take more responsibility for their behavior when they are given the opportunity to make some decisions and face consequences of their choices.
- Giving teens responsibility is a gradual process as they mature.
- It is not always easy to let go and let teens make their own decisions and face consequences.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Who Is Responsible for What?

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**


**RESPECT**

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Who Is Responsible for What?

 Ask the group the following questions. List their answers on the board. (Beneath each question are possible answers to include.)

 **What are you responsible for in your relationship with your teen?**

Providing basic needs: food, clothing, housing, healthcare, safety, education, rules, guidance, discipline, encouragement, love, emotional support.

Teaching life skills: social skills, being a positive role model, support and guidance in taking on responsibilities and becoming independent.

 **What is your teen responsible for?**

Own behavior, making choices, facing consequences of behavior, using skills learned, following rules, doing schoolwork, doing chores, following through on commitments made, fixing problems created by their behavior, asking for help.

 **How do parents take too much responsibility in their relationships with their teens?**

Excusing negative behavior, rescuing them from facing consequences, doing things for them that they are capable of doing, fixing problems they created.

 **How does this affect teens?**

Do not feel capable, become dependent on parents, expect parents to do too much for them, do not feel responsible for their behavior, are not accountable, blame others for their own behavior.

 **How does this affect parents?**


Feel resentful, angry, unappreciated, overwhelmed, stressed; do not believe teens are capable.



## **How does it affect the relationship between the teen and parent?**


Both get frustrated with each other, teen feels “nagged” by parent, tension makes it difficult to be positive, both lose sight of who is responsible for what.

### Explain the following:

 It’s not always easy to know who should be responsible for what in a teen-parent relationship. Teens can be very responsible and self-reliant in many respects. But they also still need support and guidance. Depending on maturity level, some teens need more direction and guidance than others. Every teen is different. You have to make your own decisions about what your teen is ready for based on experience with your teen.

We have been talking about ways parents take on too much responsibility for their teens.

It’s also possible to give teens more responsibility than they are ready for.

 Refer to the *Giving My Teen Responsibility* page in the parent workbook. These are helpful questions to ask yourselves. Take some time during the next week to answer these questions.

## PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 181–182 in parent workbooks.

### **Empowering Teens to Be Responsible for Their Behavior**

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

#### **Try to control them**

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

#### **Try to rescue them**

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

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

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

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

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

**How Do You Empower Your Teen?**

- Invite the person to think for themselves about how to solve a problem.
- Allow the person to take action to solve the problem.
- Allow the person to make the choice to not take action.
- Allow the person to experience the consequences of their choice.
- The most important part is how you communicate to the person. If you talk with them in a way that is both caring and firm, they will feel more accepting of the responsibility.


**Caring and firm means:****Caring**

- Letting the person know that you care about them and love them, regardless of the problem or the choice they make.
- Talking in a way that is not demeaning, sarcastic, or critical.
- Telling the person you believe they are capable of solving the problem.
- Letting the person know that they can ask for help in making their plan to solve the problem.

**Firm**

- Letting the person know that you are giving them the responsibility to take action to solve the problem. You will not do it for them.
- Letting the person know that they are in charge of the choice and the consequence.
- Allowing the person to face consequences without rescuing them.
- Being clear about your expectations, holding to what you say.
- Instead of being caring and firm, parents are often caring and rescuing, angry and firm, or angry and rescuing.



 Ask the group the following questions about each of the above responses:

 **What feelings do you think Brian had?**


 **How do you think he might respond to his parent?**

 **What messages was he getting about himself and how capable he is?**


 **How do you think he will behave in the future (regarding this problem)?**

 **What feelings do you think the parent had?**

## Practice

 Ask parents to volunteer examples of situations with their teens where they have been frustrated because their teens do not take responsibility. Have the group think of caring and firm responses to the behavior. If time permits, this exercise can be done in small groups, and then the whole group can come back together to discuss responses.

# Take-Home Activity

-  Refer parents to the *Giving My Teen Responsibility worksheet* in the parent workbook. Let them know that these are helpful questions to ask themselves. Ask them to take some time during the following week to answer these questions.

## PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 184–185 in parent workbooks.

### Giving My Teen Responsibility

1. What is my teen able to do without my help?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. In what ways does my teen show responsibility?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. In what areas does my teen still need support and guidance?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. In what ways am I continuing to take on more responsibility for my teen than they need?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How does this affect my teen?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How does this affect our relationship?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What are some ways I can give my teen more responsibility?  
\_\_\_\_\_





## Background Information

The goal of this session is for each teen to write an empathy letter to the person who was the victim of the teen's abuse or violence. Understanding another person's thinking, feelings, and experience of a situation can be the most important part of responding to a conflict with respect and without abuse and violence. When asked about another person's experience, a teen will sometimes shrug their shoulders and say, "How should I know?" If the facilitator is patient, most teens will succeed in coming to an understanding about the feelings and experience of the victim of their abuse or violence.

## Goals

- To define empathy
- To discuss how empathy can have a positive impact on relationships
- To practice empathy through letter-writing

## Important Messages

- When two people try to resolve a conflict, they will be much more successful if they try to understand each other's feelings and perspectives.
- When you try to think about how another person experiences a situation, you may feel less angry at them and less likely to use abuse or violence against them.
- Having empathy can help you be more respectful.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Empathy and Its Impact on Relationships
3. Exercise: Empathy Letter



# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**

**RESPECT**

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Empathy and Its Impact on Relationships


 Start the session by discussing the following questions.

 **What is empathy?**

- Examples: Identifying and understanding the feelings and experiences of another person; putting yourself in someone else's shoes.

 **How does empathy affect your relationship with another person?**

- Examples: Empathy brings people closer together; it makes a relationship stronger; it makes solving problems easier.

 **What difference would understanding the feelings and experience of another person make when you are responding to something they did or said to you?**

- Example: The response would be friendlier to the person.

 **What situations make it hard to have empathy?**

- Examples: When we don't like the other person; when we don't agree with the other person.

 **Can you have empathy for someone even when you don't agree with their point of view?**

- Example: Yes; empathy doesn't mean agreement with another person.



# Exercise:

## Empathy Letter

-  Introduce the empathy letter exercise by referring to the *Empathy Letter Plan*:

### TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 175 in teen workbooks, page 205 in parent workbooks.

### Empathy Letter Plan

Think about what happened when you were abusive or violent to the person(s) in the incident that you have chosen to write about. Think through the whole situation and try to look at it through the other person's eyes and experience it as if you were them. Try to really imagine you are that person. Use what you already know about them to help you know and understand how they might be feeling and seeing the situation.

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

1. Describe what happened as they might have experienced it and from their point of view as your parent, caretaker, or other family member.
2. What feelings might you be having if you were that person throughout the whole incident? There might be many different feelings, and they might change at different times.
3. What thoughts might you be having at different times during the whole situation?
4. How did the incident impact the person's life? Think about how it affected them in different ways, such as what they had to do as a result of your behavior (such as call the police, go to court, miss work, find childcare for siblings, or fix a hole in the wall or a broken phone).
5. What were the long-term effects of what happened, especially in your relationship with them and your other family members?

-  Refer group members to *Sample Empathy Letter* in the workbook. Read the letter aloud or have a group member read it.

## TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 176–177 in teen workbooks, page 206 in parent workbooks.

## Sample Empathy Letter

*Describe what happened when you were arrested or had an abusive incident from the perspective of your parent or the person you harmed.*

The argument began because you came home late. You said you were going to be home at 10 p.m. but you didn't get home until 11 p.m. When you got home and I asked you where you were, you started yelling at me and started swearing. You also called me names. When Tommy heard you yelling at me, he came into the room and you kicked your foot at him, swore at him, and told him to go back to his room. Then you came after me. You kept pushing me until I was near the door. You raised your hand at me like you were going to hit me. Then you pushed me down on the floor in the hallway and slammed the door. Then I got up and called the police.

*What was the person thinking and feeling during this incident?*

When you didn't come home on time, I was worried because I didn't know where you were.

When you started calling me names, that really upset me because I just wanted to know that you were OK. I feel degraded when you call me names. I can't believe my own son would call me those names. I was also upset because Tommy heard what you said, and I think he'll start using that language if he hears you use it. When you kicked your foot at Tommy, I was afraid for him.

The first time you pushed me, I was really surprised. You had never done that before. I wasn't sure what you were going to do next. I remember being so scared because you raised your hand at me like you were going to hit me. I thought for sure you were going to do it.

After you slammed the door, I didn't know what to do. I was in shock. I wasn't sure this was really happening to me. My own son. I sat there trying to imagine what I was going to say to somebody if they asked me what happened. I was sure they'd think it was my fault.

*How were they affected by the incident?*


I didn't want to call the police, but I didn't know what else to do to make you stop. I didn't want you arrested; I just wanted them to talk to you. I'm sorry this happened, but I can't live like this anymore.

*What were the long-term effects of what happened, especially in your relationship with them and your other family members?*

It's going to take me a while to trust you again. This isn't the first time this kind of thing has happened.

Tommy looks up to you and wants to be like you. I don't want him to think of you as someone who yells and hits people. I don't want him to start doing those things. Tommy and I shouldn't have to be afraid of you. If getting arrested means you will stop being violent and abusive with me, calling me names, and threatening me, then I think it was worth it.

Love, Mom

 Ask the group if they have questions or comments about the letter. If time permits, have group members begin their letters on the following page. They can work on their letters at home or you can use time during the following group session for group members to write their letters.

- Let them know you will collect their completed letters when they are done. Be prepared to give feedback to each participant and have them make changes to the letter if needed. The letter should include a range of feelings experienced by the victim (not just anger) and show that the teen has thought through the experience of the other person.
- Schedule time during the following sessions for teens to read their letters. The letters should be read with the parents present in the group. One way to do this is to have one teen each week read their letter after Check-In while the parents are still in the group.
- After the teen reads their letter, ask the teen's parent for comments. Did the teen accurately describe the parent's feelings, thoughts, and experiences? The parent can add anything that was missing or not accurate in the letter. The parent can also take time to express other thoughts or feelings about the letter.

**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 178–179 in teen workbooks, page 207 in parent workbooks.

**My Empathy Letter**

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

*Describe what happened when you were arrested or had an abusive incident from the perspective of your parent or the person you harmed.*

*What was the person thinking and feeling during this incident?*

*How were they affected by the incident?*

*What were the long-term effects of what happened, especially in your relationship with them and your other family members?*

*What else might the person say to you about it? For example, how might they feel now that you are finishing Step-Up and you have made changes in your behavior?*

*What were the consequences to you?*

*What could you have done differently?*

# Take-Home Activity

-  Instruct teens to finish their empathy letters if they did not already do so in class.







## Background Information

Parents usually don't think about how they are communicating with their teens, especially when they are upset or irritated with their teens. Whenever parents talk to their children, they are giving underlying messages about their confidence in the children, along with the children's abilities and strengths.

This session gives parents a chance to think about the messages they have been giving their teens when they talk to them. Through scenarios and practice, parents will learn how to phrase communication in ways that give teens the message that they are responsible and capable.

## Goals

- To recognize how you give underlying messages whenever you talk to your teen
- To realize how these messages affect your teen's view of themselves
- To learn how to phrase communication so your teen feels responsible and capable

## Important Messages

- Whenever you talk to your teen, it is as if you are holding a mirror in front of them.
- Everything you say to your teen gives an underlying message about who they are and how capable they are.
- You can give your teen a positive view of themselves with the words you use.
- You can help your teen feel more responsible and capable through your communication.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: What Kind of Message Are You Giving Your Teen?
3. Exercise: Messages We Give Our Teens
4. Exercise: Giving Our Teens the Message That They Are Capable

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT	RESPECT


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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: What Kind of Message Are You Giving Your Teen?

 Discuss the following.

 When we talk to our children, we give them underlying messages along with the words we say. We give them messages about our confidence in them, how capable they are, how much we care for them, and how much we value their ideas and opinions. We give these messages in the way we respond to them and give them information.

Listen for these messages in the two following ways of a parent responding when they learn that their teen is failing science.

- “You failed science this quarter. You’re never going to make it past middle school.”
- “It looks like you’re going to need to make a plan for how you’re going to pull that grade up in science. If you talk to your teacher, you can probably figure out a way to pass next quarter. Let me know what you figure out. I’m happy to help out if you want.”

In each example, what messages is the parent giving the child about:


- How responsible they are?
- How capable they are?
- Their ability to figure things out?
- Their worthiness?

Is this teen getting the message of, “I’m smart. I’m capable. I can solve problems,” or, “I’m stupid. I can’t do anything right. It’s hopeless”?

Even when our children haven't given us very many reasons to feel confident in their decision-making, we should still give them messages that we believe they can change and learn. We need to say, "I know you can do it." Kids have to hear this from us before they can believe it for themselves and act on it.

It is easy to get into a pattern of communicating our doubt in them and our feelings of hopelessness, especially when they have been making poor choices. We forget how to communicate confidence. When all kids hear is how much we don't trust them and how hopeless the situation is, they begin to believe it and give up on trying.

## Exercise: Messages We Give Our Teens

-  Refer parents to the *Messages We Give Our Teens* worksheet in the parent workbook. This exercise can be done as a large group or in pairs. If participants work in pairs, have them write down their ideas in the space below each response. When everyone has completed the exercise, have each pair share their answers with the group.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 195–199 in parent workbooks.

#### Messages We Give Our Teens

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

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

---

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

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

2. **A.**  
“You said you would be home on time tonight. Its two hours past curfew! You are so irresponsible. I can’t trust a thing you say. You’re grounded for the weekend.”

2. **B.**  
“I expected you home at 10 because you said you would be back by that time. I know you are capable of coming home on time. You’ve lost your privilege to go out this weekend in the evening. Next weekend, you will have the chance to be responsible and come home on time.”

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

3. **B.**  
“Jake, I’d like you to finish cleaning the kitchen now.”

4. **A.**  
“You punched a hole in the wall! You are out of control. You’re going to totally destroy this house. You already ruined my chair and now you’ve ruined the wall.”


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

5. **A.**  
“You can’t even get to school on time. How do you figure you can hold down a job?”

5. **B.**  
“I’m glad to hear you’re going to take on the responsibility of a job. It sounds like a lot of work, but I think you’ll be good at it. Plus, you’ll get experience in being punctual.”

# Exercise:

## Giving Our Teens the Message That They Are Capable

-  Refer parents to the *Giving Our Teens the Message That They Are Capable* worksheet in the parent workbook. This exercise can also be done as a large group or in pairs.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 200 in parent workbooks.

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

Read the responses below and think of a different response for each that gives the teen a message that they are capable.

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

---

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

---


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

---

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

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# Take-Home Activity

-  Ask parents to pay attention to the messages they are giving their teens this week. Ask them to listen to the words they use and think about what kinds of messages their teens are getting. On the *Take-Home Activity* page in the parent workbook, parents can write down one message they give their teen that they would like to rephrase to convey the message that their teen is capable. On the second line, parents will rephrase their words to convey the message that their teen is capable.

## PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 201 in parent workbooks.

### Take-Home Activity

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

1. Below, write down one thing you say to your teen this week that you would like to phrase differently.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. On the next line, rephrase your words in a way that gives your teen the message that they are capable.  
\_\_\_\_\_





## Background Information

The skills covered in this session are critical to successful problem-solving. Teens and parents will learn the first two steps of the 10-step problem-solving process: talking about the problem and listening. Because these are the most challenging parts of problem-solving, we encourage you to spend an entire session practicing these skills so that participants can successfully complete the problem-solving process covered in the next session.

The purpose of this session is to learn the skill of talking about how a problem affects a person, and then listening and repeating back to that person what they said. Listening and repeating what was said is hard for many teens and parents, particularly when they disagree with what was said. Remind them that repeating what was said does not mean that a person agrees with it. Also, be sure to stop participants from getting off track by talking about the problem (the who, what, and why) or trying to jump into solving the problem.

It is helpful to remind the group to use the “I” statements they learned in Session 14.

## Goals

- To learn and practice talking about a problem by using the Guidelines for Respectful Communication
- To learn and practice how to listen and repeat what you heard by using the Guidelines for Respectful Communication

## Important Messages

- To resolve conflicts successfully, you must use respectful communication skills. This involves:
  - Talking about a problem without blaming or criticizing
  - Listening to the other person’s feelings and view of a problem

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Guidelines for Respectful Communication
3. Practice respectful communication skills

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT	RESPECT

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Guidelines for Respectful Communication

- ▶ Refer participants to *Guidelines for Respectful Communication* in the workbook. Explain that these are guidelines for how to talk and listen when there is a problem.
- ▶ Tell the group that each parent/teen pair is going to practice using the guidelines for respectful communication by taking turns talking with each other about a problem. Each pair will think of something that they view as a problem and talk and listen with each other while observing the guidelines from their worksheets. The rest of the group will observe and let them know if they are not following the guidelines (for example, if they start to criticize or interrupt each other).

**Facilitator Note:** Important: Do not let parents and teens start talking about solving the problems or about the causes of the problems. Let them know that they will have time to work on solving the problems later, when the group gets to the problem-solving steps in the following weeks.



# Take-Home Activity

- ▶ Ask parents and teens to use the Guidelines during the next week. Remind them that the more they practice them, the easier they will be to use.



## Background Information

In this session, teens and parents will practice the 10-step process of problem-solving.

Be aware that you may need to stop the problem-solving process in some cases. If one person is not willing to try to solve the problem or is unable to follow the communication guidelines, problem solving will not work. Both people must be willing to work on the problem with a cooperative attitude.

Stop the problem-solving process if:

- Either person becomes abusive
- Either person is unable to follow the guidelines for respectful communication
- Either person is not willing to negotiate
- Either person is not willing to try to solve the problem

Point out that parents should not use the problem-solving process to negotiate the rules but should use it to negotiate problems that result when teens break the rules.

Depending upon the size of your group, it can take two to three sessions for everyone to complete the problem-solving steps. Do not worry if they do not actually solve a problem during the session. You may want to ask them to continue the process at home and then report back to the group on their success.

## Goals

- To apply respectful communication skills learned in the previous session to solve a problem
- To learn and practice a 10-step process of problem-solving
- To understand how problem-solving together can improve relationships



## Important Messages

- Negotiating a resolution to a problem involves listening to the other person. You don't necessarily have to agree with the other person to listen to them.
- Problem-solving is most successful when both people want to come up with a solution.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: What is Problem Solving?
3. Discussion: 10 Steps for Problem Solving
4. Exercise: Problem Solving Practice

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**


**RESPECT**

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: What Is Problem-Solving?

-  What are some things that people do that get in the way of problem-solving? (Examples: Raising voices, cursing, name-calling, criticizing, blaming, interrupting, not listening.)
- If two people were problem-solving and one of them started to threaten, criticize, or put down the other person, could they continue to work out a solution? Why?
  - If you were watching two people “working out a problem,” what would they look like?
  - How would they talk to each other?

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 188 in teen workbooks, page 216 in parent workbooks.

### Important Tips for Problem-Solving

- Don't try to solve the problem when either person is angry or upset. Being calm is most important.
- If either person becomes angry or upset during problem-solving, take a time out and try it again when you are both calm.
- Follow the Guidelines for Respectful Communication (see Session 18 for review).
- Both people must be willing to try to solve the problem and have a cooperative attitude. If either person is resistant, stop and try it again later.
- The problem you are working on must be negotiable. It needs to be something that both people are able to compromise on.

# Discussion:

## 10 Steps for Solving a Problem

-  Review *Problem-Solving* in the workbook and read through the 10 steps and examples.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 189–191 in teen workbooks, pages 217–219 in parent workbooks.

### Problem-Solving (Teen Starts the Process)

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



**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 192–194 in teen workbooks, pages 220–222 in parent workbooks.

**Problem-Solving (Parent Starts the Process)**

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



## Exercise:

# Problem-Solving Practice

- ▶ Have each parent/teen pair go through the problem-solving steps together while the rest of the class observes. Either person can begin the steps with a problem they have identified. If both parent and teen have a different problem they want to work on, they can do the process twice – one time with each problem. The person who has identified the problem starts the process with step 1.

Be sure to bring them back to the steps if they get off topic, start arguing, or start thinking of ideas to solve the problem too soon. Ask the group to let the pair know if they are not following the guidelines for respectful communication and to help them stay on track with the steps. Stop the problem-solving process if necessary (see Background Information). They can try it again next week if necessary.

When the pair gets to step 7, write their ideas on the board. After they have each thought of some ideas, you can invite the group to add any ideas they have. When the parent/teen pair does step 8, cross out ideas that are ruled out and circle ideas that both parent and teen might consider acceptable. The goal is for them to choose one idea to try during the following week. In step 9, help them make a plan that is very clear and specific (that includes who, what, and when).

At the end of the problem-solving process, ask the group to give feedback to the parent and teen about what they observed and how they think it went. Group members learn from watching each other and giving each other feedback and support.

## Take-Home Activity

- ▶ Have each parent/teen pair implement the solution they came up with during the problem-solving exercise at home. Check in with each pair in the following session to ask how things went.





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## NOTES



## Background Information

During this final session, the teen or teens (if more than one teen is finishing) completing Step-Up will read their Responsibility Letter and Empathy Letter to their parents. Other family members, such as siblings, are welcome to attend this last session with the family. We like to make this session a celebration of the hard work by teens and families to make behavior changes and improve their relationships.

During this session, we will acknowledge the positive changes teens have made over the course of the program. The teen will read and answer some questions, Changes I Have Made, that invite reflection about the behavioral changes they have made and how they were able to make those changes toward more respectful family relationships. They will also discuss goals they can continue to work on after they leave the group. Parents will also answer questions, Changes My Teen Has Made, about how their teen has changed over the course of Step-Up. This session is also an opportunity for teens to give positive messages to the graduating teen.

## Goals

- For teens to read their Responsibility Letter and Empathy Letter to their parents/family members in the group
- For teens to identify how they have changed their behavior
- For parents to identify how their teens have made positive changes and how their relationships have improved
- For teens to recognize how their behavior changes have affected their relationships with their parents
- For teens and parents to identify how they can continue working on having positive and respectful relationships

## Important Messages

- Changes in behavior can have a positive impact on other people.
- Learning how to change is empowering.
- Both teens and parents have worked hard to learn how to have mutually respectful relationships.
- You can continue to work together to have positive and healthy relationships with each other.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Responsibility Letter and Empathy Letter reading in group
3. Exercise: Changes I Have Made and Changes My Teen Has Made (read and answer aloud in the group)
4. Exercise: Messages from Group Members
5. Celebration

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT

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

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

# Group Activities

## Reading of Responsibility and Empathy Letters

- ▶ Have teens read their Responsibility Letter to their parent/family members in the group.

After the letter has been read, invite reflection from parents about how that felt for them. After parents has finished responding, ask the teen how it felt to read the letter.

Allow discussion between parents and teens about the letter and ask parents if they felt anything was missing. If so, invite the teen to add more (verbally). Provide encouragement and ideas as needed.

Invite the group to share input or what their experience listening to the letter was like.

Commend the teen for writing and reading the letter and invite them to read their Empathy Letter.

After the Empathy Letter has been read, repeat the above questions and reflection.

## Exercise: Changes I Have Made/Changes My Teen Has Made

- ▶ Refer to *Changes I Have Made* in the teen workbook and *Changes My Teen Has Made* in the parent workbook. Have teens and parents answer the questions. Have teens and parents share their answers with the group after they have completed the questions.

**TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 197–199 in teen workbooks.

This appears on pages 225–228 in parent workbooks.

**Changes I Have Made**

**Changes My Teen Has Made**

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

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

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

	<b>WORST</b>										<b>BEST</b>
<i>Beginning of Program</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

	<b>WORST</b>										<b>BEST</b>
<i>Now</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

3. What have you changed in your behavior to contribute to the improvement in your relationship? (Look at the *Abuse/Disrespect Wheel* and *Respect Wheel* as you think about behaviors you have changed.)

3. What has your teen changed in their behavior to contribute to the improvement?

4. What did you do to change your behavior?

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

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

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

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


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





## Exercise:

# Messages from Group Members

 Let the group know that we are closing the session by having everyone write a short message to the teen(s) graduating from the group. This can be words of encouragement, something you learned from them or admire, congratulations, or any other positive message.

- Pass out pieces of paper big enough for a couple of sentences. (An 8 ½" x 11" piece of paper cut into 2" strips works well.) Have them fold the paper when they finish writing and put the name of the teen(s) on the outside.
- When they finish writing, collect the notes and distribute them to the graduating teens. Teens can read their notes now or can take them home and read them.

## Closing

We suggest a celebration at the end with pizza, cake, or other treats.

Thank parents and teens who are finishing for participating in Step-Up. Let them know they have worked hard together to improve their relationships. Congratulate them for completing the program.



## Background Information

During this session, you will ask teens to think about their relationships with family members and to examine what they can do to improve their relationships. This is the first teen group session and many teen group members may still feel uncomfortable talking about themselves. This session is more about their families than themselves and can indirectly lead the teens to talk about themselves.

The *My Family Relationships* exercise gives teens a chance to think about positive qualities and strengths of people in their families. It also provides an opportunity for group members to get to know each other and to learn about each other's families. It can be very beneficial to learn that other families also have conflict.

## Goals

- To identify the strengths of each family and behaviors that destroy family relationships
- To learn about the families of the other participants and see that all have conflict
- To identify ways group participants can impact family relationships in a positive way
- To identify behaviors that strengthen family relationships
- To build relationships among members of the group

## Important Messages

- Every family has strengths and every individual has positive qualities.
- Conflict is a normal part of family life and can strengthen family relationships.
- Violence and abuse destroy family relationships.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Exercise: My Family Relationships

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT

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

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

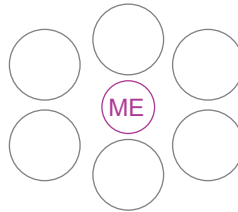
# Group Activities

## TEEN WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 203 in teen workbooks, page 266 in parent workbooks.

### My Family Relationships

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



1. Draw a circle around the family member you feel closest to. What does this person do that helps you feel close to them?
2. Draw a triangle around the family member you admire the most. What does this person do that you admire?
3. Draw a square around the family member you have the most conflict with. What is the conflict usually about?
4. Draw a diamond around the family member you respect the most. What does this person do that earns your respect?
5. Think of one thing that you can change about your behavior that will help you have a better relationship with people in your family.

## Take-Home Activity

- ▶ Ask teens to try making behavior changes (the changes they wrote about in the *My Family Relationships* exercise) during the next week. Ask teens to notice how the behavior changes affect their relationships. Let them know they will report back during Check-In next week.



## Goals

- To help youth engage with the part of themselves where they feel positive, capable, wise, and good about themselves.
- To recognize that this is their 'true selves', it is who they are at their 'Core', or what we call 'Core Self'.
- To realize that this is the part of you that makes wise decisions, holds compassion for others, helps you succeed, and is where your personal strengths come from.
- To help youth 'Explore their Core', by identifying positive personal qualities, strengths, values and beliefs.
- To help youth take a look at behaviors they use that match their 'core self', and what behaviors don't match.
- To recognize that when they are doing behaviors that don't match, they are disconnected from 'Core Self'
- To learn ways to engage one's 'Core Self'
- To recognize what disconnects you from your Core Self, how to know you are cut off from it, and how to 'shift' back and reconnect with your 'Core Self'.

## Important Messages

- You all have a part of yourself that is wise, capable and contains your unique qualities and strengths – your true self, or 'Core Self'.
- When you are engaged with your Core Self, you are able to make wise decisions, respond to stress and problems better, and respect yourself and others.
- There are ways you can engage your 'Core Self' to help you operate from the most capable and wise part of you.
- Some of your behaviors match your core self, and others do not. Learning about these, helps you recognize when you are disconnected from the best part of yourself.
- Staying in touch with the parts of yourself that are healthier can help diminish the unhealthy parts.



## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Your 'Core Self'
3. Exercise: 'Me, Not Me'
4. Exercise: Engaging My Core Self
5. Optional Exercise: 'Feel Your Core' Visualization

## Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

#### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**

**RESPECT**


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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Your ‘Core Self’

 Explain the following:

 Everyone has a ‘core’ inside that is their true self, the self that you were born with that is the foundation of who you are. It is from this place inside of us that we make wise choices, feel good about ourselves, know we are competent, and know what we need to do to take care of our needs (for example, take a rest when I’m tired, eat when I’m hungry, ask for help when I need it, call my mom to let her know where I am so she doesn’t worry, etc.) This part of you respects yourself, and knows what is best for you.

Your core is that place inside where you feel good about yourself, and you can find a sense of peace and contentment, and happiness and joy.

This ‘core self’ is engaged whenever you do something you love or something you know you are good at, such as a sport, a musical instrument, drawing, reading, dancing, singing, etc. Or just being in nature – such as the woods, mountains or beach.

You also engage your ‘core self’ when you are with people who are important to you, such as family or close friends who care about you, appreciate you for who you are, respect you, and share their love with you.

You connect with your ‘core self’ when you make a wise choice about something, such as deciding not to go along with something you know is wrong, when you realize you messed up and acknowledge it to the person and do something to make amends, or when you stop yourself from saying or doing something hurtful to someone, and instead use your skills and take a time-out and calm yourself down. When you feel proud of yourself for not falling into old behaviors that you know are not good for you.


**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 207 in teen workbooks, pages 269 in parent workbooks.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What other kinds of things help people engage with their core selves?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. One way to access your 'Core Self' is to think about things you do that help you feel good about yourself. What kinds of things help people feel good about themselves?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. There are certain things that take us out of our Core Self, such as stress, anxiety, anger, or hardships. Can you think of other things that might take someone out of their Core Self?  
\_\_\_\_\_


## Exercise: Explore Your Core


 Your 'core self' includes your unique personal qualities and strengths, your values (what you think is important), along with thoughts, beliefs and feelings that support you in making wise choices, having respect for yourself and others, and being true to yourself.

Let's brainstorm some examples of each of these before we do an exercise where you will explore your own 'Core Self'. As we think of examples, write down any that apply to you.

 Write their ideas on the board.

 **What are some positive personality traits or qualities?**  
(Examples: honest, understanding, thoughtful, adventurous, a leader)

 **What are some personal strengths?**  
(Examples: smart, creative, athletic, persistent)

 **What are values?**  
(Examples: being true to my friends, standing up for myself, standing up for what is right, getting an education, doing what I say I'm going to do)

**? What feelings support these qualities and strengths?**

(Examples: pride, love, compassion, empathy, confidence)

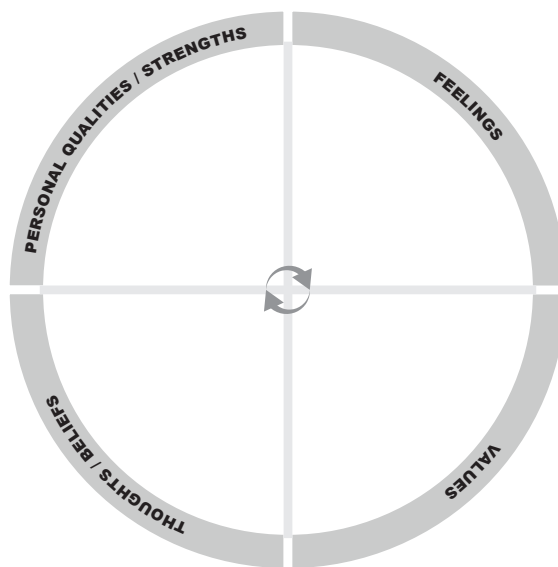
**? What kinds of thoughts or beliefs support these qualities and strengths?**

(Examples: I can do this, my feelings are valid, other people's feelings are important, I can ask for help if I need it, it's not okay to hurt people, I can speak up when something's not right, my point of view is important, I can express myself without being hurtful)

- ▶** Refer group to *Explore Your Core* circle worksheet. Have group members fill out each section of the circle with their own personal qualities/strengths, values, feelings and thoughts/beliefs.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on page 210 in teen workbooks, pages 269 in parent workbooks.

**Explore Your Core****Creative Option**

Instead of the worksheet, a more creative option is to give them each a large piece of blank paper, and have them draw a large circle and write 'me' in the middle. Then write words, draw/color pictures or images, or cut out images from magazines to create a collage that reflects their sense of their own 'Core Self'.

If using this activity, it may be helpful for youth to first complete the *Explore Your Core Preparation Questions* before beginning their circle.

**WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 208–209 in teen workbooks, pages 269 in parent workbooks.

**Explore Your Core Preparation Questions**

Answer the following questions to help you prepare for the 'Explore Your Core' exercise.

My personal qualities

---

My personal strengths

---

My values (what is important to me?)


---

What inspires me? What makes me feel happy? What do I love to do?

---

What makes me feel good about myself as a person? When do I feel a sense of pride in myself?

---

-  When the group has completed the *Explore Your Core* exercise, have them each share a few things about their 'Core Self' with the group.

## Exercise: Me, Not Me

- ▶ Have group look at their 'Core Self' circles, and refer them to the *Me, Not Me* worksheet as you explain the following:

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 211 in teen workbooks, pages 270 in parent workbooks.

#### 'Me, Not Me'

Look at your 'Core Self' circle.

Think about behaviors you do day to day (at home, school, other places)

Write down behaviors you do that match your 'Core Self'.

---

Write down behaviors that do not match your 'Core Self'.

---

Write down behaviors that you want to do more that match your 'Core self'.

---

- ▶ After they have finished, go around the group and have them share.


## Exercise: Engaging My Core Self

- ▶ Refer group to *Engaging My 'Core Self'* worksheet. Discuss how certain things can dis-connect us from our 'core self'. Other things help us connect to our 'core self'.

 Ask group the following questions and list ideas on the board:

 What might dis-connect someone from his or her 'core self'?

 What might help someone re-connect with his or her 'core self'?

 Have group members fill out *Engaging My 'Core Self'* worksheet. If time, have everyone share their answers.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 212–213 in teen workbooks, pages 270 in parent workbooks.

## Engaging My 'Core Self'

Things that sometimes cause me to disconnect from my 'Core Self' are:

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Things that help me connect to my 'Core Self' are:

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How do you know when you are disconnected with your Core Self?

*What are signs that you are out of your 'Core Self', such as behaviors or thoughts that don't 'match' with the values, beliefs and strengths you wrote in your 'Core Self' circle?*

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*Write down three things you can do when you figure out you are disconnected with your 'Core Self', to help you shift back to your 'Core Self'.*

1.

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2.

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3.

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# Optional Closing

## Exercise

*(Or to be used at the beginning of next class for opening meditation)*

### ‘Feel Your Core’ Visualization



We are going to do a visualization to help you find your ‘core spot’ within you.

Once you find this place inside, it can be a tool for you to use to connect with your ‘Core Self’ by simply focusing on that spot inside of you.



Have everyone close their eyes, put everything down, and put both feet flat on the floor.



Take a deep slow breath, deep into your heart, stomach and pelvis, filling up your whole torso, and slowly breath out. Do this two more times.

Now, imagine yourself doing something you really love. Something that makes you feel good about yourself, proud, confident, capable or just gives you a sense of fulfillment or peace. As you feel the sense of it, feel inside your body and find the place where you feel sensations of positive feelings. The feeling will probably be in the core of your body, which runs down the center of your torso from your heart to your pelvis.



Give them a few moments for this.




If you are not finding a spot where the feeling is centered, feel your core center of gravity- a couple of inches below your navel, and in about two inches. When you put your attention to this spot, it centers you. Many people calm down when they put their attention on this place inside. See how that feels. Imagine pulling all of your energy to that spot. This is called ‘centering’, and can be a great way to gather yourself and calm down when you are anxious or stressed. Breathe into this place for a few moments, or if you found your spot someplace else in your body, breathe into that place.




Another core center is your heart. Feel your heart, and breathe into that space with slow deep breaths. Put your energy into that spot (energy follows thought, so just thinking about your heart and feeling it, will put energy there).

 Give them a few moments for this.

 A third 'core spot' is right in the middle of your torso, in between your heart and the 'centering spot' in your pelvis. Feel this spot and breathe into it.

 Give them a couple of moments for this.

 Now that you have had a chance to feel 3 different core spots in your body, compare them and see which one you felt the most sensation that matched the feelings of your Core Self, when we began the exercise. Whichever spot felt the strongest or the best to you, is your 'Core Spot'. You can always return to this place with your breath at any time and it will help you calm down and connect with your 'Core Self'. It is a great technique to use during a Time-Out, or in any stressful situation. If you are in a conversation that starts to escalate, feel your core spot inside – just go to it with your mind and your breathing, and it can help you settle down.





## Background Information

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

## Goals

- To identify the stages of change
- For each teen to know their current stage
- To understand how the stages of change apply to different personal issues

## Important Messages

- Personal change takes place in stages or steps.
- You do not have to change all at once to be successful.
- Small steps are important to making important changes.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Two Types of Change
3. Discussion: Stages of Change
4. Exercise: Where Am I in the Stages of Change?

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Two Types of Change

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 217–219 in teen workbooks, pages 273–275 in parent workbooks.

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

#### Category 1

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

#### Category 2

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

1. What are the feelings connected with these two kinds of change?
2. What is the difference between the two ways of changing?
3. Which kind of change will last longer?
4. Which kind of change is more difficult?
5. Is it possible for one kind of change to cross over into the other?  
*For instance, maybe someone told you that you had to change, and your first reaction was to resist any change. Then, along the way, you decided it was a good idea. The change you made started when someone told you to change and you later decided it was a good idea.*
6. Think of a change you made in your life. When did you first decide there was a problem that had to be fixed? Did you realize it gradually, or did it happen all at once?
7. Do you remember when you didn't think you had a problem? Do you remember if other people tried to tell you that you had a problem and you didn't believe them, or you thought they were exaggerating the problem? Do you think you were even aware you had a problem? What feelings do you have to overcome to recognize a problem? How do they get in the way of really seeing a problem?

# Discussion:

## Stages of Change

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 220 in teen workbooks, page 276 in parent workbooks.

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

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

*John was arrested for hitting his mother. After he was arrested, he said he didn't think it was his fault or that think he needed to do anything differently. He said he wants his mom to stay off his back and quit nagging him.*

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

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

**Preparation:** Experimenting with small changes.

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

**Action:** Taking a definitive action to change with small steps.

*John has not been abusive towards his mother in any way since his arrest. John agrees to go to counseling. John and his mother decide to eat dinner together at least three nights a week so they can spend more time together. John is using the skills he's learned in counseling to problem-solve respectfully with his mother.*

**Maintenance:** Maintaining new behavior over time.

*John and his mother continue to eat dinner together three nights a week for six months. They also do some counseling sessions together. John and his mother make time each week to talk through any problems that come up.*

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

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

**WORKSHEET**

This appears on pages 221–223 in teen workbooks, pages 277–279 in parent workbooks.

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

**Scenario 1:**

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

**Scenario 2:**

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

**Scenario 3:**

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

**Scenario 4:**

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

**Scenario 5:**

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

**Scenario 6:**

Ryan often yells and swears at his mom when she wakes him up for school in the morning. When he finally gets up, his mom is upset with him. When he leaves for school, there's a lot of tension between them. He decides he doesn't like starting his day this way. He decides he will try not to swear and yell when his mom wakes him up. The next morning when his mom wakes him up, he starts to swear at his mom but then stops himself.



# Exercise: Where Am I in the Stages of Change?

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 224 in teen workbooks, page 280 in parent workbooks.

### Where Am I in the Stages of Change?

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

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





## Background Information

This session helps parents understand how listening can strengthen their relationships with their teens. Parents who have experienced abuse by their teens understandably have a difficult time listening to them. The time for listening is not when teens are being abusive. We will discuss times that are appropriate for listening and times when it is best to disengage from conversations.

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

## Goals

- To understand what listening is and is not
- To learn how to listen and acknowledge feelings
- To understand how listening and acknowledging feelings strengthens relationships
- To practice the skills of listening for feelings and acknowledging them

## Important Messages

- Listening to your teen doesn't mean you agree with what they are saying.
- Listening builds trust with your teen.
- Listening gives you important information about your teen's emotional life.
- When teens feel listened to, they feel less defensive and resistant.
- When teens feel listened to, they usually will share more with their parents.
- Listening and acknowledging feelings is not easy; it takes practice.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: What Is Not Listening
3. Discussion: How to Listen
4. Discussion: Acknowledging Feelings
5. Exercise: Acknowledging Feelings Scenarios
6. Discussion: Tips for Acknowledging Feelings

## Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

#### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: What Is Not Listening?

 Explain the following:

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 231 in parent workbooks.

#### Discussion: What Is Not Listening?

In this session, we will learn about listening to our teens. Listening seems like a pretty simple and basic thing we do every day. However, most of us don't truly listen to others very often. We start to listen, and then launch into thinking about what we are going to say back to the person. To define what true listening is, we will start by talking about what is not listening.

Many of us have the tendency to do everything except listen, including telling our own experiences, offering advice, denying the other person's feelings, and telling the person why they feel how they feel. There is nothing wrong with any of these responses, but they aren't the same as listening.

#### Here are some examples of ways we don't listen.

You say to your friend, "My boss is a jerk. Yesterday, he gave me an assignment at 4 p.m. and expected me to have it done by 5, when he knows it takes a whole day to do it. I had to stay late to finish it, and I missed the last bus home. When I came in to work this morning, he didn't even say anything to me."

Pretend you are the person in the scenario. We'll imagine that the following are several different responses we receive from a friend. After you read each response, think about how it would feel to hear that response. We'll write out the feelings on the board.

 Write the feelings on the board.

## PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 232–233 in parent workbooks.

**YOUR FRIEND RESPONDS BY SAYING:**

**Telling our own experience:** “Yeah, my boss is a real pain, too. I was on the phone with my wife yesterday because my son got in trouble in school. Then my boss comes in and says the next time he sees me on the phone, he’s going to take the time out of my paycheck.”

**Giving advice:** “Just try to forget it. It’s only a job; it’s not your whole life.”

**Denying the other person’s feelings:** “What are you complaining for, anyway? You should be happy. At least you have a job. Do you know how many people are unemployed in this country right now?”

**Trying to psychoanalyze:** “You know, you really seem to have problems with authority figures. Maybe you should look at that.”

**Changing the subject:** “Really? So, what do you want to have for dinner?”

**Asking questions:** “Why didn’t you just tell him it wouldn’t be enough time? How many hours’ worth of work was it, anyway?”

**Defending the other person:** “He was probably under a time crunch, too, you know. And he probably didn’t think of saying anything to you this morning because he has so much work to do.”

**Pitying:** “Oh, you poor thing. That must have been terrible.”

**Listening:** “That sounds pretty frustrating.”

Listening is hearing the person’s experience or feelings and simply acknowledging them. There are times when we just want another person to listen to us and hear our feelings without telling us what to do or asking us questions.

As parents, it is very difficult to do this with our children. We want to tell them what to do, ask a lot of questions, or tell them why they feel that way. We want to change the way they feel, fix the problem for them, or help them learn a lesson from it. Sometimes, these responses can be helpful and appropriate. Other times, these responses result in teens getting defensive or argumentative and closing the door to sharing more about the problem or figuring out how to deal with it.

We are going to learn how to listen and respond in ways that encourage your teen to continue talking about their feelings and moving toward problem-solving.

There are times to listen to your child, and there are times when it is not helpful to listen. When your teen is being abusive or disrespectful, listening engages them further (see *How to Respond When Your Teen Becomes Violent or Abusive* in Session 4).

When your teen is going on and on trying to convince you of something and attempting to keep you engaged to change your mind, listening encourages the behavior. You can listen and respond at the beginning of the conversation, but there is a point when you need to let your teen know you are finished listening (see *Tips to Help Disengage from a Power Struggle with Your Teen* in Session 7).

The listening and responding skills you will learn in this session should be used when your teen is talking with you in a respectful way.

# Discussion:

## How to Listen

- ▶ Refer parents to the *How to Listen* worksheet in the parent workbook and review it.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 234 in parent workbooks.

### How to Listen

#### HOW TO LISTEN:

- **Don't interrupt.**
- **Look at the person who is talking.**
- **Give them your full attention, if possible.**
- **Answer in a way that lets them know you are listening.**
- **Don't express an opinion or say that the other person is right or wrong.**
- **Let the person know you heard their point of view.**
- **Try to hear what the person is saying, even if you don't agree. Being a good listener takes effort and practice.**

#### HOW TO NOT LISTEN:

- Don't look at the person speaking.
- Interrupt them.
- Give advice.
- Tell the person they are wrong.
- Tell the person not to feel what they are feeling.
- Change the subject.



# Discussion:

## Acknowledging Feelings

 Explain the following.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 235 in parent workbooks.

### Acknowledging Feelings


One way to let your teen know you are really listening is to pay attention to the feeling they are expressing and let them know you hear it. You can acknowledge feelings by saying things like: “You seem really disappointed,” “You were really excited about that concert,” “You really like that music,” “You feel really let down.” This lets them know you are listening. It also lets them know that you accept how they feel. You can accept someone’s feelings without necessarily agreeing with them. You are just letting your teen know you hear how they feel without giving any judgment or opinion about it.

When you acknowledge and accept your teen’s feelings about something, it does not mean you will change rules or consequences. You can stand your ground, remain firm, and communicate that you understand how they feel. For example: “You must be really disappointed, but our agreement was broken, and this is the consequence we discussed. I know you were really looking forward to that concert.”

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


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

In groups or pairs, read the scenarios and notice the difference in how the teens respond in each.

 Refer parents to *Acknowledging Feelings Scenarios* in the parent workbook. Read the scenarios and ask parents to notice the difference in how the teen responds in each.

## Exercise:

# Acknowledging Feelings Scenarios

-  Do this exercise as a whole group or in pairs. Refer parents to *Acknowledging Feelings Scenarios* in the parent workbook. Ask them to read the scenarios and discuss the differences in the teens' responses to the parents. Come back together and have groups share their observations.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 236–239 in parent workbooks.

#### Scenario #1-A: Not Acknowledging Feelings

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

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

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

#### Scenario #1-B: Acknowledging Feelings

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

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

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

**Mom:** “Hmmm.”

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

**Mom:** “Good idea.”

## PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

**Scenario #2-A: Not Listening and Acknowledging Feelings**

**Teen:** “Mom, I really want that jacket.”

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

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

**Mom:** “Eighty dollars is a good deal? I can’t believe you’re even saying that. Do you have any idea what \$80 would buy for a family in need? It would buy a whole wardrobe for a family in some parts of the world. You kids have no concept of the value of money. You just want, want, want.”

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

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

**Teen:** “God, Mom, you are so mean! Just forget it! I don’t care about the stupid jacket! I’ll wear the same piece-of-crap, worn-out thing I always wear!” (Anne runs to the car, gets in, and slams the door.)

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

**Teen:** “Mom, I really want that jacket.”

**Mom:** “You really like that jacket. It’s a nice one.”

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

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

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

**Mom:** “You really, really want that jacket. It’s a nice jacket. But I can’t afford it. I am willing to pay for half of it if you can pay for the other half.”

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

**Mom:** “I’m willing to pay for half.”

**Teen:** “How about if you pay for it all today and I’ll pay you back.”

**Mom:** “Anne, I know it’s hard to wait for something you really, really want. But I’m only willing to pay for half. If you have the patience to save your half of the money, we’ll buy it later.”

**Teen:** “It’ll take me forever to get that much money.”

**Mom:** “I know it seems like a lot of money to come up with – it is a lot of money. But if you really want that jacket, I bet you can figure out a way to pay for your half. There’s always babysitting and doing extra chores. I’m happy to help you make a plan for how to make the money in the next two weeks.”

**Teen:** “All right.”

## PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

**Scenario #3-A: Not Listening and Acknowledging Feelings**

**Teen:** “Mom, why can’t I stay out until 3 a.m.? All my friends do.”

**Mom:** “3 a.m.? I can’t believe their parents let them stay out that late.”

**Teen:** “Everyone stays out that late – 3 is not that late for a 15-year-old.”

**Mom:** “It’s the middle of the night! You would only end up in trouble being out during those hours of the night. I’d end up having to bail you out of jail.”

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

**Mom:** “Rick sure did.”

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

**Mom:** “I do know that I’m not letting you stay out until the middle of the night. And I know that the friends you have who are out during those hours are bad news. I’m not arguing about it anymore.”

**Teen:** “I’m out of here.” (Walks out, slamming the door behind him.)

**Scenario #3-B: Listening and Acknowledging Feelings**

**Teen:** “Mom, why can’t I stay out until 3 a.m.? All my friends do.”

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

**Teen:** “It’s embarrassing. No one else has to be home by 1.”

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

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

**Mom:** “I know you would really like to be able to stay out until 3, and I know it’s hard to have to come home earlier than everyone else. But I’m not comfortable with you being out past 1 a.m. for now. When you’re 16, we’ll consider a later curfew.”

**Teen:** “1 a.m. is so early. A lot of concerts don’t get out until 1. I’d have to leave the concert early to make it home on time. If I ride with people, they have to leave early, too.”

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

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

**Mom:** “We’ve discussed what the rule is for now.”

# Discussion:

## Tips for Acknowledging Feelings

- ▶ Refer parents to *Tips for Acknowledging Feelings* in the parent workbook. Go over steps and discuss as needed.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 239 in parent workbooks.

#### Tips for Acknowledging Feelings

- Listen for the feeling you hear.
- Let the person know you hear them. Say, “It seems like you feel \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Don’t say anything else. Allow some time for the person to respond.
- Don’t tell the person what to do, how to feel better, or why the person feels the way they do.
- After the person has had time to respond, you can let them know you understand by saying things like:
  - “That sounds frustrating” (or hard, or whatever is appropriate to the feeling).
  - “Sometimes I feel that way, too.”
  - “I understand.”
  - “I’m here for you if you want to talk about it now or later.”

# Take-Home Activity

- ▶ Ask parents to listen to their teen this week and acknowledge their teen's feelings. Ask parents to write down how their teens responded on the *Listening to My Teen* worksheet in the parent workbook.

## PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 240 in parent workbooks.

### Take-Home Activity

During the following week, take time to listen to your teen and acknowledge their feelings. In the space below, write down what you said and how your teen responded.

**I said:**

---

**How my teen responded:**

---



## Background Information

Most parents who have been dealing with difficult behaviors in their children for a period of time have tried many things to get their children to change. They have often been given all kinds of advice by friends and family. They usually feel like they have tried everything. During this session, parents will look at how they have tried to make their teens change their behavior, how those methods have been working, and how it has affected their relationships with their teens.

This exercise is not intended to be judgmental about parenting methods. Many parents have probably been using appropriate strategies; the strategies are just not working. It is easy for parents to keep doing the same thing over and over because they don't know what else to do.

## Goals

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

## Important Messages


- You don't have control over another person's behavior.
- The most effective way to influence another person's behavior is with your own behavior.
- When you try to make another person change, especially a teen, it can have the opposite effect because the more you try, the more they resist.
- It can be helpful to look at how you have been trying to get your teen to change and ask: Is it working?
- One way to help a person change a behavior is by changing how you respond to the behavior.
- Changing behavior is easier said than done. It takes planning and practice.



## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Making Another Person Change
3. Exercise: Making Another Person Change
4. Discussion: Changing Our Own Behavior
5. Exercise: What Happens When We Try to Make Our Teens Change?
6. Discussion: Goal Planning
7. Exercise: Goal Planning

## Check-In

-  Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

### WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

#### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

**ABUSE/DISRESPECT**


**RESPECT**

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

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

# Group Activities


## Discussion: Making Another Person Change

-  Ask the group:
- What are some ways you have tried to make another person change? Did it work? Why or why not?

---

 Have participants share their experiences.

---

 Explain that we cannot make another person change their behavior. We can try to influence the person to make changes, but they have to make the decision and make the change.


# Exercise:

## Making Another Person Change

 Have the group divide into pairs. One person in each pair will make a fist. Their partner will try to open it without causing harm.

 After 30 seconds, ask both people in the pairs:

- What were your feelings?
- What did you notice about your own behavior?
- How many of you asked your partner to open their fist?

 Discuss how sometimes the harder we try to force people to change, the harder they resist. This is especially true with teenagers.


 Ask the group:

- Think of a time when someone was trying to get you to change. They might have wanted you to change your mind about something, act differently, or do something.
- What did the person do that made you not want to change?
- What did the person do, or what could the person have done, to help you want to change?
- How do you think you can be most influential in helping a person change?

# Discussion:

## Changing Our Own Behavior

 Explain the following:

 We don't have the power to make another person change. We don't have control over how others decide to behave. Sometimes, when we make changes in our own behavior, it influences changes in other people's behavior.

For example, your teen swears a lot in conversations with you. Usually, you get angry at him and tell him to stop swearing. You have explained to him why you don't want swearing in the house. You have yelled at him. You have even grounded him for swearing. Nothing has worked. Finally, you decide, "I don't like hearing it anymore. I am going to stop talking and separate from him any time he swears. We will not finish the conversation and I will not engage with him until he talks with me without swearing." You explain your plan to your son and follow through with your new behavior. Eventually, he gets tired of not being able to finish conversations with you, especially when the conversation is about him getting a ride or money from you or other things that are important to him. He starts talking to you without swearing.

In the parent group, we will work together on ways you can change your own behavior to influence your teen's behavior.

## Exercise:

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

▶ Refer the group to the *What Happens When We Try to Make Our Teens Change?* worksheet in the parent workbook. Have them fill out the worksheet individually and then share with the group.

▶ Point out that this is not a time to problem-solve or give each other advice/ideas. We will get to that later. Today, we just want to focus on what they are currently doing, if it is working, and how it is affecting their relationships with their teens.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 243 in parent workbooks.

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

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

---

2. What are two things you would like to see them change?

---

3. What are some ways that you've tried to make them change?  
(Example: I grounded him for a month.)

---

4. Do these ways work for you?

Yes

No


Sometimes

5. How do your efforts to make your teen change affect your relationship with them?

---


## Discussion: Goal Planning


 Explain the following.

 To effectively change a behavior, you must:

1. Decide on a specific behavior to change.
2. Choose a new behavior to replace the old behavior.
3. Figure out what you need to do to be able to do the new behavior. Break it down into steps.

## Exercise: Goal Planning

 Refer the group to the *Goal Planning* worksheet in the parent workbook. Explain that this is a step-by-step process for achieving a goal. Parents will think about things they would like to do or change that will improve their relationship with their teen. They will choose one behavior to focus on. It might be the behavior they talked about in the *Strengths, Challenges, Changes* exercise. The worksheet will help them break down their goals into steps. Let them know that they will be using this goal-planning process at different times during the program to make new goals. We will check in with parents at each parent group to see how they are doing with their goals. They can set new goals any time, using the extra goal-planning sheets in the parent workbook.

 Have parents fill out the *Goal Planning* worksheet. Provide assistance as needed with breaking down their goals into steps. Parents can help each other as well. Have each parent share their Goal Planning worksheet with the group.

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

This appears on pages 244–245 in parent workbooks.

**Goal Planning**

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

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

**Pick one behavior** from your list and write it below. Be specific. State your goal in a positive, present-tense form.

*(Example: When my son starts to be verbally abusive with me, I will separate from him.)*

**Break your goal into steps.** These steps should be specific.

*For example:*

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


**Steps for Achieving My Goal**

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

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

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

# Take-Home Activity

-  Have parents finish their *Goal Planning* worksheets at home if there was not time in the group. Have parents work on their goals during the following week. Let them know you will have them report back to the group during the next session about how it went.







## Background Information

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

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

## Goals

- Understand how self-esteem is an important part of a teen's development
- Learn ways to help a teen develop self-esteem and confidence
- Learn how to express encouragement
- Identify positive qualities and strengths in a teen

## Important Messages

- The way you communicate with your teen influences their self-esteem and confidence.
- All teens should be encouraged for who they are as people, regardless of behavior.
- You can help your teen make behavior changes by paying attention to their efforts and giving encouragement.
- It is important to separate encouragement of behavior and encouragement of the person.

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Discussion: Self Esteem
3. Discussion: Self Esteem and Teens
4. Discussion: Helping Your Teen Develop Positive Self Esteem and Confidence
5. Discussion: Encouraging Your Teen

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT

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

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

# Group Activities

## Discussion: Self-Esteem

 Ask the group:

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 249 in parent workbooks.

#### Self-Esteem

- Where do we get our sense of self-esteem?
- How do we develop positive self-esteem? What gives us a positive view of ourselves?
- Who contributed to your self-esteem when you were growing up? How?
- What experiences contributed to your sense of self-esteem?
- Who and what contributed to lowering your self-esteem when you were growing up?

# Discussion:

## Self-Esteem and Teens

 Explain the following.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 250 in parent workbooks.

### Self-Esteem and Teens

Developmentally, adolescence can be a time of feeling insecure. During the early teen years, at about age 12 or 13, teens become more conscious of themselves than ever before. They become very critical of themselves, comparing themselves to others – especially peers – and have exaggerated ideas about what they perceive as shortcomings. They feel too short, too fat, too tall, too ugly, stupid, dumb, or not cool. They get embarrassed very easily and are sure the whole world is watching them.

Adolescents will often try to cover up these feelings by acting “really cool,” being overly critical of others (especially parents and siblings), and reacting with defense and anger to any words they perceive as critical. A comment that isn’t meant to be critical is often interpreted that way, because of their extreme sensitivity to criticism.

Adolescence is a time of changing into an adult and entering the world as a person separate from the family. This changing from a child to an independent adult is uncertain and naturally brings up feelings of insecurity and fear. Most teens aren’t aware of these specific feelings. They experience them as other kinds of feelings, such as worry, panic, pressure, feeling unable to meet expectations, and sometimes wanting to just “give up.”

They also have positive feelings about growing up and becoming independent. These feelings include excitement, energy, wanting to explore, wanting to take risks, and feeling that they are knowledgeable, with strong opinions and passions about what is right, wrong, fair, etc. They feel a strong desire to have freedom and independence, and believe they are ready for it.

All of these feelings, positive and negative, can be exaggerated and can change from one minute to the next. As parents wanting to build self-esteem in your teens, there are ways you can support the positive feelings and encourage a more realistic perspective.

# Exercise:

## Helping Your Teen Develop Self-Esteem and Confidence

- ▶ Refer to the *Helping Your Teen Develop Positive Self-Esteem and Confidence* worksheet in the parent workbook. Tell parents that the title of this list could also be *Ways to Build a Positive Relationship with Your Teen*, because if they do the things on this list, they will see an improvement in their overall relationships with their teens. Go over the list and discuss as needed.
- ▶ Acknowledge that it can be difficult to do the things on this list when a teen has been using abusive behaviors with a parent. Instead, the parent should use the skills discussed in Session 4, *How to Respond When Your Teen Is Violent or Abusive*. The parent should use the methods listed in *Helping Your Teen Develop Positive Self-Esteem and Confidence* when the teen is in a non-combative state of mind.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 251–253 in parent workbooks.

### Helping Your Teen Develop Positive Self-Esteem and Confidence

The title of this list could also be *Ways to Build a Positive Relationship with Your Teen*, because if you do the things on this list, you will see an improvement in their overall relationships with their teen.

It can be difficult to do the things on this list when a teen has been using abusive behaviors with a parent. Some of these things (for example, listening and problem-solving) should not be done when the teen is being abusive. Instead, a parent should use the skills discussed in Session 4: *How to Respond When Your Teen Is Violent or Abusive*. The parent should use the methods listed in *Helping Your Teen Develop Positive Self-Esteem and Confidence* when the teen is in a non-combative state of mind.

1. **Encourage your teen.**  
Notice your teen's positive qualities and let them know that you appreciate them. These qualities include behaviors you like and things you enjoy about their personality.
2. **Listen to your teen.**  
Listen without giving your opinion, giving advice, or making judgments. Don't talk other than to acknowledge that you hear them and are interested. Listen with a desire to understand your teen's world and perspective.

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS****3. Be affectionate.**

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

**4. Spend time with your teen.**

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

Find time to do things with your teen that they enjoy, invite them to join in on some of your activities, or just hang out and do nothing together (you don't even have to talk very much). Take 10 minutes each day to just be in the vicinity of your teen and chat about little things (the cat, his new shoes, movies; not homework or chores). The idea is to have a positive connection on a regular basis that has nothing to do with problems or behavior. This is a way to give your teen the message that "I like you, you are important to me, and I enjoy you."

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

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

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

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

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

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

**8. Communicate respectfully.**

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

**9. Allow your teen to solve some of their own problems.**

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



**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS****10. Encourage special interests.**

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

**11. Let your teen know they are capable.**

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

**12. Let your teen know they are worthy of love just for who they are, not related to their behavior.**

Give your teen spontaneous words of love that are not related to their behavior. Tell your teen you love them, enjoy them, like them, missed them today, are glad to see them, or enjoy laughing with them.

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

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


**Always Avoid**

- Criticism
- Comparing
- Negative forecasts  
(For example, "You'll never make it to college," or, "You'll never get a job," or, "You'll end up on the streets.")
- Put-downs
- Humiliating
- Name-calling
- Making fun of them





# Discussion:

## Encouraging Your Teen

 Tell the group:

 Encouragement is number one on your list of ways to help your teen develop positive self-esteem. We are going to spend some time talking more specifically about encouragement, because it is especially important for your teens at this time, while they are working on changing their behavior in the Step-Up program.

Use the following questions to begin a discussion about encouragement.

-  How many of you have struggled to change a behavior that you had been doing for a period of time, such as smoking, eating too much, taking alcohol or drugs, having anger outbursts, using negative language, or behaving abusively?
-  Do you remember what helped you change?
-  Do you remember anyone in your life who encouraged you in a way that helped you change?
-  How did they encourage you?

 Explain the following about encouragement.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on pages 254–255 in parent workbooks.

### Encouraging Your Teen

There are two kinds of encouragement:


- Encouragement for behavior
- Encouragement of the person

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

**PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS**

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

- **Notice your teen's effort.**  
Pay attention when your teen is trying to do better. Notice the small steps and talk about it. For example, if the teen stopped yelling and tried to calm down sooner than they usually do, tell them you noticed. Let your teen know when you see any small improvements in behavior.
- **Talk about the specific behavior you are encouraging in your teen.**  
Avoid general expressions like, "You were good today." Instead, say, "You haven't yelled or said any swear words all day," or "You didn't let your little brother get to you. You stayed calm and left the room when he was pestering you."
- **Help your teen recognize and express their own feelings of accomplishment.**  
Acknowledge when your teen feels pleased or proud of something they did. For example, say, "It must feel good to have made it through the day without a single fight," or, "You must feel good about making it to school every day this week."
- **Recognize your teen's efforts and improvements during the group at Check-In.**  
Talk about any improvements in behavior, no matter how small. Try to find something on the Respect Wheel to talk about, or think of something positive to say about your teen every week.

 Point out that the teens in Step-Up are working on changing behaviors they have been using for a while, and that it is hard work and takes time. Ask parents to remember the previous discussion about how encouragement helped them change a behavior in the past. When others acknowledge this kind of effort and notice small changes, it encourages a person to keep trying and working toward success.

**Encouragement of the person is:**


- Giving your child positive messages about who they are as a person, separate from their behavior.
- Communicating love, appreciation, humor, and that you care about your child. It is a smile, a pat, a hug, or doing something you both enjoy together.
- Letting your child know what you like about their personality.
- Not contingent on the teen's behavior or about their behavior.

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

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

Even if your teen is difficult to live with 90% of the time, find a moment in the other 10% when you can encourage them as a person.

 Ask parents:

 What are some ways to encourage your teens as people?

 List the ideas on the board.

## Take-Home Activity

 Refer parents to the *Take-Home Activity* in the parent workbook. Ask them to do one or both of the activities listed.

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 256 in parent workbooks.

#### A. Encouraging My Teen

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

1. One quality I like about my teen is:

---

2. One of my teen's strengths is:

---

3. A behavior I appreciate in my teen is:

---

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

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

This week, I will:

---



## Background Information

In this final parent session, parents will take time to think about how their relationships with their teens have improved since the beginning of the program and how they have contributed to positive changes.

Parents often don't realize how significant changes in the relationships are until they look back at how things were when they began the program. It is encouraging for parents to recognize positive changes, no matter how small.

Parents will examine how they have contributed to the positive changes in their teens and in their relationships with their teens. The progress teens make in the Step-Up program is a combination of effort on the part of the teens and the parents. During this session, we hope parents will feel encouraged by the progress they and their teens have made and realize their part in that progress.

Parents will also think about their challenges and identify what they need to continue working on in their relationships with their teens. In this process, they have the opportunity to review the skills they have learned over the course of the parent group. They will make a step-by-step plan for working on a challenging behavior, much like the goal-planning exercise they did in Session 3. This gives parents a plan for continuing what they have learned in the program after they leave.

Finally, we want parents to leave with support and encouragement from the other parents in the group. They have been working together for 20 weeks and have come to know and rely on each other for understanding and support.

Many parents do not have others in their lives who understand their situation or who can provide this kind of support. It is important for parents to have the opportunity in this session to communicate a final message of appreciation and acknowledgement of each other. The message exchange will give them a chance to do this.

Some parents may choose to exchange phone numbers so they can continue communication. The facilitator should support this, but it is important that parents do not feel pressured into exchanging phone numbers.

If possible, it is helpful for parents to leave with a list of community resources in their areas.

## Goals

- To talk about positive changes in your relationship with your teen
- To recognize how you have contributed to positive changes in your relationship with your teen
- To talk about what you have learned in the program
- To identify what you need to continue working on in your relationship with your teen
- To say goodbye to other parents in the group by sharing positive messages

## Important Messages

- You have worked hard to improve your relationship with your teen.
- You have helped each other with the challenges of parenting your teens.
- You can get support from others when you are struggling – **you are not alone.**

## Session Overview

1. Check-In: review goal progress, and review take-home activities
2. Exercise: Positive Changes
3. Exercise: Supporting Positive Changes in Your Teen
4. Message Exchange
5. Suggested Closing Statement

# Check-In

- ▶ Have teens turn to the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section at the end of their workbooks and fill out a Check-In worksheet about their last week, and the *How Did I Do* section at the bottom of their Goal for the Week worksheet for the prior week. Teens will fill out the Goal for the Week worksheet for the following week after their Check-in during group.

## WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 15 (and in the *Weekly Check-In and Goals* section) in teen workbooks, page 15 in parent workbooks.

### Check-In Worksheet

Date:

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

ABUSE/DISRESPECT

RESPECT

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

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



# Group Activities

## Exercise: Positive Changes


 Tell the group:

### PARENT WORKBOOK COMPONENTS

This appears on page 259 in parent workbooks.

This is the last parent session. Next week, teens and parents will all meet together for the final session, and the teens will talk about what they have learned in the program, how they have changed their behavior, and what they need to continue working on.

During this session, you will have the opportunity to think and talk about positive changes in your relationship with your teen, what you have learned in the program, and what you want to continue working on to support your teen's positive behavior.

 Refer parents to the *Positive Changes* worksheet in the parent workbook and ask them to take some time to write down answers to the questions. When they finish, have each parent share their answers with the group.

**PARENT WORKSHEET**


This appears on pages 260–261 in parent workbooks.

**Positive Changes**

1. How has your relationship with your teen changed since you started the program?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What have you done that has contributed to the change?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What changes has your teen made?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you need to keep working on in your relationship with your teen?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What have you learned in the program?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What have you learned about yourself?  
\_\_\_\_\_


# Exercise:

## Supporting Positive Changes in Your Teen

-  Refer parents to the *Supporting Positive Changes in My Teen* worksheet in the parent workbook and explain that this exercise is similar to the *Goal Planning* exercise they did in Session 3. Ask the group to brainstorm together answers to the first prompt: **List ways you can support positive changes in your teen.** Have them think about ways to support and encourage their teens to use behaviors on the Respect Wheel. Write their answers on the board.

The following are some ideas to include. The words in bold are skills parents have learned in parent group.

- Give **encouragement** when your teen uses respectful behaviors.
- Separate from them when they start to use abusive behaviors – use **time-outs**.
- Be consistent with **consequences** for abusive behaviors.
- Stay **calm and respectful** when communicating with your teen.
- Use the **problem-solving steps** to resolve problems together.
- Use **listening and acknowledging feelings** skills when appropriate.
- Have consistent expectations about **making amends** for abusive behavior.
- Use skills you learned in Session 11 to help your teen develop **positive self-esteem and confidence**.
- Be clear with the message that **violence is never okay** – use skills from *How to Respond When Your Teen Is Violent or Abusive*.
- Give **encouragement for your teen as a person**, not just for behavior.
- Be **caring and firm**. Stay on the Respect Wheel yourself.

-  When you have finished listing on the board, ask parents to list the ideas that apply to them under the first question on the worksheet. Have them continue the worksheet. When everyone is finished, have parents share their answers with the group.

### PARENT WORKSHEET


This appears on pages 262–263 in parent workbooks.


## Supporting Positive Changes in My Teen


1. List some ways you can support the positive changes your teen has made.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Choose one behavior that is the most difficult for you to do and write it below. Be specific. State your behavior in a positive, present-tense form. (Example: When my son is harassing me to try to get me to change my mind about something, I will stay calm and disengage from arguing.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Break your behavior into steps. These steps should be specific.  
For example:
  - *When Tim starts arguing after I have said no, I will calmly tell him why and then stop talking about it.*
  - *I will think self-calming thoughts, such as, "I am calm. I don't need to argue."*
  - *I will tell him I am finished talking about it and will separate from him.*
  - *If he handles it well (without getting abusive), I will give him positive encouragement.*
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_


# Message Exchange

 Tell parents:

 We are going to end the session by giving each other positive messages. I will give you each several pieces of paper (the amount will be the number of parents in the group; for example, eight if there are eight parents). Take some time to think of something positive you would like to say to each parent in the group, and then write something for each parent on each piece of paper. Write something you have learned from the parent, a strength you have noticed about them, a compliment about the changes they have made, or anything positive you would like to share with that person.

 Let parents know that only the person receiving the note will read it. They do not need to put their names on the notes they write unless they choose to do so. The notes will not be read aloud in the group.

 Give the group members pieces of paper big enough for a couple of sentences. (An 8 ½" x 11" piece of paper cut into 2" strips works well). Have them fold the paper when they finish writing and put the name of the person on the outside.

 When they finish writing, collect the notes and distribute them to the parents. Parents can read their notes now or can take them home and read them.

## Suggested Closing Statement

Congratulate parents on completing the program. Commend them for their hard work in the group and as parents. Encourage them to get support when they need it, whether it is another parenting group, the court system, counseling, or calling another parent or a friend. Encourage them to exchange phone numbers for support if they feel comfortable doing so.

Pass out a resource sheet with community resources in your area, including other parent education and support groups. Let them know you have enjoyed working with them in the parent group and that you will see them next week for the final session with the teens.





## Add a Fun Question to Introductions

When a new family joins the group, add a fun question to the end of the introductions (where they have shared their names, why they came to Step-Up, and one thing they want to learn to improve their family relationships – see these questions in the Orientation session). Sometimes we ask the teens what kind of question they would like everyone to answer just for fun, and they think of their own questions, or the facilitators come up with a question. We write it on the board as the last question after the introductory questions.

For example:

- If you could have a magic power, what would you want it to be? (For example: being able to fly, being invisible, reading minds, talking to animals)
- What three things would you save if your house was burning?
- If you could be an animal, what would you be, and why?
- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

## Three People, Three Things in Common

Have the group break into groups of three and find three favorite things they have in common, such as favorite holiday, season, hobby, phone app, movie, etc. One person then introduces the group and shares the three things they have in common.

## Act It Out

Go around the group and mime something you like to do. Have group members guess what it is.



# Ball Tosses

There are lots of ways to do ball tosses in a circle to introduce new group members to each other, learn things about each other, practice listening skills, or just bring humor to the group. Be creative to find your own ways or use some of the following ideas.

Have group members stand or sit in a circle and provide a small, light ball for these activities.

## What's Your Fave?

The ball is tossed between people in the circle with a, "What's your favorite..." question. The receiver answers and tosses the ball to another person with another, "What's your favorite..." question, and around it goes until everyone has tossed and received. Provide a list of "favorite" ideas on the board to get them started, such as favorite food, sport, movie, thing to do on weekends, ice cream flavor.

## What's Your Name?

This is for new groups to learn each other's names. Start by saying your own name while you toss the ball to someone. That person then says their name while tossing it to someone else. Continue tossing the ball until everyone has said their names a few times. Let them know to listen carefully and try to remember each other's names. Then, have them switch to saying the name of the person they're throwing the ball to. Continue this until everyone remembers each other's names.

## Evolving Questions

One person starts the ball toss with a question of their choosing. The person who receives the ball answers the question. Then, that person asks a question that is related to the first question as they toss the ball to a third person. This continues until everyone has tossed and received the ball.

Example:

- Person A (tosses ball to Person B): "If you could have anything you wanted for dinner tonight, what would it be?"
- Person B: "Pepperoni pizza." (Tosses ball to Person C.) "What's your favorite kind of pizza?"
- Person C: "Canadian bacon and pineapple." (Tosses ball to Person D.) "Have you ever been to Canada?"
- Person D: "We went to Canada on vacation once." (Tosses ball to Person E.) "Where have you been on vacation?"

# Brain Breaks

When you notice teens in the group becoming agitated, restless, or disengaged, it's a good time for a brain-break activity. These short actions switch brain activity to a different network in the brain, allowing the brain pathways that were being used to rest and revitalize. Most types of physical movement shift brain activity to another pathway, and it only takes three to five minutes for the resting pathway to restore calm, focus, attention, and memory.

## Brain-Break Activities

- **Stretching** – Stand up and stretch your arms high up toward the sky, then out to the sides. Then, bend over and stretch them toward your feet. Finally, let the upper half of your body relax. Be a rag doll, swinging your arms slowly around your body.
- Stand with your arms out in a “Y” shape. Spread your feet and cross your right arm and hand down and over your left foot. Come back up and do the same with your left arm/hand crossing over your right foot. Do this five times. Then, pretend you are swimming in the air, alternating your arms in a swimming motion.
- Draw an imaginary triangle in the air with your hand while circling with the opposite foot.
- **Instant energizer** – As a group, shake your right fist and left foot, alternating 8Xs, 4Xs, 2Xs, 1X.
- **Clapping rhythms** – Have one person start a clapping rhythm, then have everyone join in until someone changes the rhythm and everyone joins the new rhythm. Continue changing the rhythm for three minutes.
- Have everyone stand up and move around the room, quietly passing a beach ball (or light ball or balloon) among themselves with the goal of not letting it touch the ground and also not talking for three to five minutes. Laughing is okay!
- **Cross crawl** – As you march in one spot, touch your right knee with your left hand. Then, touch your left knee with your right hand. Repeat several times.

- Hook-ups – Cross your legs. Extend your arms, cross them at your wrists, link up your fingers, and bring your hands upward to your chest. Close your eyes, hold, and focus on your breathing.
- Figure eights – Point your finger and draw huge figure eights sideways in the air. Make sure you cross over both sides of your body and take turns with both hands. This movement ensures that the left side of your brain is connecting with the right side of your body (and vice versa).
- The rocker – Sit on a comfortable yet firm spot on the ground. Lean back onto your arms and bring up your bent knees. Cross your ankles. Gently rock, making circular motions. This movement increases the ability to focus.
- Do a three- to five-minute mindfulness practice (see page \_\_\_\_\_ for short mindfulness practices)
- Do one of the self-calming activities in the Self-Calming session, such as 4 Square Breathing (see page \_\_\_\_)
- Have a snack or water break
- Go outside in the fresh air and walk around for five minutes

You can find a variety of other brain break activities online. Research shows that middle and high school students need to take a brain break every 30 minutes for three to five minutes for optimal mood, attention, and memory. Youth with ASD, ADHD, mental health issues, or trauma histories may need breaks more often. Somatic movement and tactile/sensory experiences are especially helpful for these youth. We recommend having tactile objects available during group, such as fidget spinners, squishy balls, or playdough. Sensory experiences calm the nervous system and increase ability to focus.

# Short Mindfulness Practices

The following practices can be done in three to seven minutes. They can be used as brain breaks or completed at the beginning of group when there isn't enough time for a longer relaxation/mediation practice.

## **Mindful Breathing**

- Sitting or standing, place your hands on your belly. Close your eyes or look down toward your hands.
- Take three slow, deep breaths in and out, counting “1, 2, 3” in your mind with each breath in, and “1, 2, 3” again for each breath out. Pause slightly at the end of each exhale.
- Continue for three to five minutes or until the facilitator brings your attention back to the room (or rings a chime).
- You can also use pinwheels, inhaling for a count of three and then blowing the pinwheel for a count of three.

## **Shark Fin**

- Sit or stand comfortably. Be still and silent. Soften your breath and close your eyes.
- Place the side of your hand on your forehead, with your palm facing out to the side.
- Slide your hand down your face, in front of your nose.
- Say “shhh...” as you slide your hand down your face.
- Complete the once or repeat two or three times.

**Breath Star**

- Spread one hand out like a star.
- Use the index finger on your other hand to trace the outline of your star.
- Take a deep breath in as your move your tracing finger down between your thumb and first finger.
- Take another deep breath in as you move to the top of your first finger.

- Breathe out as you move down between your first and second fingers.
- Continue this pattern, tracing each of your fingers until you have taken five slow, deep breaths.
- Repeat on the other hand.

**Heartbeat**

- Sit comfortably and close your eyes or look down.
- Take three deep breaths in and out.
- Place your fingers or hands over the part of your body where you can best feel your heartbeat or pulse, such as the side of your neck, under your jaw, or the inside your wrist. You may also place your hand on your heart.
- Notice how quickly or slowly your heart is beating.
- Continue feeling your heart beat and breathing in and out.
- Without speaking, stand up and jump up and down 10 times. You can hop around the room or stay in one place.

- After 10 jumps or hops, sit down, close your eyes, and find your heartbeat again.
- What changes do you notice? Is your heart beating faster or slower than you expected?
- Do you notice any change in your breath?
- Continue to feel your heartbeat, noticing how it feels as it slows down again.
- Once your heartbeat slows, wait a few moments to feel this, then open your eyes.

A great little book to have on hand is *5-Minute Mindfulness Meditations for Teens* by Nicole Libin. You can have teens pick one of the meditations from this book and lead it if they so choose.

# Skill-Building Warm-Ups for Listening

## Warm-Up Activity: Reciprocal Communication

### Sound Ball

The purpose of this activity is to embody reciprocal communication: give and take, balanced listening and talking. It helps you feel what it's like to have evenly matched listening and responding with another person.

This is a good warm-up for the *Guidelines for Respectful Communication* or *the Problem-Solving Together* sessions. It can also be used in other sessions any time there's a need to get up, move, and connect with each other.

Here's how you do it:

- Have the group get into pairs. It can be teen-parent or mixed pairs. Tell the pairs that they're going to throw an imaginary ball back and forth to one another. It's about the size and weight of a volleyball.
- The thrower isn't just going to throw it; they're going to throw it with a certain velocity and sound – and the receiver will receive the ball with the same velocity and sound.
- Then the receiver throws the ball back to the other person with a new velocity and sound.
- Tell them to use different tones, volumes, sounds, and velocities as they continue to throw the ball back and forth. The key is to be sure to receive the ball using the same tone, sound, and velocity that the thrower used.
- Demonstrate this with your co-facilitator for the group.

**Debrief:**

- ❓ How was that for you?
- ❓ How might this be similar to when two people are having a conversation?
- ❓ What about this experience of giving and receiving is important for good communication?
- ❓ Point out the value of balanced give and take – listening well so you really hear what the other person is saying – and confirm it before giving your response.

**Warm-Up Activity:  
Listening Well****Drawing Back-to-Back**

The purpose of this activity is to prime people for listening well.

- Pairs sit back to back.
- Partner A has a pen and paper, using their workbook as a hard surface.
- Partner B is given a chance to review a simple drawing of a house with a door, two windows, a chimney, a tree, and clouds in the sky.
- Partner B's job is to describe the picture to Partner A without using words that describe exactly what each thing is (house, door, window, etc.). They can instead say something like, "There is a square; inside of it, there is a tall rectangle."
- Partner A's job is to listen and draw exactly what they hear.
- When the facilitator indicates that time's up, everyone can see the drawings and the original image.

**Debrief:**

- ❓ Listeners, what was challenging about that activity?
- ❓ What did speakers do that helped?
- ❓ Speakers, what was challenging about that activity?
- ❓ How is this like real communication? (The better we are at speaking and listening, the more clearly we communicate and the better we understand each other.)

# Strengths-Based Openings, Closings, and Rebalancing

These can be added at the beginning or end of group or can be added to Check-In as a question.

These questions are helpful to use after a Check-In when families have had a rough week and there has been more focus on negative behaviors than positive. Shifting the lens to positives can reduce tension in relationships and in the group. Placing an emphasis on strengths rebalances the energy in the group.

Some parents or teens might have a hard time thinking of strengths, or anything positive, when they're in the midst of conflict. Let them know they can think about the past if it's difficult to find something in the present. You can list questions on the board so each person can choose one they feel able to answer.





# Reflective Openings/ Closings

- ▶ Have group members share one thing they are grateful for in their life.
- ▶ At the end of group, ask group members to share the most helpful thing they learned in group that session.
- ▶ At the end of group, go around and have group members say one or two words that come to mind related to what they learned in group that day.
- ▶ Have everyone say one or two words describing something they want to do more of in the coming week to improve their family relationships.
- ▶ Read (or have a group member read) a quote or short poem related to the learning for that session, or a quote or poem about healthy family relationships, listening, communication, parent-teen relationships, adolescence, etc.
- ▶ Partake in a compliment circle. Go around the circle and have each person say something they learned from – or something they appreciate about or want to commend about – the person to their left.

# About the Authors

Lily Anderson is a licensed clinical social worker with an M.S.W. from the University of Washington. She has worked with families experiencing youth violence in the home since 1997, developing and improving the Step-Up model to become an effective intervention that is being used nationally and internationally to address this form of family violence.

Lily has worked in the field of family violence since 1978, including work with survivors and parents of children impacted by domestic violence. She developed a Parents' Anger Management Program in Seattle from 1986 to 1998. Lily has authored three other curriculums: *Anger Management for Parents*; *Skills for Respectful Parenting*; and she co-authored a curriculum for parents of children who have experienced domestic violence, *Helping Children Who Have Experienced Domestic Violence: A Guide for Parents*. Lily has conducted trainings and presentations nationally and internationally on adolescent family violence and use of the Step-Up curriculum.

Ms. Anderson co-authored an article published in the *Journal for Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma: Adolescent Violence Toward Parents*, January 2011. Lily also co-authored one of the first books on this topic, *Adolescent Violence in the Home: Restorative Approaches to Building Healthy, Respectful Family Relationships*, Routledge Press, 2014.

Lily co-authored a chapter, *Building respectful family relationships: partnering restorative practice with cognitive-behavioral skill learning*, in a book edited by Amanda Holt, *Working with Adolescent Violence and Abuse Toward Parents*, Routledge Press, 2016.

Gregory Routt has an M.A. in psychology from Antioch University (1992). He coordinated the Step-Up program from its inception in 1997, establishing the first groups and working with the court and community to bring awareness to this issue and begin developing a specialized treatment model when none other existed. He has worked with colleagues nationally and internationally exploring the issue of youth family violence and effective treatment modalities. He has trained court systems and community agencies throughout the country on the issue of adolescent violence toward family members and implementing the Step-Up curriculum.

Greg has also worked as a chemical dependency counselor with inmates in the King County Jail and with adult perpetrators of domestic violence at Family Services Domestic Violence Treatment Program in Seattle from 1992 until 1996.

Mr. Routt co-authored an article published in the Journal for Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma: *Adolescent Violence Toward Parents*, January 2011. He also co-authored one of the first books on this topic, *Adolescent Violence in the Home: Restorative Approaches to Building Healthy, Respectful Family Relationships*, Routledge Press, 2014.

Greg co-authored a chapter, *Building respectful family relationships: partnering restorative practice with cognitive- behavioral skill learning*, in a book edited by Amanda Holt, *Working with Adolescent Violence and Abuse Toward Parents*, Routledge Press, 2016.

# Recommended Parenting Books

***The Explosive Child***  
by Ross W. Greene

***The Art of Talking with Your Teenager***  
by Paul Swets

***An Owner's Guide to Parenting Teenagers***  
by Pat James Baxter and Cynthia Dawson Naff

***Discipline That Works***  
by Dr. Thomas Gordon

***Parent in Control***  
by Gregory Bodehammer

***Taming the Dragon in Your Child: Solutions for Breaking the Cycle of Family Anger***  
by Meg Eastman

***ADHD and Teens***  
by Colleen Alexander-Roberts

***It's Perfectly Normal***  
by Robbie Harris

For teenagers and parents; provides comprehensive and contemporary information on the mechanics and consequences of puberty, sexual activity, birth control, pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.

***The Seven-Year Strategy: How Families Work Together to Grow Through Adolescence***  
by Laura Kastner and Jennifer Wyatt

***The Co-Parenting Survival Guide: Letting Go of Conflict After a Difficult Divorce***  
by Elizabeth Thayer and Jeffery Zimmerman

***How to Win as a Stepfamily***  
by Emily and John Visher

***Blending Families: A Guide for Parents, Step Parents and Everyone Building a Successful New Family***  
by Elaine Fantle Shimberg

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