

Session 15: Reducing Parental Conflict and Improving Communication



15.0: Introductions

Participants | Women and Men together

Objectives |

1. To discuss constructive ways of sharing information to avoid violent situations in relationships.
2. To develop participants skills in expressing personal needs and feelings and in listening reflectively and empathetically.

Duration | 2 hours

Preparation | Flipchart, markers, opaque paper (ordinary), transparent item (see through e.g empty mineral water bottle or paper) and translucent item (dull/ unclear e.g polythene or paper). Have a role play prepared by 3 people before the session starts.

Activity 15.1: Review of home practice

Time | 20 minutes

**S
T
E
P
S**

- 1 | Welcome everyone to session 15.
- 2 | Review home practice by asking individuals to share their experience.
(*Encourage them to share how their family members felt before and after the cup/ pot got broken*).
- 3 | Encourage participants to continue doing the home practice.

Activity 15:2: Openness, Transparency and Communication

Time | 1 Hour

What the facilitator needs to know

- ⊙ **Transparent paper** represents a marriage where there is open communication and partners know each other very well. A relationship of mutual sharing on which mutual trust can be built for proper human spousal relationship. It is therefore important that spouses are as open as possible to each other for more mutual understanding.
- ⊙ **Translucent paper:** represents a marriage where there is little communication and openness about each other. Spouses are always secretive about important issues which would otherwise benefit their relationship. They share *very limited information* and this keeps their partners on tension that may generate conflicts. It is therefore important for people to have few secrets and share more information with their partners.
- ⊙ **Opaque paper:** represents a relationship that is cold with no communication! Partners could be living under the same roof and each one does not know what happens in the other person's life. However, it is easier to live and work with someone who does not hide too much.

Objective | 1. To develop participants skills in expressing personal needs and feelings and in listening reflectively and empathetically.

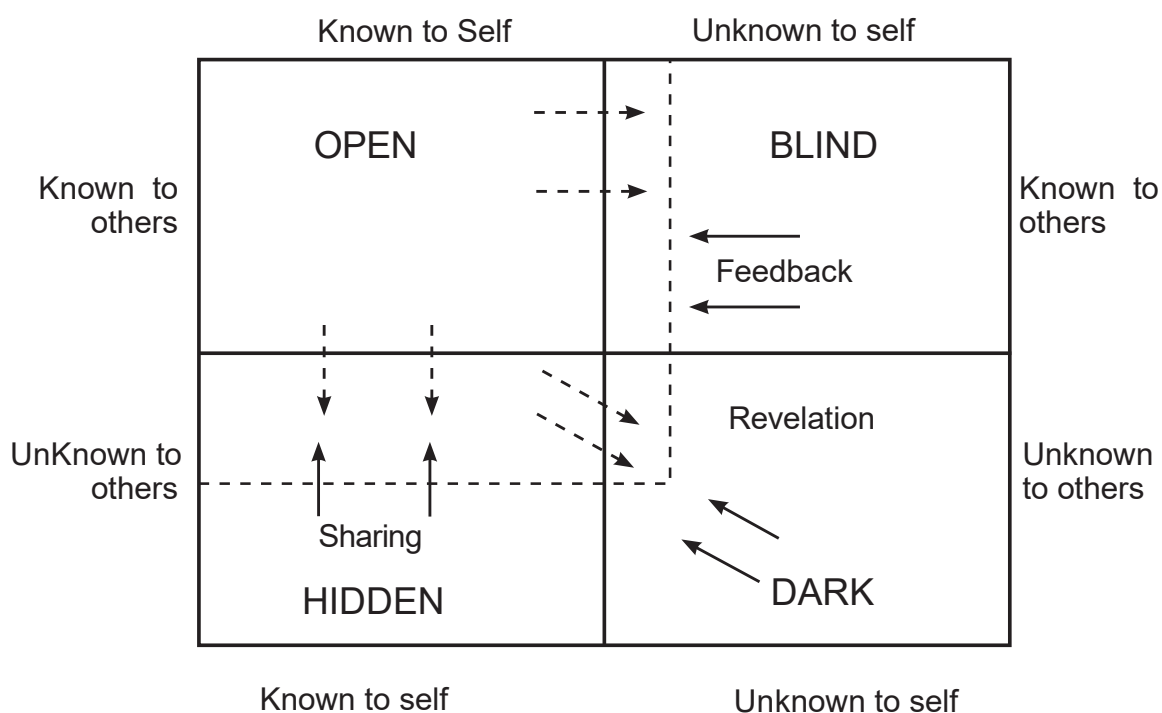
Materials | Flipchart, markers, opaque paper (ordinary), transparent item (see through e.g empty mineral water bottle or paper) and translucent item (dull/unclear e.g polythene or paper).

STEPS

- 1 | **Provide** an overview of the session objective.
- 2 | **Ask** for 3 pairs of volunteers and provide each pair with the 3 different papers/ items below;
 - a) Opaque paper (ordinary).
 - b) Transparent item (see through e.g empty mineral water bottle or paper).
 - c) Translucent item (dull/unclear e.g polythene or paper)
- 3 | Translucent paper; **Ask** each pair to stand opposite each other and let one person hold the paper/ item one at a time
- 4 | **Ask** each person to try and see their partner through the paper/item provided; one at a time and state if they can see the person standing opposite them.

- 5 | After each volunteer has finished, **let them** share how they felt when they tried to see the other person through the paper/ item.
- 6 | **Ask** all the participants to relate the feelings to their daily communication with their spouses.
- 7 | Let participants discuss/estimate on average, the number of marriages in their community for each of the scenarios, (**opaque, transparent and translucent**) and their effects on both parents and the children.
- 8 | Let participants share the lessons learnt from the exercise? (**Write these up on a flipchart**).
- 9 | Johari's Window is a tool that helps create greater self awareness and improve people's understanding of their relationship and communication with others. The diagram consists of four panels/ windows about human interaction and helps explain that;
- 10 | Use the diagram below to explain to participants how they can learn to open up better. (**The diagram helps in understanding and explaining the fact that each person is partly known and partly unknown, both to themselves and to others**)

JOHARI'S WINDOW



What the facilitator needs to know

- ⊙ **Open** is the part of yourself, which is known to you and to others. This is the area of mutual sharing on which mutual trust can be built for proper human relations. It is therefore important for this free area to be as wide as possible for more mutual understanding.
- ⊙ **Hidden** is the part of yourself, which is known to you but not to others. It is the part that is not shared with others. In some cases, it is good for some of the hidden things to remain hidden. However, it makes it easier to live and work with someone who does not hide too much.
- ⊙ **Blind** is the part of yourself, which is known to others but not to you yourself. This may be the way you affect others by the way you speak or behave, or something which others admire about you, but which you yourself do not know.
- ⊙ **Dark** is the part of yourself, which is not known to you and also not known to others. You may have abilities or weaknesses, which you do not know and others also do not know, but which may one day unexpectedly come to the surface.
- ⊙ **Sharing** is opening up more to others. This makes others understand you better, and so they can relate with you more easily.
- ⊙ **Feedback** is when others tell you what you do not know about yourself i.e. what is in your 'blind area'. This enables you to understand yourself better.
- ⊙ **Revelation** is when what you do not know about yourself suddenly comes out. This cannot be planned but is made more possible when people are ready to learn.

Close the activity by highlighting some of the following:**a) There are two main things that all of us can do to make our relationships better:**

- ⊙ **Sharing:** *opening yourself more to others that we trust, for example, reduces the hidden part of the "us". Thus widening the open window.*
- ⊙ **Feedback:** *Allowing others to tell you what you don't know about yourself. This reduces the blind part of your life and increase the open part/window. [Give an example].*
 - a) *Keeping many secrets/hiding issues from the people we live with especially our spouses keeps us and them on tension .*
 - b) *It is good for some of the hidden things to remain hidden. However, it makes it easier to live and work with someone who does not hide too much.*

Activity 15.3: Homework Practice

Time | 5 Minutes

**S
T
E
P
S**

1

Ask parents to share the knowledge they got from the session with their spouse, children, or neighbours.

2

Ask parents to reflect on the ways they can widen their open area to facilitate proper relationships with family members.

3

Bid participants farewell.