

SESSION SEVEN: SOLVING PROBLEMS TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

| SESSION SEVEN OVERVIEW | |
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| GOALS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and teens learn collaborative methods to solve problems as a family |
| CORE PRINCIPLES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peaceful solutions for family problems are possible • Making a plan of action can help solve problems • Take everybody's opinion seriously |
| MATERIALS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance register, name tags, temporary adhesive, pens, paper, flipchart, refreshments for the break • House of Support poster |
| PREPARATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up the room with chairs in a circle. • Prepare materials for name tags and refreshments for break |
| WELCOME (20 min) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Take a Pause • Emotional Check-In • Physical exercise |
| HOME ACTIVITY DISCUSSION (40 min) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind parents/teens of core home activity • Ask parents/teens to share highlights and challenges • Discuss solutions to challenges and practice solutions |
| BREAK (5 Minutes) | |
| CORE LESSON – SOLVING PROBLEMS AS A FAMILY (40 min) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: The Human Knot • Role-play and Practice: Faraja's New Cell Phone • Role-play: Dealing with Bullies • Discussion: Solving problems as a family • Practice: Working together to solve problems. |
| ASSIGN HOME ACTIVITIES (10 min) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a Pause whenever a conflict or difficult situation comes up. • Try to work together whenever a problem or conflict comes up in your family. Use the 6 Steps of Problem Solving. • Spend 15 minutes each day in One-on-One Time with your parent/teen • Other activities from previous sessions • Meet with, or contact, your PLH Buddy once during the week |
| CLOSING (10 min) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing one thing you learned with your parent/teen • Compliment Circle • Take a Pause • Emotional check-out • Remind families about next session and home activities • Thank and praise families |

1 NOTES FOR SESSION SEVEN

Read this in preparation for delivering the session.

1.1 Overview

Session Seven is focused on learning skills to solve problems as a family. Parents and teens are together again in this session.

Session Seven has the following core skills and principles:

- Peaceful solutions for family problems are possible
- Making a plan of action can help solve problems
- Take everybody's opinion seriously

There are many challenges that families face today which can prove to be stressful. Many people do not adequately address problems as they arise because they lack the appropriate skills to manage them.

Positive family life involves healthy interactions where problems that arise are solved. The ability to solve problems amongst teens is learned from the family, as the skills they learn are taken from how the caregivers approach problems.

Session Seven builds on the skill learned on previous sessions, especially Session Three on managing difficult feelings such as anger and stress, as well as communication skills learned in all the other sessions!

1.2 Six steps for solving problems

There six main steps in solving problems:

1. Identify the problem
2. Brainstorm solutions
3. Explore the consequences of each solution
4. Choose a solution
5. Try the solution out
6. Reflect on whether the solution worked

Participants may notice that they have already practiced problem-solving in different ways during the programme (e.g. when finding ways to deal with angry behaviour).

Learning how to solve problems in a peaceful and effective way is a skill that teens will take with them for the rest of their lives and caregivers can apply in all different areas of their lives (work, home, etc). *What a gift!*

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Welcome

Welcome participants warmly and enthusiastically when they arrive to the session.

2.2 Take a Pause

Take a Pause with the participants. You can make it brief (about a minute):

- Close eyes
- Focus on thoughts, feelings, and body sensations (15 seconds)
- Focus on breath (30 seconds)
- Expand focus to the entire body and sounds (15 seconds)
- Open eyes

Remind participants that they should try to **Take a Pause** before reacting to their parents or teens when they do something that annoys or angers them.

This may help them respond in a less negative and violent way. **Take a Pause** can even be a couple deep breaths!

2.3 Emotional Check-In

Parents and teens check into the group by sharing how they feel at the beginning of the session. They should describe their emotion, where they feel it in their body, and what thoughts are associated with it.

You can model this: "I feel anxious. I feel it in my shoulders. I am worried about having enough money this month for food," or "I feel proud. I feel it in my chest. I did well on my math test."

2.4 Physical Exercises

Ask participants to notice how they feel at the end of the physical exercises, ask participants to notice if they feel any differences in their bodies.

Ask them if they have been doing any of the physical exercises in the morning. Praise and encourage those who are trying!

2.5 Progress on the House of Support

Show participants their progress in building the House of Support.

3 DISCUSSION OF HOME ACTIVITIES

Divide the parents and teens so that both can feel more comfortable talking about their experiences openly.

Home Activities Recap

The core home activities were to:

- Discuss with your parent/teen about how s/he can share responsibilities
- Discuss with your parent/teen appropriate consequences for not following through with responsibilities or forgetting household rules

Key points to be aware of during this home activity discussion:

- Make sure that parents are giving their teens time for relaxation and fun along with increased responsibilities
- Make sure that consequences were reasonable, consistent, immediate, and realistic
- Make sure parents and teens are still spending One-on-One Time together

Possible questions for Discussion on Home Activities in Session Six:

- What was it like to discuss with your parent/teen about sharing responsibilities?
- What were some of the possible consequences that you discussed with your parent/teen?
- Did anyone have to use those consequences? What happened?
- Does anyone want to share a positive experience of spending One-on-One Time together?

Please remember: You need to check in with **each participant** to explore his/her experience doing Home Activities:

- Explore solutions to difficulties in doing the Home Activities with parents and teens.
- Encourage parents and teens to offer ways to overcome challenges as a group.
- Choose a strategy from the group's solutions and practice it.
- Then evaluate how it worked and encourage the participant to try it again at home.

BREAK

4 CORE LESSON – SOLVING PROBLEMS AS A FAMILY

4.1 Activity – The Human Knot

This activity helps parents and teens explore how to work together to solve a problem that they created in the first place.

1. Divide parents and teens into two groups. If the group is very big, then divide parents and teens into two groups of about 8 each. It is best if there is an even number in each group.
2. Groups stand in a circle facing inwards.
3. Everyone lifts his/her left hand and holds the hand of another person **across** the circle.
4. Keeping hold of the hands, the participants need to untie the "Human Knot"
5. Participants first do this with **talking allowed**. After 2 minutes, tell participants to continue working but in **silence**.
6. Remind participants to be aware of each other and ensure that everyone is safe.
7. It is very important that the you allow the groups to struggle on their own.
8. Most groups will be able to untie their Human Knot. However, sometimes a group will find themselves stuck.
9. Ask the entire group if anyone knows how they can do to solve this problem.
10. If the group is still stuck, you can suggest one last solution – letting go.
11. Ask participants what they learned from the activity

Please note: You should ensure that older participants or participants that have difficulty moving are able to participate in this activity comfortably. Otherwise they are welcome to sit and watch.

4.2 Role-play and Practice – Faraja’s new cell phone

Mother is looking at a phone on Faraja’s bedside table which she has never seen before.

Mother: “Faraja, where did you get that thing?”

Faraja (*excited*): “Mapesa, bought it for me. It is a nice phone, Mother. It takes photos – let me take a selfie of you and I!”

Mother: (*shouting angrily*) “I don’t want to see that expensive thing! That boy is no good! How does he think you are going to repay him for this?!”

Faraja (*upset*): “That’s not how it works, Mother! That’s not fair!”

Mother: “I don’t want to hear it!”

Faraja (*frustrated*): “You’re not even trying to listen to me! I don’t know why I even try with you!”

Questions for Role-play:

1. What do you think is the problem in this scenario?
2. Why do you think Mother is worried about her daughter getting a new cell phone from her boyfriend?
3. What is the impact of her reaction on Faraja?
4. How could she have avoided this conflict but still express her concern for her daughter’s safety?
 - a. Ask parents and teens for solutions.
 - b. Explore consequences for the solutions
 - c. Choose a solution that might work best
 - d. Practice the solution in role-plays
 - e. Reflect on whether the solution might work
5. After practicing, ask the participants if anyone noticed the steps that they used to solve the problem. Write them down in the following order:
 - a. Identify the problem (Where is the fire? What is the problem?)
 - b. Discuss solutions (What are the different options to put out the fire?)
 - c. Explore consequences (What the advantages and disadvantages of each option)
 - d. Choose one solution (Which solution should we chose?)
 - e. Try it (Try it out!)
 - f. Reflect on whether it worked (Did our solution work?)

4.3 Role-play – Dealing with Bullies

This story revisits the one from the previous session, "Unreasonable consequences." Here Grandma Sara remembers to Take a Pause and help her grandson solve his issue with being bullied.

Bibi is coming home from work. She is at the door about to open it up.

Bibi (*thinking to herself*): "Ay my poor feet! I need to sit down a moment and drink a cup of coffee before I start preparing food for everyone."

Bibi enters the kitchen and sees Baraka eating bread.

Bibi (*angrily*): "Baraka! What are you doing? That bread is for dinner! Now there won't be enough to feed us all!"

Baraka (*worried*): "Sorry, Bibi, I was just hungry. I can explain, you see, the thing is there is this guy at school...."

Bibi (*thinking to herself and taking a deep breath*): "Take a Pause...just breathe..."

Bibi (*telling Baraka*): "Just give me a moment. I am tired and now worried about having enough food for dinner."

Baraka: "I am sorry, Bibi. Let me make you a cup of coffee."

Bibi and Baraka are sitting down together.

Bibi: "Now tell me, why are you so hungry? Did you not eat your lunch at school?"

Baraka: "Well, actually, that is the problem. There's a guy at school who is picking on me and he takes my lunch every day. He says if I do not give it to him, he and his friends will hurt me. He makes me so mad!"

Bibi (*placing a hand on Baraka*): "I am sorry to hear that but am glad that you told me, Baraka. It doesn't mean that you can eat everybody's supper. After we speak, you need to go to the shop to buy some more bread. But first, let's work out a solution to this bully problem. What do you think we should do about it?"

Baraka: "Well...I want to just hit him or get him back."

Bibi: "Hmmm...what do you think will happen to you if you do that?"

Baraka: "I don't know. He is bigger than me so will probably hurt me more. And I could get into trouble at school and expelled."

Bibi: "Yes, that could happen. Any other ideas?"

Baraka: "I guess I could tell the teacher. But then the other kids will call me a snitch. Maybe you could talk to the teacher?"

Bibi: "That sounds like a better idea. I could also have a word with his parents if you want me to."

Baraka: "Sure. If you think that would help, too. Thanks, Bibi."

Bibi: "Anything for you, my dear. I will do it first thing after dinner. And you know? If that doesn't work, we can always try something else together."

Baraka: "Thanks, Bibi. I appreciate it!"

Questions for Role-play:

1. How did Bibi avoid getting into a conflict or fight with Baraka?
2. Why was it important for Bibi to Take a Pause after seeing Baraka eating the bread?
What did it help her to do?
3. Why was it important that she still gave Baraka a consequence for eating the bread?
4. What steps did she use to help Baraka solve the bullying problem with her?
5. Do you think that their solution is a practical one?

BUILDING BLOCKS

Notice when you are feeling angry and Take a Pause!

Comfort your teen when s/he has a problem. Notice his/her emotions!

Involve your teen in solving problems.

Remember the 6 steps: Identify the problem. Discuss solutions. Explore consequences to each solution. Choose a solution. Try it out. And Reflect!

4.4 Discussion – Solving problems as a family

Lead a discussion about the benefits of involving teens in resolving problems and conflicts.

The following questions may be useful:

1. What would be the benefit of learning how to effectively solve problems together as a family?
2. Why might you want to discuss solutions to problems between you and your parent/teen instead of using consequences straight away?

Possible discussion points:

- Resolving conflicts together as a family helps avoid using consequences and keeps teens in the Sunshine of Positive Attention.
- Parents and teens find solutions to challenging situations working as a team.
- Parents and teens learn how to identify peaceful/nonviolent ways of solving conflicts.
- Parents and teens learn self-management and positive social skills.
- Resolving conflicts together helps identify positive and negative consequences to actions.

Please note: Remember to draw these reasons and others out of the parents and teens during the discussion. Help them find answers themselves!

4.5 Practice – Working together to solve problems

1. Divide parents and teens into groups of 6 to 8 participants each. Parents and teens can be together.
2. Each group will practice 6-steps of problem solving using one case study each.
3. They can do this in one of two ways:
 - a. By creating a role-play to show how could they make this decision together, or
 - b. By presenting the six steps of problem solving based on their case.

4. Hand out one scenario to each group:

- a. **Scenario One:** Faraja wants to spend the day alone with her boyfriend and she wants to visit him at his house. She feels responsible and has told her mother about it. Mother is scared that Faraja might find herself in a situation where she will be exposed to the risk of falling pregnant.
- b. **Scenario Two:** Amani forcibly kisses a girl from his class after school as part of bet he made with his friends to prove that he is strong and a good example of a man. His father is worried that this bad behaviour and negative influence might get him into trouble and get him expelled from school.
- c. **Scenario Three:** Faraja and Shukuru come home two hours after they were supposed to. It is late and dark, and their parents have been worried about whether or not they are safe.
- d. **Scenario Four:** Amani keeps walking home through an unsafe area because he wants to walk his girlfriend home. Parents repeatedly warn him against doing this. Amani is trying to help his girlfriend to be as safe as possible. His parents want Amani to be as safe as possible.
- e. **Scenario Five:** Mother hears Amani fighting with his best friend outside. When he comes in, he looks very upset and says that he has just lost his best friend.
- f. **Scenario Six:** Amani and Shukuru both want to watch T.V but Amani wants to watch soccer and Shukuru wants to watch a television soapie. Father and Mother hear them starting to argue.

5. Give each group about 5 to 10 minutes to discuss their scenario and find a solution.

6. Remind the groups about the 6 Steps of Problem Solving.

7. Groups come together to present their scenarios or solutions.

8. Group discussion providing feedback on the exercise.

Remember that the activity is an exercise on the process of coming up with possible solutions to problems in a collaborative and peaceful way, and not for the group to evaluate the solution itself! (Families can try out the solution and see if it worked or not).

5 ASSIGNING HOME ACTIVITIES

IT IS WHAT YOU DO AT HOME THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE!

Assign Home Activities to practice at home:

- **Take a Pause** whenever a conflict or difficult situation comes up. You may even need to walk away from the situation before engaging with it!
- Try to **work together** whenever a problem or conflict comes up in your family. **Use the 6 Steps of Problem Solving.**
- Spend **at least 15 minutes** of **One-on-One Time** each day with your teen/parent.

Ongoing home activities

- Continue with your parent/teen about how s/he can **share responsibilities.**
- Be realistic, immediate, reasonable, and consistent when using **consequences.**
- Continue to monitor your **family budget** and **savings plan**
- Continue to be consistent with **household rules**
- Have a **conversation** with your parent/teen about **health and safety**
- Try to be more **aware of your own emotions and the emotions of others.**
- Ask your parent/teen about how s/he is feeling at least **1 time during the week.**
- Practice **I Feel Statements** at least **1 time during the week.**
- **Praise** your parent/teen, yourself, and others in your family!
- Parents: Notice how you **give instructions** and try to make them **positive, specific, and realistic.**
- Teens: Remember to be **calm and clear** when talking to your parent about things that are important to you.
- Do something nice to **reward yourself** for your hard work in the PLH Teens programme!
- Do the **Physical Exercise** every morning.
- **Meet with or contact (call or text message) your PLH Buddy** one time during the week.

Please note: Discuss with the families each goal for the coming week.
Make a note of it so that you know what they are planning to do at home.
Then you can follow this up during the next session's discussion on home activities.

6 CLOSING

6.1 Sharing One Thing You Learned

Ask parents and teens to share ONE thing that they learned during the session with their parent/teen.

6.2 Compliment Circle

Parents and teens take turns praising each other. Then parents and teens take turns praising themselves for something specific that they did well.

Encourage participants to make eye contact and use the name of their parent/teen. The compliments can be about anything as long as they are sincere.

6.3 Take A Pause

Take a brief pause with families (30 seconds).

6.4 Emotional Check-Out

Model the emotional check-out by describing your emotion, where you feel it in your body, and what thoughts are associated with it.

For example, "I am feeling happy. This happiness is in my eyes. I am happy to have learned about how to create fair rules together."

6.5 Goodbye

Remind participants of the Home activities.

Refer to the Family Handbook and to the place for families to record whether they have done the home activities. Remind families of the core home activities for the session.

Thank and praise the parents/caregivers and teens for coming!