

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Building a Partnership

Session Length: 2 hours

Objectives

Participants will:

- Understand the purpose and philosophy of the group
- Identify current parenting issues and problems
- Identify personal goals for improved parenting
- Explore current strengths and resources

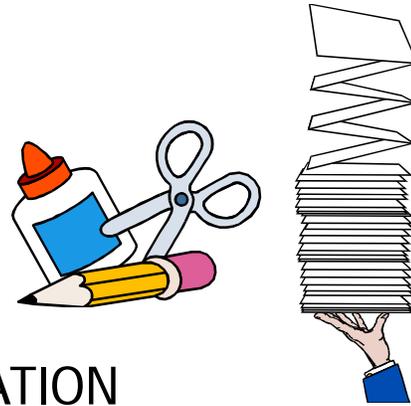
Synopsis

The first group is designed to help reinforce the title of the workshop *Partners in Parenting*. Group leaders present themselves as guides, not gurus, and participants are recognized as the primary authorities about their relationships with their children. Time is allowed for group building. The structure and philosophy of the group is explained and participants are asked to think about current parenting concerns, their strengths and coping skills to date, and their personal goals and expectations for the group.

Session Outline



Procedure	Time
Welcome	05 minutes
Workshop introduction	15 minutes
Member introductions	30 minutes
Group contract	15 minutes
Concerns and goals	40 minutes
Concluding ideas	10 minutes
Homework	05 minutes
Total Time for Session 1	120 minutes



MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- ▶ Here's what you will need to have ready for the group:
 - **POCKET FOLDERS** – Provide inexpensive cardboard pocket folders for participants to store handouts and exercises.
 - **COPIES OF MATERIALS** – Make copies of the following handouts, located at the end of the session:
 - *Workshop Schedule* (p. 13) [**Note:** Fill in dates before photocopying]
 - *Tower of Strengths* worksheet (p. 14) & word list (p. 15) (*optional*)
 - *Principles for a Productive Group* (p. 16)
 - *Goal Talk* (p. 17)
 - *My Goals for Better Parenting* (p. 18)
 - *Four Assumptions for Group* (p. 20)
 - *Session One Evaluation* (p. 20)
 - **SUPPORT MATERIALS** – Equip meeting room with a flipchart and easel, eraser board, or chalkboard. If you are using a flipchart, have masking tape or push pins available to hang completed pages for easy reference. Have extra pens, pencils, and paper available in case participants need them.

PROCEDURE



20 Minutes

WELCOME / WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION

1 Welcome participants as they arrive.



Handout,
p. 13

2 Distribute pocket folders and *Workshop Schedule* handout. Fill in meeting dates ahead of time or allow time for participants to add dates.

- To get us started, each of you is being given a folder and an outline of what to expect in this parenting workshop.
- The folders are yours to keep, so you might want to put your names on them. During the workshop you'll be given a lot of handouts and information. We've found from other groups that participants like to keep these materials and that the folders help keep things organized.
- You've also been provided an outline that gives you an idea of the general topic areas we'll cover.

3 Introduce the purpose, philosophy, and structure of the Partners in Parenting workshop. Include the following points:

- This workshop is for sharing and learning, and for giving and getting support for the most challenging job in the world - being a parent.
- This workshop recognizes and respects your courage as a recovering person and your concerns about the impact of your past addiction on your family. We will work to make this group a safe place where these issues can be brought forth and discussed without fear of judgment or blame.
- As group leaders, we will function as "partners" and "guides," not as "experts" or "gurus." We'll keep things on track and share what we've learned about parenting with you. And we recognize that each of you brings valuable experiences and strengths to the group, as well, to share.

- If there were a “magic bullet” for raising perfect children who were always polite, helpful, well behaved, resourceful, and respectful, someone would have uncovered it by now. For most of us, parenting involves a lot of trial and error. An open mind and a willingness to experiment with new techniques are what help many parents muddle through.
- This workshop will cover basic parenting issues and introduce you to some tips and techniques recommended by experts for managing common family problems. As with almost everything in life, practice is the key, so you will be asked to “experiment” at home with some of the ideas suggested and you’ll have a chance to rehearse with fellow group members.
- Our working focus in this group will be on identifying personal strengths and resources and on finding workable solutions to parenting problems. Solutions are not “one-size-fits-all.” But sometimes we can tailor things that have worked for others to meet our own unique needs.
- We’ll use today to identify some of the parenting concerns and problems that are weighing most heavily on your mind and to talk about what you want to get from this workshop. We’ll also establish some group goals to help guide us in our work.
- Before we do any of that, however, we’re going to spend some time getting to know each other.



30 Minutes

MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

- 4 Go around the room and ask participants to introduce themselves, and to tell a little about their children - ages, names, and each child’s favorite game, toy, or pastime.
- 5 Welcome everyone again, and comment on the good mix of parenting experience represented and how the group will benefit from that experience.



6 Establish a focus for the group building activity:

- For some of the work we'll be doing, you'll be asked to put your parenting "hat" to one side, and focus on the other hats you wear. In other words, although being a parent is a very important part of who you are, there are other parts as well.
- For the activities we'll be doing today to get to know each other better, focus on you and who you are - not just who you are as a parent. You'll have plenty of opportunity to focus on the parenting part as this workshop continues. For today, we want to get to know each other as people.

7 Use the allotted time to begin building group cohesion and trust. One or more of the following "icebreaker" activities may be used:

◆ Round-Robin Name Toss

- Have the group stand facing each other in a circle.
- Ask members to think of an adjective that describes them in a positive way that begins with the same letter as their first name (e.g., Nice Nancy, Rugged Ralph, Caring Carla, Magic Maria.)
- Go around the circle and have people introduce themselves with their adjective (e.g., Hi, I'm Energetic Elena). After each introduction, instruct the group to repeat the name back in unison (e.g., Hello, Energetic Elena).
- Then ask each person to go around the circle and say everyone's name (e.g., I'm Nice Nancy, next to me is Rugged Ralph, then Caring Carla, then Magic Maria, etc.)
- Introduce a bean-bag or soft sponge ball, and tell the group you want to see how fast the group can toss the ball around while remembering to say everyone's name.
- The "rules" for the toss are: (1) call out the name of the person who you are tossing to (e.g., I'm throwing it to you, Rugged Ralph), and (2) after you've caught the ball, use the thrower's name before throwing it yourself (e.g., Got it, Calm Carl. Here you go Magic Maria).

→ Instruct them to toss the ball randomly, and not around the circle. Allow the group to practice slowly to get the “rules” down. Then ask them to see how fast they can get the ball going in 1 or 2 minutes.

→ **Discuss the activity:**

? *How did it feel to have to pick a positive adjective for yourself?*

? *How will this exercise help you remember group member's names?*

◆ My Favorite Things About Me

→ Make sure participants have paper and pens to write with. If group size is 8 or more, divide them into smaller groups.

→ Ask participants to think of the 5 things they like best about themselves. These could be attitudes, feelings, values, accomplishments, or things they do well. These things need not be “lofty” or complicated.

→ In addition, ask them to think about times or situations in which they have demonstrated or put into action each of the things they like best about themselves. Ask them to make notes if needed.

→ Allow some time to introspect and make notes.

→ When participants finish the task, ask everyone to take turns in their group describing the things they like best about themselves and give examples.

→ Instruct those who are not speaking to listen carefully without making comments. Allow everyone to have a turn.

→ **Discuss the activity:**

? *How did you feel about doing this exercise?*

? *What did you learn about yourself?*

? *What did you learn from others?*

? *How come we are usually shy about revealing our good points?*



Worksheet
& Handout,
pp. 14-15

◆ Tower of Strengths

- Distribute *Tower of Strengths* worksheet and **Strengths Word List** handout.
- Ask participants to look through the **Strengths Word List** and to circle 10 words that describe strengths they believe they possess.
- Next, ask them to select 5 more words that describe strengths they would like to develop or that they are working on developing.
- Instruct them to write their current strengths and desired strengths in the appropriate spaces on the worksheet.
- Ask participants to share their worksheets, first by describing their current strengths and giving examples, and then by sharing their desired strengths and why they are important.
- **Discuss the activity:**
 - ? *Was it easier to identify current strengths or desired strengths? Why?*
 - ? *How can we learn to focus on our personal strengths?*
 - ? *How do we develop strengths? What steps do we take?*

8 Thank group members for their participation and for their willingness to self-disclose.



15 Minutes

GROUP CONTRACT

9 Introduce the purpose for having a “group contract:”

- Groups work best if participants have a sense of their rights and responsibilities and can develop a sense of safety and trust. By establishing some principles for how the group will operate, members can relax and be productive. Let’s review some guidelines for our group that we have found to be helpful with other groups.



Handout,
p. 16

10 Distribute copies of the *Principles for a Productive Group* handout, review each point, and discuss why it is important. Encourage questions.

- 11 Ask group members to sign their copy to show that they agree with principles suggested for the group and that they intend to remain a member of the group. Collect the signed copies.



40 Minutes

PARENTING CONCERNS AND GOALS

- 12 Set the tone for participants to discuss current concerns and challenges about parenting:
- Parents who are in recovery have a lot in common. Parenting, even in the best of circumstances, is a challenge. Parenting in the midst of an ongoing substance abuse problem probably felt like an impossibility to many of you.
 - The most important thing to remember at this point is that you survived those days, and your children survived. Now is the time for healing and rebuilding relationships. Both are slow processes.
 - None of us has the ability to “fix” unhappy things that happened in the past. This reality leaves most of us with feelings of remorse and regret.
 - We can get hope from realizing that it is possible to make positive changes now, today and into the future. The purpose of this group is to help in that process.
 - Before we move on to establishing our group goals, let’s discuss some of the parenting concerns and challenges that helped motivate you to join this group.
- 13 Encourage a discussion of parenting concerns using some of the following questions. Keep discussion focused on concerns about the parent-child relationship (e.g., move participants away from using time to ventilate about financial problems, child custody issues, ex-spouses, etc.). Use a flip chart or erasable board to list participants’ ideas. Model supportive listening and validation of feelings and concerns.
- ? *What concerns you most about your relationship with your child right now?*
 - ? *Is there anything you are particularly worried about?*

- ? *Are there any feelings you have, or feelings you sense your child may have, that concern you?*
- ? *Are there any recurring problems you'd like to see resolved?*
- ? *In spite of all the concerns and challenges we've been talking about, what is one thing you would not want to change about your relationship with your child.?*

14 Summarize the concerns raised by the group. Highlight the positive aspects of their parent-child relationships as volunteered in the last question. Briefly underscore how the topics that will be addressed in group and the group interaction itself will help members further address their concerns.



Handout,
p. 17

15 Lead participants in establishing group goals. Distribute *Goal Talk* handout and help create a working definition of "goals" before proceeding.

- As mentioned earlier, taking a few minutes to think seriously about goals and to establish group goals will help keep us on track.
- Goals can be thought of as action plans for creating solutions to current parenting concerns and problems.
- Your handout highlights the differences between "long range plans" and "goals." Let's examine some of those.

16 Read handout points aloud and discuss the following points:

- Both long-range plans and goals are important. Goals are the "workhorse," while the long-range plan is the "vision."
- Goals are accomplished and reached "one day at a time."



Worksheet,
p. 18

17 Distribute *My Goals for Better Parenting* worksheet and ask participants to write down a few goals they are interested in working toward as part of the workshop.

18 Prompt with some of the following questions:

- ? *What do you most want to get out of this workshop?*
- ? *What do you want to learn about most?*
- ? *What issues or concerns do you want help with?*
- ? *What might this workshop provide that will help you most in your job as a parent?*
- ? *What do you hope to gain from other members?*

19 Ask participants to contribute one of their goals to a list of “group goals.” Use flip chart paper or a piece of poster board to record group goals as members offer them. With participants’ help, frame goals in language that is specific, yet general enough to apply to most families (e.g., learn better ways to control my child’s tantrums, learn to control my own temper when child misbehaves).

- Based on everything we’ve discussed today, let’s generate a list of group goals. Goals that relate to learning and to developing new skills are especially helpful.
- Let’s begin by having each person state a goal for this workshop based on your needs and concerns as a parent. We’ll add to the list as needed.

20 Review completed list of goals. Thank participants for their input. Briefly reassure them that most of the issues reflected in their goals will be addressed within the topics to be covered during the workshop.

21 Let participants know you will keep the goals list, and that reviewing it will be part of the business of the final meeting. In addition, the group may want to refer back to specific goals during the workshop.



10 Minutes

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

22 Provide wrap-up and closure for the session. Highlight the following points:

- We will begin covering the topics described in the outline at our next meeting. The dates and times for each group meeting are included on the outline.
- As we cover each topic, you'll have a chance to explore the issues you've identified in the group goals. You may want to keep a list of questions or ideas that occur to you between sessions.
- As we explore issues related to developing a more effective parenting style and learning new skills, we will keep four assumptions in mind:

Four Assumptions

1. You are the expert on your child and on your relationship with your child.
 2. There are many things you are doing well, so, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.
 3. If it works, keep doing more of it.
 4. If it doesn't work, do something different.
- In the weeks ahead, we'll be exploring how to use your resourcefulness and good intelligence to figure out how to do things that work in your relationship with your children.

Handout,
p. 19

23 Distribute *Four Assumptions* handout.



5 Minutes

HOMEWORK

24 Introduce the purpose and guidelines for homework suggestions that will be a feature of each group.

- At the end of each meeting, there will be a suggestion for a "homework" activity or experiment. These will not be difficult or too time-consuming, however, they will require some thought and effort.

- We'll discuss the previous week's suggested homework at the beginning of each session. This will allow us to share with each other the successes or difficulties we encounter with the new skills we'll be learning.
- These take-home assignments will help you stay focused on your goals and accomplishments. In previous groups, participants have found the assignments to be fun, interesting, and helpful.

25 Give the following homework suggestion:

- Here's the assignment for next week:
 - Between now and the time we meet again, I'd like for you to pay attention to all the things that happen in your relationship with your child(ren) that you want to continue to have happen.
 - It may help you to keep some notes, but it's not necessary if you don't want to.
 - The important thing is to pay attention to things that happen between you and your child that you want to continue to have happen. In other words, "what works," "what's good."
- We'll talk about this assignment as well as many other things next time. See you then.

26 Thank participants for coming and for their participation. Invite them to return to the next session.

27 Ask participants to complete a *Session Evaluation* form before leaving.



Session
Evaluation,
p. 20



Partners in Parenting Workshop Schedule

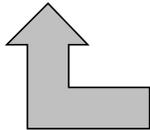


<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Date</u>
ONE	Introduction Discussion Group	_____ _____
TWO	Child Development Discussion Group	_____ _____
THREE	Family Communication Discussion Group	_____ _____
FOUR	Family Communication Discussion Group	_____ _____
FIVE	Promoting Good Behavior Discussion Group	_____ _____
SIX	Sensible Discipline Discussion Group	_____ _____
SEVEN	Self-Care for Parents Discussion Group	_____ _____
EIGHT	Problem-Solving Graduation	_____ _____

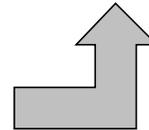
TOWER OF STRENGTHS



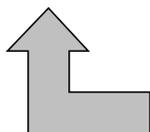
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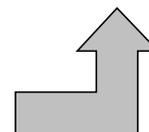
STRENGTHS I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE



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STRENGTHS I KNOW I HAVE





TOWER OF STRENGTHS WORD LIST

Adaptable	Forgiving	Peacemaker
Adventurous	Friendly	People-person
Ambitious	Funny	Persistent
Artistic	Generous	Polite
Athletic	Good intentioned	Practical
Believes in self	Good memory	Principled
Brave	Happy	Problem-solver
Community-minded	Hard-working	Quick learner
Competitive	Healthy	Quick thinker
Contented	Honest	Relaxed
Cool-headed	Imaginative	Religious
Cooperative	Independent	Responsible
Curious	Kind	Self-starter
Dedicated	Learner	Sense of humor
Dependable	Likeable	Sensitive to others
Determined	Logical	Sincere
Endurance	Loving	Smart
Energetic	Loyal	Spiritual
Enthusiastic	Mechanical	Spontaneous
Ethical	Musical	Strong
Even-handed	Optimistic	True to self
Expressive	Open-minded	Trusting
Fair	Organized	Trustworthy
Flexible	Patient	Warm-hearted

Principles for a Productive Group

These guidelines are a set of rules to be applied during group meetings to insure healthy interactions. Please read them over carefully and apply them.

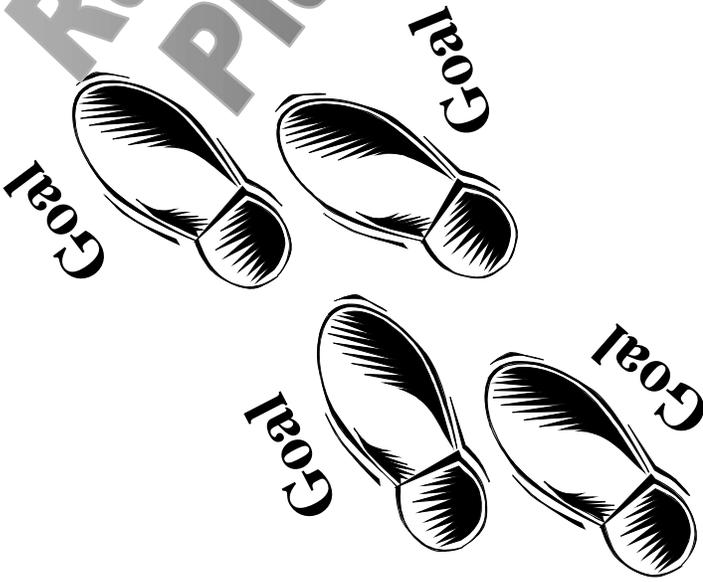
1. Attendance is very important to the group. Your presence and participation are valued and important. It is important that you attend not only for yourself, but for other members needing your support. If you must miss a session, please let the group know ahead of time. If this is not possible, please leave a message in the office.
2. Please be on time. If you are running late, please attend anyway, if possible.
3. Please honor the confidentiality of the group. Everyone must be able to feel comfortable that what they discuss in group will not be repeated outside of group.
4. Group members need to be supported when they talk about their feelings and concerns. There is no room in group for judging and blaming. Each person needs to be able to express feelings openly without fear of criticism.
5. Practice active listening. This means paying full attention to a group member who is talking instead of thinking about what you want to say next.
6. Parenting is a learning process. What works for one family may not always work for another. As group members we can offer support, hope, and encouragement, and at the same time respect that each person must find her/his own solutions.
7. Remember that each person in the group needs a chance to share. Since our meetings have a time limit, no one person should take over the conversation.

Signed _____ Date _____
Group Member

Signed _____ Date _____
Group Leader

GOAL TALK

Long Range Plan



A LONG RANGE PLAN:

- Inspires hope & motivation
- May be broad & "fuzzy"
- Reflects values & dreams
- Is reached in steps (goals)

Examples:

- Get along better with my kids.
 - Finish my education.
 - Quit drugs/alcohol.

GOALS ARE:

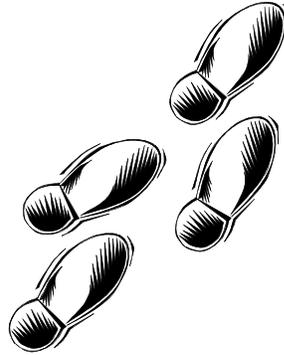
- Small
- Specific
- Realistic
- Important to you
- Require effort

Examples:

- Read to my child 4 times per week.
- Make appointment with advisor at community college.
- Attend 2 recovery activities per week.



MY GOALS FOR BETTER PARENTING



Some of my long-range plans for better parenting are:

Some of my goals for better parenting are:

One thing I really want to learn from this class is:



FOUR ASSUMPTIONS FOR GROUP



You are the expert on your child
and on your relationship with
your child.

You are already doing many things well,
so...

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

If it works, do more of it.

If it doesn't work,
do something different.





Session Evaluation Partners in Parenting Session 1

INSTRUCTIONS: Please take a minute to give us some feedback about how you liked this session.

1. Use one word to describe your feelings about today's class _____
2. What was the most important thing you learned today?
3. What is one thing you really like about your relationship with your child (children)?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you rate today's class? (Circle your rating.)

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Poor				Pretty Good					Excellent
5. Do you have any suggestions to help make this class better?